Anything for the Pack: Middle
by Mishteeshim

Summary

A sneer flit across Erica’s face as she gripped her arm, broken not more than five minutes ago. It was healing slowly and the blond she-wolf was clearly not in a forgiving mood. “I say we knock her out and hang her by her ankles till her friends come and get her,” she growled out. “Let the bitch reflect a little.”

Notes

(See Part 1 of Anything for the Pack for Additional tags.)

So very, very pre-proof-read through. No beta. Exhausted. *curls up on bed* Wake me next week.

6-16-17: Finally caved and got me a Beta reader for the latest chapter. Thank you to everyone who has offered and I may still ask for advice in the future (especially for my other ongoing fic, The Promise. God damn my inability to be multi-lingual.)
Thank you so Kinniska for loading a spell checked version of this chapter to google docs for me <3
Family is off limits

More and more lately Peter found himself simply watching the Pack as they worked. He didn’t let them do all the work— he was still a Sentinel; a Pack member responsible for negotiations with other packs—but he always did love watching the kids do their thing— whether they did it well or poorly was of little consequence. Entertainment was entertainment. So Peter watched, leaning casually against a tree and surveying the situation with a deceivingly bored expression on his face.

Scott, Isaac, Lydia, Erica and Stiles stood surrounding a willowy woman with honey colored hair and sharp features. An Elf under her glamor though it wasn’t hard to see given how it flickered with her current state of emotions. A little scared, a little surprised, and really pissed off. Her limbs were just a tad too long, fingers a bit more boney than healthy for a human, eyes a fraction too old for her apparent age. The wolves weren’t shifted— apart from Erica— but their eyes glowed and their fangs peaked out from under their lips. Lydia’s arms were crossed; a small throwing knife dangling from her fingers and Stiles had his clawed gloves. Not the training ones that left cuts akin to cat scratches, but the ones that really stuck in there. None of them looked like they’d just ran a mile and a half through the woods in search of their kidnapped Pack mate.

A sneer flit across Erica’s face as she gripped her arm, broken not more than five minutes ago. It was healing slowly with the bone almost puncturing the skin and the blond she-wolf was clearly not in a forgiving mood. “I say we knock her out and hang her by her ankles till her friends come and get her,” she growled out. “Let the bitch reflect a little.”

“You’re not still mad about the whole breaking your arm thing, are you?” The Elf sneered.

“I felt better once Isaac got you,” Erica spat back. Isaac snorted and said Elf hunched over slightly and glared. She favored the leg that wasn’t bent at an odd angle in a place where a bone definitely should not bend. The scent of her pain made Peters nose twitch.

Stiles ignored Erica’s griping and rubbed his thumb over his eyebrow. “Well Isa,” the Elf twitched at the nickname the young man gave her and Peter smirked. Elves were fairly formal and Ismala probably thought Stiles was being intentionally rude, assuming that he was just a run of the mill human or a Hunter perhaps. Someone that didn’t pay attention to tradition and procedure. “This was a dumb idea. Like, monumentally dumb. You were warned not to do anything stupid while you were here and you still did it,” he said with a shake of his head. “I mean, Chris and Derek warned you.”

“Not to mention myself and the Sheriff,” Peter added, glancing at his nails as he scratched some dirt out from under one.

Peter was also ignored and Stiles continued with hopeful breath. “I’d sort of thought Elves would be a little more…” the young man searched for the word with a wave of his hand. “Astute. Wisdom of the ages and foresight and all that. I mean, you didn’t even offer our Pack Sentinels a gesture of thanks for being allowed in the territory. The last Elf through here totally sent Derek a gift basket of awesome fruit with a thank you card in advance. He did it right. You’re kind of a let down.” Okay, maybe Stiles was being intentionally rude.

“You’re confusing her with a High Elf.” Peter corrected.

“She’s a Wood Elf,” Lydia supplied with narrowed green eyes as she surveyed the woman, noting a tinge of green to her hair and yellowed nails. “Much more short-sighted and impulsive if I recall the Bestiary entry correctly.”
“Still, Tolkien is crying somewhere,” Stiles muttered while Scott rolled his eyes fondly next to him.

“Are you all idiots?” Ismala grit out incredulously, limping back a step towards the tree. “You've got your bitch back, so let me go.” She might not have necessarily meant it as an insult rather than an actual term for Female dog, but still. She'd broken their bitches arm.

“Don’t move,” Isaac growled as Scott rumbled along, seeing the direction she was moving. Ismala stilled and Erica let out something that sounded decidedly like a hiss while Lydia just raised a sculpted eyebrow. Peter caught sight of Stiles fingertips tapping against his thigh and he could smell the metallic ozone that lingered around the man become a bit more potent.

The elder Wolf returned his attention to the Elf while still keeping their Emissary in his peripherals. “I do hope for your sake that this bullheadedness isn't a family trait.” After he spoke Peter watched as something close to true fear slipped into the Elfin woman’s expression. Peter’s smile was ominous as he turned to Stiles. “Stiles, didn't your father do a background check on our friend here the other day? I'm sure he mentioned it.”

Ismala’s eyes snapped to the black gloved young man as he tapped his fingers on his narrow hips. Eyebrow knowingly raised after a small glance at Peter, Stiles played along, taking the hint from the older man. “You've got a brother right?” Stiles asked curiously as he fixed a coy gaze on the woman. For a moment- just a moment- his eyes flickered violet around the edges. “He still living in San Bernardino?”

The Wolves heard the Elf’s pulse quicken and she knew they could hear it. Her fear and confusion permeated the air. She couldn't believe how quickly her plan had fallen apart even though she was staring right into the glowing eyes of the aftermath. The plan had been simple, thought up by her and a few other demi-immortals. In order to leech power from the World Tree they needed to be in the presence of a member of the pack that had sworn to protect it. Once they had the participant—willing or not, - they would siphon energy from the Ley Lines that converged under the Nemeton. Ismala had been sent ahead three days ago to scout out the area and the Werewolves who presided over the Haven. The Hale Pack was certainly not what she had expected. They had given her trouble from the first day she'd stepped foot in town. They made it perfectly clear that as long as she didn't stir the proverbial pot, she would be welcomed here. She’d met the Alpha and one of his betas within minutes of crossing the border and she was forced to introduce herself in a sudden impromptu interview. Both of them were in uniform, polite, following protocol perfectly as Alpha and Sentinel. Then came the last two of the Argent family line and a stern, sarcastic woman in scrubs at the grocery store. To top it all off, earlier that very morning the Sheriff of all people stopped to talk to her on the street and advised her to keep away from the Nemeton for her own good. He's seemed genuinely concerned but Ismala didn't buy into it. She had no idea how they'd figured out her intentions but, naturally, she started to feel pressured and nervous.

Not wanting to risk any more confrontations she’d decided to act on her own before her backup arrived. She enchanted the female Beta as she was leaving a bar, threw the dazed Werewolf in the trunk of her car and drove her out to the middle of the Preserve where she planned on offering her to the Nemeton as tribute. Maybe not killing her but there were always accidents dealing with Ley Lines. The blonde struggled a bit when she'd propped her up near the massive tree stump and Ismala had snapped her forearm, forcing a loud howl from the young woman’s lips. The Elf had been just about to start when a short series of howls answered back.

And now here she was; limping, in a terrible amount of pain, surrounded by four Werewolves, a human who smelled like one, and another who smelled of death. A mere 10 minutes from when she’d taken the she-wolf and now her family was being threatened. Ismala’s voice was soft and harsh when she finally answered the amber-eyed human. “How do you even know about him?”
Stiles waved his hand flippantly and resisted the very strong urge to just shout ‘Sheriff's son!’ and said simply; “I've got tiny friends with big mouths that will do just about anything for honey.”

“Fucking Faries,” the Elf spat under her breath. She hadn't expected one of the pack humans to have contracts with Fae. She glared at the young man, glamour threatening to drop off her features as she felt wave after subtle wave of magic roll off of him. “Stay away from my family, Witch.” It was almost an unspoken rule. Everyone had family after all.

“Hey, no need for name calling, Galadriel,” the lanky young man replied stiffly.

“I think talking to your family is a great idea,” Lydia interrupted, disregarding Stiles moment of nerdness. “I’m sure they’d love to know all about what you've been up to, trying to steal power from a World Tree on this land, going specifically against the wishes of its guardians.”

"Plus you kidnapped me," Erica added.

"You were warned." Lydia continued. "Repeatedly. And you ignored us. That’s just bad manners.”

"Warned?” Ismala bit out, eyes dangerous and narrow. "I was threatened by a bunch of animals. And who says you can keep the World Tree to yourselves. I’m not the only one who will come after a taste of that power so don’t think you can -where is he going?!"

A few eyes turned to Peter who had pushed off the tree and was walking away from them, hands in his pockets. The older man looked over his shoulder and shrugged. “I’m bored so I’m going back home.”

Lydia rolled her eyes and shifted her weight with a sigh. “Thanks Peter. It’s not like you could help us get her to the hospital or anything.”

“Well if that doesn't sound like a bad joke,” Peter chuckled with a smug grin. “How many Werewolves does it take to bring an injured Elf to a hospital?”

“Oh my god, Peter, just go home,” Erica snapped. Peter was already walking away, chuckling to himself.

Isaac sighed and shook his head, returning his attention to Ismala. “Dick. Moving on,” the tall curly haired beta said.

“Well at least he didn't threaten to like…break alliances and stuff,” Scott murmured. Peter liked to fall back on that with people who made him do actual work. Oh, you knocked over those papers I just organized? I’ll just dissolve the decade old truce between our families that has kept those Trolls from eating all your cattle. Have a good day.

“Moooving on, Scott,” Isaac said again, more pointedly this time, hoping he would take the hint.

Scott did and refrained from commenting further but Stiles didn't. “Now that I think of it, didn't the Wood Elves have some kind of deal worked out with the Argents from way back in the 18th century?” Stiles asked, completely ignoring Isaac's wide-eyed stare. Scott nodded enthusiastically. “The Argents are part of the Hale pack now so their alliances are kind of our alliances. Not to take a page from Uncle Pete’s book but I’d hate to have that put in jeopardy because of this little… hiccup,” he said to the willowy woman in front of them. “You’re family might be on the table for Hunters again if it gets out you don’t care about old agreements.”

That got a rise out of her immediately. “How dare you threaten my family, you pathetic human!” Ismala shouted, nearly stumbling as her leg throbbed in pain. Her glamour slipped and her features
suddenly grew sharper, ears lengthening and pointing, eyes narrowing to almond shape and her skin paling to a moonlight glow. “They are off limits and if you touch them I will rip your eyes out!”

Stiles made a small affronted noise, almost close to a chuckle. He suddenly reached out and grabbed the woman’s jaw, turning it roughly to the side. She caught a glimpse of the man’s eyes bleeding into pale violet and she felt the air around her grow colder. He brought his face close to hers and looked to the side as well so that they were both staring at the others. “Meet the pups, Ismala,” Stiles said evenly, voice dropped low as though it were for her ears only. “Scott, Erica, Isaac, and Lydia, though she’s a Banshee.” Stiles pointed at them and their eyes flashed pale red, yellow, and green in the light of the setting sun. Ismala’s teeth were clenched, eyes wide as she stared where she was told. She couldn’t do anything else.

“Sheeem?” Stiles gripped the woman’s jaw harder and she nodded as best she could, heart hammering in her chest. His voice dropped an octave lower, tone calculated to send a tremble through her limbs. “They are my Pack. You kidnapped one of them and were going to use her for a sacrifice. Don’t spew your ideals about off limits to me when you are the one who involved my family first.” Erica beamed at her friends show of protectiveness, flashing her sharp teeth and snapping them for effect.

Ismala was shivering now. The fingers holding her jaw were like ice and she lost total control of her glamour. The magic of the earth around her suddenly pulled away as though repelled by the cold, no longer feeding her energy enough to keep the veil stable. She trained frightened eyes on the man next to her and found herself staring right into a pair of violet orbs. Not a Wolf. Not quite a Witch. Not quite a Druid. Still, the feeling of a predator. “What…are you?” she whispered.

Sheathing her small blade Lydia walked up to Stiles and looked down at the woman. She nudged Stiles elbow lightly with her own and he let go of her, letting the Elf fall to the ground with a small cry of pain. “Pack,” she said smartly before letting her polished boot connect with the woman’s temple.
When will the Vampires come?

Chapter Summary

That aside, he was practically aching for a phone call. Hell, even a text would be fine. He wasn’t worried, he was just…worried. Yes, he was worried.

Chapter Notes

chapter 2 of part 2 is up! Shorter chapters so I can post more often.

Back at the Pack house the atmosphere was tense. Most of this tension emanated from the Alpha as Chris and Peter were sitting in the reclining chairs, having only glanced at the clock once per seven times Derek caved and looked at it himself. “You know, I’m pretty impressed nephew,” Peter said. The dark haired man didn’t even bother to glance at his uncle who’d sauntered through the front door twenty minutes ago. By himself. It was already 11 o’clock and Derek, apart from Peter’s comment that they were all ‘just fine,’ had not heard from any of his Pack that had gone to fetch Erica from that uppity Elf woman. “I was sure you’d tell Stiles to wait for you to get there instead of just sending the others to back him up.” Peter clapped his hands softly in a supercilious manner. “Congratulations Derek, you’re growing up.”

“He’s my Lupa,” Derek responded tersely. “He can take care of one Elf.” If he couldn’t leave this simple matter to Stiles what did that say about his trust in the younger man that he so vehemently insisted he had. Besides, Scott, Isaac, Erica –if she was able- and a Molotov wielding Lydia Martin were with him. They had more than enough muscle and brains between them to deal with the Elf.

That aside, he was practically aching for a phone call. Hell, even a text would be fine. He wasn’t worried, he was just…worried. Yes, he was worried. He was trying really hard not to be, or let anyone know about it though because he knew what the reactions would be. Isaac would have sighed and shook his head, Scott would have pouted in disappointment, Lydia and Erica would have rolled their eyes, and Stiles would have laughed at him. Derek was only just getting used to the idea of having his Lupa back officially now. When Stiles had first come into the position Derek hadn’t let any of them move on their own. Their roles were too new; too unfamiliar to the bitten wolves and humans. It was too dangerous so they operated as a unit. Then Stiles left and Derek had to take a different approach. When their Emissary returned he didn’t want to take away his Packs independence, or the flexibility of taking care of things in smaller numbers that they’d gotten used to over the last year. Still, he was used to being by their side and it felt off when he knew they were out there while he was safe somewhere else.

Watching Derek out of the corner of his eye, Chris smirked a bit while he sharpened one of his knives to pass the time. The Alpha was fretting but he’d hand it to the guy; he was trying. Pack hierarchy dictated that a Lupa be able to handle the same responsibilities as the Alpha if needed. It split the burden between two people instead of one. Stiles’ taking care of things –with the authority of being the Hale Pack Emissary as well as Derek’s Lupa- was an attempt to cement this bond between them in an even more official manner. Honestly though, Chris thought, Derek might not
have had such a hard time letting his Lupa go off on his own had Stiles not also been his Mate. The ‘retired’ Hunter knew that was a whole different ballgame. Ballpark.... In a different state.

Derek suddenly perked up and hurried over to the door, throwing it open so quickly Peter winced when it banged loudly against the wall behind it. The faint headlights of a familiar Lexus rolled up the long driveway and the Alpha let out an audible sigh of relief. “Guess they’re back,” Peter announced with a lazy smile.

Derek gripped the door frame as he watched Lydia’s car come up the driveway. His ears strained listening for rapid breaths, a staggered heartbeat, tried to scent the metallic tang of blood and pain. His nails digging into he wood was the only thing keeping him from rushing out to meet them.

Erica was the first out of the car and she waved at Derek with a confident grin. “I’m alive!” Isaac and Stiles slipped out of the back seat after her and Scott and Lydia exited the car last.

Derek felt he’d restrained himself enough and stepped out onto the porch. “How did it go?” he asked in a voice much calmer than he felt inside.

“Perfect,” Stiles replied with a grin as he removed his cut off gloves and put them in the pocket of his jacket. “Ismala is at the hospital under watch and she’s going to be escorted out of town as soon as her leg heals.”

“What did you do to her leg?” Derek asked, wariness creeping into the edge of his tone.

“I broke it,” Isaac shrugged.

“It should take about two days to heal judging by how fast it was mending,” Scott said, adding his two cents as the medical professional in the group. “Mom’s keeping an eye on her and one of the new med students is a 6 foot tall Brownie so he’ll be standing watch at night.”

Derek nodded, finding that he had no comment or criticism for once. They’d handled it how he would have...though, he might have dropped her off outside of town and told her to hitch-hike back home, busted leg and all. The hospital was probably Scott's idea and it was hard to say no to Scott.

From the living room Chris called out to them and motioned for them to come inside. “I’ve got Allison on speakerphone,” He announced. “We want a briefing.” Derek stepped to the side to let them in the house and gave Erica’s shoulder a comforting squeeze as she passed. His Beta smiled and brushed her shoulder against his. Stiles paused at the rail of the stairs.

“Be in in a sec,” he said as he reached into his pocket and pulled out a familiar looking box. Lydia hesitated at the door next to Derek when she saw it and caught the Alphas eyes with a meaningful glance. Derek nodded to her and she shut the front door behind her after once last look at Stiles.

Derek turned to face the younger man, noting the color of his cheeks in the half light the porch was lit by. A faint breeze carried the scent of aftershave, metal, and weariness to him. Derek walked across the porch to meet Stiles, watching as the man rubbed his fingers together till they grew a bright cherry red and touched the tip of his cigarette. The smell of herbs wafted through the air as he took a long drag. Derek was quiet for a moment, waiting for Stiles to speak first but when the younger man seemed insistent on letting the silence grow, Derek asked, “How are you?”

Stiles exhaled, the scent of willow bark rushing up to meet the wolf. It was a strong, bitter scent. “No worse for the ware,” he replied with a cheeky smile as he sat down on the steps. The half lie wasn’t audible but Derek saw through it anyway.

"Then why are you smoking?” he prodded.
Stiles tipped his head back a bit to look up at Derek, wry amusement in his amber eyes. "Because they taste oh so delicious."

Derek rolled his eyes and sat down next to the other man. "Admitting you have a problem is the first step." The joke was obvious but so was the double meaning and it wasn't lost on either of them. Stiles had once told him that using magic gave him a rush but sometimes it left him with an ache. Headache, muscle ache, joint ache. He smoked when he ached. Stiles had promised the Pack he’d cut back on the cigarettes but Derek realized that it was like asking someone with chronic migraines to ease up on the Advil. You didn't see the painkillers, but the pain was still there.

“Have you talked to Deaton about the pain yet?” Derek asked, tone a bit more serious, shoulder touching the other man's.

“He knows,” Stiles breathed out, leaning into the other slightly. “His latest theory is that I just need more training with nature magic.” That made the Stiles chuckle. “I think he just wants me as a student again so he can shove his Druidy propaganda on me. Equality, Balance, Vagueness!”

The Alpha wasn't sure any of them wanted to go down that path again. Stiles had more than proven he’d graduated beyond Apprentice, even at Deaton's admission. “You used nature magic tonight?” Derek asked, knee bumping against the others, wanting to unconsciously touch him more; have some kind of contact.

“A little,” Stiles admitted with a small wince. “Just getting the wind to blow towards us so the others could keep track of Ismala’s scent. Elves are good at hiding in the woods.” He thought for a moment, staring at the ember at the end of his cigarette. “I think being so close to the Ley Lines is what got me all antsy. They sort of…feel like a pulse now. Like when you listen really carefully and can hear your own heartbeat. Only louder. And I feel it, not hear it. So yeah.”

Derek’s eyebrows rose as he studied his Mate's profile. “I take it that’s not normal.”

Stiles rubbed his chin thoughtfully and hummed. “Druids are more in touch with the Ley Lines but Deaton has never mentioned getting all sore over them.” He ran his free hand through his hair and stared off into the distance, taking a long slow drag and holding it in for a moment before letting the pure white smoke rush past his lips. “So once again, I'm an anomaly.”

Derek frowned and slipped his arm around the man’s waist and let his hand slide under his shirt to touch the bare skin at his hip. It was warm to the touch and Derek pulled a little pain from him. Stiles never let on, never really talked about it, but he knew that he was unsettled by the turns his magic was taking. Stiles hated not understanding things and every time he looked into it was a dead end. His Fae contacts, friends in New York, other magic users; they had tried, but none of them had been very helpful. The Fae trusted him for the most part but were wary as they tended to be when contracted with a human. His friends in New York -including Carla and Charlotte - let him know if they found anything new but they were mostly shooting blanks. Other magic user only had advice on what they knew best. No one was really familiar enough with an amalgamation between Spark and Druid for them to be giving advice or council.

“You always were a little weird,” Derek said with mock seriousness only to smile when Stiles laughed. He leaned over a bit and rubbed his cheek against Stiles shoulder, moving up to the neck where he placed a light kiss on the mole dotted skin. "You did good tonight."

That had a small smile pulling at Stiles lips that Derek could practically feel. "Were you worried, Der?” He asked, tipping his head a bit so he could try and catch the Alphas eye.

Derek just buried his face into the crook of Stiles neck, arm looping fully around his waist and
tugging him closer to his side. "I knew you could handle it," he muttered gruffly. Stiles laughed. As expected.

Behind them the door opened suddenly, revealing Peter standing there with a smirk on his lips. Both men looked back at the older wolf expectantly and Peter raised his chin like he hadn't just interrupted an intimate moment. He'd interrupted worse. ‘Not that you aren't allowed to have your private warded discussion with our Emissary, oh Alpha mine, but maybe you'd like to come inside and hear what Allison found out?’

Peter strode back into the house and Derek looked at his Emissary questioningly, glancing at the hand that usually glowed a bit when Stiles put up a dampening ward for sound. “Warded?” He hadn’t sensed any change around them.

Stiles took one last drag on his cigarette and smirked. “When I sat down.” Derek smirked in return. Stiles was getting better.

They were all gathered around Chris in the living room when Stiles and Derek came back inside. The Hunter had his cell phone on the table and nodded to the both of them. “Okay Allison, they’re in the room. Tell them what you told us.”

Allison was at home, typing on the computer judging by the tapping they heard on hear end of the line. “As I was saying, ever since Stiles mentioned the Nest from San Fransisco I’ve been in contact with a local Hunter in the area. He specializes in Vampires so I thought he’d be able to offer some insight. It looks like they are making their way here slowly, stopping in smaller towns and suburbs. They don’t bite anyone other than to feed so no one has turned so far, but seven women and four men are in hospitals in critical condition.”

While Allison spoke Stiles took a seat on the couch next to Lydia and Scott, and Erica got up from her spot of the floor and sat on the arm next to them. Isaac kept his spot at on the other side of Chris. “They must not be looking to expand their Nest,” Stiles said. Alphas turned humans for much the same reason Vampires did: to build up support. The stronger the pack the stronger the Alpha. It was the same with a Vampire Nest. Vampires had to be considerably more choosy with their initiates however as they had to live with their choices for much longer.

“Did we get a confirmation on their actual numbers?” Chris asked, leaning forward in his seat slightly.

“No,” the Huntress replied. “Just the same as Stiles hears. 14 to 18. I haven’t gotten any names yet but judging from the control the Vampires have over how long they feed, stopping right before death, my contact is thinking they’ve all got 50 plus years experience as the undead.”

“Veterans then.” Lydia made a thoughtful noise, crossing one leg over the others. “None of them were recently turned.”

Derek crossed his arms, frowning a bit. "Do we have any more information as to why they're coming here?" Apart from what Stiles had heard at the bar through the grapevine it seemed like they were just coming here to 'see the Hale Pack'.

“Besides fun and making us fidget? No,” Allison sighed. "We could just chalk it up to the Nemeton's pull. That's what usually seems to draw everyone in.”

The agreement came from Peter of all people. “You're probably correct about that." Scott turned to
stare at the older wolf. "Oh, don't look so surprised Scott. You heard what the Elf said. As for the Vampires it might have something to do with the unnatural amount of Fae we have in this town. We're positively teeming with supernatural powers."

The True Alpha just looked confused. "I get supernatural creatures being drawn to the tree but aren't Vampires drawn to like...blood and stuff?"

Peter looked at Scott like one would when they had to explain something to a child. "Stiles, have you ever heard of Vampires being able to consume magic instead of blood?"

Stiles frowned a bit and his hand went subconsciously to his arm. Lydia caught the motion and her eyes shot daggers at Peter. The old Werewolf certainly knew how to put his foot in it. "Yes." Stiles said. "Older Vampires can learn to do that. They get a taste for blood that has magic in it and it can almost be like a drug for them." It was a real possibility that it was this type of Vampire that was heading towards them. Vampires were like other energy consuming Fae and Supernatural creatures. They might have their personal favorites -such as AB+, - but with time they could train themselves to work with other sorts of energies. That usually took a lot of time, patience, discipline, and knowledge. If it turned out these Vampires dined on more than blood they knew what they were doing and probably had years of practice. Stiles knew first hand how troublesome experienced Vampires could be.

"Stiles?"

The young man blinked, noticing a slender hand on his knee and he looked up. Lydia was staring at him expectantly and he realized he'd probably been quiet for too long. Or had someone asked him a question? "Hmm, sorry?"

Isaac cleared his throat and repeated himself, slight reluctance in his voice. "I was asking if Charlotte or any of her Nest knew these guys. Maybe they could like...talk to them when they get here?"

The idea made Stiles laugh. Almost. Because it would have been rude to laugh. Which explains why Peter did it. "Do you remember the last time we had to break up a Vampire brawl?" the older man asked. "They still haven't repaired all the damage to that section of the mall."

"I said talk, Peter," Isaac smarted back. "Not fight."

"Isaac's right," Allison chirped in over the phone. "We could at least ask Charlotte if she wants to help out. It might be smart in the long run."

"I can have Ethan go talk to her," Derek offered. "His shift ends at midnight so he can stop by the Jungle on the way back to the station."

"Does he ever have a day off," Scott muttered quietly.

Derek paused for a second. "He likes to stay busy." The twin had taken a job as a deputy right after Aiden died and it had helped him deal. He worked more than any of them at his 'civilian job,' but having the support of the Pack anywhere he went whether it was at home or work kept him grounded.

"Maybe we should wait on that," Stiles interrupted when Derek pulled out his phone. The Alpha looked up at him curiously. "Charlotte would totally help us if we asked, but I've already got her keeping an ear open for any news and I don't want to put her in a position where she thinks she had to confront another Nest that we don't really know anything about. As it sits now we're assuming that they are going to be coming in hostile so it's like asking her to agree to involve her own Nest in a turf
Scott looked a bit confused. "Didn't she fight with you in New York?" he asked.

Stiles frowned. "No. I helped her in New York."

"Not every supernatural creature fights like us, Scott," Derek said, making the younger man bow his head in embarrassment. Derek understood that though. His Pack had fighting ingrained in them since day one. Literally. It was easy to forget that many Supernatural creatures and Fae, like many of the civilians in Beacon Hills, lived perfectly mundane lives. His Pack was there to make sure that they could live those lives.

"Okay," Chris said, breaking the silence. "So we'll scratch that idea for now. Allison, was that all you had for us?"

"Yes. I'll keep you guys updated if I hear more from my contact on their movement."

"Thanks sweetheart," Chris said, picking up his phone from the table. "I'll see you at home."

"Training at 5 tomorrow," Derek added.

"Sir, yes sir," Allison teased. "Night everyone, see you tomorrow!"

"Night!" They all chorused back.
Stiles pressed the back of his head into his pillow and he let out a slow breath, a shudder running down his spine as his ears filled with the sound of the low animal rumble coming from the man on top of him, pinning him down and biting at his skin. “Screw it,” he breathed out as his hand came up to card through Derek’s hair. “I’m just gonna’ do it. I’m tattooing your puppies for reasons.” He gasped as sharp teeth nicked the thin skin over his ribs. “Deal with it.”

“Head. Ugg...gonna’ die….” He grated out, rolling on to his side while the leaves crunched under him. Stiles wanted to pass out right then and there but he was sure he had something pretty freaking similar to a concussion and didn’t really want to lose consciousness in the middle of the forest. For maybe the hundredth time in his life. Seriously, passing out was like, really bad for you.

Somewhere above him someone, in some tone of voice, asked if he was okay. Or maybe he was just imagining it because he wished he had nicer friends. “Nrrg...” was all he could mutter in response. Stiles rolled on to his stomach, eyes barely cracked open and put his hands on the ground, pushing up. He tried to stand and when he fell back down he decided that he would never do that again.

He lay there for a moment, feeling the dry leaves tickle his cheek while he waited for the throbbing to abate. “Allison,” Stiles said slowly, closing his eyes while she shuffled forward a bit. “Allison. Next time you want to use your super powers to throw me, let’s try to avoid the trees.”

He could practically feel Allison blush and she nodded her head quickly, looking chagrined. “Sorry, Stiles. You countered the last throw hold so I thought, well. Sorry. Are…you okay?”

“No,” Stiles said, cracking an eye open and smirking at the woman who stood above him in her arm bracers and baby blue coat. She really didn’t look like she was dressed appropriately enough to be flipping Stiles over her shoulder and flinging him into the nearest oak tree while they were grappling. “Didn’t you hear? I’m dying.”

Danny knelt down next to Stiles and held out his hand with an understanding smile. He might not
have gotten thrown five feet by Allison but that didn't exempt him from sparring with her during training. He knew the feel. “Come on,” he said as he helped the other man to his feet. Stiles groaned and straightened slowly, looking over to see that Lydia had broken her meditative trance and was looking at them with a small smirk, obviously amused by the show.

“How's the inner peace going over there?” Stiles called, wanting to ruffle her feathers for being so smug.

Lydia huffed and closed her eyes, smoothing out her skirt a bit and brushing some leaves that had stuck to her leggings. “Shut it, Stilinski.”

Stiles grinned triumphantly and Allison walked back over to where she'd set down her bow. “Let's take a break from hand-to-hand for today.” She unclipped a small radio from her belt and held down the talk button. “Dad, are you done setting up the targets over there?” she asked. “Over.”

“Done. John and I ready when you guys are. Over.” was her father’s response. He and the Sheriff sometimes trained with them and John had expanded his fire arms knowledge and aptitude considerably since he’d met the Argents. They had a large section of the preserve sectioned off for target practice and every once and a while they would change up the targets to keep them sharp. All Pack humans were taught how to aim well.

“Okay, thanks,” Allison said. “I'll call Derek and have him send the others down. Over and out.” Allison turned to the other three. “I'm going to head over there now. You want to take the car with me or walk there?”

“We'll walk,” said Stiles leaning to the side and stretching his back a bit. “I need to get the feeling back below my knees.”

Allison's lips pulled into a little smile. “Sure thing. Don't blow anything up while I'm gone.”

“That was one time!” Stiles called after her as the Huntress dashed off, bow in hand.

“Two times,” Lydia muttered from her position on the ground.

“Meditation is doing wonders for your concentration,” Danny said glibly.

The redhead let out a loud sigh and her straight back slouched as she opened her eyes. Her expression was clouded by frustration. “I'm trying, Danny. You have no idea what it's like to have a constant whisper in the back of your mind. It's creepy and frustrating and it's a miracle I even manage to fall asleep at night.” Lydia rubbed her eyes and took a breath to try and ease her irritation. She was smart. She knew she was smart. She knew that things came easy to her and she knew that if she put her mind to it she could do anything. But meditation as about clearing the mind; finding silence in nothingness. Lydia struggled with it. She did not like it when she struggled with things.

The two men looked at each other and then walked over to the woman, sitting down on either side of her, legs crossed. “It's not getting worse is it?” Danny asked, concern edging into his tone. When Lydia complained about voices it meant bad things were coming.

Lydia rubbed her temple and made a face. “No more than usual, I think. I've been able to Scream on command the last few times I've tried it so I think I'm getting a little more control. It's kind of nice to be able to do it without meaning someone is going to die.”

“Still gives me a migraine, though,” Danny muttered. Lydia shot him a simpering look.

“I've been thinking about that,” Stiles cut in. “Are you guys opposed to getting tattoos?”
Lydia blinked. “…I’ll need a little more information than that if you’re talking about putting a needle to this skin, Stiles.”

Stiles flapped his hand. “Okay, you know how I have all these tattoos to help me with magic?” His friends nodded. “Well, I can do the same for you guys. I was thinking of the Berkano rune. Modified you know, for silence and protection. Lydia, you wouldn’t need it because your scream doesn’t really effect you, but I could give it to the rest of the Pack.”

Danny looked thoughtful. “I don’t really mind,” he said. "Berkano is the one that looks like a "B" right? Where would we put it?"

Stiles touched behind his ear. “Behind both ears. I can figure out a way to spell the ink so that it protects your hearing from a Banshee call.”

Lydia considered it for a moment and then nodded slowly. “I think it’s a good idea,” she said evenly. She always felt guilty knowing her Scream left the Pack half concussed when she used it. She knew it could be an effective weapon but if it put her allies out of commission as well as her enemies it wasn’t much good.

“As long as we’re considering it, would we be able to get tattoos like yours?” Danny asked Stiles. “You’re able to pull up wards with them and it would be nice to not have to carry around mountain ash all the time.” The humans alway carried around a vial. The Sheriff's was stored in a pouch on his belt by his holster and Melissa had hers on the lanyard with her hospital name tag.

Stiles looked down at his hands, tracing the pale brown lines etched into his skin. He could feel them tingle all over when he concentrated his thoughts on them. “Most of these are to help me channel magic I already have. Compartmentalize it. I still use mountain ash because using a medium is easier than making something one out of nothing.” He held up his hand to show to the others and one of the symbols glowed faintly and then faded away. “I get these tattoos with single thoughts in mind for each one of them so that when I need to concentrate on something I can think of the tattoo and it helps me focus.”

“That wouldn’t work for us?” Danny asked.

The Emissary scratched the back of his neck a bit and thought for a moment. “You guys could all defiantly get the protection runes and symbols but if you and Lydia wanted something that could help you work magic it might be safer if I just made charms you could carry.”

Stiles could practically see the curiosity light up Danny’s eyes. “Safer how?” he asked.

It was Lydia who answered as she stared at Stiles, her expression unreadable. “It’s because the tattoos aren’t intrinsically magic in themselves right?” Stiles dipped his head in acknowledgment and Lydia turned her gaze to Danny. “Without the thought and belief behind it, the Spark, Stiles tattoos would just be ink on his skin.” She glanced back at Stiles. “The magic does not come from the tattoo, it comes from the individual. So that means that these tattoos would take something from us if we were to do it the same way as you, since we might not have the ability to put the same power of will behind them.”

Stiles nodded, his expression a bit grave now. “Having these tattoos works for me because I have so much magic already that they help more than hurt. You guys have a good amount of Spark in you and could handle a few tattoos without them affecting you, and the Wolves could probably handle a few more than that, but for Allison, Melissa, my dad, and Chris, I don’t think it would be okay to give them much more than a few simple runes.”
“Is that why you sewed a bunch of protection symbols into your dad’s uniform?” Danny asked.

Stiles hummed and nodded. “Most of the time it’s smarter to work with inanimate objects.”

“So, kind of like a Witch with their talismans,” Danny went on and Stiles sighed. He and Lydia had been asking more questions about magic ever since Carla opened her big mouth and told them about technically being in a Coven with Stiles. Not that Stiles wasn’t thrilled that they wanted to learn, but really, he was having trouble convincing Danny that they weren’t secretly running down a dark path that would lead them all to Witchdome.

“Even a novice can spell an object,” Stiles said. “It’s not really Witchcraft. It’s just…magic.”

“I’m having trouble seeing the difference sometimes,” Danny admitted hesitantly. Stiles loved that about the other man. He might not have the book smarts he and Lydia possessed, but he was honest about things he didn’t understand and did his best to fill the gaps in his knowledge.

“Think of us as red and Witches as blue,” Stiles explained. “Just because we dabble in a little blue does not make us blue ourselves. We’re still red. Well, maybe a little purple. But still mostly red.”

“Did you borrow that idea from some kind of after school special about sex?” Danny asked with a raised eyebrow though he couldn’t help grinning.


“Insert gay joke here,” the other man laughed.

“If you two are done, can we focus on how we’re going to tattoo a bunch of Werewolves?” Lydia interrupted. “From what Scott told me about his, it’s not exactly a pleasant experience and ears are not the nicest place to have your flesh repeatedly burned.”

Stiles waved his hand nonchalantly at the Banshee. “I told you, I’ll work some kind of spell into the ink. It will be more or less like getting a normal tattoo.”

“We,” Lydia said.

Stiles blinked. “What?”

“We are going to work some kind of spell into the ink,” Lydia corrected. “As part of a Coven it’s important that Danny and I know what you’re doing when working with magic. You have more experience than us and it’s your duty as the leader to teach us.”

“I love it when you call me the leader,” Stiles grinned. “Maybe one day I can work my way up to Master. Or Supreme Overlord of Sparky Wisdom.”

Danny gave Stile’s head a small shove. “Don’t push it, Stiles.”

“Talk to the others about it and we’ll meet up to hash out the details,” Lydia continued, ignoring the banter. “The sooner the better if these Vampires are getting closer. We can give them to Jackson and Boyd when they come back home next.”

“Maybe check if Cora and Laura want them too,” Danny added. They lived in another part of the country but a little extra precaution was nice to offer. Lydia gave an agreeing nod.

Stiles conceded with a smile. “Okay. I’ll talk to Derek and then call up some of the people who helped with my tattoos. One is a self-proclaimed Sorcerer who runs a tattoo parlor. I think he’s more
of a Wiccan though. Wiccai? What's the term for male Wiccan?”

“Just Wiccan, Stiles,” Lydia drawled.

“We really need Sparknotes on all these terms,” Danny said after a moment, sighing to himself.

Stiles laughed suddenly and loudly, startling even the birds in the trees. “Sorry,” he chuckled when the other two stared at him in surprise. “Spark notes.”

Lydia rolled her eyes but couldn’t help the little smile she gave. “I think Allison threw you into that tree harder than we thought.”

“How’s that meditating coming along?” Stiles shot back.

“Bite me, Stiles.”

Stiles snapped his teeth together playfully and Danny laughed.

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Stiles was still grumbling about the tree incident when he stumbled into bed that night. Training had gotten rowdy when Scott and Isaac decided to play keep away with some of Chris’s flash bang grenades. It was absolutely idiotic and the Sheriff, Chris, and Allison had practically grounded the grown men on the spot. Thankfully the grenades they’d grabbed were inactive but Erica, who had been privy to one too many of them in her lifetime, had tackled Scott to the ground as soon as she heard the telltale hum of the weapons activation. When Erica had finally been pulled off the other two wolves they were all sat down and made to listen to the Sheriff’s very informative speech about proper weapons safety and how one should never play hot potato with a grenade, live or not.

Stiles made a crack about maybe having them play keep-away with one of Lydia’s Molotovs instead and he’d looked so serious about the suggestion that his dad made him and Scott—who had laughed, unfortunately- take a lap around the trail they’d marked up through the Preserve. It was 8 miles long start to finish and that didn’t include exertion from the Argents getting practice rounds off at their feet for the first half a mile, or the little booby traps that had been dug into the path. Scott fell into three of them and took Stiles with him in the last.

Derek had already hunkered down for the night when Stiles got back, sitting in bed reading a book. He and the others decided to head home after John sent his son and son-by-proxy out for their punishment run. The wolves could hear the two young men bitching about it the whole time.

“I heard you were friendly with some trees today,” Derek said when his vision of the book he was reading jumped as Stiles flopped onto the bed smelling of sweat and exhaustion.

“Danny?” Stiles groaned.

Derek nodded setting the book down on the table next to the bed. “Yeah. Lydia said it was one of the more entertaining things she’d seen all week,” he said with a smile.

“Traitor…” Stiles muttered.

“So, a tree?” Derek reminded him.

“Intimate,” the young man huffed and muttered into the blankets. “I was intimate with that tree. I
made love to that tree, Derek. I’m leaving you for that tree-eee oh that feels good.”

Derek let out a low rumbling chuckle as his thumbs pressed into the tense muscles of his Mates back. “For a tree, huh?”

Stiles face was pressed into the bed and his words muffled “Nnnrrrgh mmnhff.”

“Is that so,” Derek deadpanned, nodded like he understood.

Stiles turned his head a bit and stared up at Derek, a playful glint in his eye. His hair tufted out from where the pillow had mussed it and the grin on his lips sent a little shiver through the wolf. “What’s that look for?” Derek asked, voice laced with a shameless growl, hands stilling from the light pressure he’d been giving to Stiles tense muscles.

“Like you don’t know.” Stiles wiggled his body on the bed so that he was on laying his back with Derek leaning over him. Derek let his hand settle on the man’s narrow waist, rubbing at his pale skin through the thin material of his t-shirt. He leaned over and buried his face in his Mates chest breathing in all the dirt, sweat and adrenaline that lingered.

A lazy smile played across Stiles features. “I haven’t showered yet you know.” The Alpha nuzzled his nose against his sternum, biting the fabric of his shirt teasingly to show how little he cared. The smell of sunlight and Pack were better than any soap.

“Your such an animal.” Stiles laughed, the hands on his skin overriding his need for sleep. Hell, most of the time just being in the same bed as Derek overrode his need for sleep. Sleep was unimportant and could be had any time. Sex was important and could not be had any time. Sex with Derek was super important and sleep better move the fuck over because-

“You’re talking out loud again.” Derek had Stiles shirt off in a matter of seconds, flung onto the floor along with his jeans soon after. Stiles’ long fingers carded through the other mans dark hair as Derek traced the faint brown lines etched into the pale tight skin on his sides and chest. His tongue and lips immediately followed the path of his fingers.

Emotions going one way and thoughts another, Stiles said abruptly, “Oh, right. Gotta’ talk to you….about um….tattoos.” His voice was slightly breathless.

Derek raised his head a bit, seeing his flushed Mate trying to focus on him with glazed amber eyes. “Now?” he asked, his fingertips trailing along the pale lines of the younger man’s navel to the edge of his pants, making Stiles shift and moan, arching into the touch. Derek’s fingertips came to rest on a darker swirling set of lines just below his belly button, half hidden by the band of his boxers. It was the twin of the swirling spirals Derek had between his shoulder blades. This tattoo had been the first Stiles had gotten after graduation. Deaton had presented the idea as a way to expand his potential as a Spark and Stiles took to it like wildfire. Though, before New York he’d only had three or four tattoos, not nearly the mapping of ink he bore on his skin now.

“Maybe?” Stiles sounded unsure and if Derek’s hands were trying to convince him to shut up, they were doing a marvelous job. “It’s about….it’s for protection…. something about um- Jesus Derek!” the wolf had started kissing line up his stomach, teeth catching on his skin. “Not fair. Doing this when I just ran….a million miles.”

8 was hardly a million but Derek didn’t say that out loud. Stiles hated running. “Mhm,” Derek replied simply, mouth busy forming a dark red mark just below his sternum while his hands pressed the man’s hips into the matrices to keep them from moving. The Alpha was hardly listening now, too far gone on his Mates scent to be of much use conversationally. Derek let out a low growl right from
the center of his chest— the one that Stiles called his Wolf Purr. Derek would never admit out loud that his Mate was totally right, especially because whenever he made the sound he’d be hit with the scent of Stiles excitement. Damnit if that didn't make him purr, wolf or not.

Stiles pressed the back of his head into his pillow and he let out a slow breath, a shudder running down his spine as his ears filled with the sound of the low animal rumble coming from the man on top of him, pinning him down and biting at his skin. “Screw it,” he breathed out as his hand came up to card through Derek’s hair. “I’m just gonna’ do it. I’m tattooing your puppies for reasons.” He gasped as sharp teeth nicked the thin skin over his ribs. “Deal with it.”

A strong tug at his hair made Derek pause for a moment, eyes flashing red as he smirked. “I trust you,” he said simply.

Stiles let out a slow groan that shot right through the wolf causing half a shift, claws and fangs peaking out. Stiles lips parted into a wanton grin. “Oh, god, the eyes. You can’t just flash those things around –I cant even. Please tell me you’re going to mess me up now-” Stiles was cut off when the Alpha surged forward and sealed their lips together.

Chapter End Notes

Coming up next! The fun 'morning after' conversation with the Pack. Strictly for my own amusement. And then some other things happen.

Seriously, my writing has bad transitions. I write scenes. T.T I'm sorry if that's hard to follow.
Sarcasm does not transfer through texting

Chapter Summary

The small admission made Stiles eyes widen and Isaac frowned, a small whine in the back of his throat that Stiles barely heard. He looked at the Beta who’s brows were furrowed with unease. “Oh my…” Stiles let out a harsh breath. Just one glance from Isaac, one hesitant admission from Lydia, one frantic call from Danny. He knew what this was about. He knew why they were freaked. It was stupid and blown out of proportion but he knew now. They were afraid that if he thought he wasn’t good enough again, that he wasn’t pulling his weight, that he was falling behind in any way, that he would leave again. God….his Pack was such a bunch of idiots.

Chapter Notes

There you go my lovely readers. ^^ Chapter 4. Italics were being weird. I'll fix it later.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Stiles was awoken by Lydia’s horrendously intrusive text at 4 a.m. asking about the regenerative properties of certain plants when boiled down to a liquid ink-like substance. Blurry eyed, Stiles glared at the letters on his phone, sleep addled brain trying to comprehend that the woman had actually woken him up from a dead sleep after a grueling day of training and a fevered bout of sex with an Alpha Werewolf. Well, in her defense Lydia didn’t know about the awesome sex, but still. 4 in the morning!

A cool breeze filtered in through a crack in the open window lightly rustling a small stack of papers on Derek’s shelf. The house was quiet but Stiles knew that Isaac was passed out in his room down the hall, snoring away and swaddled up in his blankets like a mummy. He rubbed his face into his pillow with a small groan, phone loose in his fingers. Plants. The woman wanted to know about plants. Stiles could only dream of what it was like to have a normal 9 to 5 job.

A warm hand slid along the dip of his spine, fingertips catching on the shallow scratches littering his hips. “Wa’srwong?” Came a muffled slur from Derek. There was one time a phone call or text in the middle of the night would have sent any of them into a panic but Derek had learned to listen for the queues. A spike in the pulse, the smell of fear, a stuttered breath. Stiles just smelled tired and irritated so Derek knew it wasn't a crisis.

A smile pulled at the corner of his mouth and Stiles shifted, placing a kiss on the others mans shoulder, the closest part of him since his face was buried in the pillows. “Lydia’s in research mode.” Stiles voice was gravely with sleep (and the decent amount of screaming Derek had coaxed out of him earlier) and the younger man felt Derek shift on the bed in response to the sound.

“Vampires?” Derek mumbled, trying to wake himself up more. His mind naturally went to the most current threat.

Not wanting to rouse the sleeping beast Stiles moved again and placed his teeth on the man’s bare
shoulder out of sleepy habit, sinking his blunt human teeth in enough to tickle. He felt his magic buzz through his veins. A shiver ran through the wolf and the stirrings of wakefulness seemed to abate a bit as his body relaxed in comfort. Turns out both Stiles and Derek had a biting kink. “No, just random. Go back to sleep, babe.” His phone beeped again. A simple “?” from Lydia.

Derek grumbled at him not to stay up too late but Stiles was already staring down at his phone again, frowning and blinking sleep from his eyes. Right. The plant. For the tattoos. Stiles didn’t know the answer to Lydia’s question and that irked him. Lydia took full advantage of his analytical mind sometimes and it had cost him more than a few nights of sleep in the past. Still, it was better than dealing with a pissy Lydia in the morning. He slipped out of a very sated Derek’s embrace and trekked downstairs to the library, hoping whatever he could find would satisfy the Banshee long enough that it could wait till a normal freaking time of day to pursue again.

The library was organized well thanks to Peter so it took him less than an hour to find the answer as well as write out a few pros and cons paragraphs on three alternative plant combinations. Because never let it be said Stiles didn’t go the extra mile. He was just finishing uploading a few attachments to his message when Lydia’s text came through again.

March 6th 5:30 AM. From Lydia:
Stiles, you didn’t fall asleep in the library did you? Not very responsible for someone who’s supposed to be leading his coven members down the path of ultimate enlightenment.

Stiles scoffed. Ultimate enlightenment. He’d be happy with all of them just learning how to not get killed.

He cc’d Danny on the responding text because if he had to be awake for this coven bonding moment, Danny did too. Once the information was sent he curled up in the oversized chair he’d claimed as bed number 2. Number 1 being Derek’s bed. At one point while waiting for a response from either of his friends Stiles dozed off, lulled by the warmth of the cozy book filled room.

His magic sparked off inside him when he woke again, jolted out of sleep by his book falling from his hands and hitting the floor loudly. Tattoos on his bare arms slowly faded from their sudden glow back to the pale brown lines. "Damnit," He muttered, pushing the heals of his hands into his eyes. He felt even more tired now. Groaning and rubbing his hands over his face he glanced at his phone, seeing he’d been in the library for a solid two hours, and noticed he had no new notifications. Thank god. He could go back to his Were-heater now.

Stiles rolled off the chair and was half way up the stairs again when his phone beeped. Lydia wanted to know if he knew who was doing their tattoos. Stiles stood on the stairs for a moment, staring at his phone like it had personally offended him.

Finally he texted back;

March 6th 7:14 AM. To Lydia
Cc Danny:
I only brought this up like 10 hours ago. Can't it wait till morning.

The response was immediate and Stiles knew Lydia was wide away at her desk, computer open in front of her. Her response however almost made him drop his phone.

March 6th 7:14 AM. From Lydia
Cc Danny:
This is about the safety of the Pack Mr. Stilinski. The sooner we can make all the preparations the sooner we can be sure I wont cause anyones ears to bleed next time someone dies.
Stiles was gobsmacked. He felt his jaw drop and some of his tiredness vanished, replaced by raw indignation. The insinuation at such an early hour was like a cold washcloth slap to the face. She seriously pulled the think-about-the-Pack-first card? Oh no. No one got to pull that card. Not on Stiles.

March 6th 7:15 AM. To Lydia Cc Danny: Good night Lydia. I’m going back to bed. I can hear Derek growling upstairs.

Each word was a sharp stab at the keys. As soon as he’d sent the text his phone rang. The noise was intrusive in the silence of large house and he stubbed his toe on the next step. Danny’s name flashed on the screen and he wondered whether if he should just chuck the damn thing against the wall. Sometimes Stiles really hated his phone. He answered before the ringing could wake up either of the sleeping wolves. “Danny, I’m really tired okaa-“

“You know Lydia didn’t mean it like that right?” was the other man’s quick hello. Oh, right, he’d been CC’d. “She wasn’t trying to guilt trip you.”

Stiles rubbed the bridge of his nose and leaned against the wall on the stairs. He’d been so tired, so caught off guard by Lydia’s bluntness that he took a moment to process Danny’s words and took a calming breath. “Danny, seriously. I want to sleep.”

“However you’re interpreting her text, it’s wrong.” Danny went on just as quickly, undeterred by the growl in Stiles voice. In fact Danny sounded very much concerned.

“Oh my god Danny, really it’s-“ His phone beeped and Stiles growled in irritation, looking at the screen. Lydia was trying to call him now. “What the fuck, you guys don’t seem to get that it is now 7 in the morning and I was thrown into a tree yesterday.”

“Are you okay?” Stiles bit back a yelp of shock and flinched a bit as he looked up. Standing at the top of the stairs was Isaac. His curls were frizzy and stuck up on the left side. There were pillow marks on his cheek but his eyes were alight with concern. That level of attentiveness was out of place so early and Stiles groaned. Any anger he might have felt from Lydia’s words had pretty much dried up by now. He was just tired after all. And grumpy. He knew Lydia was teasing him and he attributed his sensitivity to just….lack of sleep. Seriously, what paranoia bed bug had bitten their asses?

The Emissary let out a tired sigh and rubbed his eyes which might have been shifting hues with his emotions. He wanted a smoke. “Isaac, go back to bed man. Danny, you too.”

“Isaac,” Danny said knowing the wolf could hear him. “Does Stiles smell off?”

"Danny!" Stiles griped. He almost forgot to keep his voice down.

Isaac looked down at his friend with growing worry at the other man's question. “Stiles, what’s he…?” He sniffed the air. “You do smell a little bit pissed off.”

Stiles let the back of his head hit the wall in defeat. “Uuuhg, I’m hanging up,” he hissed. "Lydia’s on the other line.” He ended the call with Danny and answered Lydia in quick succession “Lyds, don’t freak out about the-“

“I wasn’t thinking when I sent that message,” came the redhead’s soft voice. Something in her tone made Stiles stop and actually pay attention. Shame wasn’t something he was used to hearing from Lydia Martin.

As a result his own tone softened a bit. “Lydia, it's okay."
He heard a quick intake of breath on the end of the line. “I just…I don’t want you to think that I…any of us think like that Stiles. We know you’d drop anything for us.”

Isaac shifted on his feet at the top of the stairs, listening in and Stiles frowned. “What? God, Lydia, I know you were teasing.” It was way to early in the morning for this kind of conversation.

“What did she say?” Isaac asked, curious now as he started to make his way down the stairs.

“Is that Isaac?” Lydia asked, her voice sounding all too small for Stiles taste. She sounded anxious. Guilty almost.

“Okay,” Stiles said firmly, holding up a hand to Isaac. “Just…everyone calm down.” He eyed Isaac from below, making him stop his decent. “Lydia, It's cool, I'm not even mad. Isaac, go back to bed, seriously. I'm going to be super pissed if we wake up Derek. Lydia, you and Danny were coming over in a few hours for breakfast anyway so we can all talk then.”

Lydia seemed to ignore his words. “I don’t want you to think that I think you’re not doing your best.”

The small admission made Stiles eyes widen and Isaac frowned, a small whine in the back of his throat that Stiles barely heard. He looked at the Beta who’s brows were furrowed with unease. “Oh my…” Stiles let out a harsh breath. One glance from Isaac, one hesitant admission from Lydia, one frantic call from Danny. He knew what this was about. He knew why they were freaked. It was stupid and blown out of proportion but he knew now. They were afraid that if he thought he wasn’t good enough again, that he wasn’t pulling his weight, that he was falling behind in any way, that he would leave again. God….his Pack was such a bunch of idiots.

“I love you guys, you know that?” Stiles said gently. “Lyd’s go to sleep. I’ll see you in the morning and we can make fun of each others eye bags and plan what to do for your birthday next week.”

There was a thin laugh on the other side of the line and Stiles pretended he couldn’t hear the small sniffle. “Night princess,” Stiles smiled before ending the call.

“…Stiles?” The Emissary looked up at the Beta and found pair of pooled of emotions starring back at him expectantly, silently pleading for some sort of explanation.

Stiles felt guilty. Isaac shouldn’t have had to have woken up to this. Half a conversation, two of his pack mates sounding frantic on one end of a phone call, asking if Stiles smelled alright…. He was just glad Derek hadn’t been roused by the noise –though the noise dampening wards probably had something to do with it. Stiles started up the stairs, meeting the other man on the last one. One the step below, Stiles had to look up at Isaac. “Don’t give me that look buddy. Listen to my heartbeat. You know I’m fine.”

Isaac swallowed but listened anyway, hearing a steady even beat. “So…nothing to worry about, right?” He asked. He had close to the same look in his eye that he used to have, before he was turned. Lost. Holding back memories and shadows. Stiles had his arms wrapped around the taller mans waist before Isaac had finished the sentence. He felt the man's body relax, his wired muscles loosening as he brought his arms up around Stiles shoulders and hugged him back, nuzzling the top of the Stiles head.

The embrace was a little desperate and clingy and it just served to make Stiles hug the other harder, wanting to banish any dark feelings of abandonment that had resurfaced. “Not a thing.” He felt Isaac huff out a relieved breath into his hair. They pulled back after a moment and Stiles pushed Isaac towards his room again, hand on the center of his back. “Now please, go back to bed. We’ve got a
Pack meeting in the morning, I’m making breakfast, and Derek’s got to be at the station by 10.”

Isaac glanced over his shoulder at Stiles, a tiny smirk on his lips. “...Pancakes?”

“Duh,” the other grinned. He gave him a final, stronger shove down the long hallway. “Now go to bed or I’ll get my chloroform.”

Isaac snorted at Stiles kidding. “Right.” Stiles went silent, looking off to the side innocently and Isaac’s eyes widened. “Oh my god, I’m going to bed,” Isaac announced, closing the distance to his room with a few slightly more hurried steps.

Chapter End Notes

Next chapter will be a bit of a time skip to Lydia’s bday. Finally more mention of fanged people, Carla, and Charlottes Nest. Because I missed the vampires.
Party for a Banshee

Chapter Summary

“Werewolves, Derek! I can’t lie to them!” Stiles called back

“Yes you can!”

Yes, he totally could.

Chapter Notes

*Sigh* okay, so there is a song in here and its a little (a lot) random but I was listening to it while I was writing and I just had to do it. No choice. And come on. Stiles would totally make them a mix CD.

A little rushed, but hey, I wanted to fit an entire week into one chapter and I did it. Go me!

As promised, there were Vampire mentions and next chapter will be a nice lil' confrontation. ^^

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Depending on what direction someone came from they could enter the Pack house one of two ways (Proper ways. Windows are not proper ways Derek, we talked about this.) Those who came from the woods where cars couldn’t navigate, where only those of a more animal or supernatural nature ventured, used the back door that was attached to the kitchen. If they came by car as most humans opted to considering the ridiculously long driveway and even more ridiculously isolated location, they used the front door that entered into the living room. So, it was using the back door that Scott walked into the Pack house the next morning on Lydia and Erica’s heals. “Are we really all going to get matching tattoos? Because as much as the bonding experience is nice and all, the last one I got really freaking hurt.” He felt a minute shudder run over him as he stepped over Stiles ward carved into the threshold.

Lydia pulled her hair up into a messy bun, letting out a breath and fanning her hand at the back of her neck to cool the sweat that had gathered. She’d met Scott and Erica half way through her morning jog. The two wolves had elected to run to the house that morning, burning off extra energy before they had to be at work and she, thanks to Allison’s insistent urging over the last 4 months, had fallen into a pattern of trying to run at least 3 miles a day to keep up her stamina. She’d let herself into the Pack house quite early that morning, tip towing past her Alphas room and grabbed her running gear from her own just down the hall. She slipped back out without a word and started off on the well-worn path out the back door.

Erica and Scott had jogged up along side her just as the house came back into view through the trees and Lydia casually told them about the tattoo idea, slightly out of breath while her two friends kept up the pulse of someone on a leisurely stroll.
“Well, then you’ll be prepared for the next one,” Lydia clipped to the True Alpha. She put off telling Scott about the special ink they were going to make for it because one, he wasn’t even out of breath, the jerk, and two, she never claimed to be a nice person. Panicked Scott was funny. “Stiles thinks it will keep you guys from being stunned when I Scream.” Erica dumped her jacket on the back of her chair and they all sat around the table where Isaac and Allison were already seated, pot of coffee brewing on the counter.

Scott grimaced and touched his ears, recalling the last incident that had him partially deaf for 5 hours. “Yeah, that sounds like a good idea.”

Allison, who had been on the phone with Lydia the night before discussing the very same topic (the Banshee gotten a lot done in a matter of a few hours), said, “You’ve been getting better at controlling it.”

The redhead gave a small sigh, fixing small smudges in her eye makeup with her pinky. She didn’t bother to look smug. She’d been working hard to get a handle on her ‘gifts.’ “As I am well aware. I still think chemical warfare has a little more class than screaming literal bloody murder at someone, but as my mother always said; ‘use what you’ve got.’”

Scott leaned back in his chair. “Mine always said; ‘Scott, don’t break my house.’” Erica shoved Scott’s head with a snort.

Isaac yawned and laid his head on the table looking like he could use another few hours of sleep and about three cups of coffee. “Are these tattoos gonna’ hurt like crazy bad for us?” He asked sluggishly. Lydia pressed her lips together as Scott fixed her with a wide-eyed puppy stare from across the table. She glanced back at Isaac and then looked away. What she’d told Stiles over the phone last night was really just between them. Well, and Danny. She knew Isaac wouldn’t bring it up.

“We’re going to make a special kind of ink,” Lydia assured the curly haired beta as well as Scott who looked a little queasy.

“When are we getting them done?” Allison asked, reaching out to absentmindedly pat Isaac’s head when he closed his eyes threatening to nod off where he sat.

“After the ink is finished,” Lydia replied, watching the young man sniff and push his head off the table in an attempt to be alert. “And as soon as Stiles can find someone to do them. Hopefully we can get everything sorted while Boyd and Jackson are in town next week.” The two of them would be right on time for Lydia’s birthday and Lydia was determined to inflict her self imposed deadline on Stiles and Danny.

Erica made a small noise of disparagement and she stood up to get some mugs from the cupboard. “Is this tattoo artist going to be another of Stiles ‘city friends’?" she asked a little skeptically as she made air quotes. “I mean, don’t get me wrong; Charlotte’s suave, Carla’s awesome, not so fond of that Centaur duo but whatever, but I’d like my first tramp stamp to not look like chicken scratch.” She walked back over to the table with mugs hanging off her fingers.

They all shifted at the promise of coffee and didn’t notice the steady footsteps on the stairs. A sleepy yawn accompanied them soon after. “Runes pretty much are chicken scratch.” Derek; hair mussed, pre-morning shave, shirtless with baggy sweatpants, walked into the kitchen rubbing at his eyes and sniffing for the coffee. Allison handed him the first cup when he sat down at the table. “And I doubt Stiles wants to tattoo protective runes anywhere near your ass.” Erica tskaed at her Alpha playfully through her teeth.
“So Stiles told you about it already then?” Scott asked with a raised eyebrow, mixing some sugar into his cup.

“Last night,” Derek replied, taking a sip of the dark hot liquid. He heard a slight increase in the Banshee’s heartbeat and Isaac shifted in his chair but Derek didn’t say anything more; not even hinting if he’d woken up at all the night before. He just hummed at the taste of the coffee. God bless Lydia for picking the best brews.

Lydia recovered from her discomposure quickly and looked over the Alphas shoulder at Stiles who had decided there was no point staying in bed when he knew he had hungry wolves to feed. It was a miracle he didn’t fall down the stairs considering he did it all with his eyes closed, half bumping against the railing and yawning. He was wearing a loose shirt of Derek’s that hitched up as he scratched his tattoo-etched stomach and a pair of equally loose pajama pants. Scott, Erica, and Isaac wrinkled their noses, smelling the traces of whatever actions had caused the little mouth shaped bruises all over Stiles neck and collarbone. Oh, look at that, teeth marks as well.

“Morning sunshine,” Erica purred to Stiles as he walked into the kitchen, earning her a low grunt from their Emissary.

“Hungry last night, Derek?” the redhead smirked, catching sight of the particularly large hicky on the back of her friend’s neck. “I’m surprised you guys had time to talk at all.”

Derek hid his smug smile in his mug but clicked his teeth at her. “We’re multi-taskers. Anyone else coming for breakfast?”

Lydia hummed lightly, watching as Erica poured way too much cream into her coffee. “Danny will be here shortly.”

Stiles grumbled as he opened the fridge to empty it of most of its contents, calculating how much he’d need to make. Scott ate like a werewolf even before he was one. “Is he still on that gluten free kick?” He groused. It was the one diet he never tired to get his dad to attempt.

“Not since you made cookies two weeks ago,” Scott said.

Stiles huffed through his nose. “Chocolate cookies cure gluten haters.”

Allison raised her mug in a toast. “Long live flavor.”

While a sleepy Stiles busied himself with breakfast the discussion about the tattoos continued. Derek eventually had to push a cup of coffee into his Mates hands so he could function enough to avoided burning himself on the stove and answer the Packs questions at the same time. Danny arrived at the house just as the food was done and the three resident magic users discussed possibilities for the ink. They’d need to get things from Deaton and Isaac offered to take a list over so that one of them could pick it up tonight or tomorrow. Around 9am Melissa popped in to collect Scott for work and steal a bowl of fruit that Stiles had knowingly set out for her. Scott told her about the tattoos while he stuffed as much of the scrambled eggs into his face as he could before they had to go and her reaction was a raised eyebrow and narrowed eyes (mostly at her sons manners). “Well… I supposed middle aged single moms could get tattoos too.”

Awake enough at this point thanks to the coffee he’d inhaled, Stiles gasped and gave his mom-by-proxy an affronted stare. “Melissa, no,” he stated. “You don’t have a middle age. You are eternal.”

To that she just let out a loud laugh and shook her head. “Just promise you’ll record it when you tell your dad he has to get one.” Stiles groaned. Yeah, that was a conversation he was looking forward
to. Hey dad, upstanding citizen and pillar of the community, you have to get a tattoo impossible to cover up with police issue clothing, visible to small impressionable children from the right angle.

Twenty minutes later Derek was the second to leave for work and when he went upstairs to change Stiles shouted up to him that his spare shirt was hanging on the closet door and his handcuffs were still locked to the headboard. Erica’s coffee went up her nose and Allison let out a peel of laughter as a light thump of someone tripping came from above them.

Danny had been scrubbing at some dishes at the sink and paused at the handcuff comment. “I’m all for a healthy sex life,” he said, “but your dad would kill Derek if he knew he was using police issued equipment as a kink with his son,”

Stiles, on his second glass of orange juice, set the glass down and licked his lips, smirking at the taller man. “Who said he was using them?”

“Stiles!” came an aggravated shout from upstairs and the man smirked.

“Werewolves, Derek! I can’t lie to them!” Stiles called back

“Yes you can!”

Yes, he totally could. “Don’t set a bad example in front of the kids, Derek.” Danny flicked him with soapy water and Lydia rolled her eyes. “Honesty is the best policy!”

“No getting shot by your father is the best policy!”

Isaac raised an eyebrow to Stiles and shrugged as if saying, ‘Well, if you’re going to go with one of the lesser evils…’

“….Touché,” Stiles called up.

Stiles ended up at the Sheriff’s station later that day to bring the boys lunch and he thought it would be funny to show his dad a picture of the tattoo that they would be getting. He’d drawn up a massive, horrific looking cartoon earplug and said that the literal imagery was important with magical tattoos because the rest of the Pack couldn’t read runes and therefore wouldn’t be able to benefit from it like he did. The Sheriff was caught between wanting to cram the drawing down his sons throat and throwing him out of the station or agreeing to get it because he didn’t want to have his brain liquefied every time Lydia screamed. The video that Ethan took from outside the office with his phone would be forever preserved in the movie shelves of the Pack house. Melissa was pleased.

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One week later

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Birthdays in the Pack were special. They didn’t look like huge events to an outsider but every one of them acknowledged that after all the shit they’d been through, all the shit they’d survived in this town, it was nothing short of a god damned miracle that they made it another full year. Everyone took the day off from work if they could and those who couldn’t made a point to have at least two hours free during that day where they could come out for breakfast, lunch, or dinner. They were going to forget about the Vampires closing in on their town, forget about the things that go bump in
the night, forget about their responsibilities. If only for a few hours they were going to relax and have fun.

Lydia already had it all planned out. While there was no big party the entire county was invited to as would have been common a few years back she fully expected to spend the entire day with her friends, especially since this was the first birthday in a year that the entire Pack was in the same state for. As a pleasant surprise to all of them Jackson had come back early and Boyd was in town for a month working as a sub EMT at the hospital till his first semester in at Montana State started.

Peter was there for breakfast along with Chris, Melissa, and John who demanded that bacon be served given the happy occasion. Lydia was the only one with the power to veto on her birthday and no matter how big Stiles eyes got, bacon was served. After a day spent shopping, lunch at an expensive Italian restaurant where Ethan joined them on his lunch break, and a Skype call with Kira in Japan, the Pack found themselves winding down at the Onyx. The ‘adults’ of the group accompanied them again for dinner, Peter and Derek’s treat this time, but opted out of drinking that night for the sake of being able to wake up on time the next morning.

Carla greeted them with a smile as they walked in. “Hey kids! Grab a stool.”

It was a Monday night, dead to most customers so Carla had offered to open earlier than normal to give the group a few hours privacy before the night rush came in. Music was thrumming over the speakers, a few candles were lit on the tables, and lights dim overhead. The Pack took their seats at the bar while Stiles hopped over the counter like he’d done it a thousand times before. Judging by the way Carla didn’t even bat an eye, he probably had. “So, how many stores did you clear out Miss. Martin?” Carla asked as she went at a block of ice with a sharp pick. The Sylphs eyes shimmered a bit as she wiped the slivers and chunks into the cooler without leaving a spot or trail of water in sight.

“None, considering I wasn’t buying,” Lydia replied. The men in the Pack who’d been on bag duty rolled their eyes. Jackson, the most experienced, hadn’t complained as much as the rest of them. After dating the woman he was used to the heavily laden arms and the lightened wallet on Lydia’s birthday shopping spree.

“You have two feet. Why, just, Scott seemed truly lost. “Why so many shoes?” Isaac pat the True Alphas back sympathetically.

Stiles had knelt down behind the bar and was placing a slew of bottles of all shapes and sizes on the counter. “Carla can you grab me those glasses from the top shelf?” he asked as he rummaged for a tray of pre-cut garnishes.

Jackson leaned on one elbow, watching as the bottles filled the counter in front of them with a curious expression. “Gotta’ say I never pegged you for a bartender Stilinski. Is anyone else nervous about him handling alcohol?” When he’d told the rest of the Pack about working at the bar some of them- mainly Isaac, Jackson, Chris and Melissa (really Melissa? Et Tu?)- had given him equal looks of hesitation. It didn’t matter if he told them he’d pulled a stint as a bartender in the city. Nope; Stiles mixing palatable drinks had to be seen to be believed. Scott punched Jackson lightly in the arm and gave his bro an supportive thumbs up. He still wasn’t getting his drinks spiked with wolfsbane but the gesture was nice.

“I guess I always thought you’d go into law enforcement like your dad,” Boyd commented.

Ethan, Derek and Stiles snorted at the same time. “But then I wouldn’t get to do all the illegal stuff,” Stiles said, brandishing a stir stick.

“None of us would ever get any work done if Stiles was at the station 40 hours a week,” Ethan
“Hey!” Stiles said, “I’m totally helpful! I…file things!”

“You mean you snoop into case files,” Derek corrected, watching as his Mate arranged the glasses in front of him with deft fingers, glasses barely making a sound as they touched the wood.

“Yeah, while I file them,” Stiles snaked back. “Now what am I making for everyone?”

“Are his cocktails any good?” Allison asked Erica, the only one of them to have been officially served by Stiles before.

“Do not make a phallic joke,” Stiles cut in before Erica could open her mouth. “And yes Allison, they are amazing.” Erica huffed at him and rolled her eyes as Derek hid a small smile. Stiles winked at him as Carla set a black bottle labeled ‘Aconite’ on the counter and went back to stabbing the ice block. “Okay, Birthday girl first,” Stiles said once everything was set up, resting his hands on the counter as he waited. “What will it be?”

“Martini, dry,” Lydia answered instantly. Stiles was already reaching for the tumbler.

“I whipped up a fresh batch of wolfsbane,” Carla offered, motioning to the bottle she’d set down. “In case any of you want to add a little kick to your drinks.”

“I do!” Scott piped up.

“You’re not 21 yet,” Ethan interjected with a raised eyebrow.

“Ethan,” Scott deadpanned. “Do not be deputy buzz kill.” Derek just shook his head when both men looked at him, deferring his opinion of the matter.

“Scott, you get a regular drink with no wolfsbane,” Stiles intervened. “You still get alcohol but since you can’t get drunk due to wolfy-ness it’s totally legal.”

Derek was about to open his mouth to protest when Erica nudged the Alphas side. “So, how’s business been, Carla,” She asked as the others put in their drink orders with Stiles who mixed them in quick succession. “Stiles mention you’ve been getting some Nest from Texas in causing trouble.”

“Can’t complain,” she replied with a small shrug. “Any damages are covered by the liquor sales. David's Nest is filled with a bunch of upstart nightwalkers who’ve barely grown into their fangs so they scatter pretty fast once we start threatening them.”

“Have you been threatening to drown people again, Carla?” Ethan queried with a sigh as though it had been a serious problem before.

“Better question,” Derek said with a frown. “Are you attempting to drown people again?”

Carla shot them a glare full of snark. “I told you I was going to lay off the water manipulation as self defense Deputies. I mean that we threaten them creatively. The usual; knives, willow bark, silver, iron blades-”

“Hemlock needles,” Lydia added, eyeing her martini with a scrutinizing gaze.

“Holy water and holly mix,” Danny chipped in right after.

“Creative and liberal use of Latin,” Stiles recited, not even pausing to be proud of his ‘apprentices.’ He knew they’d been listening when he ranted.
Carla continued after the magic users accompaniments, chipping away at the remaining ice block. “Various spells and enchantments that may or may not cause shrinkage of certain male body parts.”

“That was all you Carla,” Stiles insisted.

“Yeah, you just had the eye popping one. So much better.”

“Okay, ew guys.” Isaac said, holding up a hand to stop them. “We got it. You’re all scary.” Stiles passed him his drink with a little grin.

Suddenly Erica straightened in her chair and put a hand on Allison’s shoulder, eyes wide. “Listen,” she said, her tone serious. The rest of them tensed for a moment instincts flaring up but a second later the she-wolfs face broke out into a grin. A familiar song trickled out a piano intro over the speakers and slowly every last one of them smiled, tension bleeding away. It was one of those situationally ironic songs and it had all started with Stiles Wolfy Mix tape, sent three months after he’d arrived in New York. Any song that made reference to wolves, howling, animal urges, ridiculous sex or violence made it onto the official Hale Pack soundtrack of Life in Beacon Hills and all of them had a copy.

Derek shook his head knowing he’d have to sit through 3 minutes of karaoke. He just started on his drink.

"Wait, are we seriously doing this?" Jackson asked with a raised eyebrow, looking around at all of them.

Yes. Yes they were.

“If you could only see, the beast you’ve made of me,” Erica’s voice was sultry and amused, higher than the vocalist but on key. “I held it in but now it seems you've set it running free.”

Lydia raised her glass to her bright red lips, green eyes sparkling while her foot tapped on the rung of her stool. “Screaming in the dark, I howl when we're apart.” Isaac tapped a beat out on the counter and hummed out the lyrics with her; head bobbing to the drums. “Drag my teeth across your chest to taste your beating heart.”

Erica started to sway and she leaned forward to where Carla was grinning, body moving to the beat. The two women leaned close over the counter, eyes alight with Beta gold and Carla's stunning ocean blue glow. “My fingers claw your skin, try to tear my way in,” Carla ran a fingertip along Erica’s jaw, seductive and playful. “You are the moon that breaks the night for which I have to howl.” Scott whistled and tossed a dollar bill on the counter in front of them as they finished the verse with a blatantly flirtatious display. Carla snatched the money off the counter and pocketed it. All the wolves broke into the chorus and Stiles laughed, watching them. “Hooooooowl, hoooooowl!” Allison let out a wolf call, glass in the air as she swayed her body on the stool. Carla reached under the counter and turned up the volume, drums and voices echoing off the old wooden walls. Scott joined Isaac tapping the beat on the counter and the two of them grinned at eachother. Even Jackson and Boyd joined in on the chorus. “Hooooooowl, hoooooowl.” It was all horribly off key but oh so perfect.

“Sing with us Derek!” Scott called to the Alpha from a few seats down.

“Not on your life,” was the response.

Ethan was rolling his eyes at them until Danny nudged him and sang with a teasing glint in his eye. “Now there's no holding back, I'm making to attack. My blood is singing with your voice, I want to pour it out.” Danny had a mellow voice, not at all unpleasant to listen to.
Ethan growled playfully and responded in kind to the goading of his on and off again lover. “The saints can't help me now, the ropes have been unbound. I hunt for you with bloody feet across the hallow'd ground.” At which point he stole a heated kiss from the other man, earning them a catcall from Isaac about getting a room.

Scott and Erica actually let out real howls at the chorus this time eyes flashing yellow and red which sent Allison and Danny into peals of laughter, drowning out the next verse until Carla reached out and snagged Stiles by his hand, tugging him forward quickly. “Come on Sparky, do some karaoke with me like old times!” Her enthusiasm was infectious and Stiles tossed his towel over his shoulder, pulling his friend closer and spinning her. They sang together and moved fluidly behind the bar like they’d practiced it and Derek’s heated gaze bore into the both of them. The verse on hunters was surprisingly sung by Allison who received a mischievous and wire smirk from Erica and Boyd and an almost smile from Derek. She was their Hunter now.

Stiles spun the Sylph under his arm her jewelry catching the dim light like diamonds. Derek could only see Stiles though, smiling, moving like he had in the Jungle; like he was finally comfortable in his own skin. The wolf’s eyes roved hungrily over his Mate's body, ears keening at the sound of his voice, timbre matching the song almost perfectly.

“The fabric of your flesh, pure as a wedding dress
Until I wrap myself inside your arms I cannot rest.
The saints can’t help me now, the ropes have been unbound
I hunt for you with bloodied feet across the hallow’d ground.”

The chorus was more calls of encouragement this time, loud and exuberant, all of them moving at the bar as though they were dancing on their feet instead of sitting. Stiles caught Derek’s eye’s with his own and the little smirk that played on his lips sent a shiver right through the man. His wolf growled for him and salivated at the imagery the song painted as his Mate sang.

“A man who's pure of heart and says his prayers by night
May still become a wolf when the autumn moon is bright.”

The loud cry that erupted when Derek’s tenor voice joined in on the last line might have knocked someone off their barstool had anyone else been in the bar. “I knew you listened to the mix CD!” Scott cried. Derek ignored the other man, eyes fixed only on Stiles who now sat perched on the bar in front of him having abandoned his dance with Carla and climbed over the structure, knees fencing the Alpha in. Derek flashed a feral grin that sent a thrill through his Mate and he looped a strong arm around the lean waist, leaning forward and tipping Stiles back. He didn’t so much sing along as speak the words as though he’d written them himself. Florence would have been proud.

“If you could only see the beast you've made of me
I held it in but now it seems you've set it running free
The saints can’t help me now, the ropes have been unbound
I hunt for you with bloody feet across the hallow'd ground”

Eyes flaring with pure hunger, Stiles almost didn’t let the man finish as he cut off the husky voice by sealing his lips with his own. With one last boisterous cheer they fell into laughter and eventually calmed down. Problems forgotten, threats put in the back of their minds, they just had fun being in each other company, happy to have another day. Mission accomplished. Derek –reluctantly- released Stiles so that he could get back behind the bar and he finished with everyone’s drinks. He left Stiles with the taste of whisky on his lips.

Carla tapped along nail on the side of her glass, calling for attention. “Okay, okay, more time for that later. Sparky, I think the Birthday girl needs a toast.”
Stiles cleared his throat and nodded, raising his glass in the air. “Right. Everybody, glasses up. To Lydia, sunshine, platonic love of my life, and the most terrifying woman I know. No offense Allison,” he added. “Happy birthday and congrats on surviving another year!” There was a chorus of ‘here, here’ and ‘wow, way to jinx everyone Stiles,’ as glasses clinked and everyone took a long drink.

Jackson looked down at his gin and tonic which was half gone, clearly surprised. “Wow,” he said. “And I half expected that to taste like motor oil.”

“Stop Jackson, you smother me with your support,” Stiles muttered with a roll of his eyes.

While most of the gifts were picked out by Lydia at the mall the Pack just supplying her with their credit cards, there were some more personal gifts as well. Derek got her a two-year subscription to an underground mathematics and science journal that had great opportunities for publication and, on more personal note, a pair of marbled moonstone earrings that Stiles said she’d been eyeing for a while at the store. Scott, Allison, and Isaac all chipped in on a set of custom throwing knives that could be easily concealed almost anywhere on the body. Danny handed her a flash drive filled with what he only explained as, “5 gigs of stuff that you are not going to want to let the Sheriff know you have.” Honestly though, with the Bestiary mostly digital now, all of them probably had at least 5 gigs of stuff that the Sheriff shouldn’t know about. Lydia thanked all of them with smiles and hugs, assuring them that all gifts would be used in the service of the greater good. Who’s greater good was left undefined.

Once the Pack had a few drinks in them and were moderately buzzed Stiles brought out his birthday present from the pocket of his jeans and set it on the counter in front of Lydia. It was a clear glass jar filed with a charcoal black liquid. When the liquid moved and caught the light it shimmered purple and blue like oil on water. Lydia caught sight of it and her lips twitched into a smile, green eyes practically glittering with anticipation. “You finished it?”

Stiles grinned in return. “I told you I’d have it done by your birthday, Sunshine.”

There was a loud clatter as Carla set a large case on the counter and grinned at all of them. “And I’ve got my equipment all prepped.”

Boyd sipped at his drink a bit before he responded, eyeing the jar with a schooled expression as Carla unpacked her gear. “So…I take it we’re getting tattoos.” He and Jackson had been told about it when they arrived back in town but they were under the impression that it was still in process. Apparently not.

It had only taken one phone call for Stiles to figure out who he wanted to take care of the tattoos. He’d been at Deaton’s of all places picking up some supplies he’d requested when his phone rang. Carla, who’d been there for some of Stiles original tattoos in New York had offered up her services as soon as she heard. Evidently Danny had stopped at Onyx the night he, Stiles, and Lydia had discussed the idea during training and she’d been there for their three-way texting/phone conversation that had followed.

As the Alpha, the oldest, and least wanting to looking like a wimp in front of his Pack Derek was the first to go (after two more drinks because he, like Scott, remembered his first tattoo process.) He only winced a little as the loud hum of the needle got ever so close to his ear. “You’ve done this before right?” Carla flicked his ear lightly and told him not to move. He could hear the machine buzzing through his skull and it drown out the excited and nervous voices around him. He was pleasantly surprised by the process and Stiles fingertips had contact with his arm the entire time, pale blue tattoos under his ears shimmered with a soft glow. Derek felt warmth travel from his point of contact with Stiles to the tattoo, creeping through is veins like morphine. There had been no burning
involved and the ink only stung a little and smelled disturbingly like baby oil. Derek wondered if this was what a normal human felt when they got a tattoo.

The small rune went right behind each of their ears on the sensitive flesh with almost no muscle to cushion the stabbing sensation. Stiles occupied the chair next to each of his Pack mates, touching their arm, their leg, or their shoulder while Carla worked, feeding the progression a little bit of his magical intent the entire time. There had been next to no complaining as each of them sat on one of the bar stools while Carla marked them with the small archaic symbol, humming along to the radio. With the help of lots of alcohol and shots the entire process took less than an hour before each of them was sporting the protective runes.

The Sylph let out a satisfied sigh as she set down her equipment and slipped the near empty ink jar into her pocket. “I'll be doing the parents and Peter tomorrow,” she said to them. “Miss Martin will be free to Scream to her hearts content in no time.”

Jackson narrowed his eyes at the woman, cheeks tinted pink from his 4th glass of gin and tonic. “Gee, thank you Carla.” His sarcasm was biting but there was no real heat.

“You’re the best, Carla.” Stiles leaned over and pressed a playful kiss to her cheek to which she smiled and swatted at him fondly.

Isaac poked behind his ear lightly till Erica slapped his hand down. “Do we need to test it?” he asked.

“Not in here!” Carla said quickly, shooting the redhead a warning look. “I don’t have time to clean up shattered glassed before I open for the night.”

Lydia rolled her eyes both at Isaac and the woman. She was only slightly red behind the ears (and redder in the cheeks) but had yet to scratch or poke at the fresh ink. “I’m confidant they will work.”

“But we can practice at the next training session,” Stiles added. “Those Vampires wont know what hit them.” Unless they knew what getting punched in the ears by a Banshee’s Scream felt like.

“Till then,” Lydia cut in, sliding off her stool with her drink in hand. She swayed a bit. “It’s still my birthday for another few hours and I want to watch movies back at the house. We’re watching The Notebook, French Kiss, and Titanic. No choice. No complaining.”

Erica flung her arm around Boyd’s shoulder and took a dramatic breath, starting to sing off key, “I hate Paris, oh why oh why do I hate Paris….”

“Because my love is there…” Allison mimicked her over dramatics, the two women’s fists held up in the air as homage to Meg Ryan. “….With his slut girlfriend!” The two of them nearly doubled over with laughter and Lydia chuckled. Jackson rolled his eyes but in his mind he was probably singing along word for word. He’d watched that movie maaaany times.

“Who is alright to drive?” Derek felt the need to ask, arm slipping around Stiles waist. They’d all consumed a fair number of drinks while getting their tattoos and Stiles and Carla didn’t skimp on wolfsbane.

“I’m fine obviously,” Scott the 20 year old drawled, shooting a glare at Ethan who also said he was sober enough to drive.

“Let it go McCall,” Jackson groaned, standing up as well after he finished his drink.

“I’m good to drive as well,” Stiles offered. He hadn’t had much to drink knowing that he’d have to
concentrate to syphon his magic into his friends tattoos. “I’ll drive Allison, Lydia, and Danny in Lydia’s car.”

“You better not get in a wreck Stiles,” Lydia warned, pointing her finger at her friend.

“ Wouldn’t dream of it birthday girl,” Stiles grinned.

“I’ll ride with you.” Derek nodded. “Scott, you drive Jackson, Boyd, Isaac, and Erica. Ethan you can take the cruiser. John knows you have it tonight.”

Danny giggled and leaned on Ethan, indicating he was in no condition to drive either. “If we have to watch all three of those movies there better be cuddles the entire time.”

Boyd was keeping a wobbly-legged Erica up as she tried to literally climb him, demanding a piggy-back ride. “Don’t think we’ll really have a choice.”

“Ice cream!” Allison suddenly called out before dissolving into giggles which caused Isaac to hiccup and start laughing as well.

Derek looked at Stiles with a raised eyebrow and his Mate sputtered out. “What? You’re the Alpha.”

Derek held his hands up, fighting a smile. “When they’re drunk they’re yours.”

Erica had slipped from Boyd’s arms like jello and wove her way over to Stiles, draping over him with a high, happy mewl. “Mo~m you have to make cupcakes when we get home!”

“Holy shit Carla, how much wolfsbane did you lace their glasses with?” Stiles asked, trying to keep Erica from groping him while Derek just laughed.

Carla was smiling to herself as she cleaned up the counter. “I doubled everything. I love birthdays.”

“I hate you.”

Carla just waived at them. “See you tomorrow night Sparky!”

Chapter End Notes

So, the chapter was longer but it went fast. I might not have added a lot of detail but Im getting impatient, wanting to get to a nice little action scene I have planned. Obviously I can't just skip a whole big chunk of plot to get to it, but....i reeeally want to. I didn't, but I want to. So this chapter had some jumping around.

Side note addition on 11/04/2014:
This is the song that came on. I got some questions about it. Become addicted.

Florence and the Machine: Howl
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ucFHDxhCVwE
Chapter Summary

Stiles was actually getting used to not being woken up in the middle of the night for some dire situation.

Then of course his phone rang.

Chapter Notes

Sorry for the waiiit T. T
no beta, as per usual

Derek laced his fingers with Stiles as they lay tangled up in the blankets of his bed. The lamp on the end table offered the only source of light in the comfortably dark room and Stiles had his head resting against the older man’s chest while they listened to the sound of the wind coming through the open window. The temperature was steadily warming as they neared the end of the month so neither of them were wearing shirts, perfectly content to snuggle in boxers and take full advantage of Derek’s unnatural body heat despite the heat. Stiles had two books open in front of him like the overachiever he was and his eyes flit between the two texts. In his right hand, partially held by Derek was Bram Stoker’s *Dracula*, which just seemed appropriate given their current situation. In his left hand was a spell book labeled *Blood Ritual and Torture* with a yellow post it notes all throughout the pages. He never pretended to the pure driven snow of the magical world and spells like these were well within the realm of something he might need this week.

Derek shifted drowsily as Stiles turned the page on the Vampire drama propped up on his knee. “Ah, wait. Almost done with that page,” Derek muttered. He finished the last two sentences and Stiles smirked a bit as he flipped the page.

“I know you’ve read this one before,” Stiles said, yawning and blinking sleepy eyes at the page, speed reading a few paragraphs and then switching back to a footnote in the spell book. “I took it from your shelf.”

“I’m not allowed to read it more than once?” Derek asked, not really paying attention as he started mulling over the next page, chin resting on the top of Stiles head. “Seems somewhat hypocritical coming from someone who practically lives in the library downstairs.” Stiles just squirmed obnoxiously in retribution till Derek grabbed him tight with one arm and held him still.

Setting Dracula and the new approaching Nest of Doom and Destruction aside, Vampires were an immediate problem in Beacon Hills. Since there were at least 20 of them in town at any given time mingling with the remaining humans, the Selkies, the Fairies, the Elves and what have you, it was easy to run into them in public. Carla suffered through the the brunt of their company in the evening hours as the Onyx was something of a legend in its own right as a place for gathering not so legal information. (Stiles was certainly a well-versed grape on that secret vine). But the Undine handled her business well and Stiles was actually getting used to not being woken up in the middle of the
night for some dire situation.

Then, of course, at 12:30am, his phone rang.

He knew before he even said “Hello” that he was going to have to drag his ass out of bed and get dressed. It was a bummer too because they’d just gotten everyone up to their rooms a few hours ago after most of them passed out during *Titanic* and an entire batch of vanilla cupcakes. They were all tired, a little tipsy, but completely satisfied with the way the day turned out.

Stiles should have known real life would catch up to them in their down time.

Stiles could hear soft music playing in the background and the familiar sounds of a tap being drawn. “Hey Sparky. You remember that pompous Nest on vacation from Texas? The ones that have been coming in for the past few nights? The eye-popping spell ones?” Carla sounded much too awake and Stiles grunted tiredly in affirmation. Davids Nest. These Texan bloodsuckers had been in town for little over a week and they were rude and annoying, but so far they hadn’t done anything to warrant an expulsion from town. They might be a little rough, a little pushy with the humans they found to be their donors, but they hadn’t killed anyone and hadn’t put anyone in the hospital. “Well, they’ve taken up all my good bar seats and now they’re harassing the non-supes.” Non-supernatural: Carla’s way of saying human. Which sort of added to the direness of the situation in Stiles opinion. The Pack was pretty damn protective of the humans who’d chosen to stay in town.

Stiles set the books aside, dumping *Dracula* on Derek's lap and rolling out of bed with a put-upon sigh. “Did you tell them to leave?” He asked.

“No, Sparky,” Stiles could almost hear the eye roll. “I dusted off the good bottles of wine for them. Of course I told them to leave!”

“Use that holy water mix under the bar,” Stiles suggested. “I made you a fresh batch a few days ago.”

“Jesus, you must be tired,” Carla accused as more glasses clinked in the background. “Their First is here tonight so I can’t get into it with them without a member of the Pack with me.”

Stiles had yet to meet the Nests First in command but he knew protocol. “First time for everything,” Stiles joked as he rubbed his eyes, looking around for some discarded clothing. He knew Carla had hired him for a great deal of weird reasons but one of the main being that he was Pack. He was an Emissary and could speak as an intermediate between the supernatural and humans. On top of that he was Derek’s Lupa. He could speak and act on behalf of his Pack. If Carla inadvertently started a turf war with some out of town Vampires because she threw holy water on somebody important she could bring a whole mess of trouble to Beacon Hills and wouldn’t be able to claim she’d had the backup of the Hale pack. Unless of course, someone who could represent the Pack was there. Enter Stiles. He didn’t flaunt it when he was working but if push came to shove he could use it.

“So it’s just the four of them then?” Stiles asked with a yawn. “Any of their donors need an ambulance?” Seriously, where had Derek thrown his pants? Said Alpha yawned, watching Stiles move about and shifting into the warm space he left on the bed.

Stiles waved a hand at Derek without looking back at him, listening as the woman continued. “Just the four of them, and no. Can you and one of your puppies just get down here and get rid of them?”

“It’s really not something you can handle on your own?” Stiles asked, kicking aside a few socks and a coat. He wasn’t above whining.
Carla wasn’t having any of it and he heard the sound of an ice pick being stabbed into a block. The Undine was getting irritated and it wasn’t all Stiles fault. Carla hung up on him and the young man sighed, casting a longing look at the bed. “Well…guess I’m going to work,” he announced. Movement to his side made him turn to see Derek was already next to him, pulling on pants and a t-shirt.

“Should I let anyone know we’re heading out?” Derek asked with quiet yawn.

“We?” Stiles repeated, kneeling to dig through the laundry hamper. “You, sir, have work tomorrow and dads’ already going to bust you and Ethan for hangovers.” Stiles found his trademark, oh so cliché red hoodie and pulled it over his bare upper body, eyes still searching the floor.

“I clearly heard Carla say ‘bring a puppy’,” Derek returned, eyeing Stiles bare legs with a small smile. Tattoo lines even twisted around his thighs and calves, all the way to the tops of his feet. “I’m going with you.”

“Fine, be that way.” Stiles said smartly. “And leave a note on the table. Isaac has an early shift at the clinic anyway so he’d kill us if we woke him up. Might get the same treatment from the others too.” Some of them might wake up if they heard them leaving but he’d leave it up to them if they wanted to follow.

“Point,” Derek conceded.

Stiles frowned and turned to face his boyfriend. “Derek?” he said, hands on his hips, bare foot tapping on the carpet.

Derek’s eyebrow rose. “Yes?”

“Where did you hide my pants?

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When they got to the bar the situation Carla had prepped them for seemed to have mellowed out. Even though this was the busiest time of night at the bar there was only a smattering of people sitting at the tables in the back. Once they walked in however, the smell of blood immediately hit Derek and he noticed drops on the floor. His eyes following the trail all the way to the bar. He glanced at Stiles and then at each pair of eyes that sought them out when they came in. There were a few that recognized Derek and they spared a glance at the bar as well before ducking their heads again. Some of them recognized Stiles but wondered why the bartender had come in with Alpha Hale behind him. Tending the counter, Carla frowned as she cleaned glasses a little more roughly than necessary. The four Vampires were sitting at the counter with their human companions between them, held in place by an arm over the shoulders or slid around their waist. The Vampires smelled like dark, rich soil and sweet perfume. It wasn’t a bad scent in all, but it was meant to attract humans and made Derek want to sneeze.

Stiles waved to Carla as they entered and they walked up to the bar before squeezing in between two of the seated Vampires without so much as batting an eye. There were three to their left and the one to their right was nipping at a young woman’s bare shoulder, distracted only when Stiles leaned his elbows on the counter. “Hey Carla,” Stiles said with a grin after he’d cast a glance at the woman. “CB-7, please.” If he was going to deal with dick patrons on his night off he was not going to do it sober. He hoped he wouldn’t have to call Scott or Melissa for this one.

Carla raised an eyebrow and cast a quick look at the man to Derek’s left who had stopped nibbling at the neck of a lanky blonde to fix a predatory gaze on them. Going by Carla’s small nod of
affirmation this man was the First. He was older looking than the rest of the Vampires but that meant little with their kind. His hair was dark as ink and his eyes were a pale blue made all the more vivid by his pale skin. It might have been due to the instinct that came with the burning need to thwart any sort of unwelcome gaze directed at his Mate that Derek’s arm slid protectively around Stiles waist. The Werewolf stared blatantly back at the Vampire, a growl rumbling in his throat.

To Stiles right sat a blonde Vampire that he recognized as Jordan; the Second. He knew this because two nights ago Jordan had been bragging about his position and ordering expensive drinks with real blood extract and Stiles had thought that he’d been a colossal ass. The blonde vampire removed his teeth from the thin woman’s shoulder and she let out a pathetic whimper, tears of relief welling in her eyes.

“What a surprise, Alpha Hale,” Jordan said with a smirk. “Fine night, isn’t it? Is there a problem?” Peter, Chris, and John had been the ones to speak to this Nest when they came into town but they still knew the Alpha of Beacon Hills.

“My boot up his ass might be a problem in a second if you don’t let her go,” Derek warned the Vampire to their right, hazel eyes narrowing at the man. The blonde chuckled and raised his hands, taking them off the woman. “Go home,” Derek ordered her. She recognized the deputy even without the badge and with a red flash of his eyes she turned on her heel, running out the door without a single glance back.

Carla watched her go with a sigh. One collateral liability taken care of. “Anything for you?” she asked Derek as she set Stile’s drink in front of him. If a bartender could ever convey ‘on the house’ with their eyes, Carla was certainly doing it.

Still swimming in the drinks from a few hours ago Derek shook his head in refusal. “Just water, please.” His choice made the dark haired Vampire to the left laugh through his nose and he didn’t even bother to hide the condescension in the sound. He let the brunette he was with lean against the bar, looking tired but sated as she pressed a napkin to her neck. She was obviously a willing donor. The younger man near the end of the bar clutching a red stained towel to the bend in his arm was obviously the unwilling donor. He looked shaky on his feet and his eyes darted between each Vampire, too afraid to move.

Now that Derek and Stiles were here, Carla nodded her head to the man. “Hospital, now,” She said. “Ask for McCall.” The man looked relieved and wobbled to his feet, flinching when Jordan smirked at him but didn’t get up to stop him as he followed the woman who’d just made a speedy exit.

"Aw, your dinner got away David," Jordan said to his First. The oldest looking Vampire was a bit less built than his Second and was probably much more much agile because of it. The condescending smile hadn’t left his face even as he watched the second of their three humans leave. It was almost like a cat playing with its food; allowing the mouse to get away so he could have the same fun later. His attention soon returned to Derek and Stiles and he leaned a bit closer to them, a lazy smile on his face as he looked past Derek to study his human companion. “You look familiar,” came his smooth southern drawl like velvet and honey. “You work here, right?” A little squeal and nervous laugh made him glance over his shoulder. Davids female companion half-heartedly pushed away from a tall, burly redhead who was making too strong an advance, reeking of alcohol and the coppery taste of blood. Derek felt the tension from the back of the room and heard the fluttered beats of the womans' heart in his ears. The Vampires just smirked. They were a collection of superiority and amusement, completely aware of the foul mood they were causing and not intending to do a damn thing about it.

Stiles took a sip of his drink, pressing his lips together and leaning against the counter as Derek’s arm
shifted around his waist. The Alpha couldn’t sense any sort of emotion coming off of the other man but maybe he was just concealing it as he tended to do now. It made sense in a town like this where more than a third of the occupants cold taste, smell, see, or feel others emotions and mental states to some degree.

Derek waited a moment to see if Stiles wanted to lead since the comment had been directed at him, but the mans amber eyes flicked up to catch Derek’s. Carla had called him to help with the situation but the Emissary had brought his Alpha along, acknowledging Derek’s authority to make the first move in a territorial dispute. One had to be careful when dealing with favors to Fae and Supernaturals -even if it was Carla- and the nuances were something Stiles held in heavy regard. “I think it’s time you left,” Derek said in a tone far more polite outwardly than what he was imagining in his head. “You’re disrupting business.”

The Vampire blew right over formality. “We are bringing the business,” David said, oozing seduction towards Stiles who pretty much ignored him in favor of his glass. “I didn’t catch your name, little one.”

Derek growled and drew himself up a bit but Stiles just had to look up with a raised eyebrow, rim of the glass pressed to his lips and the Alpha conceded to his Lupa. The subtle tick in his jaw let Derek know that the younger man was not amused either and both of them could smell the heightened pheromones drifting off the Vampire. Stiles cleared his throat. “Your brand of creepy makes people uncomfortable, dude.”

Clearly aloofness was what did it for David. His dark eyes seemed to sparkle with interest as he regarded the human. He put his hand on Jordan's shoulder and pushed him away from the bar so he could switch seats with him and be closer to Stiles and Derek. “Hmm.” He eyed the lithe body hungrily and if Derek hadn’t been between them he might have even run his hands along the young mans arm. “Maybe I should just call you Red?” he asked, noting the ironic choice of sweatshirt color that the Werewolf’s companion was wearing. Stiles and Carla just snorted like it was an inside joke. Which is sort of was. David raised an eyebrow at their reaction and turned his attention to Derek this time. “What do you want for the human, Wolf?”

And whoa. Wrong thing to say. Derek snarled and was instantly a barrier between the Vampire and his Mate, turning to face David like a linebacker ready to charge. At the quick movement barstools screeching along the floor. David’s Nest stood up and the last remaining human with them excused herself quickly knowing full well that it was unwise to be in the middle of whatever was threatening to start. Carla had set her glass and rag aside and watched all of them, hands below the counter where Stiles knew she kept a shotgun loaded with rock salt and iron shavings for emergencies. An uneasy stillness seemed to settle over the establishment as reluctant and curious eyes bore into them from the back of the room.

David laughed, inappropriately cutting into the sudden tension. It was loud and haughty, his sharp teeth glinting in the light in much the same way Charlottes' did when she laughed. It was decidedly less charming on David. The tall redhead behind him joined in a moment later, resuming his seat at the bar again and Jordan and the blonde behind them followed suit. “You’re being a little possessive, aren’t you?” David said to Derek, smiling like the two of them were in on a joke together and dismissing the warning snarl with a wave of his hand. “I’ll offer a fair price for his time; compensate you for what you paid. He’s got a little bit of an attitude but I don’t want him for conversation.”

Stiles gave Derek’s arm a tug back when the Werewolf made to step forward. “Rein it in, big guy,” he said, but even Carla looked a little offended for Stiles sake. "Seriously David, its time for you to leave."
“Why don’t you run that by me again, bloodsucker,” Derek growled, trying to shrug his Lupa’s hand off his shoulder as his lip curled up in a snarl. On a vacation or not, permission to stay in their town or not, Derek was this close to invoking his Alpha right to rip this Vampire a new asshole. The murderous expression on Derek’s face just made David lean back in his chair and laugh out loud again. The three other Nightwalkers chuckled behind him, pitying the poor little Wolf that thought he could threaten one of their kind with any real hope of coming out on top. Even young Vampires were faster than Werewolves.

Stiles sighed and slipped off his stool, sensing that the Cowboys pompous attitudes weren’t toning down any time soon. He looped his arms around his Alphas waist, pulling him back successfully this time so that his front was flush to the others back. He was tall enough that he could rest his chin on Derek’s shoulder, rubbing his cheek subtly against the side of his neck to keep him calm. “No homicidal eye flashing, Der.” He leveled David with a cold glare, amber eyes seeming to darken a shade at the same time. “David’s going to take his friends and find somewhere else to go.”

Only the truly confident and unaware could have ignored the threat weighing heavy in the air. “Maybe if you come with me sweetheart,” David countered, being one of the confident and unaware. “You can make some pretty good money ‘donating’.” The asshole even made air quotes as his friend snickered.

Derek’s hands clenched into fists and Carla kept her own behind the bar, her voice chill with warning when she spoke. “David, I warned you and your Nest that you’d have to vacate if you kept riling up the other customers. Stiles and Derek are customers right now.”

David’s grin was lecherous. “So it’s Stiles, is it.”

“David!” Carla snapped.

“Aww, Carla,” David said, a small whine in his voice. “We’re just having fun. We’re allowed to pursue locally as long as we get permission, right? We even got approval from the Sheriff and Chris Argent himself!”

Stiles tried really hard not to get mad that this man was trying to twist his father’s words, but Derek seemed to think that holding back his temper was a waste of time. Stiles attempted to tighten his grip around Derek who had jerked forward and he managed to yank him back quickly so they were pressed flush against each other again, no space between them. David chuckled again and stood from his seat, drawing himself up to his impressive full height, fangs peeking out from beneath his lips as his iris’s flooded with an icy neon blue. “We’ve got permission to be here Alpha so why not make nice and share the local werebait with your guests?”

The silence in the bar was deafening. Eyes wide, Carla took a step back like she was washing her hands of the whole satiation.

On a long list of things not to say in Beacon Hills werebait was right at the top. It was an old term amongst their kind that came about when the supernatural and the human world started mixing centuries ago. Hunters would use humans as bait, hoping that the beasts would be lured by the sight of willing flesh or a kind touch. It was as derogatory now as was intended to be back then and was an assholes way of calling humans involved with Weres and Shifters –mated, family, or casual– little better than attention seeking whores, good for nothing but satiating a beast.

Derek had snarled loudly, eyes flashing with an abrupt and sudden surge of crimson. He was only keeping himself back because Stile’s fists were balled tight in the fabric of his shirt over his stomach. “They can drag his bloody corpse out when I’m done,” He said, hoping to sound like he was putting forth a reasonable argument. Derek’s wolf was snarling and shifting under his skin, eager to tear into
this obnoxious parvenu Vampire who presumed he could insult his Mate. Stiles firm hold however subdued his Wolf no matter how much it wanted to break free. Derek tried to count to ten to calm down, wishing that Stiles would react and defend his pride a bit more if just to show outwardly that he had as much of a backbone as Derek knew his Lupa possessed.

When Derek’s limbs stopped twitching Stiles let one hand relax the grip on his shirt so he could pick up his glass again. He took another sip before he spoke, a chip of ice in his tone. “He’s already a corpse. They can drag him out without you spilling his coagulated, undead blood.”

“Ooh, cheeky,” David grinned, unaffected by the obvious anger he’d stirred up in not just the two he was talking to. “I wonder if you taste as spicy as your personality.”

Stiles slowly unclenched his second fist from his lovers’ shirt and slid his hand over his sides to his back, letting his fingers rub out calming circles between Derek’s tense shoulders. He could tell that the Alpha was really holding it in, muscles trembling with restraint on his behalf. But it was late. He was tired and they’d totally interrupted them in the middle of Bram Stoker. “You’re a little too old for me, David,” Stiles said, letting out an exasperated breath. “And I’m not into necrophilia. Now, this is the last time I’ll say it. Leave.”

The red-haired Vampire behind David snickered at something Jordan said and he made a rude gesture ’round his nether regions. Stiles didn't hear the comment but he could tell it was bad because Derek twitched. “Forget the twink, Brother,” The redhead laughed. “Obviously, bestiality is his thing.”

Jordan laughed and David grinned sadistically. "Is knotting a turn on for you Stiles?” the Second taunted. "Maybe you can only get it up when he's on all fours and furry.” Carla made a small sound that only Derek could hear, somewhere between a gasp and a laugh, and then he caught an overwhelming scent of anticipation coming from her. Derek felt the hand on the back of his shirt tighten for a moment and he looked over his shoulder at Stiles. There was a calm, dangerous look on the man’s face that sparked heat in Derek’s chest. He couldn’t even bring himself to be mad at the comment because he knew his Mate was pissed enough for the both of them.

Jordan looked thrilled that he'd gotten such a reaction and he grinned. "Hit a nerve there, dog lover?"

Stiles clicked his tongue against his teeth and his hands dropped from Derek’s sides altogether. He could handle insults- hell he was used to them- but insulting one of his Wolves? Nuh uh. His eyes flickered pale violet under his downcast lashes and Derek smelled ozone. “So…no homicidal eye flashes?” Derek couldn’t help but tease, a low rumble in his voice.

Stiles turned his face to him for a moment before shifting his eyes back to David. Carla took a quick breath and called to the people at the back, waving her hand in the air to get their attention.

“Attention everyone! Yes, hi, thank you,” She smiled. "Now would be a good time to step out for ten minutes!"

David chuckled in disbelief as a few patrons got up without question, even taking their glasses as they went to wait outside. “Listen to you guys! We’re just looking for a little fun, kids! Don’t take it so personally.”

Stiles picked up his drink and took a long pull before setting the near empty glass back down on the counter and then stepping around Derek. “Carla and I put up with your shit and your Nest full of asshats for an entire week, David.” Stiles’ voice was smooth but Derek and Carla recognized that tone. “But you’re Second there just compared my boyfriend, my Alpha, to a wild fucking animal. That’s personal.”
I warned him

Chapter Summary

“Damnit Stiles, what did I say about bloodstains?” she groaned.

Chapter Notes

Not as long of a wait this time! Sorry about that cliffhanger ^^ I don't have many opportunities to do them.

No beta, as per usual. Next update will most likely come this weekend. Maaaaybe next weekend. Not sure with holiday travel and all. I may just want to pass out on my parents couch for like....days.

Derek had always known that Stiles was possessive. More possessive than any wolf he’d ever known in fact. Any person he set his sights on, gave his loyalty to…well, they had that for life. The Sheriff had asked him a long time ago if he was ready to take on the burden of his son’s devotion and at the time Derek hadn’t known what the man meant. Scott said much the same thing to him after he came to the realization that Stiles and Derek were more than just a heat of the moment fling. Scott had stared hard at him and said, “He’s my best friend and I love him Derek, but he’s a little insane. I got picked on by a jerk for one day in middle school. The kid had to get thirteen stitches on his head and the school had to replace a locker.”

Going by John’s stories, Derek had always been under the impression that Stiles was a bit of a wild card when he was younger so Scotts story hadn’t really surprised him and he said so. “No,” Scott went on with a shake of his head. “The guy was three years older than us and twice our size. Stiles gave him that head wound after Cameron had already broken two of his fingers and his nose.” That certainly sounded like his Stiles but this time Derek was a little alarmed. “Get it now?” Scott asked.

Derek got it more and more every day.

The red-haired Vampire sneered when he saw Stiles take a step towards them and didn’t even notice the thin blade that dropped into his hand. He scoffed, reaching around David and Joshua to grab the humans shoulder. “Sit back down, little boy. Let the grown-ups ta-,” his words were cut off as a long, sharpened piece of metal pierced his throat. Stunned, the Vampire’s eyes flared neon, mouth gaping. A wet choke bubbled out, muscles twitching around the length of metal like they were trying to function around it, unaware that something was now obstructing them. To get within stabbing distance of the redhead Stiles stepped in close to David. His arm arched over the man’s shoulder, over Joshua's too, bodies a few mere inches from each other. Stiles didn’t even spare him a glance, not at all concerned about having his neck so close to the biter.

Dazed, David opened his mouth just as Stiles jerked his knife back and flicked it to the side, splattering the Vampires blood onto the floor. The redhead choked and reeled as David shot back against the counter with Joshua. “Jesus Christ, are you insane!” he cried, stool toppling over while all traces of humor slipped from his tone, replaced with indignation and fear. Behind them Joshua
cursed, a hiss to his words as the redheads' blood splashed onto his shirt. Derek cast a glance over his shoulder to see the blonde Vampire back away from them with glowing eyes.

Hand covering the weeping gash across his neck and Carla swore as the redhead staggered back, blood seeping between his fingers. “Damnit Stiles, what did I say about bloodstains?” Carla groaned. David let out a loud hiss, teeth elongating in his gums as his Nest crouched into a ready stance behind him, moving closer together and stepping away from the bar. The fourth Vampire, the blonde who’d been exceedingly silent till that point, pushed his bleeding comrade to the side and stalked towards Stiles. Standing, they could see he was taller than the rest, a little more brute-like, and was too late to heed David’s warning of, “Stay back, idiot!”

Stiles brought his leg up and kicked the Vampire in the chest with more force than his smaller frame suggested. He staggered back with a grunt and knocked into the redhead, toppling them both. Stiles balance was thrown off kilter as well but Derek was there with a steadying hand, expression schooled to indifference.

Seeing two of their Brothers put on the ground in less than thirty seconds by a human had David and Joshua fuming, fangs out and feral as they hissed with neon eyes aglow. Derek had to fight a smile when Stiles snapped his own teeth and hissed back. Honestly, he barely felt the need to jump in at this point.

The blonde Vampire got to his feet slowly and Joshua circled around to stand by the others, giving Derek and Stiles a wide berth as he did so. “Have you lost your god damned mind?” David spat, a far cry from the seductive southern cowboy he’d been a moment ago. Before Stiles had made a kebob out of another man's throat. Davids next words were directed at Derek. “We haven’t done anything to hurt anyone here and this bar supposed to be neutral ground. If you and your Pack are going to be harassing anyone it’s should be this crazy fucking human who goes around stabbing people!”

Derek’s hands were back at his sides at this point and he eyed Stiles from behind like he was contemplating it. Stiles rolled his shoulders and waved the bloody blade at the Vampire reproachfully. “He'll heal by tomorrow.” As if to prove his point the redhead had already gotten to his feet. To be fair, his hand was still on his neck and he looked like he needed to sit back down.

“Only right, it's throat for a throat,” Joshua hissed. "Crazy little bitch." Derek was suddenly looming over Stiles' shoulder like some bizarre fanged haunting. Just because he didn’t think his Lupa needed help didn’t mean he wouldn’t offer it anyway. He wanted to tell them just who this crazy fucking human was. He was theirs. He was Pack. The Onyx was neutral ground only when Stiles and Carla said it was. Derek’s eyes bled crimson for the Vampires to see, brow shifting enough that only the area around his eyes looked animal, shadowed and a little bit feral. The anxiety in the air practically had a taste now, sharp and stale, like old coffee and regret.

The Undine behind the bar tapped her nails on the counter, eyes coldly trained on the Vampires. “You guys can come back tomorrow only if you leave now and promise to behave. There’s been too much excitement here for one night and I want to invite my regulars back in.” Her eyes then moved over to Stiles. “And Sparky is working tomorrow, so you'd better behave.”

Their gaze hurried back to the man who was cleaning his knife in Joshuas abandoned glass of vodka. The polished blade lit up with thin rune etchings as Stiles flicked off the alcohol. If possible David’s face grew paler, icy eyes almost comically wide as the once subtle lines on Stiles skin starting to glow faintly on his neck, face, and exposed hands. “You’re a… Druid?” The First breathed. It sounded a little hesitant, like the endearment Carla had been using was conflicting with what he knew to be possible of magic and what he was seeing and sensing from the man in front of him.
Stiles eyes narrowed in thought and he looked off to the side, the faint throbbing glow from his
tattoos steadying out. “Sort of?” He slipped the knife back into the padding hidden by his long
sleeve, handle resting just over his wrist.

The Vampires eyes flicked over to Derek. “We…weren’t aware you had a magic user, Hale.” Derek
remembered then that notwithstanding how Stiles interacted with Charlottes Nest, Vampires tended
to avoided magic users on account of them being impervious to their charms and therefore much
more difficult to manipulate. Vampires were not fond of working to get their dinner.

Before he could come up with any response Derek looked at the door, nose in the air as he sniffed a
few times. “Stiles…” A second later the door banged open and everyone but Derek flinched. Stiles
frowned, squinting a bit at the silhouetted figure haloed by the floodlight above the door.

“Are you fucking serious right now?”

The clipped voice instantly had Stiles expression changing to recognition. Jackson. A pissed off
Jackson. None of them had the energy to change before they’d collapsed into their respective beds so
the man was still wearing sleep rumpled clothes and sported bed hair. “A post-it note, Derek?
Really?” the younger wolf snapped as he strode into the bar like his Alpha wasn’t halfway shifted,
his Emissary wasn’t glowing, a Vampire hadn’t sprung a bloody leak, and a small, dead silent little
group of patrons weren’t still sitting in the very back of the bar watching with wide eyes.

Stiles sighed but didn’t look altogether surprised. “If you’re going to bitch about it you can go back
home, Jacks. We’re almost done anyway.”

Jackson scoffed at the suggestion. “I was the only one sober enough to drag my ass out here, so bite
me, Stilinski,” he shot back. Erica, of all people, only awake because she’d needed to use the
bathroom, had actually threatened that if he didn’t go back up the other two that she’d stab him with
some leftover Kanima venom. Jackson turned his haughty, irritated glare towards the Vampires,
blaming them for everything wrong with the world. “Are these the assholes causing problems for
Carla?” He then noticed the redhead, still gripping his neck though the blood flow had lessened.
“Why are you bleeding?” He snapped like it was the other mans own doing.

Now that Jackson had broken some of the tension, David mustered up a bit of that devil-may-care
attitude again. “The employees here are violent,” David hissed at Carla.

“I don’t have employees,” Carla said nonchalantly. “He’s the co-owner, as your friends very well
freaking know.”

Joshuas gaze was still hungry but in an entirely different way this time as he glared at Stiles. The
difference between killing to eat and killing to kill. "He crossed a line."

Stiles’ eyes flared and his body tensed. “Only after you!”

Posturing could only get the Vampire so far before it became a matter of pride. Jordan’s stance
turned aggressive and he stepped forward. “I don’t care if you are a fucking Druid you little shit, you
cant just-!”

“Joshua!” David snapped suddenly, hand moving out to the side and cutting off the mans tirade.
“Enough.”

“Emissary,” Stiles ground out. Derek’s head wiped to the side to stare. “Emissary to Alpha Derek
Hale and the Hale Pack of Beacon Hills.” This was the first time Stiles had said it out loud since he’d
gotten back. The first time he’d confirmed it in public (even if there were only a few people here.)
They’d all been waiting for him to get to it in his own time and had been content to wait but Derek had underestimated the swell of satisfaction he’d feel once it was finally out there. *Their* Emissary. He could even feel it from Jackson; a smug sort of ‘damn straight’ that had the younger Werewolf smirking.

“I attempted civility three times, as is required,” Stiles continued, stifled anger rolling off him in waves. Derek could practically see the Vampires counting back the times Stiles had asked them to leave. Their look of dread was almost as intense as when they saw Stiles tattoos. Joshua made to say something again but Stiles cut him off heatedly. “If you open your mouth one more time Joshy, I’ll put my fist down your throat.”

The attack happened abruptly, which might have been why Stiles moved without thinking. Joshua darted forward with unnatural speed, jaw open and fangs out. He let out a vicious hiss as his nails lengthened inches from his fingertips, poised to pierce at chest level. Stiles reacted faster than Derek or Jackson could even snarl out a warning; quicker than David could yank his Second back. All Jackson and Derek heard before the sound of shattering glass on the ground was a quick skip in the Emissaries heartbeat, almost overwhelmed by the scent of panic that punched through the air. Stiles had grabbed his mostly empty glass from the counter, curled his fingers around it and promptly smashed it right into the charging Vampires face. The glass shattered on impact and the man let out a howl, tripping and falling backward, knocking into the rest of his Nest. A pin dropping would have sounded like a bowling ball. The smell of alcohol hit the air and the stunned Werewolves stared at their Emissary. Derek would have felt an overwhelming surge of pure pride but he could smell the ripe sting of Stiles anger and anxiety in the air. Jackson did too so he wisely chose to stay silent.

Carla’s hands were out from behind the counter now and in them was a shotgun she’d grabbed as soon as Stiles made his move. Her eyes glittered ocean blue and she stayed still as the ocean on the calmest of nights, waiting.

Stiles jaw was tense, body ready to move at a moments notice. His hand sported a few cuts from the broken glass but he didn’t take his eyes off the Vampire who’d charged him even though the man was quite distracted by the glass in his face and groaning in pain. Suddenly there was a hissing sound. Not the hiss of an animal but the hiss of somethign burning. Jordan shrieked and started to claw at his face, flailing as smoke drifted up from between his fingers. The smell of burning flesh drifted outwards and Carla covered her nose. Looking up from his Second, David gasped in horror: “What did you do?”

“Oh holy water,” Stiles bit out, voice noticeably strained. CB-7 was Stiles ‘deterrent drink.’ Christian Brother’s brandy with 7-UP. It included a little extra “Christian” and seven drops of juniper extract. It was like chloric acid to Vampires but totally safe to drink for him. Jordan let out a high-pitched scream and thrashed on the floor till the blonde and redhead knelt and tried to help him up. They both looked a little relieved that they’d only been kicked and stabbed.

Fists clenched at his sides as he listened to the creatures pained cries, Stiles barely noticed when Derek stepped closer, letting his fingers brush his hand. He felt a shock of static when their skin connected and saw a few circles on Stiles' fingers glow. Symbols on the floor flared up momentarily, dividing them from the Nightwalkers. Wards.

“Stiles,” Derek said gently. The man didn’t look at him, eyes tinted an eerie violent purple, barely stirring enough to breathe as he watched the Vampires with full concentration.

“Leave!” Jackson shouted at them suddenly, pointing at the door.

David held up his hands as his Nest jumped. “Okay! Okay, calm down,” He said, managing to keep his voice from cracking until the very end. “We’re leaving.”
They must have taken a little too long to gather up their wounded because Stiles barked out, “NOW!” His voice carried the pressure of his magic and the air tasted like iron. Blue lines burned on his skin like neon in the dim bar, set off by a flare of pale violet in his iris. The Vampires would have left dust in their wake if they’d moved any faster.

Once gone, Derek slid his hand along Stiles shoulders, remembering suddenly that no, Stiles did not like Vampires. “Hey,” the older man said softly. “You alright?”

Stiles wiped his hand over his mouth after a moment of standing still and then nodded. Jackson walked up to his other side and glanced down. “Your hand’s bleeding,” he said, tone softer than normal. Stiles peeked down at the cuts on his palm. A towel was pushed in front of him and Stiles looked up. Carla stared at him with knowing eyes.

“That holy water mix is going to take a while to heal,” Carla said as Stiles took the towel. At least a month, even taking into account a Vampires accelerated healing. "They won't be back."

“I warned him,” was Stiles excuse, shrugging a bit as he gripped the towel in his injured hand. Derek was satisfied with that response. Stiles pat down his pockets and then the front of his sweatshirt, frown deepening as he realized he didn’t have what he was looking for. “Damnit…” Jackson dug into his own pocket and held out a thin paper roll. Stiles saw it and let out a relieved breath. “Thank god,” he muttered, shooting Jackson a grateful smile. The wolf nodded but the slight concern in his eyes didn’t fade.

Derek eyed the cigarette with a scowl. “You’re not in pain are you?” he asked. He hadn’t smelled any hurt on the man beside the small cuts to his hand. The smell of ozone had been strong but it was just ward, right?

Stiles brought the cigarette up to his lips, rubbing his fingertips together to create a cherry glow to light it. “Nerves.”

Derek looked to Carla as that was all the information he was going to get from Stiles it seemed. “His magic is tied to his emotions,” Carla explained softly, pushing a fresh drink in front of the man. “A Sparks power comes from their will so when his mind is willing him to destroy whatever pisses him off, he’s got to hold it back. Creates some strain.” Stiles took a long drag and let the smoke spill out over the surface of his glass as he took a drink, wincing when the alcohol burned down his throat. Derek slipped his hand up his Mates back and curled his fingers around the base of his neck, feeling the warm skin as he took a little of his pain. It was like a migraine; sensitive to light and sound, achy all over.

“Let’s go back home,” Jackson said just as softly as Carla, knowing how to tiptoe around their Emissary when he was like this.

Stiles took a breath and nodded, drawing himself up a bit. “Right. Home, good idea. I’m still exhausted. I need a year to recover from shopping with Lydia.” He looked at his friend behind the bar and gave her a little salute. “Carla, I’ll see you later tonight. David and his Nest should stay away but there are some damn good deputies on call right now. Don’t hesitate to abuse their authority.”

Carla gave the man a wire smile. “Got it, Sparky.”
Chapter Summary

John frowned and brandished the fry at his deputy warningly. “Shut it, Deputy Hale. You know where I was at 6am this morning? Taking statements from Vampires who reported that they were traumatized and assaulted by my son last night,” the man said. “I get curly fries. Now talk, before I order a pizza.”

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“Okay, talk.” John ordered when Derek and Ethan finally came into his office the following afternoon. Both wolves looked a little frustrated but Ethan more so than Derek. A plate of curly fries sat in front of the Sheriff and as he reached for another one Derek grimaced a little.

“Stiles will have a fit if he hears you ate that.”

John had been the first person Melissa called after treating said Vampires and he’d gone to the hospital to take their statements because they put up a whole solidarity front about not leaving the hospital to go to the station. They probably felt safer in the hospital. Not even ten minutes after he’d returned, Carla came by the station to give the Sheriff his new tattoo and she spilled the beans on a much more colorful rendition of what happened, bragging slightly while she did so and making it seem like a one-sided bloodbath in the process. Derek and Ethan had been privy to every word from their desks before John shut the door on “-and blood went everywhere!” Damnit Carla. So the Sheriff had been giving both of them the stink eye from his office for a good hour before he called them.

“Technically I wasn’t there, Sheriff,” Ethan repeated for what was probably the third time since he’d clocked in. Derek was sitting in a chair next to him looking properly guilty and Ethan felt he didn’t deserve to be here in the slightest so he was more than willing to throw his Alpha under the bus. “If you want to question a third party,” Ethan went on, “it should be Jackson.” Jackson might actually be willing to give a decent statement considering how ruffled he’d looked when he and the Alpha had come home with Stiles, covered in a cloud of herbal smoke.

John drummed his fingers on the desk, leveling Ethan with a look that said ‘Oh, I will be talking to Mr. Whittmore, alright.’ Finding out from third parties about an altercation involving his son and the Alpha of his town was certainly not a great start to the day. “David Morgan is filing assault charges against the Hale Pack. Collectively.” The older man emphasized as he held up a piece of paper on his desk and read, “For the wrongful treatment and excessive force used against one Randy Miller who was stabbed in the throat with a blade suspected of being made of iron and carved with runes,” all the blades Stiles kept on his person were at least 90% iron and had been acid etched with runes. “And for Joshua Harley, who sustained multiple lacerations to his face and eyes due to being hit with a glass full of holy water.”
Stiles would have been proud to see Derek’s brain to mouth filter fail and he said, “It was hardly a full glass,” but John glared at him.

“Excessive force, Derek,” he repeated. “Weren’t you the one that came up with the codes of conduct when you and the Pack came out to the rest of the town? When anyone crosses the border we tell them that as long as they don’t hurt anyone, don’t have any ill intentions, and remain respectful of all residents that they are free to stay here? I understand the reasoning behind an eye for an eye, but this looks like overkill.”

“To be fair,” Derek said. “Carla did call us because they were harassing her customers. One of them was a prostitute, whom we have a file on, another was just short of wrapping a tourniquet around his arm, and the third woman was so Enthralled she was practically high.” He then added pointedly, “And we did ask them to leave, so they had fair warning.”

“Fair warning before getting stabbed in the throat?” John insisted incredulously. “And the holy water? I'm all for sprinkling a little on the undead to make them back off but that is a little extreme to me. I mean, look at this,” He flipped the file over on his desk, showing Derek the photos that were submitted with it. Derek almost felt bad when he saw Joshua's mug shot. John went on. “Now, I know we both warned Stiles about the Onyx knowing what kind of people go there and he's been doing well so far, but I can not have him losing control of-”

“Jordan was going to attack him,” Derek said abruptly. He wondered if Carla had left that out on purpose for some reason when she'd been regaling the Sheriff with his son’s escapades.

The Sheriff stopped and stared at him until Ethan stepped in a bit hesitantly. “Anyone would back that up, John. David and his Nest have been nothing but instigators since they got here. They're all new bites. David is barely over 50 and he’s their First. They really had it coming, especially after they ignored three warnings to leave.”

John ran his hand over his face tiredly and breathed out. “Three warnings,” He repeated. “Is that significant?”

Ethan glanced at Derek and the Alpha nodded to him to explain. “When… Aiden and I were still in the Alpha Pack,” he began, voice softened a little as it always did when he mentioned his brother. “Kali told us about the threefold rules that sort of make up the basis of all magic. It’s a pretty big deal to the supernatural community; a universal rule if you will. Three completes the Trifold. Maiden, mother, crone. Alpha, beta, omega. Life, death, rebirth. Trinities are important. Like if you ask a Fae the same question three times they have to answer and they have to tell the truth. Stiles had asked them to leave and they didn’t listen. Even new turns will feel that pull. The fact that they didn't listen to it just means they're stupid.”

John was a little startled by that information. He remembered when Stiles was younger Claudia had the same kind of rule. She would only tell the misbehaving boy to do something three times and only three times. It had worked every time. Curious behind his disgruntlement, John leaned back in his chair, hand reaching up to rub at the fresh tattoo behind his ear absentmindedly. The things he'd do for his boy. “It’s still the same if a human does it? It has the same effect?”

“It’s the same if an Emissary does it,” Derek clarified, remembering for a moment the surge of pride that had filled his chest when Stiles announced it to the Vampires. “Emissaries are representatives of the supernatural, chosen by the supernatural to be a link between humans and us. David and his Nest were harassing humans so that falls into Stiles domain.” For the Sheriff's sake, however, he added, “Not to mention that the altercation happened at Stiles and Carla’s bar where they have full autonomy over who is allowed service.”
John could tell that the younger man was trying to placate him by speaking Law. “So you’re telling me, as an officer and as the Alpha, that it wasn’t an overreaction that landed two men in the ER with third-degree burns and cuts that won’t stop oozing incredibly disgusting green stuff?”

Derek thought back for a moment about the tense and haunted look on Stiles face when he’d let the remaining shards of glass fall from his hand; the erratic pulse of his heart and the stunted way his breath caught in his throat. The way his eyes flashed violet and held the hue as he stared at the Vampires. Ethan glanced at Derek, hearing the hesitation more than the Sheriff did. “No,” Derek finally said. “Stiles was justified in his actions. He and Carla had asked them to leave and I as the Alpha of Beacon Hills had asked them to leave. They did not cooperate. Stiles felt threatened and defended himself. I’m sure Carla told you the same.”

John stared at him a moment longer till Derek felt like squirming and then the Sheriff sighed loudly. “Her exact words were; ‘Sparky smashed him so hard with that glass I swear he’ll be picking it out of his face three years from now,’ and then she asked me what the process of filing a countersuit was and how to sue someone for the cost of a cleaning service that would get blood stains out of hardwood.” Ethan chuckled a little and John shook his head. “I’m not worried about the charges,” the man told them. "There are plenty of eyewitness testimony and I don’t think anyone will be a character whiteness for these guys. I can sort out that paperwork quick enough.” His frown deepened a fraction and he was silent for a moment. Ethan and Derek exchanged looks, unsure if they should say anything. The Sheriff finally spoke and he suddenly looked like he hadn't slept in two days. "I am worried that my son's clothes now all smell like those damn cigarettes.” The mood sobered instantly at the topic shift and the older man looked up at them, worry shining clearly through his eyes, making the lines in his face pull down wearily. “Carla said he uses them as a painkiller,” Derek remembered that Stiles hadn’t exactly told his dad about why he’d suddenly taken up smoking and wondered just how hard it had been for the Sheriff to watch his son light up each time. “She…Claudia, she never mentioned anything to me. She was a Druid and she never said she was in pain. Before she got sick… I mean,” John struggled through. He still had trouble wrapping his head around the idea that he hadn't really known his wife. It wasn't a secret, but it wasn't exactly shared either. “I mean, Deaton is a Druid and he’s never mentioned anything. Is this something different? Something I need to be worried about?”

Derek swallowed, looking down for a moment. The whole situation was complicated and it would have been an understatement to say they were all out of their depth. Stiles was still trying to look into and subsequently control his odd mix of powers while they all searched for clues on the new Nest. Allison and Chris were getting thin information from their Hunter contacts and the rumors that came out of the Onyx lately had been obnoxious at best. Every little worry was adding up for all of them as they tried to prepare for the next big thing.

“I don’t think there is anything to be concerned about right now,” Derek concluded, hoping to ease John’s worry even a little bit. He just barely believed his own lies sometimes. “I don’t really understand it myself, and Stiles…well, he might be as confused as us on this one.” No one had answers and Stiles simmered, smoking away on the special cigarettes. No one could do anything about it.

“We’re keeping an eye on him,” Ethan offered softly, making John look up at the younger man. His expression relaxed a bit and he stopped wringing his hands together.

“I know you are.”

“I will as well, for what it’s worth.”
The three men’s eyes jerked up to the new addition in the doorway, not having expected the interruption. Ethan let out a shallow growl though he was clearly shocked by the man’s sudden appearance. “What the hell, Deaton.” They hadn’t sensed him and while they’d gotten used to the stealth from Stiles, with Deaton it would always be weird.

The Druid wore a familiar dark leather coat and an amiable expression on his face. He held a sleek black attaché case in one hand while the other was in the pocket of his jacket. “Am I not allowed to worry about my former student?” He asked with a raised eyebrow.

“He means what are you doing here,” Derek clarified. He didn’t think he could ever remember the man coming to the station before.

The Vet stepped inside the office and shut the door quietly behind him. When he turned he held up the case with one hand as an explanation. “This actually. Some things I was going to deliver to Stiles. He, Lydia, and Danny were going to put up a few more wards at the Pack house and wanted some notes and materials.”

“So why are you here and not at the house?” John said, suppressing mild irritation. "I'm sure you're not the first person they'd like to see so early in the morning but it's not as if they'll throw you out."

Deaton gave an amiable nod. “I will see him when I am done here.”

Derek stood from his chair, no longer feeling comfortable with being seated. “That's not what he asked.”

The Druid nodded sharply. “Yes, well, as long as I was heading in the general direction I thought this would be a good time to speak with the Sheriff about some concerns I’m having, hence my presence in his office. Concerns I happened to overhear when I walked in.”

The fatigue in John’s eyes only grew and he rubbed his temples. “Thank you for admitting that you eavesdropped on the Sheriff in his own office, Alan.” The small accusational glare he shot to the super sense Werewolves wasn't missed by either of them. "Is this going to be bad news or good news?"

Deaton looked off to the side in a manner so similar to Stiles that Derek immediately felt uncomfortable with it. It was a look that meant Deaton knew the answer to the question but was avoiding it. “That depends I suppose. It has to do with Stiles of course.” The other three men tensed at exactly the words they didn’t want to hear right now. “He’s been coming to me for some extra cigarette ingredients lately, and whenever he comes into the clinic I have to redo my wards.”

Derek glanced at John before answering sharply. “We know about the cigarettes.” Way to go and make his dad worry all over again Deaton. “What’s the problem with the wards?”

Deaton brought the case in front of him, holding the handle casually with both hands as though he was waiting for the bus. “To put it simply, he's erasing them,” he stated. “Ever since we started getting more types of Fae and supernatural creatures in town, I’ve been adding different kinds of wards to the clinic to keep it a safe but neutral place to all who enter. For protection, detection, and magical suppression to be precise. I carved or burned the runes into the railings and gate but when Stiles walks through them the wood erases the runes.”

Johns' eyes narrowed, the oncomings of a magical talk related headache clear in his expression. “…Your gate healed itself.”

“Yes, essentially,” Deaton nodded. “It’s made of rowan wood which is easy for Druids to work
with. It responds well with our natural magic.”

“So it’s reacting to Stiles?” Ethan asked, looking a bit confused. Magical things always reacted a little around the humans of their group; side effect of being so heavily involved with it he supposed. Deaton shot the wolf a look that seemed to say ‘let me finish’. Ethan held up his hands in surrender and leaned back in his chair.

“When Stiles first came back the wards reacted,” Deaton said. “Now they are rebelling.”

A loud thump drew Deaton’s attention to the Sheriff who had let his hand fall to his desk harshly. Derek had started rubbing the bridge of his nose and both men had matching expressions of irritation on their faces. “Pretend for a moment,” John said as calmly as he could manage, ”that we have no idea what you’re talking about, Alan, and also keep in mind that I may still want to follow Melissa’s example for keeping secrets about my family.”

Deaton sighed and held up one hand to stay the lawman’s anger. “My apologies, John, let me explain. Normally if another Druid were to pass through one of my wards I would be made aware of them and, in most cases, they would feel the magical barrier. A Druid with stronger abilities could physically affect the ward, such as making it flare or even burning symbols further into the wood. The Rowan would latch on to another Druids natural magic and use it to strengthen the wards that were already put on it. A week ago, that's what it did with Stiles. Now, the opposite is happening. We all know he has a…natural reaction to retaliate against authority-"

“Someone trying to invade his magical bubble,” Derek muttered, remembering what Stiles had once told him about what walking near or over someone else’s wards felt like.

“-So I think that his Spark is manipulating his Druid magic to remove the wards that are bothering him,” Deaton finished. "Basically, the runes are refusing to stay in lieu of Stiles believing that they should not be there to hamper him.”

There was a moment of silence as the other men processed the information. John felt an uncomfortable pit of worry grow in his gut. “Stiles already told us that his Spark would allow him to bend the rules Druids have to follow.”

Here is where Deaton pressed his lips together and suddenly looked serious. Derek felt every muscle in his body go ridged when he scented actual distress, actual fear from the man. “That is the reason why I’m worried. The rules we follow are ancient; set in stone by very powerful people. People like your wife, Sheriff.”

John stiffened almost as much as Derek and then got to his feet just a quickly. “I’d think carefully before you continue with that train of thought, Deaton. You’re talking about my kid and wife now and if you’re going to leave this explanation half-assed I want you to leave before you even start.” The Sheriffs tone brought a chill to the other man’s skin and for a moment Deaton recognized where Stiles got his ability to threaten so well.

But Deaton just took a calming breath and went on. “I’ve explained to Stiles that his mother was a part of the Druidic Order; a member of the Council who is charged with keeping the balance of Magic in the world. The amount of magic and supernatural creatures in this town is nothing to be laughed at and when they realize that Stiles powers are fluctuating like this, I fear they might very well find it necessary to intervene.”

"Intervene how?” Ethan leaned forward in his chair, brows drawn together. “Are they a threat?”

Deaton actually balked at that, looking offended that Ethan would even ask such a thing. “The Order
keeps the balance, they do not threaten anyone.”

“Then why are you worried?” Derek insisted, ire creeping into the edges of his voice. “And why haven’t they intervened before? We had element controlling fox spirits tearing apart the town not even three years ago.” Allison almost dying that night was still fresh in all their minds and Lydia still went pale whenever it was mentioned. She’d almost lost her two best friends that night and if there was some high order of Druids out there that would have been a pretty freaking good time to step in and help.

Deaton looked a little hesitant to answer, knowing it was still a raw subject. “Noshiko had put that into motion over a century ago. Kitsune powers, however, have a strong connection to nature so the Nemeton did sort itself out in the end. I assume the Order felt it wasn’t necessary to step in.”

“What about the last 5 years,” John continued, not even bothering to try reigning in his fraying temper anymore. “All the bullshit we’ve had to deal with because the Nemeton attracts everything supernatural on this continent. If we’re all a part of this balance as you keep claiming, why have the hundreds of magical and supernatural related deaths in this town never caught their attention?”

“The Order does not police supernatural violence, Sheriff,” Deaton explained steadily. “These fights that the Hale Pack takes part in hardly register on their scale because a balance of power is always maintained in the end.”

“That’s bullshit,” Ethan growled. Derek saw the Betas hands clench into fists. The shifter that had managed to kill Aiden had died of his own wounds shortly after and if Deaton thought that was supposed to make Ethan see that the scales were level now, he had another thing coming.

“And yet they have been doing it this way for millennia,” Deaton replied calmly.

Ethan barely realized he was on his feet. His eyes glowed blue, emotions rolling off him in waves. Derek let out a rumbling growl though his gaze didn’t leave Deaton. “Is this something we need to worry about right now, Deaton?” he demanded. “If they haven’t bothered to show up after all this time is it really a possibility that they will be coming because Stiles is erasing your wards?”

Deaton closed his eyes for a moment. “Where Druids are concerned, the Order has the authority to do what they want. Stiles is a Druid for all intents and purposes and being a Spark is upsetting the balance of magic around him. So yes, there is a slim possibility that it will attract some unwanted attention from the Order.”

“So you’re saying that everyone just gets to keep killing each other left and right but because my son can erase wards in your clinic a bunch of Druids are going to throw a fit?” John asked disbelievingly.

Deaton made a face, clearly showing he wasn’t impressed with Johns description. “My advice is just to keep an eye on him, Sheriff.”

“We are,” John breathed out, voice gone cold and final. “Now if your done telling us about something that might happen, my deputies and I need to focus on some more pressing matters. For example the Nest we know nothing about that has been broadcasting their intent to come here all across the god damned state.”

Chapter End Notes
Deaton has some issues to work out. ...
You should really talk to Derek about this

Chapter Notes

Because I apparently just cant layer enough emphasis on this....

“What the hell, Alan?”

The door had been pulled open sharply and Deaton lowered his hand which had been about to knock. Stiles was standing in the doorway glaring at him with a familiar intensity and the first name usage hardly registered with the older man. He just blinked and returned nonchalantly; “Afternoon to you as well, Stiles. I take it Derek called about my coming over?”

Stiles hissed, stepping outside onto the porch and shutting the door behind him. Deaton saw a shudder pass over the door and one of Stiles tattoos glowed for a moment on his hand, signaling a silencing ward had been thrown up. “No, my father called me which was a hundred times worse!”

“Some of the pack is still inside I take it?” Deaton asked, attempting to be sociable. He assumed most of them had requested the day off in preparation of the day after Lydia's birthday. Anyone would need to recuperate from that.

Aggravation rolled off the younger man in waves though not nearly as strong as their last argument for which Deaton was thankful. “Yes, and I don’t want them to hear us,” Stiles huffed, spinning on his heel to take a few steps away from the other before turning around again and facing him. “Just like I didn’t want my dad to hear about the god damn Druidic Order from you!” He cast a tentative glance behind him at the house even though he knew full well that his wards were holding.

Deaton took a fortifying breath and let it out quickly, knowing that if he wanted Stiles to calm down he’d have to explain himself. “I felt it was my duty as a concerned citizen to speak to him,” he said simply. And what was the harm in it? At least he had mentioned a potential threat before it reared its ugly head this time. "I can understand you not mentioning anything to the betas but your father is the Sheriff and Derek is your Alpha. As his Emissary you should-"

“Don’t give me that," Stiles cut in firmly, silencing the man mid sentence. Deaton didn't have any right to lecture him on how a proper Emissary should act. “I was going to tell them but not now. None of them need to be worried about this now.” It seemed that Derek, the Sheriff, and Stiles were all apparently on the same page about that stipulation.

Deaton set his briefcase down on a narrow bench pressed up against the house and pulled up his walls of calm and zen, relaxing his tone as much as Stiles was getting tenser. “I have to disagree with you on that. I think this is a very good time to worry. Your mothers bloodline gives you access to Druid magic for which you have had no official training. Marabeth does not count as she is a Hedgewitch.”

Stiles really couldn't resist. "Gee, too bad I didn't have a Druid back home to train me." The remark was sarcastic and petty and Stiles found he didn't give one crap.

Familiar guilt edged up the Druids spine and the older man had the good sense to avoid Stiles eyes. He knew the chances of him living that down were slim to none and even if he got annoyed that it
was brought up again and again he could not bring himself to rise to his own defense. "My point is that due to your inexperience it's like giving you a gun with a broken safety switch."

Stiles let out a dry laugh at the apt metaphor. "Good thing I spend a lot of time at the target range," he quipped.

Crossing his arms over his chest Deaton's face remained passive in reaction to the humor he'd grown immune to over the years. "Please Stiles, this isn't something to joke about. I don’t think you really understand what it means to attract the Orders attention."

Almost as soon as he'd said it Deaton realized that those words might not have been the wisest selection. In hindsight, assuming Stiles didn't know something was usually- always- a bad idea.

The young man went quiet for a moment, frowning at Deaton while his fingertips tapped at the sides of his thighs restlessly. "Yes. I do." His voice was even and calm in a way that Deaton recognized as forced. Stiles was letting his old mentor see the control he was exhibiting, letting him think over what he'd just said and how badly Stiles could have reacted. "Marabeth made sure I was aware. You aren’t the only Druid I’ve been in contact with, Deaton."

The older man didn’t hide the scoff in his voice though an alarm bell was going off in the back of his mind telling him to be careful. "Who else? Marian? She's a Druid but she isn't exactly on the Orders nice list, Stiles. It’s not wise to trust anything she says about them."

"I feel like your underestimating my contact list," Stiles bit out, eyes narrowing as the golden whisky hues seemed to darken.

Deaton met those changing eyes with his own determined gaze, stubbornly refusing to let the younger man intimidate him. Further. "I have lived following the rules set down by the Order my entire life. You’re in pain all the time because your Spark is trying to bend a source of magic that should be unbendable."

Stiles let out a sudden rough noise of frustration and ran his hands through his hair, turning away from the man again and walking further down the porch, bare feet scuffing against the worn wood. "I know."

He started pacing, shortening and lengthening their distance with quick pointed steps. "I get that I'm messing with your precious balance. I get that I'm the cliche overpowered protagonist of my incredibly ridiculous freaking life story. Why the hell do you think I’ve been smoking so much? You think I like the taste?" He let his mini rant die down when he let out the breath he'd sucked in, forcing himself to settle. When he opened his mouth again his voice was quieter, less high pitched with panic. "I could barely keep it in when we were at the Onyx. I put up a ward thinking that would be enough to curb it but I wanted to tare into David and his little posse and just...!" his hands were clenched now and he remembered the feel of the broken glass on his palm, cutting his fingers as he ground it into the other man's face. That glass digging into his skin and Derek's low growl at his side had been the only things that had pulled Stiles in. The cuts were still there, treated and bandaged, grounding him again.

Deaton might be the man of little expression and many mysterious metaphors, but he did care, in his own way. He promised the Pack and Stiles that he would work on his...everything, because he knew it was important to keep guiding the pack's magic users. His experience was something they needed and his experience told him that letting Stiles deal with this on his own was a bad idea. He would not abandon his former student a second time. So Deaton steeled his will and went on pointedly, "That would be your emotions ruling over your magic. If your control starts slipping further due to stress you could...." Deaton trailed off slowly.

Stiles had dropped his hands from his hair letting one come to rest on the railing beside him.
tattoos along his arm shimmered with a faint blue light and Deaton felt static in the air, smelled the earthy mixture of soil and rain. Something cracked, split, and Deaton's eyes widened in shock as Stiles raised his hand slowly from the wooden rail. Emerging from the polished composite wood was a small green sapling. The railing cracked slightly as the stem thickened, roots working their way into the grains with new growth and it reached up towards Stiles glowing palm like it was reaching towards the sun. Stiles stopped his hand when the sapling was a little less than a foot tall, little green buds growing off the thin stem in delicate shoots. It looked for the world like it had the intention to keep growing despite the lack of soil and seed. Despite the fact that it was a freaking partially plastic deck railing. Stiles looked over his shoulder at the Druid who’s lips had actually parted in awe. “Not slipping Deaton. Growing.”

It actually took a moment for Deaton to remember what words were and even then his mouth moved a few times before anything came out. “Stiles...” He said finally, surprising even himself with the disbelief evident in his tone. “You have to stop doing that.” This was on the same level as erasing his wards if not better—or worse, depending on how you looked at it. And wasn't earth magic supposed to be the one Stiles had the most trouble with?

Stiles pressed his palm back to the railing as the blue etchings on his arm faded back to pale brown, smothering the new plant he'd created. When it came away the wood was smooth and polished, not even a hint of life to it. Stiles leaned against the railing, eyes shut tightly as he hung his head, voice strained. “Not really an option, Deaton.” It was the classic damned if he did, damned if he doesn't situation.

Deaton frowned, taking a hesitant step forward towards his former student, trying to push aside the vibrations of power he felt in the air surrounding him “Are you alr-.”

“And you're wrong.” Stiles interrupted suddenly, walls of stubborn and self assurance lowering a bit. “These small spells, training with the Pack, the wards... they help. Using the magic isn’t what’s hurting, Deaton. Keeping it inside, reigning it back in so it doesn't spill over is what hurts.”

Deaton’s frown only grew more worried and his brows drew together. He glanced at the railing again studying the smooth surface and then looked back at Stiles who was gripping it hard enough that his knuckles had turned white. The ex Emissary helplessly remembered the days Stiles used to come to him confused and looking for answers; for guidance. He remembered the day he'd told the boy no. “I know...about your history with Vampires,” the older man said carefully, watching the other. “From what Lydia told me at least. Any additional stress will only make your hold on your magic fray more.” He closed the distance between them with a few steps so he was at the younger mans side, leveling him with a steady, knowing gaze. “If you are going to start tapping into this amalgamation of magic like you did in New York then- “

Stiles eyes suddenly snapped to him, flashing sharply. “What do you know about New York?”

Deaton kept himself from taking a step away from that heated glare, heart beating in his throat at the sudden change in atmosphere. "I know that you don’t get a Metatron cube containment sigil etched across your abdomen without knowing what it is.” His eye flickered down to Stiles clothed torso knowing all too well what was hidden from view. That picture was the first and last direct contact he'd had from Lady Marabeth during Stiles absence and when he'd seen it for the first time; saw the raw raised ink lines of the fresh marking spanning across a pale expanse of skin Deaton had almost gone straight to Derek. Almost picked up the phone and demanded that the Alpha go retrieve his Lupa immediately. But then days went by without any more contact. No calls from Stiles or Marabeth. No emails. Only the scant ‘he did this today’ talk from one of the pack. Mostly Isaac since the boy worked with him, though even that died down to nothing in the end.
Talking about it, Stiles could almost feel the intricate and perfectly symmetrical geometric pattern traced out on his stomach tingle, a reminder of what pooled beneath it just under his skin. “She….did she mention why I got it?” Stiles asked, not meeting Deaton’s eyes and instead choosing to stare out into the quiet woods. When Deaton didn’t answer Stiles turned and leaned back against the railing, crossing his arms over his stomach. “I already met with someone from the Order.”

The comment was so unexpected that the Druids stomach dropped to the ground, swearing he heard wrong. “What?” he rasped. Stiles pressed his lips together for a moment, trying to look nonchalant under his frown. "An older woman. She showed up at Marabeths house one night. Carla started complaining about a sudden and un-yielding urge to go swimming and bolted before she even came in the door. So yeah, I do understand that these guys pack some juice and despite what you think I'm not underestimating them." That woman...something about the way power rolled off her in waves, steady and throbbing like Ley Lines themselves, had made the magic users of their group suddenly want to seek comfort in something familiar. Marabeth had even grabbed a nearby potted plant and held it the entire time the woman was there.

"Stiles, you should have told me that you-"

"What, that they were already watching me? Even before I started training with Marabeth and the others?" Stiles interrupted as he turned and put his back to the railing, facing the house. "You already thought I didn't know what I was doing Deaton, so why would I give you more reasons to preach at me and make my family worry?" That was like a cold slap in the face and the ex Emissary almost reeled from it. The Pack. There were reasons Stiles cut off contact with Deaton. Reasons he didn't fill him in besides being monumentally pissed off at him. It was Deatons habit for opening his mouth, saying some abstruse B.S. and making things worse. Stiles knew about the Order. Knew about the power they represented and held. He did not need Deaton voicing out these concerns to his father and Pack, making them worry even more about something that they didn't fully understand. Everything seemed worse when you didn't really understand it.

Stiles was now staring at the dark painted siding of the house like he could see through it if he tried hard enough. “She showed up when I was just starting to learn more about Druid magic, about what it could do with my Spark and how it warped the basic rules and principles that Druids have to follow. She… mentioned my mom.” The young mans voice grew a bit quieter. “She didn’t stay for very long but she said that they were watching. That they would be watching. To make sure I didn’t upset the balance.” The last words were bitter as he’d heard them far too much in his lifetime. “She made it perfectly clear that I wasn’t trusted. She said I was too young and too inexperienced to have the powers I had.” The silence almost dared Deaton to comment on that one before Stiles continued. “So I kept training. I got the tattoos to help me channel everything and I made it work.” He looked at Deaton now, brows furrowed. The afternoon sunlight caught the metal earrings in his ear, each a different hue of gold, copper, iron, and silver. “I am working on it, Deaton, and I don’t want to be told that it’s dangerous because I already know. I can feel it and I’m dealing with it.”

Deaton just stared for a moment, watching the younger man and choosing his words carefully. “...Alright Stiles.” He said resignedly. "I wont press anymore, but may I offer just one more piece of advice?"

Stiles looked reluctant but nodded.

“You are an Emissary and Dereks’ Lupa,” Deaton started earnestly. “Even if you were just an average human, those positions hold a lot of power in the supernatural world. The magic that connects the Pack runs through you. Lydia's powers as a Banshee, Derek as an Alpha, the Betas, Scotts powers as a True Alpha, even Jacksons latent powers as a Kanima. Add that to you being a Spark and a Druid and those bonds then connect you to the very earth around you; the Ley lines and
the Nemeton.” Stiles nodded slowly, mouth drawn into a grave line. “The body is a container for magic as well as a sieve from which it is filtered through our will. As you are now, you are a full container letting out *just* enough magic to keep it from spilling over. Just...be careful that nothing happens to make that container overflow.” Deaton’s words weighed heavy with warning. “You run with wolves Stiles and anything can happen. That is what the Order is waiting for. Do not give them a reason to think you are a threat to the balance they so carefully maintain.”

Ominous parting words hanging in the air Deaton left soon after, leaving the case of ingredients and notes on the bench for Stiles. The young man watched as Deaton's car drove away and then let out a tired sigh, letting himself drop into a crouch, forehead resting against the bars of the railing. “Why couldn’t a hangover be the worst part of my day?” he muttered to himself.

A thumping noise off to his left made the young man jump and looked to the side. A familiar package of styled hair, chiseled features and wicked smirk had hopped over the railing from out of nowhere and was now leaning against it casually. “Because then it just wouldn’t be a fulfilling day around here,” Peter said smartly. The small smirk on his face however wasn’t as sharp as it usually was. “Now, care to have a little conversation with me about this Order?”

Stiles let his head drop back to the bars with a small thunk. “No,” he wined softly. “And why were you creeping around?” He hadn’t been at the house when they’d returned the night before so he just assumed the man gone back to his own apartment to get away from his inebriated younger pack mates.

“I wasn’t creeping,” Peter insisted. “Carla is meeting me here later to give me that tattoo and then you two started talking about some seriously concerning topics. If anything, you ruined the serenity of my afternoon stroll.”

“My guilt is overwhelming,” Stiles deadpanned, eyes closing tiredly. Maybe if he ignored the wolf long enough he’d forget about talking. Suddenly there was a hand on the back of his neck and Stiles shivered at the contact, his sudden urge for another cigarette abating a bit.

“Come on. Stand up and take a seat on the bench,” Peter said, tone almost gentle. Stiles felt a cool sensation trickle up his neck and to the base of his skull, easing the headache slightly. Pain drains where awesome and the Pack had finally gotten used to taking the bare minimum lest they accidentally tap into the Emissaries magic and get a nasty shock for their troubles.

He turned his head a bit and glanced up at Peter. “Thanks,” he muttered, getting to his feet. Peter followed him to the bench and moved aside the briefcase so they could sit. Stiles could feel Peters expectant eyes on him and he just tilted his head back, exposing his neck to Peter in a way that he never would have done a few years ago. Peter barely spared it a glance and kept his eyes on the Emissaries face.

“Well I won’t pretend that I didn’t just hear all of that, Stiles. Are you going to talk or will I have to fill in the blanks myself?”

Stiles grimaced and huffed. “It’s just not the most important thing we’re dealing with right now,” he insisted.

Peters eyebrows raised high on his forehead. “That’s certainly not what it sounded like.”

Hands brought up to rub at his face, Stiles continued, “I'm teaching Lydia and Danny about magic, training with Chris and Allison, putting wards all over the preserve and town, helping my dad track leads, I'm working on a treaty with a clan of Fae spirits living in the northern part of the woods as well as the pack in Montana so Boyd can safely be assimilated when he goes to school, and I still
have no information about this new Nest who could be very well coming up here to make our lives miserable. I don't have time to worry about a bunch of high and mighty Druid council members threatening to magically expel me from their Druidy club if I so much as sneeze wrong and throw off their stupid balance.”

Peter let out a small snort. “Elegant, Stiles. But do you think Deaton has a point?”

The younger man did look at him now, slightly stunned. “…Do not tell me you’re agreeing with Deaton. Did hell just freeze over?”

Peter tipped his head to the side, shrugging a bit. “Well it certainly explains why he didn’t want to teach you anymore than what you knew at the time. If he saw that you’re powers were already…how did he put it? Filling up the vessel? Well, then maybe he thought he was protecting you, as poorly as he went about it. And his concern that your close involvement with the Pack might do something to upset that balance of power is legitimate. I’m sure you and Derek have spoken about it before.”

“I….sort of did.” Stiles admitted, feeling a tad cornered. It was easy to tell Deaton to back off and go screw himself but this was Peter. He was Pack and he’s promised never to keep anything from them. Still, the number of times he and Derek talked about the worst case scenarios varied. Derek didn’t like talking about it for obvious reasons. A lot of it had to do with getting bitten, not just by a Werewolf but any supernatural creature. What would happen to the Betas, what would happen to a Banshee, what would happen to Derek, what would happen to Stiles…. They would talk about it late at night most times when there was a lull and nothing better to do than plan. They’d talk about it before a fight. Before their own little wars started. The last time they talked about it though had been a year ago. Before Stiles left. Before his mother wasn't just his mother. Before his Spark had jumpstarted. Before a bite from a supernatural creature would not just potentially shift the dynamic of the Pack, but now even potentially shift the dynamic of Stiles magic.

The force of Peters frown wasn’t exactly something Stiles was used to from the devil-may-care elder Werewolf and he huffed when it became too much. “It doesn’t help when I don’t have any real facts to go off of,” Stiles argued.

Peter leaned back against the house a bit, his shoulder brushing against the younger mans. “It’s always best to have a contingency plan, Stiles. Before you actually need one. You should understand that better than anyone.”

Stiles let the warm contact of another body settle into his skin as they looked out over the woods. From here the long driveway dropped away to the side, giving them a partial view of the town below, roofs just peaking through the covering of trees. It was a peaceful day, a false prelude to what Stiles, Derek, and Jackson had been doing just earlier that morning. The front door creaked a little as Erica poked her head out tentatively. “Hey, Stiles, is Deaton still- Oh, hey creeperwolf.” She stepped outside, hair a mess and squinting at the bright afternoon sun and wrapped up in an oversized robe. “Erica,” Peter nodded to her while Stiles scoot over, pressing further against Peter to make room for the woman. Erica sat down next to Stiles with a sign, easing into the arm he wrapped around her. “The ward was up for a while so we got worried,” she yawned. “Everything good out here?”

“Erica,” Peter nodded to her while Stiles scoot over, pressing further against Peter to make room for the woman. Erica sat down next to Stiles with a sign, easing into the arm he wrapped around her.

“The ward was up for a while so we got worried,” she yawned. “Everything good out here?”

Stiles rubbed his hand along her arm soothingly. “Deaton was dropping off some stuff for me,” he said, avoiding the question so smoothly Erica wouldn’t have asked again if even he hadn’t added the, “Everything’s okay.” Peter didn’t hear a stutter in the man’s heartbeat and he was a little surprised. He didn’t think Stiles was masking it which meant he actually thought everything was fine. Interesting.
Erica nuzzled against Stiles shoulder and Peter had to shift his arm just behind Stiles, letting his hand rest on the younger man’s waist so one of them didn’t slide off the small bench they were on. “Good,” she said. “Allison, Isaac, and Boyd are making an awesome hangover breakfast. Peter, you can come too even though you weren’t awesome enough to have hangovers with us.” Erica looked like she wanted to curl up in a dark room with a pot of equally dark coffee and Advil.

“Breakfast?” Peter asked with a little smirk. “You realized it’s past noon right?”

“Some of us had a more exciting night than others, old man,” the she-wolf shot back without any real intensity. Her fingernails gently scratched at Stiles’ knee and he knew she was talking not only of Lydia’s birthday but David’s Nest as well. None of them had been all that pleased when they’d come home that morning and he smelled of cigarettes.

Peter’s lips pressed together slightly to hide his smile and he gave Stiles hip a small, comforting squeeze. “Yes, exciting night. Lots of new developments for our Emissary I hear.”

Stiles didn’t even want to know how Peter had found out considering his apartment was on the other side of town from the Onyx. Then again, word got around in this town stupidly fast and Peter probably had a spy at the bar.

Erica’s long nails pressed into Stiles’ knee a little harder, a fond gesture for her, and she turned her face into Stiles’ neck where she took a deep breath, scenting him tiredly. “Mmmm, you still smell too much like that smoke,” she grumbled. “Scott’s going to grump about it.” Stiles let out a small chuckle as Erica finally stood up and stretched a bit. “Drop the ward will you? It’s weird not being able to hear out of one side of the house.”

The small shudder in the air enveloped the door as the ward fell away and there were some relieved sighs from inside. “Is Deaton dead?” came a joking call from Isaac. “Do we need to call Peter to get rid of a body?”

Said body remover raised an eyebrow. “It’s so nice to know what roll I play in this family,” Peter called back lightly. Something clattered, probably from the kitchen, and the pounding of footsteps echoed. Directly behind where they were sitting the curtains to the window were drawn back and Isaac and Scott’s faces pressed up against the glass, looking down at Stiles and Peter. “How long have you been here?” Isaac asked, just as Scott asked, “Do you want eggs?” they were both equally disheveled and comfort clad in pajamas as Erica was.

“Isaac, keep stirring the oatmeal!” Allison called out from deep in the kitchen. Isaac disappeared from the window a second later and Erica laughed, strolling back through the front door and back inside.

Peter let out a breath and unwound his arms from Stiles, standing up gracefully. “I suppose this conversation can be picked up later. One thing at a time as my father used to say.”

Stiles narrowed his eyes skeptically at the older wolf as he stood up as well. “Did he really?” He had a hard time believing that Peter, player of the longest game, took words like that to heart.

Peter shrugged and smiled. “He was the one that said it, not me.”
Chapter Summary

Not a chapter. Someone wanted a gander at the tattoos Stiles had in my head. So vola! Tattooed Stiles. I will be posting up a separate picture with all the tattoo meanings as well. Not sure when that will be however because ugg. The sickness has smote me. Colds are evil. New chapter coming soon!

His face is hard. to. draw.

12/31: added link to detailed picture and description of tattoos on my DA page. please visit if you're interested ^^

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

details of tattoos click here
And for those who don't remember, Stiles is tattooed head to toe. Acckk, crap. I just noticed I forgot to add his earrings....damnit.
“There are two ways someone can get a nickname, Sparky. They can do something really embarrassing like accidentally electrocuting a sweet and innocent unsuspecting water spirit when you shake their hand for the first time-”

“I apologized a *thousand* times for that!”

“-or they can do something so memorable people will look back on it with awe. You, my dear, did both.”

Everyone barring Peter and Scott left later in the evening after the entire kitchen was nearly emptied of food. Danny and Lydia made plans to come by later the next day to help Stiles with the rest of the wards in the house and then excused themselves for what they considered to be a well deserved evening of low key bubble-bathery and soothing music in their own homes to chase away the remainder of their hangovers before they had to be at work the next morning. They all had rooms in the Pack house but there was something to be said about having your own private space on the side. Allison had a the rest of the day planned out for meetings with her father’s clients, discussing a new shipment of ammunition and Isaac reluctantly left for work, knowing that it was probably going to be awkward as all get-out being around Deaton. He really hoped their deepest discussion that evening would be ‘pass the gauze please.’ Jackson begged off a little earlier than the rest, driving Boyd back to his grandmother’s house and then was probably going to spend the rest of the afternoon checking in with his “part time pack” back in England. Erica…well, Erica decided she was going to go hide in her house till the next morning.

Carla had come just in time to see everyone off to their own homes or jobs, mercilessly making fun of them for drinking too much like she hadn’t had anything to do with it. She earned herself a fond glare from Lydia who really saw too much of herself in the Undines teasing to be cross with her.
Stiles however was perfectly content with it. “I’m going to be mad at you forever for that ridiculous story you told my dad,” he announced as he’d pattered around the kitchen, cleaning up the demolished remains of brunch. Scott brought a few of the dishes to the sink and graced his friend a sympathetic look.

The entire Pack had been privy to that phone call this morning. They were amazed that Stiles had gotten a word in edgewise to explain what happened what with the Sheriff’s mile a minute scolding of ‘What did I tell you about punching someone when you’re holding something in your hand, you idiot!’ Scott then had to explain to the others that the comment stemmed from a rather unfortunate incident in first grade when Stiles got mad at a kid for pelting Scott with a ball and slugged him, totally forgetting that he was holding a handful of thumbtacks. That had been a fun trip to the nurse’s office to treat the tiny puncture wounds in Stiles palm.

Putting a glass tumbler through a Vampires face was a little more serious, but still, they’d been over this!

Carla laughed at the man’s griping as she sterilized behind Peter’s ear with an alcohol pad. “You can’t stay mad at me for more than a day,” she told him. One: true. Two: Carla made it a point to not piss the kid off too badly. “Don’t be dramatic, Sparky.”

“You couldn’t have called 911 like a normal person after we left?” Stiles insisted. “You had to call him on his cell phone? Why do even have my dad’s personal phone number?”

Carla waved her hand dismissively. “I have all the deputies cell numbers, Stiles, including some of the hospital staff, the one guy on Main street who used to be a Canadian Mounty, the Chief at the fire department who happens to be a distant cousin of mine-“

Peter interrupted her there, flipping through one of Erica’s fashion magazines while Carla worked. “Just because he’s a Nøkk does not mean he’s your cousin.”

“Hey,” Carla snapped. “Just because you don’t feel distant familial bonding with other Werewolves does not mean you can deprive me of the fuzzy feelings, old man,” She stabbed her pen into the mans skin a little harder than necessary before she returned her attention to Stiles. “And your dad wasn’t even that mad. I told him you handled yourself just fine. There was like, no damage to the bar either so yay for that! I’m pretty sure that we won’t be seeing any of David’s Nest causing trouble in town anymore. I mean, who wants to continually piss off the Emissary to Alpha Hale, hmm?” The grin on her face reminded Stiles of the one Derek had worn when he’d announced his official position in the Pack to the bar patrons, as little of them as there were. Even Scott was grinning at his side now. Yeah, that had been a moment of pride for everyone. Stiles sighed.

“Well, at least I have a relatively good reputation here,” he muttered, scrubbing a plate in the sink, handing another one to Scott to be dried. Relatively mild reputation.

“You had a good reputation in New York, Red” Carla reminded him, peeking Peters interest with the change of topic and mention of the infamous nickname.

Peter glanced at Stiles out of the corner of his eye. “You’ll have to tell us the story someday.” Sick mind that he was, Peter had already thought up a few likely scenarios mostly revolving around scenes similar to the night Stiles had come back and ended up eviscerating a Redcap, drenching himself in the creatures blood in the process. He really hoped the actual story lived up to what his imagination supplied. Scott perked up, metaphorical tail wagging. Stiles wanted to drown himself in the dishwater.

“I don’t see the harm in telling them,” Carla said with a raised eyebrow.
“Of course you don’t,” Stiles said gruffly. “It didn’t happen to you.”

“Iaac has been saying it’s because of the hoody,” Scott offered helpfully and Stiles wanted to face palm. God, he was always getting shit about that red sweatshirt from high school. It wasn’t like he even wore it all the time but when he did and there just happened to he a Werewolf around? Holy crap. *All* the Little Red Riding hoop jokes came out. He was never going to live it down.

“It is not about the damn sweatshirt,” Stiles growled, flicking water at Scott to get the dopey look off his face. He glanced over his shoulder at Peter. “I don’t even want to know what kind of gruesome things you've come up with,” he warned the man.

“Well, my fantasies are all I have,” Peter said innocently.

“God, just tell them, Stiles,” Carla laughed. “It’s a good story.”

Stiles let out a loud sigh, looking up at the ceiling with a pained expression. “It's just…so….stupid,” he said finally. God, he hadn't even told Derek about this yet…the Alpha was going to kill him for having share and tell when he wasn't there again. Why was his Pack so freaking pushy?

“I beg to differ,” Carla countered, setting up the vials of ink and prepping the needles on the counter. “There are two ways someone can get a nickname, Sparky. They can do something really embarrassing like accidentally electrocuting a sweet and innocent unsuspecting water spirit when you shake their hand for the first time–”

“I apologized a thousand times for that!”

“-or they can do something so memorable people will look back on it with awe and a little bit of terror. You, my dear, did both.”

“Oh, now you have to tell us,” Peter insisted, a grin pulling at the corners of his mouth. Knowing something juicy before the rest of the Pack (minus Scott of course) was always something Peter appreciated.

Scott turned the puppy eyes on his friend. “Pleeease, Stiles?” Oh, god, the lip. He did the lip thing.

“Ugg, fine!” Stiles snapped, dropping the plate in the sudsy water and moving on to another one. “Just be aware that this confession was given under duress and I will not be held accountable for whatever face melting spices I put in your next meals.”

“S’cool, I like spicy food,” Scott smiled. Peter just snorted.

Groaning inwardly that he’d have to recount the whole mess from start to finish, Stiles frowned and picked up a frying pan. “Okay. About two months after I’d settled in with Marabeths crew we got a call from an Incubus who was acting in an off-Broadway play. A Wichtlein had been squatting in the old theater house that had reopened for the show and he was knocking stuff around every time someone would walk past him, freaking out the staff. Lights would flicker and he’d lock and unlock doors, there was laughter coming from the rafters and the walls, and shit started falling from the catwalks when they were rehearsing. One of the stagehands had a pile of cables fall on him and he broke his collar-bone. It was some serious *Phantom of the Opera* shit and our contact in the play thought that the little bastard was predicting their deaths or something. It only got worse when there were reports of a woman in white wandering around the hallways, scaring the crap out of everyone.”

“Wait, a real Lady in White?” Peter asked with slight surprise in his tone. He was completely ignoring Carla’s prep work now, firmly interested in Stiles story which he had not expected to start out with ‘our contact the supernatural sex demon stage actor.’ Stiles sometimes teased Lydia about
being a Lady in Gray, a predictor of death rooted firmly in the physical world, but a Lady in White was a born spirit that was sometimes found in places were death walked. Graveyards, battlefields, hospitals. They were often mistaken for Angels.

“Yes,” Stiles grumbled. “Marabeth and I looked into it and of course we found out that back in 1922 the theater had been the scene of a huge shoot-out between some Irish immigrants and the police. One of these immigrants happened to be a magic user who had 12 different contracts with supernatural creatures.”

Carla had a grin on her face that Peter wasn't entirely sure about. He actually reached up and rubbed his temple in sympathy, imagining what Stiles was about to say next. “Let me guess, the magic user died before he could release the contracts.” A contract had to be broken by the magic user before they died or a part of the Fae would be bound to the place of death until someone else came around and released them. That was one of the reasons Stiles had miles and miles of red tape to go through whenever he struck up an agreement with Fae. Of course, it also meant that those who contracted with him really trusted the man.

“Correct!” Stiles said with forced enthusiasm. “The Wichtlein, three Fairies, a Troll, a Gnome, 4 Elemental spirits, a wood Elf who made it really freaking clear that she hated coming to America, and an Adhene. They were all bound to the theater which wouldn't have been an issue if the thing had stayed closed or been demolished. But no. They decided to reopen it and put on the play. The contracted were summoned whenever someone happened to walk over the place where the magic user died. Which was the god damn stage.” His dishwashing became a little more vigorous as he worked himself up over the memory. “So we had 12 really pissed off magical creatures in an enclosed space who had been forced to listen to crappy show tunes and had nothing better to do than scare actors, break things, and be mad at the magic user for being shot in the face before he could release them!”

Carla chuckled as she finished sketching out the rune and then went back to the ink, uncorking a few vials of the simmering liquid she'd use for the tattoo. “As someone who has contracted before, I can say I understand what they went through,” the Undine said. "Not only is it impossible to make plans when you have to worry about getting whisked off to a grave marker, but the more types of Fae you have in room, the tenser it gets.”

Peter shook his head a bit now that Carla wasn't drawing on him. “So when you offered to break the contracts, I take it they weren't helpful?” How could they be if this was how rumors of Stiles struck such fear in those Centaur brothers?

“HAH!” Stiles barked out suddenly. “I get that they were wary of magic users but when Marabeth and I stepped through the front door they sicked the Troll on us and tried to rip our heads off.” Peter winced. No one wanted to be charged at by one of those brutes. Think bus with fists. Stiles let out a tired, recollective sigh. “We ended up having to call in the entire gang so Marabeth and I could work on breaking the contracts,” he said. "It was a mess."

“Yeah, too many cooks in the kitchen,” Carla mused. She plugged in her machine and turned it on, the buzz of the needle humming through the air as she positioned herself at Peters side. “We had two Were with us, myself, a Nixi, an Elemental, plus another Spark in addition to Stiles. We distracted the Fae while Stiles and Lady Marabeth set things up on the stage. The Troll and Fairies got away from us unfortunately.” Carla's smile actually started to grow, eyes dancing with humor. “The stage already had props set up everywhere so of course Stiles managed to trip over every last one of them trying to get away from the Troll. The Faries-” Carla full on grinned and laughed. “-the Faries found one prop in particular and-“ She cut herself off with a snort as she pressed the needle to Peters skin.
“What?” Scott encouraged, looking between Carla and Stiles who was shaking his head despairingly.

“You know what the play was?” Stile asked. “Carrie. And you know who got doused in fake blood? This guy!” he pointed at himself animatedly, flicking soapy water in the air. “So there I was, covered in red food coloring, wrestling with a Troll who was trying to turn me into pulp while a group of fairies bit at my ankles.”

“Then,” Carla laughed, “Stiles grabbed the first prop he saw, which happened to be a freaking baseball bat-

“You've got to be kidding,” Scott gasped, face breaking out into a huge grin.


“-And he cracked the Troll so hard in the head the bat snapped in half. The Troll ended up smacking into a support beam which just splintered and the entire freaking roof started to cave in!”

“You broke the building?” Scott asked, mouth agape.

“The rest of us booked it out of there,” Carla continued, “And the entire theatre collapsed in on itself.”

“It was old,” Stiles insisted weakly. He wondered how long it would take for Erica to find out about this. God, she’d have a field day.

Carla ignored him, excitement pitching her voice higher. “So there we, all were standing in the middle of the street in the rain –yes, it started raining because that’s just how awesomely dramatic this was- in front of a building that had just collapsed. We were all beat up, half of us still had the other Fae in choke holds, freaking out because no one had seen Stiles come out. Then,” Carla looked at Stiles, eyes glittering with held-in excitement, “the ground started to shake.” Scott was on the edge of his seat, long having abandoned the dishes he was supposed to be drying and Peter looked like a child watching the latest episode of his favorite show. Once again Stiles wished he could drown himself in dishwater.

“You’d swear we were on a set,” Carla animated. “Lights started shining through the dust and debris, rubble started falling away and then we saw a huge chunk of plaster fly through the air. Right at the top of this giant mound of building bits came Stiles hand, like that scene in Mulan where the Hun punches out of the snow and scared the shit out of everyone. It. Was. Epic;” the Undine exclaimed, waving the tattoo gun in the air for emphasis. “He climbed out of the rubble like the freaking messiah of badassery, drenched head to toe with fake blood and Troll guts, all cut up and pissed off, tattoos lit up like a Christmas tree, holding the severed arm of a Troll in one hand and a shattered baseball bat with the other. I swear, the Adhele I had a hold on pissed herself. Stiles just pointed at them with the god damn dismembered Troll limb and said; Your contract is hereby dissolved. Get the fuck out of here!”

Scott let out a very manly squeal and punched his friend in the arm. “Dude, I have such a man-crush on you right now!”

Even Peter gave an appreciative nod. “I'll admit that was considerably better than what I’d thought up.” The whole blood-soaked theory hadn't been too far off and considering that the end result was that 11 of the 12 creatures they’d fought were undoubtedly spreading rumors of that night all around the world, it was quite easy to understand why their Little Red wasn't so much of a joke as a threat.
Carla let out a satisfied sigh and shook her head, turning back to Peters tattoo again. “Yeah, that one that will reign forever in my memories as one of the funniest things to happen on a New York Stage. Also, Stiles totally slaughtered a bunch of Vampires like two weeks later.”

The plate in Stiles hands shattered and Scott and Peter wiped around, eyes trained on Carla. “Carla, what the hell!” Stiles cried out, staring at the woman with a betrayed look in his face.

The Undine frowned and slapped the back of Peter’s head, telling him to turn away again. “Oh, stop, Stiles. You think that you can keep that little escapade quiet for long? Especially now? They already know you have a problem with Vampires and if they didn't before, ramming holy water down that guys face holes last night sure proves it.”

Under his anger and embarrassment, Stiles...felt a little ill. He’d told the Pack about the Vampires in Brooklyn. They knew the story behind the bite on his arm; it’s why they’d been protective at the Jungle that night when Charlotte and her Sister were around him. Still, he hadn't used words like ‘slaughter’ when he described what happened. He fought a Nest when he was trying to help Charlotte, he got bit, he killed some Vampires. He left out the details because it was…well, fuck, it was a little traumatizing.

"I don't want to talk about it, okay." Stiles suddenly felt like a liar hiding everything all over again. Deaton had made him feel guilty for not telling Derek or his father about the Order. Peter inadvertently made him feel guilty about keeping theories about his powers to himself while the Pack dealt with the Vampires. He just didn't want to worry anyone right now and he knew he could handle it by hims -

Damnit. He didn't want to be that guy.

The guy who had all the secrets and emotional baggage he carried around like the weight of it was something he deserved. It had taken him years to get Derek to stop being that guy and Stiles did not want to be that guy.

The lighthearted mood from the previous story pretty much gone, Stiles felt his stomach clench with a sudden urge to see his boyfriend, sequester them both in the bed and spill his deceitful lying guts to the man. “We've got enough going on as it is so I don't want to get into it. I haven't even-,”

Haven’t even told Derek about it yet.

Scott’s hand was suddenly on his shoulder and Stiles jumped, realizing that he was still gripping the broken remains of the plate above the now lukewarm water. “It’s cool, man,” Scott said. “Don’t worry about it.” Scott was mans best friend, Stiles decided. The best puppy. He nodded and gave his friend a weak smile, realizing he’d just added another topic to the list of things he needed to talk to Derek about. Peter’s eyes on him were a constant reminder of that.

The Emissary blinked and shook his head once to clear it. Seriously, Carla was a giant wrench thrown into all his calm evenings. He shot her a heated glare. “I’m still going to be mad at you forever.”

Chapter End Notes

Next chapter should be up tomorrow. Just editing at this point.
Peters comment gave Scott pause as the younger man thought about the literal files the Sheriff’s station had on them. Private record but still, everything got logged. Parish was a note taker. “Okay….I guess your dad being mad is justified. Bro, you’re kind of a delinquent.”

Derek knew Stiles silencing wards weren’t up because when he came home he heard three recognizable voices in the kitchen bantering aimlessly. The smell of food infused the air with spice and cooking meat and he took a deep breath, the tenseness in his shoulders bleeding out a bit as he settled into the familiar surroundings. He was only a little disappointed that the other two wolves were present but he would have been even more disappointed had his Pack left Stiles alone when he knew that Deaton had stopped by.

“Derek’s home.” He overheard Scott announce.

A little smirk managed to pull at the Alphas frown and Derek stowed his badge and gun in a drawer by the front door, hanging up his coat before he made his way to the kitchen. It wasn’t odd to see a few people in the kitchen cooking since Stiles had gotten back. The others were usually here anyway so Stiles would put them to work and keep them around for dinner. As usual, Scott manned the counter cutting up vegetables and Stiles oversaw everything with a head chef’s level of fortitude. Peter however…well, it was always odd to see the man cooking. Even before the fire he was a ‘sit back and sample the cooking wine while other people puttered around with the food’ kind of guy. Sulking in a corner? Normal. Browning hamburger? One frilly apron short of being domestic.

Scott waved to him as he came into the kitchen and Stiles offered him a small familiar smile in greeting. “I’m not a wolf but I’m not deaf either.”

Carla’s fresh citrus perfume hanging in the air caught his attention and Derek glanced over at his uncle who had a small gauze bandage behind his ear. “When I tell Cora you got a tattoo she’s going to laugh her ass off,” Derek announced, searching for a water bottle in the back of the fridge. Cora’s reaction would no doubt be to send her uncle a dozen images of tramp stamps she’d Googled and
insist his next one be a butterfly. Derek knew he sounded all too pleased with the prospect which Peter obviously noticed.

“She would,” the older man agreed. “And when she has to get hers I hope she gets someone as steady-handed as Carla.” The sarcasm flooding from his tone could have burst a dam.

“It’s not like she meant to stab you,” Scott insisted from the center island where he was meticulously chopping onions for the salad. “You kept moving.” Too mature to threaten Scott with the hot frying pan he was currently tending, Peter just shot the young man a dead glare over his shoulder.

Water in hand, Derek gave a small snort and closed the fridge. Stiles had a small smile on his lips as he stirred the boiling pot in front of him and Derek leaned on the counter to his side, taking a long drink before he asked, “Have you talked to your dad yet?”

Stiles winced, spoon pausing its clockwise rotation before starting up again. “No. Not since this morning,” he admitted. “Which is kind of worrying me. Was he really mad when he hung up? Like, mad enough to threaten to ground his adult son?”

Derek wondered if he could get away with telling his boyfriend he was grounded. “Not so much concerned,” he replied, censoring his words as his eyes flicked to Scott and Peter. The Sheriff had been mad about the Vampires and concerned about the Order. Understandably so.

“You guys didn’t do anything wrong though,” Scott voice wavered a little, his eyes finally starting to water from the onion that was piling up on the cutting board. “I mean even Jackson said those Vampires were assholes. The Sheriff can’t be too mad at you.” The onions must have been strong enough to mess with Scotts senses because he didn’t seem to notice the stuttered beat his friend’s heart gave.

“No, I sort of overreacted,” Stiles admitted quietly, causing Derek to do a double take. Seriously? Jesus, if John got wind of that admission Derek was in a world of hurt because he’d told the man exactly the opposite.

“Dude, they provoked you,” Scott insisted with a frown. “And you had a right to defend yourself. I think your dad would be proud you kicked their ass.”

Scott obviously couldn’t smell the guilt over the vegetable and Derek was about to step in when-

“The Sheriff’s not allowed to be concerned?” Peter cut in suddenly, eyebrow raised. “After all, his son does have an even longer police record now.” The interruption had been a little too coincidental and the save a little too unlike Peter for it to be kosher. Derek happened to see the look that passed between his uncle and Stiles and his instinct told him something was up. The slight gratitude from Stiles barely there smile and an understanding an almost imperceptible nod from Peter made it seem like they weren’t really talking about the Vampires anymore. If they were the look in Peters’ eyes wouldn’t be an understanding what Stiles had done, it would have been pride.

Realization dawned on Derek seconds later. Peter knew.

The older Werewolfs comment gave Scott pause as he thought about the literal files the Sheriff’s station had on them. Private record, but still, everything got logged -Parish was a note taker. “Okay…I guess your dad being mad is justified.” Scott allowed. "Bro, you’re kind of a delinquent.”

“I’m not that bad,” Stiles muttered, purposely avoiding looking at his Alpha through the stiffness in his shoulders eased when he realized Scott was sidetracked.

Scott made a skeptical face. “I think we have our own file cabinet.”
“Two at least,” Peter supplied nonchalantly. He caught his nephew’s affronted stare, raising an eyebrow in unapologetic inquiry and Derek felt himself scowl harder. He wasn’t even denying it! Peter knew. Stiles told Peter. Told him. Just like that. Derek knew he was probably overreacting and Peter had more likely coerced the information out of Stiles, but still. He could understand telling Scott first, or maybe even his dad, but why Peter? It could have been Lydia or Danny, who knew about magic. It could have been Melissa, his surrogate mother. Or even Chris, who probably would have given Stiles some sort of magic gun to defend against zealot Druids. But no, it had to be his vindictive uncle who still had bouts of crazy and just had to stick his nose into everyone’s business. Derek loved the man but jealousy still reared its ugly head. In the long run it would probably be a good thing but right now it was just annoying.

Derek went to grab some plates from the shelves, refusing to say anything on the subject when he knew the first words out of his mouth would be ‘Peter, you’re an asshole’, so he chose to put it on the back burner for now. “Scott, are you staying for dinner?” He asked gruffly, just managing to keep the bite out of his question.

Scott shook his head, dumping a pile of onion and tomato chunks over the lettuce. “No, I’m working a graveyard shift so I’m having dinner with my mom.”

“Isaac’s working late,” Stiles added. “It’s just us three tonight.” The younger man sounded a little edgy to Derek but he didn’t comment on that either. Considering that his uncle knew something at least, Derek felt that Stiles should feel a little nervous. He felt warranted in being irate with the man. Before he could glare his uncle or Lupa into an early grave, however, Derek excused himself from the kitchen so he could go upstairs and change out of his uniform. He could hear them talking in the kitchen while he stripped off his shirt and pants, switching them out for something more comfortable. He stayed up there for a while more, stewing in his own angst before he heard Scott call up to him.

“I’m heading out, Derek. See you tomorrow night!”

Training. Right. He’d almost forgotten about it. ‘Later,’ Derek grumbled just loud enough for the other to hear. He waited till he heard the door click shut and Scott drove off before he made his way back downstairs again.

“Smells great,” Peter said cheerfully as they all sat down at the table, steaming food piled in front of them. Stiles just winced at the light-hearted compliment while Derek continued to scowl.

Meals were usually quiet and amiable when it was just the three of them; calm like only family can be together in silence. This time around however there was noticeable rigidity. Stiles kept glancing at Derek, only to look away when the other noticed. Peter kept glancing between them, poised and proper and not at all guilty of being himself. They finished most of the meal without speaking a word but Derek found himself trying to get Peter to stop glancing expectantly at Stiles every other bite because every time he did the anxious scent off of Stiles would grow. Derek tapped his fork on his plate exasperatedly and Peter just looked him right in the eye and shrugged. After a rather animated conversation between two sets of Hale eyebrows over the table, Stiles finally cleared his throat. He broke the silence with a voice that held only a slight waver on the first word. “So. We should talk, right?”

Derek settled with one final glare at Peter and sighed quietly, setting down his fork and giving the man his full attention. “It’s not a bad idea,” he said carefully. “I heard some of the details from Deaton but I want your take on it.”

Stiles glanced hesitantly at Peter again. “It’s okay if Peter stays?”

Derek shrugged, wondering if Stiles wanted the older man there for some sort of moral support or
something. “Considering he already seems to know about the Order anyway I don’t care much either way.” Yeah, he couldn’t really stop the sullenness from seeping into that sentence.

Stiles winced again, pressing his lips together and Peter took a sip from his glass, casually saying, “Don’t be mad, nephew mine. I simply overheard Stiles and Deaton talking outside.”

“Of course you did,” Derek rolled his eyes. “Now shut it.” He wanted Stiles take on the Order, not Deatons, and not Peters, and god did he have some questions, the first of which being why the hell didn’t I know about this right away?

Stiles let out a nervous breath and began. "Deaton brought it up before I got the chance to. Trust me, I did not want you guys to find out about it from him." He sighed and sat back in his chair, staring at his plate of half-eaten food and Derek felt a little of his irritation ebb when he noticed the dejected look on the younger man's face.

In way of softening the harshness in his tone, Derek said, “You’d tell us if you thought they were a problem.” He was sure about that. If the Order was a threat Stiles would have said something to him. As his Lupa, as his Mate, he would have said something.

Stiles opened his mouth but Peter spoke first. “Or if one of them happened to, say, threaten you in New York,” he added, dabbing his mouth with a napkin. Stiles breath hitched and he gave the man a gob-smacked look, mouth hanging open.

Okay, maybe Derek wasn’t so sure…. If the bitter scent of betrayal leaking off Stiles was anything to go by he hadn’t wanted Peter to say anything about it either. Derek could feel a growl tickling the back of his throat as he looked back at Stiles. “They threatened you?” he asked sharply.

Stiles turned back to him looking a little guilty. “It was like…a warning. It was just this one old lady that said they’d be keeping an eye on me. No one has shown up since, even after all the…” Stiles waved his hand around indicating anything from magic to bullshit with a simple gesture. “I was going to tell you.”

Noting that Stiles heartbeat was unwaveringly steady, Derek had to repress a little anger and he took a controlled breath, steadying his own. “Is there anything we can do?” he asked carefully. “Any measures we can take to make sure they stay away?” The Alpha felt himself grow uneasy when Stiles and his uncle shared yet another look. Peter nodded to Stiles and the young man sighed, rubbing his eyes. “Stiles,” Derek rumbled out in warning.

The younger man let out a breath, looking considerably more strained than he had a moment ago. “We…should probably revisit some of my worst-case scenarios,” he said reluctantly.

Derek felt dread pool in the pit of his stomach, sharper than his irritation and mild sense of betrayal. Stiles Worst-case scenarios, a.k.a something bad enough happening that he’d have to choose between a horrible gruesome death and the Bite. Derek didn’t like those talks. “I don't see what this has to do with-,”

“Just consider this for a moment,” Peter interrupted evenly. The older man held up his fingers and ticked them off. “Stiles is your Lupa, your Emissary, a Druid, and a Spark. That combination is already drawing unwanted attention from this Order. If you were to add Werewolf to that mix how do you think they would react?”

Derek got it. Deaton had told him as much so his response was quick and to the point. “I don’t care,” he growled. He didn’t care if the freaking Druidic Order and the High Council of the Supernatural and Mystical Powers that Be and the freaking Ministry of Magic had a problem with it! People could
be as unsettled and as mad as they wanted about how much power Stiles held so as long as the man didn’t die.

“You should care, Derek,” Stiles said firmly. “The Pack needs you to care about it.” His Lupa’s tone was stern, amber eyes hardened and Derek forced himself to settle down and listen properly. It helped that even Peter looked curious for an explanation meaning it might be his first time hearing this as well.

Stiles rubbed his hands over his face, taking a breath. He glanced between Derek and Peter before he spoke. “Okay, just…try to follow me on this. Deaton said there have been some reported cases of Emissaries getting bitten by shifters but they never turn. Something to do with being a bridge between humans and Weres. He assumed that because I’m your Emissary if I were to get bitten it might save me from dying but I wouldn't actually turn, like Lydia when she was bitten.” Derek nodded to show that he followed. He remembered this conversation from the first day the Vet had announced Stiles ready to take his place as Emissary. Stiles went on. “However the Pack has also unanimously voted me as your Lupa. As far as we know there has never been an Emissary that has actually been part of the pack they support.”

Derek nodded slowly again. Deaton had been his mothers Emissary but his family had never considered him as part of the Pack. That was sort of the point of the Emissary; not fully part of either world but able to reside in both. Deaton was close but lived outside the Pack’s social structure and hardly had contact with anyone other than Talia and Peter. In fact, even thinking about the Druid in a roll like Lupa felt…unnatural.

“I’ve been thinking,” Stiles continued. “What with all…” he made a vague motion to himself, “this happening, we can’t be sure that I won’t be turned if I’m bitten. A year ago, I would have been okay with that, honestly. If it came down to dying or being furry, I’d go furry all the way, but now-,”

“Stiles,” Derek interrupted gently, feeling his wolf rumble. “I can discuss this again and again with you but my answer will be the same. If your life is in danger, Scott or I will-“

“I know!” Stiles cut in, holding up his hand placatingly. “I know. I agreed to that a long time ago. One of you will bite me to save me. I know, Derek. But things have changed now. I have changed.”

Derek leaned back in his chair trying to will the tension out of his shoulders and making himself think rationally instead of with his inner Wolf which wanted to grab up its Mate, haul him off to their room and just cuddle excessively while he assured him that nothing bad would ever happen to him, that the Bite would take, that he would be safe and secure and live to be one hundred, never facing any danger ever again. His Wolf was in denial but Derek wasn’t. “Do we know anything about magic users receiving the bite?” he asked finally.

Peter made a contemplative noise and tapped his nail on the tabletop. “I've heard of a few. With Sparks I’ve heard it go either way depending on their willpower to survive and turn, or not turn. Witches are pretty much the same as humans, though I believe that becoming a Were affects their magic. Druid magic generally does not mix well with the Bite,” he noted. “I've never heard of a Druid being turned first hand, but many suspect the result would be something like what Jennifer Blake became.”

Derek growled. “A Darach”

Peter kept his eyes on Stiles who was starting to smell sour with unease. “Death is usually the worst scenario but there are more unfavorable options.”

Stiles nodded reluctantly and went on, eyes once again boring into the table. “That’s the problem.
Being a Spark I **think** my willpower might be strong enough to keep it from killing me, despite being part Druid, but even if I survive it might…” Stiles trailed off and the scent of his unease grew even stronger. Peter leaned forward a bit, hand inching towards Stiles arm till Derek let out a huff and his uncle stopped. He needed Stiles to finish.

“It might do what, Stiles?”

The younger man looked up, his amber eyes shadowed. Derek could feel the muscles in his neck tense. Unbidden his thoughts swirled around Jackson and the whole Kanima incident years before. It had nearly broken the boy, turning into that master-seeking monster, hurting those people and being **completely** unaware and unable to stop it. Back then killing him seemed like the only option but thank god Lydia had been able to reach him and turn him back. Even now that Jackson could shift into Beta form he still had reptilian qualities. The Kanima was still in him and Jackson’s wolf had to fight every day with it. Derek didn't want Stiles to go through that. ”You won't turn into a Kanima,” Derek declared. Or a Darach. He just….couldn't.

Stiles shifted in his chair a bit, looking reluctant. “I don’t think I would either. I mean it’s still a concern, sure, but…” he licked his lips nervously and glanced at Peter. “Deaton warned me that there are so many different types of magic in me right now that my body can’t contain it. I can’t let the magic out fully because it-,” Stiles got a desperate look in his eyes and pressed his lips together like he wanted to stop, but pushed on. Derek thought he saw a pale flicker of violet in the man’s eyes, warring with the whisky brown. “Derek, it’s strong. It is so hard to use just a little and then cut it off. I feel it constantly buzzing under my skin. I feel the Ley Lines in the earth, and the Nemeton’s constant pull, and all the Fae in the town. If I turn into Werewolf having access to **those** abilities it could be a massive power shift that I just…..” He trailed off with a sigh, leaning his elbows on the table and carding his fingers through his hair. The wolves could feel the strain radiating off their Emissary and ached to offer some sort of comfort.

Stiles put his hands down just as quickly and sat straight in his chair. His face now was forced into a mask of calm, jaw tense. “I kind of understand what the Druids mean about balance, as much as I hate it,” he said finally. “Right now it works. The Pack. The structure of it. It’s weird by general Werewolf standards but it works for us. Alpha, True Alpha, former Alphas turned Betas, long distance members, Banshee, Kitsune, Hunters, humans,” he waved a hand at Peter, “Peter.” The older wolf shrugged. “We’ve all got our places and it’s good. We’ve got it figured out and it works for us. For me. It works because I’m your Lupa. It works because I’m human.” The next breath Stiles took rattled a little in his chest and his words came out softer, fearful while the mask of calm dropped. “If I take the bite one day, what if I ruin it?”

Derek was visibly stunned at that admission. He never even…really considered that. What was one more wolf in their mash up of supernatural creatures and humans? If anything he felt that it would absolutely solidify Stiles place in the Pack as his Lupa, the person he trusted above all others to lead and protect. Peter was just as surprised but had the wherewithal to ask, “Stiles, what do you think would happen exactly?”

Stiles looked over to the older man, giving him a watery smile, hints of fear flickering in the corners of his expression. “Exactly? I have no idea. I’m just guessing,” he admitted ruefully. “Turning someone requires the biological magic of an Alpha like Derek or Scott. I can feel that magic through the Pack bond like…like a little fire in each of you and it’s good, and strong, and awesome but,” Stiles swallowed, hands clenching in front of him. “But it’s **magic.** I’ve **got** magic. In spades. I can barely handle what I have now and I’ve already been warned by the Druid Order about doing anything to upset their balance so **obviously** my worst fear is that I’ll be somehow magically **warped** into this weird little reject wolf who’s stupid drunk on power that throws a massive wrench into this incredibly awesome Pack that we’ve built over the past few years.” Derek watched as Stiles voice
grew higher with the run on sentence and he stared down at his nervously ringing hands. Above them the dining room light flickered.

“What if I can’t handle it all? Shit, I am so unprepared for having more power, Derek. Despite what people think it is not cool to have the ability to tap into the power of the freaking earth. Do you even realize how much energy that is? It’s the earth for christ’s sake. If I turn, what if it’s like a computer getting overloaded and I just short circuit and explode or something?” The light above flickered more and Derek could hear it buzzing, the filament getting brighter. “Or like my body decides to just reject all the magic and just vacate the premises? I’ll just be this pathetic twitchy mess of useless thing that happens to have fangs and claws and god you guys will have to worry about me again like-!” Derek surged up and grabbed Stiles whose hands had started shaking, heart rate elevated like a drumbeat in his ears. The scent of ozone had slowly filled the room and Stiles practically buzzed with energy, tense limbs trying to hold in his discomfort. Out of the corner of his eye Derek saw the shadows in the room draw back, the light dying down to its proper output instead of threatening to shatter.

Derek dropped to his knees next to the mans chair, clasping his shoulders with hands that barely held back claws and forced Stiles to look him in the eye. Pale violet and honey.

“Don’t you dare finish that,” he ordered, voice rough like he could taste the other mans distress on his tongue. Peter was usually the first to think of and bring up worst-case scenarios–usually to throw off everyone’s game- but this was one he didn’t even want to consider. “You are not a computer and we will always worry.” Derek pulled the younger man forward and wrapped him in a strong hug. “That’s what you do when you care about someone.” Stiles quieted and Derek could feel him tremble in his arms. Derek looked at his uncle from over Stiles shoulder. “Peter, are you staying here tonight?” he asked softly. All anger he felt about Peter being ‘in the know’ was gone now and he felt like a complete jerk for still entertaining the notion that Stiles was hiding things from them on purpose. There were reasons. Of course there were reasons. Stiles was scared.

Scared that he would somehow hurt his family.

The older wolf drew his eyes away from Stiles, concern etched into drawn brows. Slowly Peter nodded, glancing up at the light. “I think I will.” He motioned with his head towards the ceiling, signaling for Derek to take Stiles upstairs. “I’ll be in the library if you need me. I’ve got a lot to look up.” Peter stood up from his chair quietly. As he passed by them he reached out and placed his hand on the back of Stiles neck, thumb brushing over a pale line of tattoo he found there. He didn't say anything because just the touch was enough. He could feel some of the tension bleed out from the younger man and thin black lines traveled up his arm. Derek received the same careful touch and the wolf leaned into it, gratitude nestling in his chest. Without a word the older man left and headed for the library.

They sat there for a moment longer, arms wrapped around Stiles as he calmed down, face buried in the crook of Derek’s neck. He felt the man breath out against his skin. “Let’s…go upstairs okay?” Stiles said, voice weaker than Derek cared for. But he nodded and stood, taking Stiles hand and helping him up, wordlessly following him up to their room.

Chapter End Notes

I....

yeah. This chapter made me look back and thing 'so remember when I said I had most
of this story written out already?'

yeah. LIES. >.
“What do you say to an early night?” Stiles asked mildly, glancing around the room like he was looking for something to distract him. It was a rhetorical question so Derek just watched him for a moment letting Stiles settle into the silence. The man was unsure, that much was obvious. He was unsure of what to do now but he was still filled with that same restless energy that had been buzzing under his skin since he stepped foot back in Beacon Hills.

Chapter Notes

As I have now just dealt with my third one let me extend my deepest sympathies to anyone who has ever suffered from kidney stones. They are such bitches.

no beta, there are errors. sorrrrryyyy T.T will fix later.

Derek was glad that for once the house was blessedly empty—barring Peter downstairs—as he followed Stiles down the hallway past everyone’s rooms. Derek watched as Stiles lightly brushed his fingertips over the wall and Isaacs door frame as he waked, footsteps whisper soft on the hardwood floor. The line of tension that seemed to run over his shoulders and down his back hadn’t dissipated and Derek could hear the younger man taking steady breaths; in and out. The quiet in the house was a bit of a comfort now whereas at dinner it had started out as suffocating. Derek doubted that Stiles would have been so forthcoming had there been more than he and Peter around and he was sure that even with just the two of them the man had been reluctant to broach the topic of what had been at the heart of his troubles.

As they passed each room Derek couldn’t help but cast a glance inside out of habit, noting that on each one Stiles let his fingers trail over the doorframe, brushing the small runes he’d carved into the wood; protection, good dreams, wards against intruders. The smell of the Pack lingered in the air but for tonight the rooms were quiet and empty. Isaac’s door was usually closed and his room was a god-awful mess most of the time. A day didn’t go by when he didn’t trip over at least one piece of clothing on the floor. Lydia’s door was open only to a certain extent that didn’t invite snooping but also made it look welcoming. The smell of her perfume drifted into the hallway mixed with the soft downy smell of her expensive comforter. Allison and Erica had rooms next to each other and their doors were wide open. The Huntress’s room was tidy with some posters tacked up and a desk in the corner where she cleaned her guns. Sometimes she brought home some paperwork of her Dads but that was all filed away in a desk drawer now. Erica had a few hand drawn pictures hung on her closet door from her favorite kids at the day care. She had painted her room a cheery blue color because after being tortured in a dark cell for days she said she always wanted to feel like she could see a clear sky. Boyd and Jackson’s rooms were open and tidy only because they weren’t there all that much. What with Jackson only spending close to every other month in Beacon Hills and usually preferring to sleep at Derek’s old loft, and Boyd organizing his move to Montana, the rooms didn’t
get much use. Similarly, Ethan and Danny's rooms were neat and aired out, spending equal amounts of time in their own apartments as they did the Pack house. Scotts room revealed an utter sty rivaling Isaacs with crash course medical text books piled on a desk, old lacrosse gear in the corner and a hamper that had been completely hidden in a pile of dirty clothes, spare scrubs, and work shirts. They were all pretty sure that his old room at his moms house looked the same, much to Melissa's eternal frustration.

The last two open doors near the end of the hall belonged to a guest room and what was technically Stiles room. Stiles, however, had maybe slept in there a grand total of one time since getting back, favoring Derek’s room and the library which no one commented on. It wasn't like they'd expected anything different.

Derek's room was the largest but it seemed even bigger because of the two large bay windows. One faced the Preserve and framed the edge of the lake and the second overlooked the hillside and the town just on the other side. The windows were left open a crack to let in the cool air and the heavy dark curtains were drawn back, allowing the moonlight to filter in through the trees. The smell of pine and cool wet earth drifted in and mingled with the anxious, herbal smoke scent coming off of Stiles.

The younger man entered the bedroom without bothering to turn on the light and started tugging off his outer shirt, tossing it to the floor without a word and leaving only the tight fitting white top. Stiles walked over to the window and reached out, rubbing his fingers along the curtain and pulling it open a fraction more, pushing on the glass so that more fresh air could pass through. Derek heard the man swallow, pulse ticking out a nervous pattern for a moment or two before he spoke. “What do you say to an early night?” Stiles asked mildly, glancing around the room like he was looking for something to distract him. It was a rhetorical question so Derek just watched him for a moment, letting Stiles settle into the silence. The man was unsure, that much was obvious. He was unsure of what to do now but he was still filled with that same restless energy that had been buzzing under his skin since he stepped foot back in Beacon Hills.

When Derek didn't respond, Stiles rubbed his bare arm and then moved his hand up to press on the back of his neck. “Training tomorrow afternoon,” he muttered to himself as though starting a mental list for himself. His jaw tensed as he ground his teeth lightly, thoughts making him frown. He wanted to say something but judging from the look on his face the words that came out weren’t it.

Derek didn’t speak. He just watched, leaning against the doorframe as his Mate shifted from foot to foot restlessly. Unburdened by long sleeved outer shirt Derek could see it in the way his muscles twitched under his bare skin, the way the subtle cords in his neck flexed as he swallowed, the way his hands rubbed against his jeans anxiously like they tended to do now when he wanted a cigarette. As Derek remained silent Stiles eyes darted around a particular area of the room before settling on the large bay window overlooking the town. Derek ached to say something and understood Stiles driving need to fill the air with words. You didn't have to dwell in your own thoughts if you were talking, or listening to someone talk. His wolf was scratching at the floor inside his mind, wanting to comfort the younger man and ease the shaking in his hands.

Then Stiles spoke suddenly. “I broke a building in New York.”

Derek blinked himself out of his daze. What? “Sorry, what?”

Stiles was still staring out the window with a contemplative, slightly vacant look on his face. “A building,” he repeated. “I was fighting a Troll and -well, technically, he broke the building. I think it was structurally unsound-. Anyway, I hit him in the face with a bat and then the whole thing came down and somehow I got a hold of his arm which had gotten torn off or something, so I was waving
around a Troll arm and yelling at a bunch of Fae and I was covered in red paint.” Derek barely had
time to let his confusion manifest into a frown before Stiles let a breath out quickly and took another
one just as fast. “That’s how I got my nickname. Red. Well, the one after Peter gave it to me. Like,
Red 2.0. Carla says it’s the fun story.”

“Stiles-.”

Stiles looked back at Derek, expression quickly bordering on desperate and panicked. “Then there
were the Vampires. The Nest I told you guys about when I was helping Charlotte and one bit me.
I…sort of lost it. Like totally lost it.”

“Stiles-“

“I killed a lot of them, Derek.” Stiles ran his fingers through his hair like he was soothing away
memories and he swallowed hard, starting to pace in front of the window. “That’s probably why the
Centaur were afraid of me. I started…I mean rumors started spreading about me and some of them
are true. I mean, I really laid into that Nest and I’m pretty sure half the East Coast thinks I’m a
homicidal maniac because of it. Which, yeah, I get that. Walking around with a bloody bat sort of
screams psycho.”

“You don’t have to-,”

“But looking back on it I was just learning how to control my powers and all of a sudden I had
access to all these super fricking dangerous weapons and of course I came off looking like a raging
lunatic with a hard-on for beating up things up! Yeah, I like a little violence- you know that- but
some of those rumors are totally crazy. Okay, some of them are true. Like those Pixies in Central
Park? That happened. But I didn’t uproot that tree! That was totally Marabeth and Henly, and-

“Stiles!” Derek interrupted firmly. Stiles blinked and his mouth clamped shut, jumping in surprise at
the close proximity of Derek’s voice. By this point the taller man was only a foot away from him and
Stiles just seemed to realize that he’d moved.

Reaching up and letting his hand come to grip the sides of Stiles neck, thumbs brushing the line of
his jaw, Derek could only look at him fondly. “Why are you telling me this?” he asked.

Stiles frowned for a moment and then looked away, leaning into one of Derek’s hands. “…Carla,”
he swallowed. "sort of made me tell Scott and Peter about my nickname. Scott’s probably going to
tell Isaac and he'll tell Erica and then soon everyone will know. I just…I wanted you to hear it from
me first.” He let out a small breath and sat on the windowsill, shoulders drooping. “It’s stupid, I
know. But I know you’re getting pissed that you don’t know everything that happened in New
York.” He paused and a moment later a tattoo on Stiles hand flared to life, lighting up a silencing
ward. Normally when Stiles did this he had a shirt on but this time Derek could see the light on his
palm travel up the lines on Stiles arm to his bicep where it bloomed out into a series of lines and
angles, shimmering light and fading the higher it reached up his arm to his shoulder. The very faint
shuffling he’d been able to hear from Peter in the library disappeared. Stiles pressed his lips together
to think before he spoke again, still avoiding Derek’s direct gaze. “And don’t tell me you’re not
pissed. I might not be able to smell emotions but you reeked of irritation when you walked through
the door, so if you want me to spill everything now I can-,”

“I know what you’re trying to do,” Derek interrupted with a light smile. “And thank you.” His
fingertips trailed through Stiles soft hair at the nape of his neck. “But you don’t have to.” Stiles
started to say something and Derek cut him off again. “You were right. You have to tell me when
you’re ready. If you try to tell me everything in one go it’s not going to make sense. Like, I’m
already going to have to ask Peter about the Troll because there is defiantly more to that story that I
Still, Stiles seemed hesitant, like he didn’t believe he was off the hook yet. “A lot happened, Derek,” he muttered, staring at a space between Derek’s ankles and the floor. “11 months is a really long time.”

“Yeah, it is,” Derek agreed. And it was stupid of him to think that it was smart to get it all out of Stiles calmly and in a timely manner. Yes, every new revelation to come in the future was probably going to shock him and make him want to demand that Stiles sit down and spill everything so he could avoid any heart attacks, but he sort of preferred it to Stiles working himself up into a panic attack or stressing himself out so badly that he blew out all the lights. “I won’t lie, finding out about the Order was a bit of a shock, “ Derek admitted, feeling Stiles practically flinch in his hands, “but you’ve got the rest of your life to tell me all about what happened over there.” The alpha didn't even blush at his cleverly disguised marriage proposal. Stiles met his eyes now, the amber color lighting up under the soft glow of the moon and Derek felt like he was looking into the eyes of a Wolf. A Wolf he had the urge to grab and never let go of. Stiles had no business being so strong and looking so vulnerable.

“The Druid from the Order,” Stiles voice cracked slightly. “Marabeth was with me the whole time she was there. I haven’t heard or seen anything of them for months, not even when I started using my powers more actively. I swear I’ve only been keeping a lid on it because I didn’t think that they were going to come around again.” His frown furrowed his eyebrows. “I don’t mean its nothing to worry about, but Deaton shouldn’t have made such a big deal out of it to you and my dad. He still doesn’t like that I’m quote unquote *abusing my Druid magic with my Spark.*” His tone was bitter now. “Like that’s a freaking thing.”

Derek let out a small breath, recognizing the tone. “Are you scared of them?” Derek asked quietly, gazing down at his Mate.

Stiles head whipped up to stare at Derek disbelievingly. “No!” he declared, only to shrink away a second later. “Maybe? I don’t know.” He fell silent for a moment and then let out a sigh, tipping forwards a bit and letting his forehead come to rest on the center of Derek’s chest. “Okay, that lady was wicked powerful, but I’m more scared of what them *coming* here would mean. Something so messed up happening that the people who protect the actual *balance of nature* have to step in and fix it.” Derek rubbed Stiles neck when he felt the muscles tense up slowly, the lines of tattoos shimmering a dull blue under his skin.

"Do you think something bad is going to happen?" Derek asked, careful to keep his tone neutral.

Stiles sighed. "Something bad always happens around here. Knowing these Vampires are coming to town is already starting to get to me. David’s Nest just…rubbed me the wrong way, and I can’t help thinking that every mildly aggressive Vampire I meet is like the one that—…” Derek felt Stiles push his forehead harder into his chest and he let his thumb trace the back of his neck, rubbing the stiff muscles with a bit more pressure. “If I start loosing control and something happens to make the Order butt in,” Stiles breathed. “I just…can’t risk you guys getting hurt because of some emotional baggage I dragged back from New York.”

“Hey,” Derek said, moving Stiles back and guiding his face up. “Werewolves, remember? We’ll figure something out so let’s just take a break from it.” Stiles scoffed a little and Derek couldn’t help but chuckle at his own words. ‘*Let's take a break*’ was the last thing Derek would have said a few years ago and they both knew it. “Besides,” Derek went on, “that’s not what I want to hear right now.” His thumb brushed over a very faint set of tan lines on Stiles right temple. “Why don’t you start with these,” Derek said. “Tell me about the tattoos.”
The laugh Stiles let out was bright and airy, lines of worry vanishing from his face in an instant, making Derek feel overwhelmingly good about himself. Stiles tipped his head up and slipped his arms around the other man's waist, pulling him closer. "I was wondering when you were going to ask," Stiles said. "God knows you stare at them enough."

The moon was a quarter full tonight but the sky was cloudless, letting its soft white light illuminate the man's features. Under the moonlight Derek swore Stiles' tattoos gave a subtle shimmer. Not the soft glowing blue like when magic ran through them but something gentler, quieter. "I'm not just staring at the tattoos," Derek smirked, leaning down and nipping at Stiles' bottom lip.

Since he'd gotten back he'd seen Stiles without clothing on many occasions but somehow the pale markings on the man's skin seemed to elude him as he instead took in the whole package that was Stiles Stilinski, naked, flushed and moaning on the bed. Only when his Mate's bare skin was pressed close to his, wrapped in his arms, had he taken time to study the markings. Each line was so perfect and elegant, curving over pale stretches of skin like a painting. He recognized some of the runes and symbols for the elements of nature, planetary symbols, and Pagan markings. A long continuous line ran the length of Stiles' body from hands to feet, curving around his shoulders, chest, back, and ribs, arching over the clean jut of his hip and down his thighs all the way to his ankles, connecting the markings in an unbroken line. The detailed geometrical pattern was a work of art, squares and circles within circles, all contained and centered on the man's torso. Above and below it were two symbols of equal size. One in the center of his chest and one below his navel. Even lower than that, hidden by the edge of his pants most of the time was a tattoo Derek recognized. A Triskele. The three fold spiral he bore between his own shoulder blades.

Stiles started to explain the tattoos finger by finger while Derek traced over them with his own. His hands were his main source of protection, he said. Derek had witnessed that right away when Stiles had put out a cigarette in his palm. On the back of his right hand was the alchemic symbol for fire and on the first knuckles of both was Algiz, the rune for protection. Each finger was home to alchemic symbols for soul and sun, fire, air, water, and earth, aided by the protective rune above them, giving him power over and protection from each. On his left wrist was a Norse rune; Lasabjotur the lock breaker, to help him get free from bindings. Above his wrists was the long, thicker line of ink started, trailing over each limb. The symbols connected to the lines running down left arm were Fewsets; old Druid symbols that altered the magic as it passed through, stabilizing it, encouraging his healing, or amplifying it. Derek's fingers brushed over the raised bite mark on Stiles' forearm. His own fangs itched in irritation till Stiles ran his hand through Derek's hair to calm him down.

Runes curved around his left shoulder, hovering above the Wolf's Cross and the Goddesses Moon etched onto his pectoral. To get a look at the markings as they traveled down the man's hips and legs Derek was only too happy to relieve Stiles of his pants and lay him on the bed so he could continue. More alchemic symbols lined his thigh and two larger Pagan markings took up space on the pale skin. The line ran all the way down to his ankles and even his feet were tattooed with the pale brown lines that shimmered blues as Stiles spoke of them.

"What about this one?" Derek asked. They were laying side by side now on the bed, looking over Stiles' body like a work of art (which Derek was completely convinced it was). Derek's eyes had settled on the most complex marking almost a foot in diameter, right in the center of Stiles' body. That one alone must have taken hours.

Stiles hand brushed along the edge of it. "A Metatron Cube. Marabeth said it's holy glyph, like the ultimate containment and the perfect design. I...got worried when I first used my powers. It was such a rush that I knew it was only going to get harder to control so I started looking at tattoos that would help me." Derek spread his entire hand over the marking, felling the energy thrum beneath his palm.
Stiles's eyes fluttered shut and he placed his hand over Derek's. Stiles didn't need to explain that one further because Derek could feel the power in that mark. Or better yet, the power it was holding back. The two smaller symbols above and below it were ones Stiles spoke of with reverence. He touched the one at the center of his chest. "Dissolving contained energy," he said. "It would break the Metatron's hold if I need it to." He moved his hand down and placed it below his navel on the second marking. "And this would seal it again."

Stiles turned his head, resting it on Derek's shoulder as the words sank in. It took a moment and Stiles offered no more commentary, letting the older man's hands continued to stroke down his sides and stomach, skimming over the raised lines of ink and scars.

The moment he understood though, Derek's heart rate hitched in his chest and he tightened his grip on Stiles who returned the embrace. It was a failsafe, Derek realized with both awe and horror. Stiles had made his body a failsafe.

Click here to see details of Stiles tattoos

Chapter End Notes

Well, this one took forever....>_
Lets try this and see if it works

Chapter Summary

“Isn't it nice being popular?” Derek teased, nudging Stiles hips with his own.

The motion brought a smile to Stiles tired face. “I regret ever wanting attention in High School.”

Chapter Notes

No beta, but ITS DONE! Finally. Sorry it took a while! I'll try to be better! I will finish this story I'm just slow. *cries*
I think there is a lot of frowning in this chapter.... Comments and speculation are welcome ^-^

By 9 am the next morning Erica, the lovely daycare assistant who tolerated screaming little toddlers monster (some quite literally in this town) for a few hours a day, had already texted him a pithy aside.

March 24th 9:03 AM. From Erica:

‘Go to your closet and pray!’

To which Stiles responded with a picture of his middle finger and the caption; ‘Fuck off, Margaret. I hope one of the kids puts glue in your hair.’ He wished Derek hadn't already left for work already so he could tell him to punish his Beta in a cruel and unusual fashion.

While he was brushing his teeth Jackson called him just to laugh about Fairies being little ankle biters and by the time he'd showered and changed even Danny (no, Danny, how could you!) had asked him if carrying around a basket full of goodies and a bat was a hassle. Kira emailed him some more updates about Ley Line activity from the other side of the world that he’d asked for and for a moment he thought Scott hadn't poisoned her mind yet, but a little post scriptum at the bottom of the email read; “Don’t feel bad. Carrie is a classic!” and his hopes were dashed. Alison was at least impressed that hadn't died when the building fell on him (though she did chuckle at the idea of the dismembered Troll arm). Lydia mostly mourned the loss of the antiquated theater house saying that Stiles lack of cultural appreciation made her cry a little inside. How the hell had Scott managed to tell everyone that quick anyway? Did he send out a mass email or something last night after he left? Ass.

Ethan and Boyd wisely chose to stay quiet and while he ate a quick breakfast Stiles decided he was going to make them a glorious cake later.
... Until he showed up at the station with food for his dad and Ethan handed him a wrapped *Carrie* DVD with a shit eating grin on his face saying that they’d all agreed they were watching it after training tonight.

And no cake for Ethan.

Stiles bid his time walking to his dads office by shooting the breeze with the other officers. “How is your daughter doing since her coming of age? Is she still bursting the water pipes when she sneezes?” and “No, I really don’t think it’s a good idea to hose your Ifrit neighbor with a fire extinguisher and I’m telling the Sheriff on you. You’re Deputy for god’s sake.”

The officers at the station were familiar enough with Stiles coming in and pestering Beacon Hills resident uniformed pack members that at times Stiles was nearly dazed by deja vu. It was just like it had been before the Nogitsune had up and killed almost every officer he’d grown up knowing in that explosion. The new men and women all had a notion that Stiles was Pack, or at least new damn well that he was protected and aware of Beacon Hills supernatural inner workings.

Biting his bottom lip Stiles met Derek half way through his walk of shame and the Alpha caged him in between his desk and arms.

“You didn't wake me up this morning,” Stiles said sullenly in way of hello.

“I tried. You kicked me in the stomach,” Derek replied, searching the other man’s face and noticing the slight shadow under his eyes.

“Ah. Sorry. Rough night,” Stiles sighed, tipping his head to the side to stretch out his neck. “And your kids have been slinging *Carrie* jokes all morning.”

Derek chuckled quietly and leaned in closer, brushing his check against Stiles in a comforting manner before pressing a chaste kiss to the exposed length of neck. “My kids?”

“They're always yours when they piss me off,” Stiles mused absentmindedly. “We've talked about this.” Between Derek’s arms Stiles managed to maneuver two burgers out of the paper bag he was carrying and set them down on Derek’s desk. “You get Ethan’s too,” Stiles announced. Werewolf number two groaned from across the building and Derek smirked. “So,” Stiles continued while the wolf sobered at the tone. “Do we have a Sheriff on the war path?” he asked with enough hesitation in the question to prove he was actually a little nervous to talk to his dad.

“He’s not in a *bad* mood,” the older man offered sympathetically.

Stiles sighed and glanced over at the drawn blinds of the Sheriff’s office. “Doesn't mean I won't get an earful. Stupid Deaton ruins all my mornings.”

Derek shook his head fondly as Stiles pouted. “What are you doing today?” Derek asked.

Stiles let out a breath, looking up at the ceiling as he listed off his plans. “Talk to dad, check in with Charlotte to see if she’s heard anything about our new Nest, mail some charms to a client, attempt to get Mrs. Keller’s tomato plants to stop committing suicide, go to the Onyx and see if I can rub some of my misery off on Carla, and then go pick up Scott and Isaac from work and bring them back to the house for the pack Meeting. I may eat at some point.”

“Isn’t it nice being popular?” Derek teased, nudging Stiles hips with his own.

The motion brought a smile to Stiles tired face. “I regret ever wanting attention in High School.”
Derek didn't move from Stiles space the entire time they talked, giving small touches and tender brushes of his fingertips every time he smelled a hint of worry or exhaustion coming from his Lupa. In every second glance and caress that lingered just a little long Stiles could tell that the night before still weighed heavily on Derek’s mind but neither of them wanted to bring it up. Stiles did his best to smile brightly at the man and assure him that everything was aces, only feeling slightly guilty that he had to tap into his newly acquired 'I can lie to a Werewolf' skill to set Derek's mind at ease. They both knew it wasn't true but, well… they’d talked every scenario to death at this point and had to get on with it. They had things to do and if they halted at every life-altering hiccup they encountered they’d never get anywhere.

Stiles and his dad had a quick and manly Stilinski heart-to-heart in which a strong hug was shared whilst Stiles enthusiastically assured the Sheriff that Deaton was not only vague but paranoid and that maybe Melissa needed to clock him again. The Sheriff accepted this explanation with a grain of salt and the two of them reassured the other that neither of them would try to do anything stupidly gallant unless you know, they had to. That was really all they could ask of each other after all these years. The Sheriff made no mention of having spoken to Scott about his Broadway mishap.

The kiss Derek gave him before he left sent up a volley of whistles and wolf calls (no pun intended) and the Alpha murmured in his ear that if Peter gave him any crap today he was totally okay with locking him in one of the stations special cells.

Stiles laughed at that but didn't think he’d be hearing anything from Peter on the subject. In fact when he’d passed the older wolf in the kitchen that morning after Derek had left he’d found Peter with his nose buried in a book. When he did look up at Stiles he had a searching, affectionate expression on his face before he winked and went back to the library without a word. Stiles side eyed the library till he left, unsure if he wanted to venture in there till Peter was done being...Peter.

Stiles blew through his schedule quickly after that. He became a little more depressed that Charlotte had no news for them, nearly cried when he found out how much it cost to overnight a anti hex charm to Missouri, and might have accidentally made Mrs. Keller’s tomato plant immortal.

It was close to 4 by the time Stiles found a moment to grab some takeout from a diner, earning the 100% Pack discount because they all ate there often enough. After tucking away an order of fries, two burgers, and the most orgasmic chocolate and strawberry shake on the planet Stiles felt a little more like himself. He’d always made fun of the wolves for eating so much but damnit, super powers made you hungry.

Before he had to go pick up Isaac and Scott from work Stiles drove over to the Onyx. The Vampire blood hadn't in fact stained the hardwood but Carla was still looking to press charges because she was vindictive and wanted to tie the Nest up in some bureaucratic mess of legal papers for a few months.

they bantered aimlessly for a while but Stiles had to pause sweeping for a moment when Jackson texted him. He read the text and scoffed, shoving his phone in his pocket. “Jackson wants me to try and move things with my mind at training tonight. Thanks Carla.”

Carla laughed heartily only to have it die to a chuckle when she caught the look Stiles was giving her. Like he wanted to beat her with the broom. “I wish you’d stop glaring at me, Sparky. I’m not the one who pissed off the Fairies.” Carla was, as usual, completely and totally unapologetic that her big mouth had caused her business partner unnecessary grief. "And at least they aren't calling you out on the whole Vampire part of the story. That was pretty sick." Stiles threatened to write her a list of ways she lacked tact and the ability to transition into topic like a normal person and the Sylph just rolled her eyes.
On the way out Stiles may or may not have kicked the freezers plug out of the wall and stolen the open/closed sign. Why not? It was his night off.

- Isaac's shift ended a little sooner than Scott's so the clinic was Stiles first stop. Carpooling was an awesome thing and it was a hassle to get everyone’s cars and or bikes along the Preserve trail to the house when it got darker out (unless it was an emergency then fuck the fact that some of them didn't have off road vehicles) and Stiles reliable old jeep was more than familiar with the uneven shortcuts.

Stiles pulled into the parking lot of the Vets office and did not go inside to see Deaton, preferring instead to glare at the front door menacingly till Isaac came out. The curly haired blonde slipped into the car with a grin already plastered on his face. He actually managed to hold back on his questions till they pulled up to the hospitals main entrance and Scott got in, scrubs stored in a bag slung over his shoulder.

“Your mom’s coming to the meeting tonight right?” Stiles asked coolly as he put the Jeep in gear.

Scott nodded. “She left a little before my shift was over.” The two wolves shared an absolutely annoying gleeful look.

“Cool,” Stiles said, turning out of the parking lot. Scott and Isaac lasted three more seconds before they made Stiles recount -once again- the events of what Isaac deemed The Finest Musical that New York Never Put On.

“Man, why do I miss all the good stories?” Isaac asked when Stiles had finished, trying to rid his eyes of laughter tears.

“I just can’t believe that you used a bat,” Scott snickered. Stiles was sure his friend had been creeping out the hospital patients by chuckling about that all day.

“It was either a bat or a Styrofoam sword,” Stiles grumbled. “Just be happy I ended up grabbing the one that wouldn’t get me killed.”

Scott put his foot up on the armrest between the two seats, a marvel in Stiles Jeep really, and went on, “But of aaall the props in that theater, man. I can’t tell if you’re the luckiest or the unluckiest guy in the world.”

“Please,” Stiles groaned, wanting to bang his head on the steering wheel. “Please. The luckiest. I don’t think I’d be able to survive being unlucky at this point.”

“Way to be positive,” Isaac said, patting him on the shoulder. He would have sounded truly comforting but Isaac was grinning and shaking his head, one word away from losing it again. “You are all the clichés, man.”

Stiles couldn't really argue with that. “At least I’m an awesome cliché, teenwolf.”

Scott fake gasped and Isaac burst out laughing. “We agreed that was only till we were out of high school, man!”

Stiles shook his head showing just how little remorse he had. “Once a teenwolf, always a teenwolf,
When the three of them finally got to the house they were engrossed in a serious discussion about how to beat a certain Call of Duty level. Chris’s truck was in the driveway as well as the Sheriff’s cruiser and Lydia’s car. Stiles opened the back door to the kitchen just as Scott dramatically declared “-And then BOOM! Headshot!” The rest of the Pack was already there, the Sheriff, Melissa, and Chris included. Peter was leaning against the counter with his arms crossed and a raised eyebrow. Scott blinked, dropping his arms from their “sniper pose” and looked expectantly at the others as their conversation died off. “…What did we miss?”

Derek, Ethan, and the Sheriff were still in uniform which Stiles took automatically as a bad sign. “Did somebody die?” Stiles asked out of habit.

“Don’t know yet,” Allison answered from her seat at the kitchen table next to her father.

Boyd nodded towards their Alpha, arms crossed stoically over his chest. “We were waiting for you guys.” They all looked expectantly back at Derek who was standing at the head of the table next to Erica who was perched behind him on the counter.

Derek rubbed his hand over his mouth, trying to process what words he wanted to use before he spoke. “No one died,” He said. “Barry passed on a letter from his cousin today. He’s the Sheriff in Roseville.”

“He’s a Gargoyle too, right?” Chris asked.

Derek nodded, frowning at the folded paper. The Alpha stopped there and Jackson made a rolling motion with his hand. “Please, don’t overwhelm us with the whole story,” he said slowly.

Lydia elbowed Jackson in the ribs and Derek went on, shooting Jackson a slightly irritated look. “The letter was addressed to the Alpha and Pack Sentinel Sheriff of Beacon Hills.” Stiles knew that the Pack members official titles were for official business and the two wolves at his side straightened to attention.

“Oh, for gods sake,” Erica snapped, reaching over her Alphas shoulder and snatching the letter from his hand. “Just let us read the damn thing.”

“Erica!” Derek made to grab them back but then a few photos tumbled out and fell onto the kitchen floor.

Erica frowned and slid off the counter, kneeling down to pick them up only to stop and stare at them, head tilting to the side in confusion. “What are these about?” she asked before shuffling them into one hand. “What are these markings?”

Everyone barring Jackson, the Sheriff, and Ethan moved to get a better look but Derek reached over and snatched the letter and photos back from his Beta. Stiles eyebrows shot up in question and Derek held the letter out to Stiles. “Well, Emissary,” Derek said with a knowing look. “What can you make of these?”

The letter itself was short and written by a neat hand, giving it more the feel of a formal pen pal letter than a missive addressed:

To Alpha Derek J. Hale of Beacon Hills, CA, and Sentinel Sheriff John H. Stilinski of the BHPD,
I was assured by my cousin Bariatem that this letter would reach your hands safely. We've heard that you and your Pack have been looking for information about a Vampire Nest heading in your direction and I thought it appropriate to bring this to your attention. One day ago a Nest passed through my town and were overheard discussing your territory. There were eight Vampires that I saw personally but there my have well been more that did not come into town. Normally I wouldn't take note of it as they didn't stay long and no one was hurt but there was some minor vandalism that I found odd. A local Witch informed me that they were not any particular symbol meant to cause harm and we tested the spray compound used and it turned out to be regular spray paint, but I've enclosed some photos for you to look over in case they might mean something to you. Don’t hesitate to contact me. My card is enclosed with this letter. Good luck to you.

Roseville, CA Sheriff Ahur “Arthur” Jones.

Erica leaned over Stiles shoulder, reading the letter with her eyebrows drawn together. “So what’s with all the tagging?” She asked, reaching around and tapping the pictures held loosely in Stiles other hand.

Derek huffed a little as he'd been asking himself that same question since he read the letter. “It’s just an X as far as we know,”.

“What about the buildings that were marked?” Lydia asked.

“The buildings themselves don’t seem important.” Peter said, taking the pictures and spreading them over the table. “A Grocery store, gas station, the sidewalk outside a theater, some random area of a side street.”

“Maybe it’s connected to the people who live and work there?” the redhead went on. "It's not the first time people we know outside of Beacon Hills have been targeted."

“Anyone know anyone in Roseville?” Isaac asked. Everyone shook their heads.

Stiles looked down at the pictures like if he stared hard enough they would come to life and give him answers. “…Well that just seems incredibly pointless.” He scratched the back of his head, frowning in concentration. “There wasn't anything else?” He asked, flipping the letter over like he might have missed some secret code on the back.

His dad shook his head, absentmindedly brushing his thumb over his empty holster, gun stored by the door with the others when he'd came into the house. “I checked in with the RPD dispatch earlier and she said there weren't any odd crimes in the area before or after the Nest left. It’s just the graffiti. I don't think these Vampires even talked to any of the locals.”

"I don't suppose they manage to get any pictures of them, did they?" Peter asked Derek, knowing it was pointless. Vampires were very good at avoiding the camera.

Stiles leaned back in his chair while they all tried to piece it together. “Google,” he said finally.

“Huh?” Scott asked, looking up at his friend.

“Google,” Stiles repeated as he dug in his back pocket for his phone. “Or Google Maps, to be specific; satellite view. And an actual map please. State of California. Where is Sheriff Jones’ card?” He asked Derek in quick succession. Derek grabbed the envelope and pulled out a business card that the man had added, handing it to Stiles who quickly punched in the number.
The rest of them watched while the phone rang, the wolves listening in. “Sheriff Ahur Jones?” Stiles cleared his throat, his voice dropping a noticeable octave when someone answered. “Hi, this is Stilinski in Beacon Hills.” John made to reach for the phone with a rather murderous look in his eyes but Stiles shook his head stubbornly and scoot his chair back out of reach. “Yeah I did call your dispatch earlier today to check up on some things. Alpha Hale is with me now, along with the rest of the Pack. We just read the letter and looked over the photos. Listen, do you have the addresses of the places that got marked? You do? Great. Sure, I can hold.” Stiles looked up and gave a start to see his father still glaring daggers at him.

“You promised you wouldn't impersonate me to other officials any more,” The Sheriff said to his son.

“Well, technically I didn't say I was you.” Stiles dodged, trying to look innocent. “And I only promised not to impersonate you when it was official police business.”

“He’s a Sheriff!” His dad insisted. “How is this not police business!?”

“A Gargoyle Sheriff.” Stiles explained obviously. “It’s totally different. Anyone have that map yet?”

Snapping to it Erica and Isaac ducked out of the room and headed for the library to find a map while Lydia went to her bag and pulled out her laptop, already two steps ahead.

The Sheriff was about to argue that no it certainly was NOT, but then Stiles was talking again, phone pressed to his ear. “Sheriff? Yes, still here. Great, yes, I can write it down.” He made a frantic motion to Lydia with his hand as she flipped open her laptop and nodded to him that she was ready. “Go ahead, Sheriff.” Stiles rattled off a list of address and streets as the man on the other end of the line said them and then politely bid him goodbye and hung up. Erica and Isaac came back with a map of the state a moment later and spread it out on the kitchen table.

"You think its the actual locations then?" Lydia asked as she watched Stiles smooth the map flat. Bless the Banshees brilliant mind for keeping up with him, Stiles thought. “Lydia, you have them pulled up on the map?” She made a noise of affirmation. “Okay, tell me where to mark them on here. Exact locations.” Lydia set her laptop at the edge of the map while she grabbed a pen out of Ethan’s shirt pocket and handed it to Stiles. They looked back and forth from the screen and paper while the others watched in slight wonder and soon all the spots on the map were marked.

“Okay,” Lydia said, leaning back and looking at their little project. “Now what?”

Stiles thought for a moment about his suddenly half formed plan and bit his lip. “Umm,” Before Lydia could even roll her eyes Stiles clapped his hands together loudly, making everyone jump. “Got it! Scoot back.” Lydia obliged with a raised eyebrow.

“Okay, let’s see if this works…” Stiles trailed off. He stood in front of the table, leaning over and laying his hands flat on the map as he closed his eyes. Even without seeing it physically anymore Stiles pulled up the geographical representation in his mind. He saw the main roads and highways and even where little rivers and creeks merged. Eidetic memory was great sometimes.

As he kept the map in his head he reached down to feel that familiar tug and pulsing sensation he’d been disregarding since he’d first noticed it getting stronger. Maybe not the wisest thing to do in hindsight but he’d focus on that later. Once he located the little burning ball of heat he’d described to Derek the night before; the thing that connected him with the Pack and with the magic around him, he let the pulse fall into tandem with his own heartbeat. The wolves shifted, smelling ozone in the air and he heard the rumble of Chris leather jacket as he shifted. The beating grew louder in his ears as a larger pulse joined his own till it was no longer centered in his chest but his entire body, reaching out
to where his fingertips pressed hard against the map.

“What are you trying to-,” Isaac started to ask only to have both Peter and Lydia shush him.

“Just wait,” Stiles muttered, keeping his eyes closed and frowning. “I’m trying to figure out how to do this.” And wing whatever this was he certainly did. The quickly forming idea in his head was something he wasn’t even sure he could do. But he needed a way to see the Ley Lines: the invisible workings of the earth’s magic. Even without seeing them it was like being able to feel electricity and heat moving under the ground and he had to be careful not to dive in too deep otherwise he was sure he’d have a hell of a time pulling back. That much raw power when he was already trying to control himself? Bad idea.

The Emissary let out another slow breath and the small pale rune tattooed near his temple started to glow. He felt a burning sensation behind his eyes that signaled the rune was doing its job and allowing him to see the truth of things, which in this case happened to be the supernatural current flowing around and inside the earth, more specifically in the city of Roseville California and even more specifically on the map in front of him.

Stiles opened his eyes a moment later revealing them to be an icy purple.

When he looked down at the map instead of familiar black lines of roads and rivers he saw an intricate spider web of glowing blue white trails reaching out across the paper. Most of them converged into a tangled mess of shimmering light over Beacon Hills where the Nemeton stood. Looking at it this way Stiles really saw the irony in their town’s name.

Something like triumph must have shown on Stiles face because the others had moved closer. Peter had somehow gotten behind him and leaned over his shoulder without Stiles noticing and he jumped when the older wolf spoke. “What are you seeing?”

Stiles blinked down at the map and realized that the others didn’t share his super special optics. How to fix that, hmm… Stiles drummed his fingertips on the map, frowning hard in concentration. Would it just be easier to draw the lines out? That would take a while though. “Everybody touch the map,” he said suddenly. His dad was only the slowest to reach out because he was the farthest away. As soon as everyone had a hand on the paper there rose a collective gasp. Stiles felt the rune at his temple hum like a bee and the thin line that connected it to the rest of his tattoos tingled on his skin. The steady blue glow crept behind his ear, down his neck and traveled down his arm to the enhancement Fewest on his bicep which hummed with energy that made Stiles shiver. Derek’s hand was on his shoulder a moment later, grounding him.

“How are you doing this?” Scott asked, staring wide eyed at the map, the glow from the shimmering lines reflected in his eyes.

“Spark,” Stiles reminded him. He believed that he could share his powers with his Pack and he could. Nifty.

“What are they?” Erica asked, hand itching to trace over the lines.

“Ley Lines,” Derek answered with a frown as his eyes roved over the map.

Stiles grinned it his Alpha. “Bingo.”

"Wow, irony," Boyd muttered, no doubt starting at the little glowing spot that was their town.

The Sheriff leaned over Allison’s shoulder squinting at the map with a cops eye for detail. “I take it this isn’t a good thing.”
“Probably not,” Chris conceded.

Each of the shimmering silver lines, even the thinnest scratches, slowly ran through the circles drawn out on the map. Stiles pressed his lips together for a moment and then frowned, the circles standing out like little red flags in his mind as warning bells went off. “Well…they are defiantly coming here for the Nemeton.” And he uttered words he really thought he’d get a break from. “Call Deaton.”
Lines on a map

Chapter Summary

“Elaborate,” Stiles insisted calmly, keeping a steady gaze on the older man. The kind of gaze that said ‘please don’t test the patience of the super powered Druid Spark or something will explode.’

Chapter Notes

There is talking in this chapter. Lots of talking. No beta.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

A ridiculous amount of potato chips and ice cream had been consumed in order to keep them from saying something stupid like “maybe we can intercept the Nest with carrier pidgin and tell them in a note to fuck off.” Erica had thought it was at least worth a try.

A soft knock at the door came at about 10 o’clock and they all paused their quiet conversations just in time to hear the wind moan ominously outside. Derek caught Scott and Isaac sharing the wide-eyed glance of individuals who’d watched way too many horror movies in their lifetime. Derek sniffed the air, taking advantage of the fact that Stiles silencing and scent wards were down so he could gauge the state of their visitors mood and intentions. They were all quiet for a moment and just when it seemed like they were going to ignore the knock and let the visitor stand out there all night, Isaac glanced at the clock and said, “That should be Deaton.”

The Sheriff took in a deep breath, chest swelling as he straightened and placed his hands on his hips. "We'll lets not all rush the door at once.” most of them looked off to the side, not really all that sorry. He cast a wary glimpse at his son who hadn’t looked up when the knock came. Stiles had been oddly quiet after he’d said to call in the Druid and was frowning down at the map on the table, seemingly intent on ignoring everything until the last moment. Derek laid his hand on Stiles shoulder, nodding to John who went to answer the door.

A cool wind blew into the warm house when the door opened, chill air mixed with the smell of leaves and soil outside. Deaton was dressed in a fittingly dark leather jacket and black pants, a complete 180 from his white lab coat. “Thanks for coming,” the Sheriff said solemnly, stepping aside so Deaton could enter.

It had been quite a while since the Pack had called the ex-Emissary to the house for help and Deaton had managed to look neither superior or condescending about the fact that they required his specific brand of expertise. But in a matter of a few months he'd managed to, on more than one occasion, aggravate the Packs Lupa, one of their Sentinels who also happened to be the Sheriff, the mother of the the Alpha's Second in command, and the Alpha all by proxy. Deaton was probably aware of how tenuous his position here was as well.

“How can I be of assistance?” The man asked as he stepped inside. The Druid deferred the question to Derek and the Alpha beckoned him forward with a jerk of his head.
“We got a new lead on the Nest.” Derek explained as Deaton stood at the other end of the table. Peter none too subtly closed in right behind him and his nephew gave the older wolf a raised his eyebrow. Peter shrugged innocently, looming over Deaton’s shoulder.

Deaton eyed the map, studying the markings. “Roseville?” Without words Stiles motioned for Deaton to touch the map like the others had and he did so without question. The man’s eyes widened a fraction as soon as his fingertips met the paper. His gaze flickered to Stiles before returning to the map again. “A very interesting use of your rune,” he acknowledged. “I take it those circles where the lines cross through mean something.”

Derek nodded and reached out for the letter and pictures that Chris was holding. “The Nest marked each of those places with an X when they went through the town.”

Deaton made a small considering hum and removed his hands from the map, taking the letter and pictures and reading quickly. “So they know about the Ley Lines,” he said finally.

“You don’t sound too surprised,” Derek noted with a cagey growl to his voice.

Deaton turned his attention to the pair at the head of the table. “It makes sense if they are an older Nest. The longer you live the more you tend to pick up.”

Hearing his fears confirmed Stiles reached behind his neck and rubbed away some discomfort, eyes cast down at the map, trailing over the pulsing lines. Derek’s fingers tightened fractionally on his Mates shoulder. Chris spoke up. “It could mean that they know about the Haven here. You’d mentioned before that some older Vampires could learn to draw out magical energy from people instead of blood so for a creature that can live off of other supernatural creatures Beacon Hills is sort of an all you can eat buffet.” Allison nodded in agreement, having heard as much from her Hunter contact that specialized in Night walkers.

“It’s too specific,” Stiles muttered, breaking his silence as he tapped his fingertips on the map. “There are other Ley Lines running through that town connected to their own center point. Those marks are on direct veins to the Nemeton.” He paused a moment, considering. “Though, the supernatural buffet is probably a big bonus.”

Scott sighed a little, looking forlorn. “So, what, we’re like appetizers before they stick a straw in the Nemeton?” Stiles could only offer his friend a small smile and a shrug in way of comfort. His encounters with elder Vampires had left him with a bad taste in his mouth not to mention scars on his body. That they knew how to locate Ley Lines was some serous evidence that they were an old Nest.

“It’s likely,” Deaton said in answer to Scott’s rather rhetorical question, earning him glares all around. “But Vampires do not have the means to do it properly.”

Erica wrinkled her nose, scowling at Deaton as she took a purposeful step towards her Alpha and Lupa. “Roseville isn’t too far away,” she said, feeling the second hand anxious from Stiles. “Edward Cullen and his posse could be here any day now. So what should we do?”

Chris shook his head, leaning back in his chair. “Apart from what we’ve done? There’s nothing much to do. Our weapon stocks are full, we’ve already alerted Barry to keep an eye out, Charlottes Nest keeps us informed of movement, every supernatural citizen in the county knows to keep clear of newcomers till one of the Pack checks them out, and John’s got the entire force informed.”

Ethan shifted at the mention of the BHPD. “We’ve got rotations set up to patrol roads in and out of town 24 hours a day,” he added. “And we’ve already had a meeting about the Nest at the station.”
“We don’t know when they’ll come,” John nodded, putting his lawman tone into his voice. “But we’ll be ready when they show up.”

"Ready for what though?” Boyd interjected, a frown masking his normally stoic features. “All we know for sure is that they know about the Ley Lines and the Nemeton.”

Lydia leaned her elbows on the table, careful not to come into contact with the map again. “They know about the Hale Pack obviously and that Beacon Hills is a Haven. But you’re right; that still doesn’t tell us what exactly they are going to be doing once they get here. We can assume all we want that they will be picking a fight with us, but over what? Control of the territory? A random show of dominance? Do they want to get rid of some of us to make the Pack weaker? And what are they going to do with the Ley Lines they’re so keen on pointing out to us?”

Stiles licked his lips and then pressed them together, thinking to himself as he stared down the map for answers. He let his fingertip trail along one of the lines, down from the circle to the mass of light that was Beacon Hills. “Maybe…” He trailed off. Sitting flush at his side Derek probed by nudging him ever so lightly with his elbow, watching the man’s long fingers trail over the paper. “Deaton,” Stiles said, tapping his finger over the town. “Can all supernatural creatures feel Ley Line activity?”

Deaton looked off to the side, thinking for a moment. “Technically anyone has the potential to feel the shifts.”

“Elaborate,” Stiles insisted calmly, keeping a steady gaze on the older man. The kind of gaze that said ‘please don’t test the patience of the super powered Druid Spark or something will explode.’

Deaton nodded. “The more direct connection they have with the Ley Lines the more they would feel shifts. Witches, probably the least as they store magic already around them, along with Vampires who draw their power from lifeblood. Those with Elemental magic like Carla perhaps a little more, Earth spirits and those from the Second plane usually the most. Druids and…” he motioned to Stiles, “those with Druid magic like yourself are more connected than others since our powers are granted directly to us by the earth.”

Which made sense, Stiles thought, given the Druid Orders protective inclinations towards all things related.

Deaton went on. “Given the proper training and preparation we could actually physically tap in to it if there was a need to.” He gave an acquiescing nod to the Sheriff. “A Druid of your wife’s caliber would have noticed shifts. She might have been prone to headaches or bouts of dizziness.”

The noticeable scent of melancholy shot through the air and the wolves instinctively drew in closer to the father and son. Isaac started growling and then clapped a hand over his mouth once he realized what he was doing, looking sheepishly at his boss. Derek felt a surge of pride bubbling up at his Betas response. "No one asked about my mother," Stiles grit out, feeling his skin flush with barely suppressed anger and the throbbing behind his eyes grew sharper. He knew they were flashing colors by the way Deaton quickly looked away. Damnit, would this ever not be a sore spot for him? Probably not.

Clearing his throat first, the Sheriff spoke up, voice carefully level though he couldn’t mask the slight hitch at the beginning. “Claudia…would sometimes say she could feel the earth move.” He gave a wire smile when he caught his son’s wide eyed purple hued stare, like it wasn’t a rare thing that he was actually talking about his wife and magic in the same sentence since he found out about her. He could also remembered that she would frown whenever she had a headache and tap her fingers impatiently on any surface as though there was something she ought to be doing. Melissa placed a gentle hand on the mans shoulder while Deaton nodded his head in a placating manner, his way of
paying respect to the late Mrs. Stilinski’s memory and appeasing the wolves side eyeing him.

Stiles pulled his eyes away from his father, gathering his thoughts and taking a breath. “So…anyone with even a little bit of magic in them, which is technically everyone in the world in one way or another, has the ability to feel the Ley Lines.” It was more of a statement that a question, forced out in hopes of pushing the conversation along.

“Yes,” Deaton knew his former student well enough to wonder where his train of thought was heading and instead of treading carefully, his curiosity got the best of him. “In theory. Why do you ask?”

Stiles fell quiet again, frown making his lips thin as he rubbed his temple. “Just…thinking,” he answered, though the buzzing sensation just behind his eyes wasn’t abating and it was making it hard to do so. Deaton’s gaze didn’t break from him and Stiles could feel the man’s eyes bore into him, searching for answers and asking questions that he really didn’t want to think about.

Scott’s brows furrowed in concern as he watched his friend clam up and hunch into himself a bit more, staring with narrowed eyes at the map. Derek’s frown grew deeper and he reached under the table, setting his hand on his Mate’s thigh and giving a small squeeze, his wolf whining at the tension. The stiffness in Stiles’ shoulders eased a fraction, but not enough.

Deaton didn’t say another word, he just kept staring. Waiting.

Scott looked at his mother and the rest of the Pack unsurely, wondering what to say to break the tension. Melissa finally tipped her head inconspicuously towards Deaton a few times, hinting to them in the silence that settled over the kitchen while they all shifted anxiously.

Erica squared her shoulders, standing straighter and lifting her chin, giving a subtle nod to Melissa. “Well, I’ve never felt them,” she stated.

“Neither have I,” Lydia announced right after. She sounded a little affronted by the fact.

“Me either,” Isaac added. Boyd shrugged in his way of agreeing with the others and even Jackson tipped his head.

“I sure as hell haven’t,” the Sheriff muttered, tone slightly bitter now that he’d had a moment to ruminate on the secret life of his wife for a minute.

“Well, Kira can feel the ones in Japan,” Scott piped up, remembering the reoccurring theme in most of their Skype calls. “She’s Pack so if she feels it shouldn’t we be able to as well?”

“Being Pack has little to do with it,” Deaton answered, the small smile on his face was only a little pitying. “Kitsune are elemental spirits and have a different connection to the land,” the older man explained.

Scott narrowed his eyes a bit like he was trying to understand and failing. “But we can feel other things she feels through the Pack bond…” he tried.


Erica frowned, huffing out a sigh. “But you said we can still feel it if it’s strong enough. Ever since Stiles started practicing magic we’ve all been a little more sensitive to spells and enchantments and stuff. That’s coming through the bond because he’s our Emissary right?” She bumped her hip against Stiles shoulder lightly, causing him to glance up at all of them. He could have jumped in to help
Deaton and bring the conversation back around to their present dilemma, he really could have.

“Well, that’s a little different. Stiles, could you-?” Deaton started only to have Melissa cut him off.

“If it does have something to do with the Pack bond would John, Chris, Allison and I feel shifts more strongly than regular humans?”

“I suppose you could-,” Deaton tried again, only to get stopped by Lydia.

“I’m still human, Banshee or not. Danny and I have been using magic for the past few years and as official members of this Packs Coven shouldn’t we be able to feel something more?” she wondered out loud as she her foot nudged against Stiles leg under the table. “And even if our magic isn’t as powerful as Stiles I assume that life and death work within the balance of the Ley Lines so maybe my screaming is a side affect of the balance of life shifting.”

Deaton smoothed the front of his jacket. “Banshee are a slightly different matter. You and Danny have been working with Stiles to-,”

“Is there some sort of special charm or something for those of us who don’t have or use any kind of magic?” Allison jumped in with an entirely innocent smile. “My dad and I have been surrounded by the Supernatural every day what with us being Hunters in a Werewolf Pack, living in a supernatural Haven on top of a World Tree. Dad and I don’t really do much with the magic but since the Argents are now allied with the Hale Pack don’t you think we should take extra precaution? What do you think Deaton? Is there some sort of magic beeper we humans could get for when there’s trouble? Like Ley Line 911?”

“I’d invest in that,” Chris said with a serious nod.

It was Chris jumping in that had confirmed it for Stiles. Judging by the smiles and the way that Derek had a hand over his mouth to cover his own, Stiles realized that he had the best friends ever. Even Ethan who knew more about the Ley Lines than the other Betas and could have stepped in as well, looked like he was enjoying this.

Deaton rubbed his hand over his mouth, collecting himself amidst the barrage of questions –legit and asinine- that had sprung up. Finally he said, sounding absolutely done; “It’s fairly difficult to explain the workings of the Ley Lines to those who are not Druids.”

Off to the side Melissa looked triumphant and even the Sheriff had pulled himself out from his slump enough to enjoy the show.

“But if we can’t feel if the Ley Lines are in danger, how can we protect them?” Scott asked, and oh god, Derek wanted to hug the True Alpha who was nothing if not a trooper.

“You’ll be connected to them because Stiles is your Emissary.” was Deaton’s quick response, actually sounding a little frayed as he glared at his former assistant.

Jackson cut in bluntly. “You just said it had nothing to do with the Pack bond.”

The wolves all heard a small huff of air from their Emissary that passed as a chuckle and they knew their little game had worked, which is why Peter deemed it safe to rub his eyes to resist rolling them right out of his skull. “What Alan is oh so nicely alluding to but can’t seem to say outright is that in normal cases, it doesn’t. Normally Emissaries are not part of the Pack they work with. They exist along side the Pack but apart from it.” Peter saw Derek give him a warning scowl, hearing a dialog that strayed just a little too closely to their private conversation the night before. Even Stiles was giving him a cautionary stare. Peter forged on for the sake of progress.
“Stiles, unorthodox as always, is a part of the Pack, which is why we are more sensitive to the magic he works with.” The Pack did actually look curious now and Lydia glanced between the eldest wolf and their Emissary, sharp green eyes calculating.

“Think of it this way,” Peter went on, mostly directing his words at Scott, his favorite to pick on. “You are a squirrel living in the branches of the giant oak tree that is,” he motioned to Stiles, “our Druid.” Before anyone could be offended he went on, “If the earth shakes, we feel it in the tree. Human, Werewolf, or Banshee, we are all part of the earth and its magical inner workings but some of us just have a deeper connection to it. Stiles’ unique... condition and position in the Pack allows us to feel stronger magic by proxy.” Peter ended with a satisfied smirk aimed at Deaton.

“In Laymen’s terms,” the Druid deadpanned.

Jackson huffed a little and rolled his eyes haughtily. “Why didn’t you just fricking say that.”

Stiles cracked small smile, raising an eyebrow at Peter. “Did you really make me a mighty oak in that metaphor?” Erica snorted at his side and Derek shook his head fondly.

Sighing dramatically Peter leveled Stiles with a knowing look though his eyes held a certain softness as they always did when regarding the younger man. “Maybe you’d like to continue with your questions then, oh mighty oak?”

He would, Stiles decided. Powering through the oncoming migraine and doing his best to ignore the steadily strengthening glow of the map spread out before him, Stiles waved his hand as if to clear the air. “Okay, so everyone can feel the Ley Lines, everyone is connected to it in different ways, Scotts a squirrel, circle of life, hakuna matata. Got it. My second question Deaton, is have you ever heard of someone other than a Druid being able to tap directly into the Ley Lines.”

The new question actually had Deaton looking startled for a split second before the expression vanished. He looked down at the map, silent for a moment as the corners of his mouth turned down in thought. “Breaching the Ley Lines is incredibly difficult and extremely dangerous. It’s like tampering with the nervous system in the human body. But, if anyone were to attempt it would have to be through a conduit such as a World Tree or a central location where the Ley Lines converge. Our past encounters with people who have tried it...well, you know how they usually end.”


“Is that what made Blake go all crazy?” Erica asked.

Deaton shook his head. “Jennifer was a Druid who chose the wrong path to walk down. And no. She tapped into the Nemeton’s powers with her sacrifices, not the Ley Lines.” Seeing Erica’s eyes narrow Deaton amended his answer lest he start another tangent. “Let me explain it like this,” the man said. “Think of the Nemeton as well.” His eyes traveled over to Stiles whom he looked at pointedly. “A container if you will. One may sample from that well but to actually reach the underground stream, the source where the purest power flows, is nearly impossible. I highly doubt these Vampires have found a way to-“

“Nearly impossible is sort of our thing,” Stiles interrupted in a low voice. “And my question was have you ever heard of it happening?” His words were said more pointedly this time as the small traces of humor he’d gathered slipped away. Melissa’s pointed tapping of her foot on the kitchen floor had Deaton clearing his throat lightly.

“There are stories. Some older Fae, perhaps. Direct descendants of the Unseelie or Seelie court
Royals. Those who are powerful enough know not to attempt it.”

Lydia glanced between Stiles and the ex-Emissary, forming her own conclusions given the information she knew and paring it with how she knew Stiles’ mind worked. “The Argent’s Bestiary says that true Vampires are historically Unseelie Fae.”

Skepticism was clear on Deaton’s face. “I doubt the connection matters. Even Druids would have a hard time of it and it usually ends in disaster. There is a reason there is a Druidic Order after all.”

That had Peter sighing again, this time at Deaton rather than the Pack. “Oh, don’t be stupid, Deaton,” he said bluntly. The eldest wolf looked to their young Emissary, gaze lingering like he was trying to communicate with more than words. “Think about it. They left those marks in Roseville on purpose for us, knowing Barlys cousin would tell us about them. They wanted us to know they knew about the Ley Lines and that they knew exactly where they converged in California. With the rumors and the signs they’ve been sending I think we can safely assume that they know exactly what they’re doing.”

The Sheriff held up his hand, looking a little worn out. “So let me get this straight. This Nest might have figured out a way to use an ancient tree to suck magic right out of the Ley Lines under the town? And they are warning us about it?” He looked around at the others, clearly confused. “In what way is it smart to let your enemy know your plan?” He thought they’d gotten past the stage where their adversaries underestimated them and flaunted their plans as though they wouldn’t be able to stop them even if they knew. This was almost a little insulting.

Stiles took a calming breath, applying some pressure to his forehead. The tattoo near his temple was still shimmering faintly with a dying light that he was desperately trying to smother without say, accidentally setting the map and table on fire. The glowing blues lines were starting to glare now like light reflecting off a mirror and he couldn’t look directly at them anymore. When the headache seemed to near its peak Stiles felt Derek’s hand squeeze his thigh again and he let out a slow breath. The older man’s presence was warm at his side and he swallowed, finding his worlds. “Older Vampires are self-righteous bastards,” he said with the tone of someone who’d had that statement proved to them. “They don’t care if we know their goal because they think they’ll win anyway.”

Melissa sniffed and bit. “Well that’s just...rude." Some of them couldn’t help but nod in agreement.

“But what can the Ley Lines do for them,” Erica asked hesitantly. “Aren’t they just like…raw magic? Isn’t that…” She trailed off, her eyes faltering over Stiles who was really starting to look a little pale around the edges. “Isn’t that dangerous?”

Peter answered before Stiles could even think of forming a response. “If these Vampires are old enough to have taught themselves how to live off magic instead of blood I’m guessing that if they use the Nemeton to access it, one direct hit from a Ley Line will be like the elixir of youth to them. It could make them immortal.”

“Wait, hang on,” Isaac said suddenly, holding up his hand to halt the discussion. “Isn’t that what the Elf lady was talking about?”

The kitchen fell silent and Peter raised an eyebrow, lips parted in realization. “…Oh,” the older man said simply, sounding genuinely surprised.

“Elf lady…?” But then Scott’s eyes lit up in recognition. “You mean that Ismala chick from a few weeks ago who’s leg you broke?” Leave it to Scott to remember a person by what injury he had to treat them for.
Erica let out a low growl at the mention of her latest kidnapper. “No way that friggin’ wood sprite was working with this Nest. She was way too easy to deal with.”

“Says the Werewolf who got kidnapped by her,” Lydia reminded sweetly, earning her a toothy growl from the blonde.

While the rest of them argued back and forth Stiles and Derek remained quiet, both of them sharing a look with each other. The Alphas eyes flashed red at the mere idea that he’d let his Pack, his Mate come so close to the danger they were now trying to face head on. They’d assumed she’d been scouting the area for others of her race: more Elves wanting to up their life energy. When she’d mentioned other demi-immortals they’d had no idea she could mean Vampires. He could feel a shiver of anger wash off of Stiles, tinting the air with ozone so sharply that the wolves all looked at them.

Deaton, aware of the energy charging the air, asked evenly, “Do we know where this woman is?”

“We could always ask her brother in San Bernardino,” Peter suggested after a moment, only to have the Sheriff shut him down.

“We are not dragging an innocent civilian into this mess.”

“You don’t know he’s innocent,” Chris interjected with all the know-how of someone who used to subscribe to that philosophy.

Isaac backed the Sheriff up with a little shoulder shrug. “She was pretty keen on her family being kept out of the whole ‘leave our territory or we may or may not have a death match with the Hale Pack’ thing.”

“I hardly implied there would be a death match,” Stiles had to cut in, a slight grate to his voice.

Erica scoffed. “Yeah, you only threatened them with the Argents.” Chris looked properly smug at that.

“The point is” Stiles said loudly, hand coming down on the table, garnering a look from Derek who had been trying to keep the younger mans emotions from escalating, “That we should-,” Stiles cut himself off with a harsh sigh, closing his eyes suddenly and leaning back from the table, physically withdrawing. “S’cuse me,” he said bluntly. His chair screeched across the floor as he stood quickly and snatched the map up with one hand, dragging it off the table.

"Stiles, are you-?” He shouldered his way past Erica as politely as he could, cutting her off mid sentence and headed for the back door of the kitchen, ignoring calls of concern. Derek was up in an instant to follow. Lydia was half way out of her chair and Scott had already taken a few steps forward, just in front of the Sheriff. Derek made them all freeze with one crimson eyes glance.

“Stay here,” Derek ordered.

Deaton took a step, looking a little concerned. "Perhaps I should-"

"Stay. Here." Derek said again words laced with a growl, shutting the door a little too loudly behind him, just in time to see Melissa snap her fingers, and point to the chair where Deaton sat back down quickly.

“Stay here,” Derek ordered.

He felt the silencing ward shoot up behind him as soon as he passed over the threshold and glanced back at the house to see his Pack looking worriedly through the windows. The temperature outside had leveled out and the wind had died down since Deatons arrival but it still whistled high above the
trees, drowning out the sound of quieter animals and their calls. Derek's eyes adjusted to the darkness quickly and found Stiles standing out in the back yard just a few yards from where the trees started to thicken before the trailed down the hill towards the lake. His shoulders were tense and the faint blue glow of his tattoos was a little more ethereal than it had been under the synthetic light inside the house. Derek forced his gait to slow and his heartbeat to calm as he approached his Mate from behind. The metallic smell of magic washed over him along with the sour scent of frustration and the sharp scent of pain. “Stiles, what happened in there?”

Stiles shoulders rose with the deep breath he took and fell as he let it out. "The map," he said, sounding bitter. "It's stupid."

"What do you-?"

“I can’t get the damn thing to stop glowing.” Stiles snapped, dropping the map to the ground and kicking it lightly with his bare foot.

Derek sighed a little, features relaxing. He continued forward. "Is that a problem?" He reached out to pick it up from the ground. He didn’t have time to react to Stiles warning before he touched the paper and instantly jerked his hand back, blinking away the sudden explosion of white spots in his vision. It was like someone had lit a sparkler right in front of his face. “Jesus!” Derek growled, rubbing his eyes and standing up again. “Why didn’t you say anything?”

Stiles laughed, reaching into his pocket for where the small tin he kept his cigarettes in was. “With Deaton in there? Like I need another lecture on control. I just…” he sighed and dropped down to a crouch next to the crumpled paper, eyes half shut like has looking at a bright light. He rubbed is fingertips together to create a cherry glow and lit the cigarette. “I don't know, I didn't really think seeing magic on a map would be such a stretch.” he'd used his seeing rune before and it had always went away after a while.

Derek watched as a rune just above Stiles knuckle flared to life. A small spark of flame from the end of his cigarette fell on top of the map and instantly the fire flared as the paper caught. Derek took a small step back before the flame died down entirely and the paper was quickly consumed in an ember smolder quickly eating it away.

“Sorry,” Stiles muttered quickly, a second marking on his knuckle flaring to life. A strong gust of wind came down from behind them and carried away the smell of smoke and ash, taking along the burnt debris of paper with it. The man clenched his jaw and then his fist, letting out a long slow breath as the wind died down. He was quick to take a long drag from the cigarette after that.

Derek knelt next to him and wrapped his arms around his Mate, pulling him close to his chest. Now that he knew a little more about the difficulty Stiles was having with his magic he knew not to comment, ask if he was okay, or if there was anything he could do to help. He wasn't, and he couldn't. Derek only took a little of the man’s pain, feeling a rush to his head when he did like he was suddenly overcome by exhaustion. It left him dizzy. “You should have told us it was getting bad.”

Stiles leaned back into Derek’s chest while he slipped the cigarette between his lips. “It was something I made up on the fly,” he said. “I wasn’t really thinking about it when I did it but I thought it would help us find out what the Nest wanted. I was seeing if I could figure out a way to just shut it off.” He tipped his head back onto Derek's shoulder and blew out a ring of smoke. “It did not go well.”

Derek ran his fingertips through Stiles hair, taking a deep breath to replace the smell of burned paper and smoke with the others mans scent and the herbal concoction. "Well, we know now." He
stiffened a moment later and looked over his shoulder to see John coming down the porch steps, a worried frown in place. Derek didn’t even bother mentioning his order to stay inside because who could honestly say that to a concerned, armed father who also happened to be his boss? Not Alpha Hale, that’s for damn sure.

"The wolves were getting curious so I assume your ward is up." John walked forward and knelt down on the other side of his son. “You alright kiddo?” he asked. He eyed the thin cigarette between his boys lips and then at the small burned patch of grass on the ground. “Your, uh, magic okay? Scott said he could smell it in the house.”

Stiles gave a small dry laugh and a tattoo flared up on his hand and suddenly Derek could hear the relieved exclamations from everyone inside now that they could hear again. “Super sniffers,” Stiles laughed. "I just gave myself a migraine is all. Couple cigarettes and I'll be good to go.”

The Sheriff’s frown only grew deeper and he looked at Derek over his son’s head. “Maybe I should stay the night. Derek, could I use the guest room?” Derek nodded readily but Stiles shook his head, waving his hand.

“No, dad, it's fine.” He said, taking the cigarette between two fingers so he didn't have to talk around it. “You’ve got work in the morning and the house is closer to the station.”

“Then maybe you should come back home with me for the night. Take a break,” The Sheriff offered. Derek had to suppress small growl his wolf wanted to let out at the thought of his Mate leaving his side when he was distressed. If a night away from everything let Stiles get some rest it was worth it.

But Stiles looked up at his father and smiled softly, pale white smoke drifting up along side him. “Dad, it's cool. I’m good here.”

Derek ignored the little happy dance he was doing in his head. He didn’t want to argue from an emotional standpoint but rationality won out. “It might not be a bad idea,” he agreed, trying not to sound hesitant. “Just a change of scenery for the night to get your mind off things.” If Derek wanted to continue he wouldn’t have been able to because Stiles had clapped his hand over his mouth (thankfully he remembered to do it with the one that didn’t have the lit cigarette in it).

“Derek Hale. I have slept with you every night since I got back from New York with the exception of that one time because everyone was drunk and passed out on the floor. If I wanted a change of scenery I would sleep in the guest room or make someone else share their bed which, let's face it, every one of your Betas would be willing to do because I am the best cuddler,” Stiles said sternly. “The Pack House is my home now and I feel safe there.” He glanced back at his dad. “Not that the old house isn’t rock solid with all the spells and protections I’ve got around it dad. Just…”

John shook his head with a small smile and ruffled Stiles hair, chuckling. “I know kid. I’ll let it be.”

A relieved smile crossed Stiles face and Derek groaned a little, wincing.

“What?” Stiles inquired, looking up at the man from his position still in his arms.

Derek jerked his thumb at the house. “They all just volunteered to have a dog pile sleep over in the living room.”

“Please, Derek,” Stiles sniffed. “Puppy pile.”
I don't even dislike Deaton's character most of the time. He's badass in the show. He's just so easy to pick on and he certainly knows how to put his foot in his mouth.

Don't worry, he gets better. Promise!!
The hammer drops

Chapter Summary

“Gambit, my darling,” Charlotte hummed a little, “I may require your assistance sometime in the near future.”

Stiles winced and set the beers in the cooler and Carla laughed through her nose. “What did you do?” Stiles asked out of habit.

Chapter Notes

Short chapter update! Things will start happening now ^^

no beta.

In retrospect, being a Werewolf in Beacon Hills and protecting it citizens from an untimely demise had gotten a hell of a lot easier. Back when Stiles had put himself in charge of the research in hopes that by some freak chance it would allow all of them to live to see graduation they’d been limited to the Argents Bestiary, Deaton, Google, and -when something popped up that was particularly heinous- Peter. They suffered their loses, no one could deny that, but they gained strong allies along the way. By association all of the friends Stiles had gained while training in New York transferred over with him –some quite literally. Their reach and influence now far surpassed those few channels they’d built up in high school and though they still threw around Deaton’s name for leverage in the magical community and Google would always be Stiles personal favorite, they found that their Pack name would do just as well to persuade the hesitant.

This didn’t help much however when all their contacts were consistently drawing blanks and could offer nothing more than their apologies.

As instructed the Pack was made aware of all newcomers that came into town. Barry was hyper alert even for a Gargoyle, and spoke to Derek at least once a day with updates. The deputies volunteered daily to patrol the borders and one or two even scouted the preserve with the Pack members, checking on the wards and traps set out there.

Four days passed after the Pack got word from Roseville which was more than enough time for a group of dedicated undead to hitchhike the last few hundred miles. Ethan had to be talked down from ordering an excess amount of speed traps all along the roads they suspected the Vampires would take and Danny had a live feed from all traffic cameras in a twenty miles range of Beacons Hills border. Apart from three people being pulled over for ‘looking suspicious’ (that was horrible profiling Ethan, what the hell) and hours of footage of an old lady walking her dog every morning along a particular route, it was quiet.

Unease grew within their chests the longer they went without any news because this was Beacon Hills. The hammer could drop any second.
The day it did oddly enough, it fell straight on the Onyx.

It was about twenty minuets before opening that the phone behind the bar let out a shrill ring. It always made Stiles jump because Carla was constantly forgetting to put the stupid thing back in the receiver. Sometimes he’d find it in the cooler, or in a cleaning bucket, or that one time he nearly cost them a few hundred dollars in product because she somehow managed to forget it behind the bottles on the back shelf. Like…how even?

Thankfully the phone was not in an unexpected place this time around and Stiles was not carrying something exceedingly fragile or expensive. “Get the phone!” Carla called out from the back. Stiles grunted as he set down a large crate of imported –slightly magically modified- whisky to be put up while his other hand carried a bucket of ice.

“You get it!” Stiles called back, knowing there was a phone in the back room. The phone rang out again as he stared pouring the ice into the open cooler.

Something crashed behind the closed door and the woman swore colorfully before snapping, “Get the damn phone, Sparky!”

Stiles snorted and rolled his eyes but set down the bucket anyway, reaching for the phone. “Onyx. Catering to the seedy underbelly of Beacon Hills, what do you need?”

“Wow,” answered an absolutely languid female voice. “That’s your sales pitch? How are you guys still in business?”

Stiles sighed a little but smiled at Charlotte’s unimpressed tone. He wondered how the Jungles reception answer of ‘Welcome to the Jungle. Release your inner beast’ was any better.

“Our customers are awesome,” Stiles said pleasantly. And the fact that they make it much easier for alcohol immune Fae to get really hammered and no one cared if someone dropped their glamor and started ranting about how frustrating it was not to be able to eat human intestines any more like back in the old days. The onyx was a judgment free zone.

The tone of Charlotte’s voice even over the phone betrayed her smile. “The ones you refer to as the seedy underbelly? Yes. Very charming.”

Stiles shrugged openly. “We also have Carla’s boobs,” he said just as said Sylph pushed through the back door with a case of beer wearing an inappropriately low cut shirt that reminded Stiles so much of high school Erica post bite.

She didn’t hear the conversation but for the last bit and without missing a beat she announced, “My boobs rock.”

“So classy,” the Vampire drawled.

“So, Miss Charlotte,” Stiles said, bringing the conversation back around. “What’s up?” He set down the phone after putting it on speaker and took the case of beer from Carla, pushing the whisky bottles at her to dust off.

“Aw, Gambit,” the Vampires voice took on a low sultry tone and she almost purred. “I’m not allowed to call my favorite on a whim?”

Stiles laughed a little because, wow, was that true and terrifying at the same time.
“Stop distracting him with your vampy wiles, Charlotte,” Carla said reaching for a bottle, dust rag in hand.

“My wiles are only a little distracting.”

“Your entralling assets beg to differ,” Carla grinned.

The Vampire chuckled and the low purr in her voice that made most humans weak in the knees toned down. “They are a lovely pair, aren’t they?”

“Anyway!” Stiles cut in, shooting the Undine a look that made her grin and hold up her hands in surrender. “What did you need Charlotte?”

“Gambit, my darling,” Charlotte hummed a little, “ I may require your assistance sometime in the near future.”

Stiles winced and set the beers in the cooler and Carla laughed through her nose. “What did you do?” Stiles asked out of habit.

Charlotte let out an affronted gasp. “How little you think of me,” the Vampire said though the humor wasn’t quite there. “I rarely ask you to bail me out of trouble. And that first time doesn’t count. You jumped in all on your own.”

Stiles stilled a moment as he reached for another can but continued, voice laced with a little more trepidation this time. He had only helped her the first time because he had not wanted to see a pretty lady’s head cut off with a machete.

“What kind of trouble are you in, Charlotte?” Carla glanced up from her cleaning and raised a curious eyebrow. Stiles ignored her, listening for the Vampires response.

There was a pause on the other end of the line and Stiles heard the woman let out a long breath. “Now, I don’t want you to panic because I’m not entirely certain about this. It was just a flicker of a rumor I heard from one of my Sisters.”

“Char,” Stiles cautioned.

“It’s the Nest we’ve been hearing about.” Stiles felt his stomach clench and then bottom at the woman’s next words. “…I think it’s Valid.”

Glass shattered on the ground and Stiles didn’t even register the sound. Carla’s now empty hands twitched a little, about sixty dollars worth of liquor pooling around her feet and wetting her boots. Her eyes were wide, face paler than normal. “Are….are you sure?” she asked, her voice barely above a whisper. But she didn’t seem to fear the Vampires themselves. Instead she looked at Stiles, shock flashing across her face as he slowly set the beer can on the counter. The tilt of his head cast a shadow across his eyes. Carla barely took a step forward before two lights above the bar exploded in a shower of sparks. Carla yelped a little and a translucent sheen of water formed over her skin, protecting her on instinct as she jumped back.

“Stiles?” Came Charlotte’s suddenly static voice over the phone. “Carla, what’s happening over-?”

Carla had known Stiles for less than a year and Charlotte a little less than that but they’d both been present when Stiles ran into his second Vampire Nest. The very night before he’d gotten his first visit from the Druidic Council. The night his eyes abandoned their amber warmth for icy amethyst. She may make light of Littles Red's creation but that was only because she'd survived it.
The shadows darkened around them and the only light on Stiles face seemed to be the pale purple glow and he interrupted the Vampire mid sentence. “I’ll meet you at the Jungle.” Carla felt ice run through her veins at the dangerously low words that seemed to fill the corners of the bar, muting out every other sound. Stiles pressed the end call button on the phone and set it back in the receiver too calmly. A living blue glow crawled along the man’s skin, vanishing under his sleeve only to reappear under his collar, snaking up the cords of his neck and along the side of his face.

Feeling jittery at the sudden influx of magic in the air, Carla licked her lips nervously, her skin still enveloped in the thin layer of water at the sensed threat. “Sparky, hun, lets just take it easy.” The younger man placed both hands flat on the bar and the dark thick slab of ash wood groaned under his touch. Eyes flashing a clearer ocean blue, Carla’s voice became soothing and calm with her own magic like she was talking to a wild animal. “We’ll head on over to Charlottes and figure out what-,”

“If it’s Valid,” Stiles whispered harshly, shattering the calm veil Carla had tried to drape over them. “If it’s him I will…Carla, I swear I’ll-,”

“Completely kick his ass.” Carla interrupted hastily as she had to swallow back the taste of metal. Panic edged into her voice now as Stiles pale purple eyes flashed, growing more distant from their present. He was loosing it. “Yes, I’m all for that Stiles. All the ass kicking’s. But right now we really need to-.”

Stiles hands slammed down with a loud bang and he let out a growl that sounded more like the wolves he ran with than the human he was. Carla full body flinched at the sound and her heartbeat shot up. The building seemed to creak around them like a great wind was pushing against it and the remaining lights flickering above. Stiles breath came quickly in forced gasps and he hunched over, making a small distressed noise.

“Damnit!” Carla scrambled forward only to recoil. A trail of ink on Stiles skin suddenly seared to life, cutting through the dim lighting and all Carla heard after that was the roar of flames.
What if?

Chapter Summary

“Call any of us if you need us.”
“I will.”
“And just keep calm.”
“I’ll try.”
“And Stiles?”
“…Yes?”

Derek met Ethan’s eyes again and the other man looked at him expectantly. Derek pressed his lips together for a moment before answering, “It’ll be okay.”

Chapter Notes

Short! No beta. Derek POV because i’ve neglected him.

Derek leaned back in his chair looking exasperatedly over the paperwork he’d just finished filling out. Ethan could obviously not be trusted with speed trap management anymore. The ex-Alpha had antagonized at least one creature passing by because ‘Derek, Vampires and Pontianaks sort of have the same smell,’ and that was obviously cause enough to pull her over and try to glare her into confessing her evil master plan. The woman had threatened to remove some of Ethan’s more sensitive appendages before she was allowed to get back into her car and go to her friends freaking baby shower.

Reaching for the lukewarm cup of coffee Derek had been nursing for the better half of an hour he felt an uneasy clench in his chest and frowned, shifting his shoulders to alleviate the pressure. John happened to be walking by and he paused for a moment. “You alright?” the older man asked. Everyone at the station had been on high alert since the threat of the Nest had surfaced and the Sherriff was on constant lookout for deputies that were burning themselves out.

Derek side-eyed the coffee with a scowl. “…You think Werewolves can get heartburn?” he asked. The Sheriffs response was to bark out a laugh and clap him on the shoulder before going back to his office. The scowl grew. Stiles would never let him live this down.

After a moment the unease passed and as soon as he felt it was safe he reached for the cup again. Derek’s fingertips barely brushed the paper when his heart lurched and a wave of anxiety washed over him. His spine straightened with a jolt as though someone had ran a fingemail along his skin. “What the-?” Senses tingling his eyes darted around the station, searching for the threat. Everyone mulled about, as they had been moments ago, oblivious to his inner turmoil. He shot a glance at the
Sheriffs office and saw the man scribbling away at some files on his desk. Even Ethan was unaware, chatting up a fellow officer about the pro’s and cons of police issue loafers when the wearer had a habit of sprouting claws instead of toenails.

Eyebrows coming together in a thick line of trepidation Derek went back to staring at his desk. While this felt a hell of a lot like that familiar old paranoia that he’d been desperately trying to get over for the past decade he couldn’t let himself panic just yet. He leaned back in his chair, forcing his shoulders to relax. “Weird,” he muttered, pulling out his phone. He had a good 10 minutes left on his shift but it wouldn’t hurt to check up on his Pack. Just to be safe.

His phone suddenly jumping to life in his hand startled out of his daze. Derek looked at the caller ID before he answered and smiled when he saw Stiles name light up the display. Stiles self programmed ring tone for the week was currently a deranged chipmunk laughing that made both Scott and his neighbors dog growl when they first heard it. Derek almost broke his phone but Erica caught it before it hit the wall. Now it just made Derek laugh and wonder how he ended up with a guy who thought reprograming his boyfriend’s ringtones every week was any sort of acceptable. Werewolves, that’s how.

“Hey,” Derek answered, leaning back in the chair. “What’s up?”

“Derek? Oh, hey Der, haha, of course it’s you. Listen we’ve got a little problem.”

Any happy feelings that might have come about were smothered by the worry that had crept up on him and pounced earlier. His eyes narrowed hearing his Mates voice just on the edge of panic and he leaned forward immediately like a stiffer position would help him hear more clearly. Across the room Ethan looked towards his Alpha and excused himself from the other officer to make his way over. “Stiles, what’s wrong?” Derek demanded. “Where are you?” Damnit. That would teach him to ignore his hard and tragically earned paranoia.

Stiles took a thin breath and Derek heard him clear his throat of the artificial humor from before. “It’s bad, err, well it might be bad. Charlotte thinks she knows the Nest. I just…I need to check. I have to make sure…”

“Where are you?” Derek repeated, wanting a location so he had a destination to sprint to after he jumped out the closest window.

“I just left the Onyx.” Derek could hear the other mans footsteps, not quite a run but not a walk either. “Charlotte said she’d meet me at the Jungle with one of her Sisters. I don’t know; they might already be there. She was the one who had the information...god, I don’t know Derek.” Another strained chuckle. “This is sort of the worst timing, you know?” Stiles trailed off but Derek had already stood up from his desk, pulling his jacket off the back of the chair. He wouldn’t say the timing was good but he was a little worried as to why Stiles thought it was the worst.

One of the officers with the desk closet to him had stopped what she was doing to look at their resident Alpha when he stood up, noticing the tension. She mouthed ‘you okay?’ but Derek ignored her with little more than a cut off nod to assuage her curiosity. He didn’t see Ethan hold up a staying hand and shake his head. “I can meet you there,” Derek said. “I can be there in five minutes so-,”

“No, stay there,” Stiles interrupted quickly, voice just a tad high. “Finish your shift, it’s almost done right? It might turn out to be nothing. I just...” Derek heard the familiar sound of Stiles Jeep starting with a sputtering cough and the tapping of what he thought was Stiles fingertips hitting the wheel.Derek took a breath, somehow managing to sound calmer than he felt. Stiles needed him to be calm; ground him in the present. He couldn’t panic. They’d dealt with problems before so this would be no different. Panicking helped no one, especially not his Mate.
“Try and calm down,” Derek couldn’t help but say, and Stiles response was immediate.

“Don’t tell me to calm down Derek! There is nothing worse you can tell a potentially panicked person to do!” Oddly enough the panic in his voice wasn’t so pronounced now.

“That isn’t calm, babe.”

And Derek could almost feel the tense breath pass Stiles lips and he imagined that the man was focusing on reigning in the quick thud of his heartbeat. Stiles needed to be calm. Derek knew first hand how much his Emissary needed to be in control of his emotions. He proved that every time the scent of magic and sharp metal filled the air and he knew it well enough after their talks about the Order. “Sorry, I just…I just wanted to call you.”

When he finally spoke again Derek’s voice rumbled soft and gentle. “I can send anybody. Just tell me what you need.” Standing off to the side a few feet away Ethan looked like he’d be out the door with just a nod from his Alpha.

Derek heard Stiles draw a shaky breath and for a moment he thought Stiles was going to have a panic attack. “Talk to me, Stiles,” he urged.

The breath rattled and a gear shifting clicked in the background. “I might know them,” Stiles admitted finally, causing Derek to still. “From New York.” His voice was quiet and tense and Derek could practically hear the self-reproach in his words. He looked up at Ethan and saw his own frown mirrored on the Betas face.

Damn. Maybe this made the timing the worst. “Who are they?” Derek asked.

“I don’t…Charlotte isn’t sure yet. A really old nest that I…we didn’t get along.”

And that could mean any number of things, Derek thought to himself. None of them were good. “Are they dangerous?”

The small laugh Stiles gave was an admission all on its own. “Pretty sure their First fought in the Saxon Peasant Revolt in 1790.”

Derek’s stomach dropped. “Jesus….” That put their First well over 200 years old. Charlotte was barely breaching 70. Vampires could live a long time but they had always been hunted and even peace loving Night Walkers like Charlotte had targets painted on their backs. For this one to have lived two centuries… Derek licked his lips, setting his coat tensely back on his chair. “How sure is she that it’s the same Nest?” Derek asked.

He imagined Stiles hands gripping the steering wheel tight enough that his knuckles turned white. The man didn’t respond and Derek’s eyes tinted with color when he heard horns beeping over the line.

“Stiles?” Please don’t zone out while you drive, he prayed silently.

“That’s what I’m going to find out.”

Derek took Stiles answer as a sign he hadn’t decided to spontaneously off road. “Okay,” Derek let out a breath and nodded even though the man couldn’t see him. “Drive safe and come home as soon as you can. You can fill me in then. We’ll figure this out.” Erica and Scott would be at the house too, having come over just as he was leaving that morning. Something about a gaming marathon on their day off. They’d be a grounding presence for the both of them. Or at the very least they’d provide some good angry feedback rant if it was needed.
Stiles voice drew him back. “*Do you want to call the Pack?*” Derek understood the hesitancy in the mans’ voice and he glanced up at Ethan.

“We can once we know for sure what’s going on,” he answered. “You said yourself it might be nothing.”

The noise of the jeeps engine was almost louder than Stiles reply this time. “*And if it’s not?*”

Derek wanted nothing more than to be in the seat next to his Mate, holding his hand. “I’ll be at the house in twenty minutes.”

“Okay.” And Derek knew Stiles was a rattled because even though it took a good half hour to get from the station to the Pack house the man didn’t warn him about speeding.

“Call *any* of us if you need us.”

“I will.”

“And just keep calm.”

“I’ll try.”

“And Stiles?”

“…Yes?”

Derek met Ethan’s eyes again and the other man looked at him expectantly. Derek pressed his lips together for a moment before answering, “It’ll be okay.”

He hung up and didn’t even need to look back at his Beta to feel the judgment in his gaze. Ethan sighed and shook his head in sympathy though whether it was towards his Alpha or the mans’ Mate was uncertain.
**Still, what if?**

Chapter Summary

Scotts jaw dropped. “Two hundred? Holy crap, that’s like, Angel and Spike old. Are we going to have an Angelus reincarnate in Beacon Hills?”

Chapter Notes

a few short chapters in a row, but they will all be posted up today ^-^ The reason I put them into separate chapters is because they are slight time skips.

Derek got home in 15 minutes after his shift ended. That was 15 extra minutes he’d had to think things over and brood. Brooding always got him into trouble. He wasn’t supposed to do it but Ethan’s shift ended a few hours after his and he had the whole drive back to himself to think about how his Mate was worried and alone and surrounded by Vampires and obviously in need of someone standing by his side and-!

And Stiles was his emissary too. His Lupa. It was literally his job to act as the go between to the Pack and other groups, like Charlottes Nest. Just like with the Elf that had taken Erica, Derek needed to let Stiles handle this. He didn’t have to like it, but he’d do it. Even if he felt like someone was squeezing his lungs tighter the more he thought about it.

Back at the house Scott and Erica had been camped out on the couch all afternoon surrounded by chips and blankets while Halo blared from the TV speakers. Derek slammed the door a little harder than necessary and all but chucked his service weapon on the table after he unloaded the cartridge.

Scott immediately paused the game and the two wolves looked at their Alpha curiously. “...Rough day?” Erica asked.

They got a growl in response and Derek stalked into the kitchen. The partition door swung shut and Scott and Erica shared a confused look while Derek rattled around the fridge. A moment later he came back out with a water bottle looking madder than when he went in.

“Charlotte got a tip about the Nest,” he said finally, taking a drink while the other two scrambled up from the floor and onto the couch.

“What? Who are they?” Scott asked excitedly. Then smile dampened a little. “And why do you look so pissed off? This is good news right?”

The grimace he gave had nothing to do with the taste of the water. “Stiles said he might know them from the city.”

Scott groaned and buried his face in the cushions. “Oh my god, Jackson was right." The statement physically pained him. "All of his grudges are totally stalking him.”
Ignoring Scott, Erica leaned over the couch a bit, tilting her head to the side as she studied her Alphas expression. “Are you worried?” she asked tentatively, brushing her long blond hair behind her ear.

The older man took a breath and let it out quickly. “No,” he affirmed. “But Stiles is.” Which pretty much meant yes. He took another sip. Was it possible to drink away problems if the liquid was water?

Scott lifted his face from the fabric, hair mussed. “Are they that scary?”

Derek rubbed a hand over his mouth, remembering how the Nest had been described to him. “Stiles said that their First is over two hundred, so I’m sure they aren’t kittens.”

Scotts jaw dropped. “Two hundred? Holy crap, that’s like, Angel and Spike old. Are we going to have an Angelus reincarnate in Beacon Hills?”

Erica shoved Scott’s head like she could push the nerd out. “Jesus, Scott, don’t be such a fanboy,” she growled.

“Let’s not rename the town Sunnydale just yet,” came a smooth voice from the hallway. The door to the library shut with a soft click and Peter emerged from the shadows, dressed casually but smart enough that he could go out to a nice restaurant and not feel underdressed. Lounge clothes. “If I didn’t overhear incorrectly you said might. How certain are we that it’s the same Nest?”

Derek rubbed the bridge of his nose as his uncle walked into the living room and took a seat on one of the reading chairs like he was waiting on a briefing. “We’re not. That’s what Stiles is going to find out.”

“So it might not be them?” Scott asked, looking a little relieved.

Erica scoffed. “Are we ever that lucky?”

“Erica.” Derek growled, though he couldn’t help but agree.

“I’m just saying,” Erica insisted. “We’ve kind of got a track record.”

Choosing to ignore his Beta Derek shook his head and sighed. The plastic bottle crinkled in Derek’s hand and he looked at his watch. “Stiles will fill us in when he gets here. We’ll call the rest of the Pack once we know for sure what’s going on.”

“And what do we do if it is a Nest that old?” Peter asked slyly. “If it is the Nest that Stiles knows.”

Derek felt his fangs push at his gums. He was getting tired of all the what-ifs being thrown around lately. He and Stiles were driving themselves crazy with them and the stress was making them crack. Peter knew this well enough yet he still had to push those buttons. That’s just what Peter did. So Derek set the water bottle down on an end table and fell back on the only answer that let him sleep at night. “We’ll deal with it when the time comes.”

Erica perked up suddenly and looked at the door. “I hear the Jeep,” she said. Derek turned towards the door as well and listened. He heard the familiar puttering engine and took a deep breath. Over the smell of dirt on the road he could pick up the comforting musk of oil, exhaust, and the faint odor of blood would never come out of the seats. The engine killed outside and the drivers’ side door opened and slammed shut, followed by the crunch of heavy boots over gravel.

Derek made his way to the door and Scott and Erica climbed off the couch in a scramble of limbs.
Scott looked ready to get on his knees and start begging. “Please, please don’t make us call Buffy.” He murmured, crossing his fingers. Erica smacked him again as the boots hit the stairs and porch. They heard someone sigh softly on the other side of the door.

Out of the corner of his eye Derek saw the Peter pick up a random magazine and flip it open. He heard the man mutter, “That time might be now.”
Jumping the gun

Chapter Summary

Scott leaned back against the couch, tension slumping out of his shoulders. “Thank god. We’re not a Hellmouth.”

Chapter Notes

skippy skip, skipping all the filler I'm too lazy to write out.

The moment Stiles walked into the house he found himself wrapped up in a strong pair of arms. The familiar starched uniform scent of his childhood settled the thoughts roaring in his mind and the nostalgic aroma of leaves, leather, and aftershave that had been with him since high school settled his buzzing nerves. He felt the other man's stubble on the side of his face as Derek rubbed their cheeks together out of habit. It was warm and comforting and would have been even more so had Stiles own arm not been squished to his side at a weird angle, trying to hold his cigarette out of the way.

“Hey Der,” Stiles breathed, closing his eyes for a moment. His voice was a little raw but that was only natural and damn, he was exhausted. He looked over the man’s shoulder to see Erica, Scott, and Peter standing in the living room. Well, the younger two were standing and Peter was sitting in a chair looking as put together as ever except for the frown that pulled at his features as soon as Stiles walked in. The Emissary winced a little when Peter’s eyes widened and then flashed blue. Yeah, he had some explaining to do. Scott’s jaw dropped and was about to open his mouth when Erica grabbed his shoulder, eyes not leaving her Alpha and Emissary.

“What did she say?” Derek asked, squeezing tight before slowly loosening his hold on the man. “Is it-?” Derek’s sentence abruptly cut off in a savage snarl and his eyes flashed deep red as soon as he got a good look at Stiles face.

“Yeah, about this….?” Stiles started slowly, glancing off to the side. A deep bruise blossomed out just under his left eye, covering most of his cheekbone. It was a mix of purples and blues laced with a sickly yellow that disappeared under the hair at his temple. It looked like it had been there for days but they all distinctly remembered evidence to the contrary. Running a hand awkwardly through his hair, Stiles didn’t really offer any further explanation and just let the silence grow.

Derek felt a dark and unsettling pool of anger well up in his gut. It had been so long since he’d seen Stiles with a mark on him like that that it instantly brought him back to…well, a certain dead Hunter that they didn’t like bringing up in casual conversation. “Did Charlotte-?”

Stiles eyes went wide and pushed away, causing the Alpha to growl. “No!” Stiles exclaimed, voice cracking slightly. “God, no, Charlotte didn’t do this! What the hell Derek?!!”

“Who did?” Scott demanded eyes flashing as he stood stock still next to a fierce looking Erica. Peter said nothing and only stared at their Emissaries face with narrowed, cold blue eyes.
“It was my fault,” Stiles deflected, waving his cigarette though he was careful not to let ash get anywhere. “I was being an idiot.” They listened for a stutter in his heartbeat but found none. That didn’t make them feel better.

Derek reached up to brush his fingertips over the bruise, drawing away the brunt of the hurt. Stiles winced a little as Derek's thumb touched the outer edge of the bruise and he huffed. “Seriously, it’s just a bruise guy.”

“What happened?” Derek asked, lowering his hand to the mans’ throat. Stiles sighed softly when Dreges palm pressed flat on the side of his neck and small veins of black worked their way over the wolf's arm.

“You look like you got hit by a brick,” Erica blurted out. She shifted on her feet anxiously, feeling the urge to move and do something about it.

“Please, I’m very good at dodging bricks,” Stiles smirked as he took a long drag on the cigarette. Derek noticed that the man’s hands were shaking. Stiles caught his eye and shoved his free hand in his pocket.

Peter went back to looking down at the magazine in his lap, pretending to read the articles. “What did you find out from Charlotte?” He asked, taking Stiles hint to change the topic.

Stiles sighed and made a dismissive gesture, cigarette between his fingers, smoke making small circles in the air. “Charlotte… may have jumped the gun a little.”

Derek felt a growl push out of his chest. “Jumped the gun,” he repeated. He didn’t know whether to be more pissed at the Vampire for freaking out his Mate, or his Mate for freaking him out.

“To be fair,” Stiles went on, clearing his throat. “She did only say it might be Valids' Nest when she called. I just…. overreacted.”

“An overreaction gets you hit with a brick?” Erica asked bluntly.

Stiles took a drag from his cigarette and shot her a small glare. “Stop saying its a brick. No one would hit me with a brick.” He told her, sweet smelling white smoke drifting past his lips. “But it’s fine.” Only a light stutter in his heartbeat this time.

Peter shifted in the chair, fingers laced in front of him. “How many of those have you smoked since you left Charlottes?” He looked pointedly at the cigarette in Stiles' hand.

Their Emissary glanced at it. “Some?”

Peter’s eyes narrowed some more. “And when you say you overreacted, do you mean there was some shouting or that the Onyx is now a candlelight only establishment?”

Stiles blinked at the frankness of the question and grudgingly cursed Peter’s astuteness. “A little of column A and a little of column B,” he replied, refusing to be helpful. “And I for one just want to celebrate the fact that we don’t have an Elder Vampire breathing down our necks. Hopefully.” Peter started to say something that would get him in trouble but Derek made a short gesture with his hand and the older wolf stood down.

“So it's not this…Valid guy?” Erica asked, testing out the name as she placed a hand impatiently on her hip.

Though he was happy they were no longer talking about the new tie-dye on his face, Stiles rubbed
the back of his neck tiredly. “One of her Sisters heard a rumor and Charlotte freaked out. She called without really looking into it. The description turned out to be really vague so it’s not enough to say for sure.”

Scott leaned back against the couch, tension slumping out of his shoulders. “Thank god. We’re not a Hellmouth.”

“Don’t make me hit you again,” Erica grumbled before she punched Scott in the arm. Again. She cocked one hip to the side and tipped her head up a bit towards Stiles and Derek, deferring to them. “So what are we going to do?”

Stiles closed his eyes for a moment to think and Derek stepped closer. He didn’t touch Stiles but he was close enough to feel the heat of the man’s body. “Nothing,” Stiles said finally. “Just keep doing what you’re doing. We don’t want to go hunting a rumor.”

“What are you going to do?” Derek knew Stiles too well to think he was going to follow his own advice.

Stiles opened his eyes and cracked the smallest of smiles. “Try and ignore it for now?” he said in a barely strained voice, partly in question, wondering if that was even possible. “Call up Lyds and Danny and see if they want to help with some more wards? Never hurts to have back up plans.”

Erica raised an eyebrow. "You mean on top of our other back up plans?"

“So we’re pretending it didn’t happen?” Peter asked, his heated gaze implying more than what his words were saying and Stiles felt the urge to cover the bruise on his face.

Derek reached out and placed his hand on the small of Stiles back. It was there; subtle and simmering under the surface. Anger. And even more subtle, fear. For all his smiles and assurances, Stiles was still worried and pissed off. Keeping busy was how he was trying to deal with it and they all knew that.

“For now, yes,” Derek answered. “Call the rest of the pack.”
None of the wolves said anything more about the bruise, about Charlotte, or about the Nest, and Stiles disappeared into the library after collecting a truly alarming amount of water bottles from the fridge, saying he had to do some research before he called his ‘magical minions.’

Once the door was closed and they heard Stiles settle on the couch and open a book, Erica was the first to speak up. “Why didn’t you ask?” She demanded tensely, looking at Derek.

“Because he didn’t want me to,” Derek rumbled, sitting rather aggressively in a free chair.

Traces of guilt and shame flickered over Scott's face. “That hasn’t worked out so well in the past.”

“I have to agree with Derek on this,” Peter interrupted, making the other two Betas turn on him, clearly stunned. The older wolf held up a staying hand. “Yes, shocking, I know. But think about it. Stiles said he overreacted to hearing the news about the Nest. Obviously, someone hit him to snap him out of it. He didn’t seem angry.”

“So we’re just going to pretend half his face isn’t black and blue?” Was Scott's incredulous retort.

Peter snapped open the magazine again, not bothering to look at Scott. “Did I say that?” The barely there growl in the undertone of the man's voice betrayed his own feelings on the matter.

Erica huffed and turned away from Peter in favor of their Alpha again. “Derek, you saw his face. Stiles would never let anyone get away with that. Not unless…” Erica trailed off, her own words sinking in. Not unless he knew that person. Not unless he thought he’d done something to deserve getting hit. That was the only way. But the very thought that someone Stiles knew would hit him that hard ticked her off. Nobody touched her Batman.

The magazine Peter had grabbed was really just to keep his hands busy at this point. “Call the bar and ask Carla,” he suggested, trying for uncaring when he really wanted to start swinging fists of his own. “She keeps a pretty close eye on him.”

Scott complied and pulled out his phone. “The Sheriff is totally going to send undercovers down there when he finds out,” he muttered. He put Carla on speaker when she answered.

“Onyx. What do you need?”

“Hi, Carla. It’s Scott McCall.”

The Water spirit chuckled. "You don’t have to say your last name Scott, I know who you are."
Scott looked a little chagrinned but continued. “Stiles just came home and he has a massive bruise on the side of his face. Was he getting hassled at the bar?”

“Hassled? No, I punched him.” Scott nearly dropped the phone and Erica growled. Derek hushed her and stood up, taking the phone from Scott.

“Well?” he asked evenly. He would not jump to conclusions. Stiles liked Carla.

Carla let out a sigh and there was some noise on the other end of the line as she spoke to some customers. “Listen, I know he’s got a damn strong handle on this magic even if his moral compass is a little broken, but for god’s sake, he needs a break. I mean, is the universe trying to fuck him over? You guys need to figure out a way to help him out or he’s going to end up attracting exactly the kind of attention he doesn’t want.”

Peter wasn’t even pretending to read the magazine now, interest firmly rooted in the conversation though there was a dangerous glint in his eyes. Derek could practically hear the gears turning in his uncle’s head. “And what exactly would you have me do with my Lupa?” Derek asked, the utter calm tone revealing how heated he was at the insult that they weren’t doing enough to help their pack mate.

“Christ, Hale, calm down. I don’t mean it like that. But packs ground their Emissaries as much as they ground the pack. You guys can feel when he’s stressed just as much as he can when you are.”

“Again,” Peter pushed. “What would you have us do to keep our Emissary grounded.”

“Keep him away from the damn Vampires for starters!” Carla exclaimed.

Erica stomped her foot and snarled, imagining it was someone’s face she was putting her heel to. Probably Carla’s. “Stiles says he can handle it,” she insisted, eyes narrowed and fists clenched tight at her sides. “And a little argument is no reason to hit him that hard. He’s still human you know!” Scott’s hand on her shoulder calmed her a little and she pushed aside memories of a certain car part connecting with a certain someone’s head that one time.

There was a silence on the line and they heard Carla excusing herself, presumably stepping out from behind the bar for some privacy. Some of the background noise died away and a door clicked. When she spoke again, her voice was low and calm. “Listen up she-wolf, I’ve been working with Sparky for a while now and he’s never accidentally set the bar on fire. That kid is more in control of his spark than a lot of humans I’ve seen but as soon as he heard Valid’s name: WOOSH! There went the fucking varnish.”

All four wolves looked at each other, expressions a mix of worry and shock. Derek sat back down in the chair.

“He set the bar on fire,” Scott repeated.

“Yes.”

“The bar that you own.”

“Yes Scott, the Onyx. The bar that Stiles and I own.”

“That you run.”

“Jesus, are you broken? Yes!”
But Erica was following along with Scott and continued. “So the bar that is so worked over with protective spells that you could set off a bomb and it would still be standing; the bar owned by a freaking water elemental Fae was set on fire??”

“Do you see my reason for concern?”

“Why didn’t you call me Carla?” Derek demanded. Stiles hadn’t told him any of this on the phone and he must have called right after. He must have been walking to his Jeep still reeling from that punch. No wonder he’d sounded so rattled. No wonder he’d been smoking. Derek knew now that was what the unease in his chest had been. His Mate had been distressed and he had felt it.

Carla scoffed. “There wasn’t any damage and I figured he’d call you as soon as he left. He called you right?”

Erica pressed her lips together and glanced at Derek. The Alpha was sitting tensely in the chair, staring a hole in the floor. The scent of concern hung around him like a cloud, covering a restless sort of anxiousness that she could see in the way he held himself. That Derek wasn’t jumping all over Carla for hitting someone in his Pack, much less his Lupa, was enough to tell both Erica and Scott that there was something more worrying him. Peter was just rubbing his temple tiredly. Derek listed for a moment to the familiar mumbling in the library as Stiles moved about, reading to himself in a foreign language.

“Derek?” Scott ventured hesitantly.

“It’s not a problem.” Derek knew that Stiles wasn’t torn up over being clocked by his friend. If anything he was grateful that Carla had snapped him out of it. Hell, Derek was too. “He’s been dealing with some things.” Like the frickin sword of Damocles that the Druidic Order had aimed right at his neck. The bastards.

Carla spoke again, the anxiety in her voice making it a little snappy. “Listen, I know everyone is stressed about these Vampires but obviously something else is going on. Stiles does not just set things on fire when he’s worked up. He hasn’t said anything to me about it but I need to know if I should invest in a sprinkler system.”

Derek was silent for a moment, staring at the phone like he wanted to chuck it out the window if it meant he could avoid this conversation. He, Peter, and Deaton were the only ones who knew how close a threat that the Druids were; how they were watching their Emissaries every move and waiting for him to mess up. The rest of the pack was aware but the conversation had been put off, only filled in here and there when it came up. He felt like saying it out loud would make it even closer to home. “He’s worried about the Druid Council.”

There was a clear surprise in the woman’s tone. “Whoa, are you kidding me? Damn. I mean, I know he’s had some slip ups but they already talked to him in New York. They shouldn’t be back to visit unless something big is going down.” Apparently, Dereks silence wasn’t what Carla wanted because her voice hardened. “Derek, they haven’t talked to him again, right?”

Derek sighed. As another Fae and Stiles friend, Carla deserved to know what she might be getting into. “No, they haven’t contacted him,” he admitted, pausing a moment before he added, “…but, he says his control is slipping.”

There was dead silence and for a moment Scott thought they’d lost the connection. He walked over and took the phone from Derek’s hand, lifting it a bit closer to his face. “Carla?”

A hissed curse on the other end signaled she was still there. “He said that himself?” she asked.
Derek felt the worry stir in his gut again. Carla recognized what that admission cost Stiles. “He did.”

The Undine swore again under her breath. “Derek, can you get down here? I don’t want to talk about this over the phone.”

Erica straightened. “We’ll all come.”

“No, little she-wolf. I am asking Alpha Hale to meet with me to discuss some concerns that I, a Beacon Hills citizen, have about your Pack’s Emissary.”

Derek frowned at the formal request. Carla obviously had her suspicions and she wanted to give the proper respect to the Alpha’s authority and to his Lupa. “I can be there in ten,” Derek replied, already standing and heading for the front door. He looked at his Betas before glancing down the hall at the library door. He hesitated for a moment, like he wanted to take a step forward, but then stopped himself. “Tell Stiles I’ve gone out. Let the rest of the pack know what happened so no one puts their foot in their mouth. Call me if anything happens.” Scott glanced at Erica and back at the phone as Derek hurried out the door without another word.

“Hey, Carla?” Scott asked after a moment or two of silence.

The woman took a breath. She sounded tired suddenly, as old as her years rather than the age she looked. “Yeah, Scott?”

The muscles in his uneven jaw twitched and his expression grew serious in a way that was reserved only for his friends and family. “Are you worried about Stiles?”

“....Yeah, Scott.”
Magic is a distraction

Chapter Summary

Stiles watched his friends faces as they remembered. “How did it feel?” he asked.
“Honestly.’

“Like…anything was possible,” Danny admitted glancing at Lydia. “Like…something was on my side, even if I didn’t see it.”

Lydia twirled her finger through a strand of loose hair absentmindedly. “Like something was in my control again.”

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Lydia and Danny arrived at the house that night together, faces set with grim determination. After knocking briskly on the door they shared a look. “We’re seriously supposed to pretend nothing happened?” Danny asked quietly.

“Alphas orders,” Lydia shrugged, flipping some hair out of her eyes.

Danny’s eyebrow rose. “Since when do you listen to Derek?” He asked, clearly remembering all the times his no nonsense friend arguing with their Alpha because Derek, don’t be an idiot. My way is better.

The redhead huffed and crossed her arms. “I pick my battles, Daniel. And what makes you think it was Dereks’ idea to ignore things? I’ll bet my best Prada bag Stiles is the one who doesn’t want to talk about it and you know as well as I what comes from making that man talk.”

Danny made a face of understanding and nodded. “Yeeep, all the sass.”

They heard someone come to the door and quickly clammed up. The deadbolt turned and when the door opened the two of them were enveloped by the warm light from inside. Stiles was dressed in a plain T-shirt that was easily recognized as one of Derek’s, repurposed as Stiles sleeping shirt, and a pair of sweatpants that hung low on his hips. If they hadn’t been on the phone with him just a little while ago they would have sworn he’d just woke up.

Lydia drew in a sharp breath at the sight of Stiles face. It was just like…. Same expression too: a little smile. She was thankful though that his eyes didn’t look as haunted this time around. “Hello fellow coven members!” Stiles greeted. His voice was raspy.

Danny made an aborted movement with his hand and winced in sympathy. “That doesn’t look good,” he said, unable to ignore it like he’d been advised to and Lydia rolled her eyes beside him. “She clocked you pretty good.” Before he’d gotten the call from Stiles to come over he’d listened to a rather growly Erica explain what had happened. He’d had a hard time believing Carla would hit anyone hard enough to leave a mark like Erica described but that was a nasty shiner. The Sylph must have put all her weight into that.

Stiles shrugged, opening the door wider for them. “Well, the bar’s still standing so that’s a plus.”
Lydia knew her friend well enough to know when he inserted humor into a situation to deflect that he didn’t really want to talk about said situation. So she looked around the empty living room, tossing her purse on the couch. There was a small collection of jars on the coffee table, half of which she recognized as things that the three of them had prepared together. Different salts and herb mixtures, oils, a box of white chalk from the dollar store. A magic ‘starter-kit’ Stiles had called it. Near the supplies was a large yellowed book that Stiles walked to and picked up. Lydia stood on her toes to look over Stiles shoulder when he opened it.

“Did you kick the Wolves out of the house?” She asked, scanning the Latin text.

“For a few hours,” Stiles replied, rubbing at the shell of his ear, tugging on one the gold earring just under the silver one. “Derek will be back later.”

Lydia nodded. Scott had been the one to call her before he rang up the others. She wondered if their Alpha had any choice phrases for the barkeeper. Up close, seeing the bruise and the way Stiles couldn’t smile fully because of it, she certainly did. “What do you need us to do?” she asked.

Stiles dropped into a cross-legged position right where he was, setting the book on one knee. “Just adding another layer to the barriers around the house. Since Its a little custom to our Pack I think it will work better if we’ve got all three of us. Danny will be our full human, Lydia will be our connection to the Fae, and I’ll be the connection to well…everything else.”

Lydia raised an eyebrow as she knelt next to him, smoothing out her skirt. “We don’t need a Werewolf?”

“Mmm,” Stiles mused, looking over the page. “Naw, I think I can cover that. Emissary and all.” He picked up a pencil from the table and scratched a little ‘X’ right onto the floor off to his side, between himself and Lydia.

“I love your confidence,” The Banshee deadpanned. But hell, they’d gone on less.

Danny shrugged off his coat and joined them on the floor, looking curious. “Is this like the runes we carved all over the house and in the preserve?”

Stiles flipped through the pages of the tomb and stopped on one, humming to himself. “A little. I’m going for a ward that targets a persons intentions rather than species or magic. Lydia, grab that jar with the blue label will you. Pour it all out on that mark I drew on the floor.”

Lydia picked up the bottle and opened it without question. The smell of mint and sage hit her, almost making her eyes water. She tipped the bottle out and a white stream of small grains spilled out, covering the pencil marking Stiles had made. She looked a bit closer when the small pile trembled, granules rolling off the top. “Is it supposed to do that?” She asked.

Stiles glanced over at it. “Hm? Oh, right, forgot.” He raised his free arm out in front of them, nodding to it. “Go on, touch.” Danny was the first to reach out and wrap his hand over Stiles bare wrist. The moment he did, like with the map, his eyes reflected a pale blue glow. The tattoos on Stiles arm shimmered under his hand and radiated out over the hardwood floor in flowing geometric patterns. They ran along the floors and walls and even branched out over the ceiling. The barely noticeable runes that were carved into the wood all over the house shined with a soft white glow, pulsing with steady power. Stiles hadn’t been kidding when he said he wanted to add a few things of his own to the house.

Lydia gasped lightly when her hand joined in next to Danny. She looked down at the grains again and noticed that the ‘X’ Stiles marked was smack dab in the middle of a convergence of glowing
lines. The white grains continued to move, bit by bit along one of the lines, forming a perfect traveling line like invisible ants were carrying them. The longer the line stretched out, circling around them, the more the small pile she’d poured out seemed to supply until it connected all the way back to the beginning. As soon as the circle formed the Banshee felt something settle in the back of her mind, like the safety of a door being shut behind her when she entered a home she knew.

She let go of Stiles arm and the lights faded from her eyes. “Well that’s a different way of making a circle,” Lydia said. “Do you see that all the time?”

Stiles shook his head, expression unreadable. “Not really. I just learned how to control it after the map incident.” And that wasn’t nearly as comforting to the other two as Stiles thought it was. “Here we go,” Stiles said finally, tapping on the book. He held both hands out to his sides. “This ought to do it. Take my hands. No glowing this time, just completing the circle.” He waited for the other two hands to settle in his and Lydia and Danny joined hands just opposite him before he took a breath and said, “Servo is domus.” Silence followed and he waited for a moment, glancing up at the ceiling expectantly as though waiting for something to happen. The other two glanced at each other.

“Was something supposed to happen?” Danny asked.

Stiles made a face and looked down at the book. “Maybe? Not gonna lie, my Latin kind of sucks. Maybe ‘protect this home’ wasn’t specific enough for the dead language.” He squinted at the pages again and his eyes focused on another line. “Okay, lets try this one; servo is domus ex malum.”

Danny and Lydia scrambled away as sparks jumped off Stiles hands and onto theirs. “Don’t guess!!”

Stiles snickered, shaking out his hand a bit and holding them out for them to take again. “Okay, being specific works better.” They took his hands a bit reluctantly this time. “Keep thinking happy thoughts,” Stiles instructed. “Malum vadum non penetro is domus!” The sparks that jumped from his fingertips this time were warm instead of electric and they fell to the floor inside their circle and melted into the wood. Danny and Lydia shuddered as a deep warmth sank into their bones and settled there. If possible the house felt even safer than before, like every good home and memory rolled up into one. Knowing Stiles wont for covering all angles, it probably was.

Danny looked around like he was expecting the walls to start shaking or at least for something to light up like a glow stick. “That was it? It’s done?”

Lydia’s eye was much more scrutinizing. “…Yes, I can feel it. There’s another barrier around the house.” Her green eyes fixed on Stiles, narrowing. “I’m going to be able to get in and out of here right?”

Stiles let go of their hands and snapped the book shut. He broke the line of the circle with a swipe of his hand. “Unless you suddenly decide to use your powers for evil you can come and go as you please, Miss Banshee.” Lydia made a clicking sound with her tongue and teeth and Stiles smirked. “It’s all about intent, Lyds.” Stiles had created the spell in order to prevent those with bad intentions from entering through any threshold, from stepping onto the very floors. In theory it would work to keep out anything from burglars to disgruntled Fae, at least until other protective measures could be taken.

Satisfied, Lydia got to her feet gracefully with a hand from Danny and brushed some wrinkles from her skirt. “Well, if we’re done here then, I have about a billion other things I’d like to be doing, starting with my manicure appointment.”

Danny looked down at the woman’s perfectly buffed pink nails, not commenting on how it was almost midnight. “Mhm. I’ll bet your manicurist pays her mortgage with your business.”
“And we all appreciate the results,” Stiles said as he started sweeping up the grains with his hand. “You guys can head out. Thanks for stopping by.” Stiles jumped a bit when Lydia knelt down next to him again and helped clean up the mess.

“You sure you don’t want us to say?” Lydia offered to Stiles surprise.

The brunette chuckled a bit. “What happened to your appointment?”

Danny knelt down too, getting the rest of the grains and dumping them into a trash bin Stiles had. “I think it’s stupid to ignore things when they’re right in front of you,” he announced frankly.

Stiles hands paused before he emptied them into the trash. They could see that he was keeping his mouth shut on purpose and it unnerved both of them. Since he came back from New York he’d picked up a few new habits that had surprised them all. The ability to stay still, not needing Adderall, his mind was quicker, but his thoughts tumbled about more chaotically. He could mask his heartbeat from Wolves and he would stay silent and glance off to the side instead of directly lying. He would cage in his usual rants with a stony silence when something was wrong. Stiles had learned how to do that and though the humans didn’t need to hear his heartbeats to pick up on a lie, they’d quickly learned his new tells. Stiles glanced at both of them, eyes shadowed for a moment, but it was the pure concern on their faces made him yield. These two… they could understand a bit better. Maybe.

“Do you…remember the first time you used magic?” Both of them nodded. Danny smiled at the memory. He’d been with Ethan patrolling the woods and a rouge omega came into their territory. Ethan managed to push it back but caught an unlucky claw to the stomach and ended up slammed against a tree, leaving Danny to defend himself when the feral wolf turned on him. He had a charm that Stiles had made for him and threw it at the ground as instructed. He thought of nothing but protection, pouring his intent through every outlet in his body. Stop the Omega, keep us safe, keep us safe.

A surge of energy had coursed through his body and the Omega had been blown back. The protective barrier created by the shards of the amulet surrounded him and Ethan and held until the Pack arrived, kept strong by his steady and half terrified wave of belief.

Lydia’s first time on her own was a little less dire. She’d come down from a migraine induced by a Scream earlier that evening, signaling an attack. Unfortunately she’d been out shopping with Allison when it happened. Allison had been closest to her and as a result her ears started bleeding from the sound. Never the less the Huntress stayed by her friend side to make sure she got home okay. Lydia couldn’t shake the guilt of hurting her every time she tried to help so she brewed up a pot of steaming chamomile and lemon tea, a concoction that Stiles had made specifically for her ‘banshee issues’. It wasn’t as potent whenever she made it (she’d never found out Stiles secret) but she wished so badly that the look of discomfort would leave Allison’s face that when she drank the tea, the look actually vanished. The look of surprise on the young woman’s face as she snapped her fingers near her ear turned into a smile as she insisted that her ears had stopped hurting.

Stiles watched his friends faces as they remembered. “How did it feel?” he asked. “Honestly.’

“Like…anything was possible;” Danny admitted glancing at Lydia. “Like…something was on my side, even if I didn’t see it.”

Lydia twirled her finger through a strand of loose hair absentmindedly. “Like something was in my control again.”

Stiles nodded and stood with a small grunt, brushing his hands off on his pants. He looked down at them, the bruise a stark contrast on his pale skin. “My magic isn’t always on my side. I’m not always
in control.” He held his hand out to Lydia and helped her up and Danny got to his feet slowly.

The redhead stepped forward suddenly and wrapped her arms around her friend's waist, resting her cheek on his chest. Her eyes shut tight for a moment, frowning at her friend’s obvious ache. “We’ll figure it out sweetheart. It’s what we do.”

Stiles let his long arms wind around the woman’s smaller frame, placing his chin on top of her hair and breathing in the scent of her peach shampoo. Danny reached out, hand resting on Stiles’ shoulder before he gently touched Lydia’s. “Come on Lydia.” He said gently. She took a breath and slowly released her hold on the other man.

With a firm nod she collected herself and cleared her throat. “We’re getting coffee tomorrow afternoon. Come pick me up at my house after you’re done at Deatons,” she said finally. How did she know Stiles was going to Deaton? The man had supplies, that’s why. “And tell Carla that she should be expecting a very strongly worded hex within the next few days.”

Stiles chuckled softly, looking at the both of them fondly. Danny hugged him next and ruffled his hair lightly, looking over the bruise one last time. “Ice that tonight okay?” He playfully tugged on one of the many precious metal earrings on the other man’s ear. “You’re too cute to have your face messed up.”

“Battle scars, dude,” Stiles grinned. Danny gave his head a small shove and they left feeling uneasy but settled. An odd contradiction.

Chapter End Notes

Next up is some feels because Carla has a big mouth.
It was well past midnight and closer to two in the morning when Derek got home. He’d left his car at the bar practically forgetting he’d even drove there. Almost mindlessly he walked back to the Pack house and didn’t realize he was on the porch until his feet hit the stairs. He almost tripped. His wolf was bewildered, curled up in the back of his mind and staring at nothing, an occasional unbidden growl rumbling out from its chest.

Derek barely listened to see if anyone was inside before he pushed open the door, forgoing taking off his shoes as he made his way upstairs, pulled along by an unseen force. He passed empty rooms and closed doors, walking all the way down to the end of the hallway in the darkness. The door to his bedroom creaked softly as he pushed it open. Familiar scents and sounds were lost to him. Pale moonlight poured in through the open window but Derek didn’t hear the wind, or the rustling of the leaves.

He saw Stiles laid out on the bed in boxers and an old Henley Derek recognized, listening to his iPod with his eyes closed. The sound of his breathing and the methodical beat of his heart filled Derek’s ears and somehow managed to drown out the buzzing that had filled his mind since he left the Onyx.

Still in a trance he crossed the carpet and crawled smoothly over the comforter, work clothes and shoes still on. In a single motion Derek slid one arm under Stiles and the other over his waist, not hesitating for a moment to pull him close.

Stiles jumped a bit, the touch startling him out of his sleep. “What the-!” The younger man flailed, tugging out the ear buds and craning his neck to look over his shoulder. “Hey, Derek, what are you-
Derek buried his face in the back of Stiles neck, eyes shut tight. “I’m so sorry.”

Stiles stilled at the other man’s words, the faint hum of music still playing in the air next to them. He heard Stiles swallow. “What are you-?”

“Carla told me about Valid,” Derek interrupted, feeling his entire chest twinge in distress when Stiles tensed in his arms. He curled in closer, protecting him from whatever enemies he was remembering that Derek was suddenly and painfully much more aware of.

--- Earlier and the Onyx---

Derek had never seen the Sylph so serious in all the time he’d known her but then again most of their past encounters had not been to discuss something so personal. Not even when Derek threatened to arrest her for excessive defense had her frown been so firmly set.

There had been no small talk. No how are you or even thanks for coming. The bar was just empty when Derek walked in. Half full glasses were on the tables as though the patrons had simply got up and left and the speakers played a soft tune to no one. Carla was facing the door, seated at one of the tables lit by a single dripping candle. Most of the lights were off in fact. Well, broken would be a better word and Peter would gloat if he found out he was right. Above the bar were shattered globes, a hanging pendant light in the corner flickering uselessly. Tapered candles were placed on all of the tables, casting eerie shadows on the dark wooden walls.

Wordlessly Derek walked over to the table and sat in the chair across from Carla, feeling his entire body suddenly go on edge when he met the Sylphs cold ocean eyes.

Two glasses of something clear and strong had been set out on the table, the bottle off to the side. Carla licked her lips as her fingertips tapped on her glass. “I didn’t know how bad it was getting so I’m only telling you this for Stiles sake,” she dove right in. “I know he doesn’t want Charlotte and I talking about New York to the Pack but…” She paused for a moment, wincing. “Valid is a different matter.”

Derek nodded slowly not wanting to interrupt, watching Carla as she pushed her fingers through her aqua colored hair.

“I sort of mentioned this when I was giving Peter his tattoo but Little Red isn’t a name that the rest of the supernatural community associates with humor. Some of them know the story about the theatre but Stiles got that name officially because he practically destroyed an entire Nest of century old Vampires single handedly.” The Werewolf tensed at the reminder, recognizing that this was one of the things that Stiles had yet to tell him. Something that he’d said he’d wait for, till he was ready.

That was enough to make Derek feel reluctant. “Maybe I should ask Stiles about-,”

“He’ll deflect, Derek,” Carla interrupted quickly, shooting Derek a reprimanding look. “Sometimes the only way to hear the whole story is to hear it from someone else. And you need to hear it this way. Please.”

At the ‘please,’ Derek found that he could only nod.

Carla took a breath and continued, staring down at her glass. “The only reason we got involved was because we heard a woman screaming- turned out to be Charlotte by the way. We’d heard about
some turf wars with Nests in the area and wanted to check it out. We had no idea there would be so many of them just...waiting.”

“Why were they attacking her?” Derek asked, curiosity getting the better of him. No one had really gotten a concrete answer from the woman.

Carla frowned faintly. “We didn’t exactly stop to ask when we saw she was about to be beheaded but we just assumed it was a turf thing. Turns out Valid has been trying to off Charlotte for years. Something about an old family grudge or something.” She shook her head dismissively, taking a smaller sip of her drink. Derek took up his own and swallowed a fraction to be polite. The alcohol stung in a way he hadn’t felt in a long time and he coughed lightly.

Carla gave him a weak smile, raising her glass in a small toast. “I save the strong stuff for myself.” Clearing his throat, Derek made a ‘please continue’ motion with his hand because he couldn’t exactly vocalize it. The smile faded from Carla’s face and she took another breath.

“It was pretty one sided. We even had a Hunter join up with us for a while before he got most of his shoulder bitten off.” The woman shuddered and took a long drink. “Older Nests have a tight knit ring of leaders and below them are a few younger, lower level Vampires. Even if the Nest is large they rarely all stay in the same city. This wasn’t the case with Valid’s Nest though. There must have over 50 of them there, Derek. I’ve never seen a Nest that big before; not all in once place.” She shook her head and leaned her elbows on the worn wooden table. “Most of us were down for the count after a few minutes. We weren’t prepared to take on a group that big and Stiles had only just started learning legitimate offensive spells. He ended up getting pinned down by one of the younger Vamps. Really young. He was all snapping and snarling and pure bloodlust. Hell, most of them were probably new turns. Older Vampires have a different way of fighting you know?” Derek growled deep in his chest. He knew very well.

“I’d just had my arm broken when Valid showed up. This guy… Jesus, he still gives me the creeps. He’s polite and well spoken, right out Interview with a Vampire, but he’s seen way too much blood to be sane. Stiles was,” she paused and let out a small chuckle, lips quirking in a fond smile of remembrance. “Stiles was such a little shit though. Taunting and pissing all of them off, but…” her expression sobered again. “This was only his second run in with Vampires and he hadn’t learned any healing spells yet. Nothing to help with the majority of his injuries at the time. He couldn’t fight back as hard. I couldn’t hear what Valid said to him but before any of us could do anything Valid grabbed his wrist and—”

Something splintered loudly and Derek jumped, looking around expecting to see someone else in the room with them. He frowned when he saw that the room was as empty as it had been. His hand though, suddenly felt warm.

With eyes he didn’t know had bled red he looked down at the destroyed remains of the wooden chair arm beneath his completely wolfed out claws, realizing only then that that dead buzzing in his ears was his wolfs low and unending rumble.

Carla didn’t seem fazed at all and she met the Alphas blood red eyes, even as he shook out the splinters of wood that had embedded in his palm. “Should I go on?” Carla asked in a low voice.

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Derek pressed his forehead against Stiles shoulder, listening to the steady beat of his heart even if it was a bit faster than normal. “She wanted me to know why you were so upset when Charlotte called
you.” He hated the way his voice shook as he spoke and his grip turned a bit tighter.

The only sound was the music coming from the headphones, the thin cord tangled up in Stiles hands that clutched it like a lifeline. Derek could feel the other man remain tense in his arms, as a sudden heat burned at the surface of Stiles skin. Embarrassment, fear, and anger all seeped out into the air. Just as quickly though it was smothered like a blanket being thrown over a fire. Stiles let out a long breath and Derek could feel inch by inch as he forced his body to relax and sink into his hold. A cool blue glow flared up somewhere just out of Derek’s line of sight and the sounds outside their room; like the hum of the fans and the creaking rafters, were muted, letting Derek know that in his daze he hadn’t noticed the other people in the house. Stiles wouldn't have thrown up the sound barrier otherwise.

“I don’t want you to be afraid of me.”

Derek's next words were gutted in shock. "What are you-?"

“Scott and the others….I mean, you’ve all got these awesome skills when you fight and those skills earned the Hale Pack a pretty damn good reputation. It's a warning that makes people under your protection feel safe. The reputation my skills earned me is just…” Stiles words sounded pained and small but he went on. “I never wanted power to do that.”

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“Valid is the one that bit him Derek. And Stiles lost it. This is why I say that I’m worried when Stiles tells you he’s loosing control. I’ve seen him lose control. He had nothing but a knife and a bat and his magic, and in the end he didn’t even need the knife and the bat. You’ve seen Stiles eyes turn violet?” Carla asked, not waiting for a response. “That only means one thing to Fae, Derek. Too much magic mixing with too strong an emotion.”

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Almost as though he’d regressed back to when baser instincts took over the more stress he was under, the more heartache he felt, Derek latched his blunt teeth unto the crook of Stiles neck. He heard a sharp intake of breath and then Stiles shifted against him. “Der, come on…” Derek growled and bit down harder till the other man stopped moving entirely. Only then did Derek release his teeth.

Idiot, Derek thought. He had Stiles on his back in a matter of seconds and stared into the wide amber eyes that looked up at him. Those eyes softened a fraction and Derek felt a warm hand touch the side of his face. “Hey now. You’ve got Alpha eyes…”

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Derek hadn’t been able speak a word and Carla was fearful. She looked calm, collected, unfazed, but Derek could practically hear her nerves buzzing and every now and then her skin would shine with moisture, her natural shield acting up without warning. Derek wondered if she even knew she was doing it.

“That’s why the Druids came,” Derek said. There was no question in it.
Carla tipped her glass on its edge so she could stare at the reflective surface of the clear liquid before she set it down again and reached for the bottle, filling it to the brim. She downed half of it without even a flinch and the glass was set back on the table loudly.

“We were in the middle of down town and roots shot out of 5 feet of concrete, spearing a man through the heart. Wind cut through a woman like a blade and the ground opened up and swallowed a guy before it snapped shut. I’m telling you all this Derek, because when I say that Stiles raised the forces of nature itself to rip these Vampires apart I need you to understand the full meaning.” Carla reached over the table and placed a hand over Derek’s clenched fist. "I dont think he was even aware of the magic he was using and my entire body felt like it was on fire.”

Derek’s heart thundered in his chest, nerves buzzing as he felt like cotton was stuffed in his ears, making Carla’s words fuzzy in his mind.

“See Derek? It’s not only the fact that Stiles has an ingrained fear of Vampires which makes this situation extremely unpleasant, but these are the ones that officially put him on the radar for what magic users equate to the supernatural Secret Service. They made Stiles lose control and now there’s a chance that they are coming to his hometown where the people he loves live. Where his Pack lives.”

Derek grabbed Stiles wrist and tugged, bringing the mans arm closer to his face where he inhaled the scent of smoke and iron and magic. The smell of herbs and curly fries and home.

Just under the elbow were the twin crescent moon indented scars on his arm. Teeth marks. Deep enough that the blood must have flowed, slipping down his Mates arm and dripping off his fingertips. Deep enough that if a wolf had done it, it would have turned. It would have claimed. A Vampire had done that.

Derek nuzzled against the man’s skin, a low rumble sounding in his chest. The wolf in the back of his mind dug its claws in, trying to scratch its way to the surface.

Cover the mark. Get rid of it, get rid of the mark! Mine to protect! Keep safe! Get rid of the mark! The closer his lips got to the scar the faster the man’s heart beat underneath him.

“Don’t!” the voice was small and so alarmed that Derek stopped mid-growl and his wolf drew back like it had been slapped, instantly dropping to a whimper. Derek blinked the red from his eyes and looked down at his Mate, seeing him clearly.

Stiles eyes were wide, staring up at him with an unreadable expression and his jaw clenched tight. Stiles body was tense underneath him again and Derek felt sick.

He dropped Stiles hand, horrified, only for Stiles to surge up and press their lips together. Too shocked to react Derek froze. Stiles kissed him fiercely, lips cool to the touch. When he pulled away the words instantly slipped from his mouth, chasing Stiles lips.

"Stiles, I didn't! I'm so sorr-!""

“No, Derek, no, it’s okay.” Stiles long arms wrapped around his shoulders and the Wolf let out a shuddering breath, willing his arms to do the same, circling around the other Mans waist. “Its okay, Der. Just, maybe no biting at the literal point of trauma, yeah? Calm down.”

The words were like a cool breeze washing over him, soothing the anger and self loathing that had
stirred up in his heart. Stiles kissed him quickly- softly a few times before Derek returned the gesture, hands’ spreading wide over the younger man’s back.

“I…I wish I could tell you everything would be alright,” Derek whispered against the other man’s lips.

Stiles brushed their cheeks together, mixing their scents in a way he knew would calm the Alpha down. “I know you do.”

Stiles’ fingers carded through the older man’s thick hair and Derek trailed his blunt nails down his lover’s torso, feeling the urge to rake him in close, keep him near forever. He wanted to keep the man from losing control, from fearing the things in the dark, from ever having to worry about the Druidic Order. So he kissed him like he was never going to stop, like everything else was second-rate worry.

“We’ll keep everyone safe,” Derek promised.

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“Oh god,” Derek breathed; mind clouding over in a daze he was sure would last till he got home again. “We are so incredibly fucked.”

Chapter End Notes

See Carla for gossip.
I have not update for a while because its been a very bad few weeks for me. My dog has been really sick and I think I'm going to have to put him down soon. He is a rescue dog an is only 4 years old. To top it off today was Memorial Day and I spent most of it crying because I miss a friend of mine and am constantly worried about other friends who are currently serving. I want to keep posting and will because it distracts me from all this fucking depression, but I am not sure how stable I will be after by dog goes and I can make no promises as to when the next update will be. So it's been a bad day.
No killings sprees

Chapter Summary

Peter nodded, hand rubbing at his chin as he eyed the door inquisitively. “Mm, yes. News travels fast among Werewolves,” he mused. Especially Werewolves with such a practical and methodical emergency phone tree such as theirs. Peter sniffed at the air lightly. “Judging by the smell of it I think it’s safe to say the news wasn’t good.” No, the lingering scent of anger and grief in the hallway were too strong, as though their Alpha had wallowed in it and traipsed through the house. “I wouldn’t let it bother you too much.”

Chapter Notes

First off, thank you everyone for the very kind words in your comments. It really helped me out in a very rough time. Thank you thank you!!

Short chapter for you. NO BETA! no judging....

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Peter came back just as the golden hue of dawn started filtering through the trees. Isaac poked his head out of his bedroom to see him pass by smelling like varnish and alcohol, meaning he’d been at the Onyx and hmm, wasn’t that interesting.

The older man normally prided himself on his talent to sneak up and scare the shit out of anyone, even his nephew, but this time Isaac would have been able to hear the mans footsteps regardless of his heightened senses.

“Peter?” Isaac called tentatively, fingers gripping the doorframe, ready to slam the thing shut again at the smallest hint of a drunken pissed off growl.

The older wolf stopped, still as a statue before he glanced over his shoulder. Isaac swallowed nervously until he saw Peter’s dark blue eyes and subdued expression.

“They’re home?” Peter asked, tone curious but soft. It wasn’t really a question either. Absolutely no sound was coming from the Alphas bedroom and the door was shut. When no one was in that room the door was always left open.

Isaac glanced down the hallway towards said door. “Yeah. Silencing ward went up about an hour and a half ago.” He stepped out of his room a bit and leaned against the doorframe. “I’m not sure Derek knew I was even here.”

Peter made a non-committal humming noise in the back of his throat. “Well, we all know he can have a one track mind sometimes,” said the Werewolf who’d been hell bent on revenge for years.
Frowning, Isaac scuffed his bare foot on the carpet. “I heard what happened. Scott mentioned Derek was meeting with Carla.” His phone had practically exploded with texts from Scott after Stiles had kicked the wolves out to give him space to work his magic.

Peter nodded, hand rubbing at his chin as he eyed the door inquisitively. “Mm, yes. News travels fast among Werewolves,” he mused. Especially Werewolves with such a practical and methodical emergency phone tree such as theirs. Peter sniffed at the air lightly. “Judging by the smell of it I think it’s safe to say the news wasn’t good.” No, the lingering scent of anger and grief in the hallway were too strong, as though their Alpha had wallowed in it and traipsed through the house. “I wouldn’t let it bother you too much.”

Isaac might have considered that sound advice had he not come home to find Stiles asleep out on the couch with a book covering his face. He’d been pleasantly relieved to discover Stiles was asleep but when he gently removed the book from his friend’s face he drew back quickly at the sight of the bruise.

Arms crossed protectively in front of him it was clear Isaac was looking for some kind of reassurance, even if it was from Peter. The Beta couldn’t help but feel his wolf inch closer to the older, more experienced man. “So where did you go?”

Peter sighed placing his hands on his hips. “The Onyx; just after Derek left actually. I thought I’d a first hand account from our resident Slyph.”

“And?” Isaac asked, curious to what the older man had found out.

Peter ran his hand through his hair in thought before answering. “Well, half the bar needs a new coat of varnish and she says she’s to cheep to buy more light bulbs so she’s thinking of switching to candles for a,” he makes air quotes with his fingers “strategic atmospheric change.”

Isaac frowned. That sounded…bad.

“She also thinks she broke two of her fingers on our Emissaries face.”

The younger wolf blinked in shock. “…Jesus.”

Peter had been waiting for the young man to go on but when it looked like he was going to continue to stare a hole in the carpet till he could see the living room below, he asked, “What’s on your mind, pup?”

The curly haired blonde frowned slightly at the nickname that really only Stiles or Erica could pull off without sounding demeaning. “Do you…do you think he was the one who…” The blonde made a gesture to his forearm. It seemed like a stupid question now. Stiles reaction to the man’s name had been visceral.

Isaac almost regretted the question as he felt a shiver run down his spine. Peter was quiet, staring at the younger wolf as his expression darkened. “Also safe to assume.” A moment later the darkness in
his eyes faded out and he gave a tired, almost uncaring shrug. “Like I said; don’t let it bother you too much.” He started down the hallway to his room, throwing a little wave over his shoulder and Isaac watched him go, unsure if the conversation had helped ease his mind or made it worse.

Most likely worse.

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Peter entered his room and shut the door behind him quietly, leaning against it for a moment as he looked around. Everything was in it's place, neat and orderly. from the walls to bedspread, everything was saturated with gray- clean and cool. Peter hated warm colors. It made his skin itch. Books from the library were lined up on his dresser and shelves offering the only splashes of color in the room, making it smell of paper and binding glue. He was fairly sure that if Derek didn’t allow Stiles to treat the library as his second bedroom the Alphas room would have book piles ten times worse than his.

Peter listened for Isaac to shut his door and shuffle back to bed, eyeing the other side of the wall like he could see the younger wolf. The room in between theirs was technically Stiles but it was more of a guest room now, its owner never having spent more than one night in it. It had always calmed Peter, knowing that empty space was there but that his Alpha and Lupa were just down the hall. It was the same feeling he'd gotten when he'd spent the night at his sisters house all those years ago. The strong reassuring pull of the Pack bond from the pair had been like an extra security blanket.

But he couldn't feel that same calm now. His wolf was…restless. Stalking back and forth in his subconscious like it was looking for a crack to escape. Peter could feel it just beneath the surface, growling and digging its' claws in. The scent of nervousness coming from Isaac had been unmistakable and relatively easy to ignore but it was the other scents he recognized a little to well. The anger, the guilt, the sorrow, and the fear. It was the scent Peter had given off for months whenever he thought about Laura. How he'd almost….

Even the thought of it made his stomach roll. The look on Derek’s face behind the fangs and red eyes; the way Cora had started crying, the pale color of Laura’s skin as she stared wide eyed at him as he’d regained consciousness. Just the memory of what he'd almost done-how he’d almost lost his family. Angry at himself like Derek was, for not seeing what was in front of him. Guilt for the actions that anger caused. Sorrow for things he could not change. Fear….fear of what was to come.

The mixture of scents sent a growl chasing up his throat, rattling his teeth as he took a deep breath and let it out. His nephew had just been reunited with his mate. Yes, Peter knew mates when he saw them even if the two boneheads wouldn't admit it out loud. But Derek had just gotten Stiles back-the Pack had just gotten Stiles back.

These Vampires had set their Emissary off at a time Peter found most inopportune what with the Druid Council already weighing heavy on the young man's mind along with his other duties. Stiles didn’t need another distraction and Derek should not have to worry about losing someone close to him. Ever. Again.

Peter felt his wolf clawing even closer to the surface and his nails burned as they lengthened. He'd wanted to break the rest of Carla’s fingers and give her a matching bruise. But when he heard the
whole story from the woman, finishing what she’d started when she came over to give Peter his
tattoo, he restrained himself. Little Red indeed. If Stiles didn’t eviscerate them then Pack would, and
Peter would be at the front of the line. He’d never taken much issue with other supernatural creatures
let alone Vampires because his experience lay mostly with other Werewolves and shifters.
Nightwalkers were unsettling but they didn’t personally offend him. Now they were starting too. He
wanted to pay a visit to Charlotte and her Nest and wring any information out of them that he could.
He wanted to go to the town’s water tower with a priest, have him bless the whole freaking supply
and turn on the sprinklers.

Mind jumping between blood scenarios should this particular Nest decide to be idiots and show up,
Peter pushed off from the door, bare feet padding over the soft carpet. Half way to his bed he paused,
niffing the air. A look of confusion flit across his face as he glanced to the side. Laying on top of a
book resting beside the table by his bed was a folded piece of paper. Peter stepped closer and got
another barely there whiff of herbal smoke. Picking up the paper and reading, Peter’s features
softened and a tense breath he hadn’t even realized he was holding was let out.

Peter,

No killing spree.

-Stiles

There were some obnoxious cartoon hearts at the bottom and Peter folded the note back up again and
slipped it inside the pages of the book. He fell onto the bed, hands settled behind his head, a small
smile playing at the edges of his lips.

Chapter End Notes

So, I have decided that I will be re-writing this and posting the edited version. There are
glaring plot errors (not to mention spelling) and I HAAAATe the way I split up the
parts/chapters. Someone mentioned it before and I totally agree.

I am trying to figure out how to do it though.....like, do I just post it as a totally new fic
and lock this one up? No idea. I don't want to pull the rug out from under you lovely
people who have chosen to follow the story. Advice??
Chapter Summary

“Think of it this way, Isaac,” Stiles said, sliding off the counter to take a proper seat on the stool. “If it does turn out to be them we will let them know that if they put so much as one fang out of line that we have every right to treat them as a threat that needs to be removed.” It was certainly a polite way of putting it and though the words on the surface were calm all three wolves noticed the way the tattoos on Stiles arms simmered.

Chapter Notes

yay update! I was falling asleep when wrote and posted this. So sorry for typos.

The ward dropped a few hours later and though it was comforting to hear the soft breathing of the Alpha and Emissary as they slept, Isaac only managed another two hours of sleep himself.

Those two hours were short lived and it was 8 in the morning when he heard a door in the hallway open. The young man practically rolled himself out of bed like it was on fire, blinking as fast as he could to get his eyes to adjust to the sunlight coming in through the window.

Isaac opened his door quickly to find his Alpha lumbering by with a tired, almost dead-to-the-world expression on his face, cheeks and chin scruffy with stubble. Isaac couldn’t hold back a yawn even though worry had been effectively gnawing at his stomach for the last few hours. “Hey, everything okay?” he asked immediately, knowing that within the next 30 minutes or so his phone would vibrate out of his pocket with texts asking what had happened that night. Isaac was the only Beta besides Peter who lived in the Pack house so it often fell on him to relay updates when the others weren’t around.

Derek, looking disheveled and the shadows under his eyes just a tiny bit more prominent than normal, merely ruffled Isaac’s hair as he passed the younger man. As though Isaac hadn’t heard him stumble up the stairs, smelling of confusion and shock. As though the silencing ward hadn’t cut off any noise coming from the Alpha’s bedroom half way through the conversation he’d been trying to eves drop on. As though one of his best friends wasn’t dealing with something big and bothersome and a little bit scary.

Awake and unsettled enough to feel snubbed by the response Isaac opened his mouth to give Derek a piece of his mind and harp him into compliance, but Stiles chose that moment to walk out of the bedroom, yawning loudly and rubbing the sleep out of his eyes.

“God,” he grumbled blearily. “I feel like I got hit in the face with a baseball.” The bruise wasn’t much bigger than last night but it was a few shades darker. Isaac frowned, feeling uneasy; inadvertently recalling when bruises like that colored his own skin and hating that for all their basassery, the Pack humans didn’t heal like the rest of them. He glanced to the side only to see that Derek was already disappearing down the stairs. He huffed in annoyance and ran his fingers through his curls in an agitated motion. Was is really so much to expect an explanation? He’d been at work.
when all the drama went down and he was tired of piecing together the night with second hand scraps.

Stiles shuffled down the hallway and grinned lazily when he caught sight of the taller man's frustrated expression. “Morning, Sunshine.”

Isaac answered reflexively, stepping out of his doorway to stand in the hallway. “Morning.” His eyes swept over his friend critically. “Sleep okay?”

Stiles shrugged, Derek’s too large t-shirt barely rising over his hips as he did so. “As well as to be expected,” he replied honestly and Isaac didn’t need to listen for his heartbeat because, yeah- as well as to be expected. He doubted anyone had been getting his or her full 8 hours lately.

“Peter came back a few hours ago,” the blonde mentioned, eyebrow rising hopefully. “After Derek. He said he’d been to see Carla? At the Onyx?” His voice had gotten steadily higher as he waited for Stiles to jump in and fill in the intentional blanks. At least a little information from the source would have been nice.

But Stiles just nodded, glancing over his shoulder at Peter’s closed door. “Oh. That’s good. Peter you awake?”

Stiles looked back at Isaac, knowing that if the older wolf was indeed awake he would have heard him even though he hadn’t raised his voice. Stiles didn’t hear the little grumbled from Peter’s room but Isaac did and the younger wolf nodded. “He’s getting there,” informed Isaac. His fingertips drummed an anxious pattern on his thigh. “So… I got some interesting calls last night…” he went on.

“Derek said he’s making waffles.”

That statement threw Isaac for a loop. “…. Waffles,” he repeated, blinking, wondering if he’d misheard. Stiles nodded and Isaac stared at him, trying to reason if his Alphas brush off or his Lupa’s avoidance was more irritating. Were waffles going to solve anything? Were they going to fend the Vampires off with breakfast foods? Was their delicious smell supposed to overpower the sharp scent of concern and dread in the house?

As if mirroring the betas thoughts Stiles sniffed the air and a smile pulled at the corner of his mouth. “And coffee,” he added.

Isaac was having a difficult time. “Seriously?”

Stiles made the same motion to ruffle Isaac’s hair as he passed but he ended it by giving the curls a firm tug. The young wolf blinked in surprise until he saw the look Stiles was giving him.

“Sourwolf is making waffles, Isaac,” Stiles said seriously. “With chocolate chips.” Apparently in Stiles mind that was the solution to everything. One did not say no to chocolate chip waffles made by Sourwolf.

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Downstairs in the kitchen Derek opened the curtains above the sink and at the glass doors leading out to the deck in the back yard, letting the morning light fill the space and forgoing turning on the lights. Rugs that Erica insisted on- complaining about cold floors and bare feet being the worst way
to wake up ever-interrupted the cool tile where he walked and the hum of the timed coffee machine broke the silence that wasn’t as oppressive as Derek though it would be when he’d fallen asleep.

He opened the fridge to see it was stocked full of whatever the Pack had crammed in there after their bi-weekly grocery trip and grabbed the few things he’d need for batter before setting it all out on the counter.

So unruffled was the air around the Alpha that if he’d been the humming type he would have been humming out the chorus to some pithy classical song Peter enjoyed in the library, filling the house with ‘culture’ as the older wolf liked to say. Considering his Mate had spent the entire night wrapped up in his arms as they reassured each other that the world was not going to explode around them any time soon, the older man was surprisingly mellow. Isaac had looked ready for a full blown discussion when he’d opened his door and Derek used his better judgment and kept his mouth shut. Panic set in when the first person started getting antsy and it snowballed from there. To avoid that they were not going to panic and talk about serious life or death matters within 5 minutes of waking up. A good morning that did not make.

Derek went about setting up the ingredients for waffles and a minute or two later Stiles and Isaac followed him down the stairs, lured by the smell of coffee.

“Who else am I cooking for?” Derek asked the both of them, not turning around to look while Isaac took a seat at the counter and Stiles hopped up and sat on the counter itself.

“Melissa and my dad maybe,” Stiles replied, thinking for a moment while he let his long legs dangle. He was actually pretty damn impressed that he hadn’t gotten a call from either of his parental figures yet because he knew someone must have filled them in by now. Two years ago his dad would have been the first to call, asking if he needed to shoot anyone and if he thought that because he was an adult that he still couldn’t get grounded.

“Give them a call,” Derek said, filling a bowl with flour. If he was going to be cooking for the Sheriff as well he was morally obligated to put something healthy in the older mans portion and Melissa was partial to fresh fruit. Stiles nodded and reached into the pocket of his sweatpants, fishing out his phone. Foregoing a call, he shot off two quick texts while Isaac fidgeted a bit on the stool.

“So,” the younger wolf began innocuously. “I don’t work till this evening.”

Derek looked over his shoulder, hands pausing their mixing as he waited for the man to continue. Isaac returned Derek’s keen look with an incredulous one of his own. “So… are we going to have a Pack meeting?” he asked, looking between the two men.

Still tapping away at his phone Stiles raised an eyebrow and shared a quick shrug with Derek, leaning back so he could steal some chocolate chips from the open bag on the counter. “Dun’no. Are we, Alpha?” he asked lightheartedly.

Derek gave his boyfriend a smirk and moved the bag out of reach. “Dun’no, Emissary. Are we?” Humor and feigned ignorance probably wasn’t a healthy way to deal with their current situation but who were they to dispute a time honored, proven tradition. Stiles pouted and made a grabbing movement with his hands towards the chocolate and Derek just shook his head and scooted it farther away.

Isaac rolled his eyes but Derek noticed some of the stiffness had ebbed out of the younger man’s shoulders. See? Traditions.

Derek smiled a little, scraping the spoon along the edges of the mixing bowl as Stiles lightly but
persistently nudged Isaac’s leg with his foot till the other swatted at him, unable to help the grin on his face. “Seriously guys,” Isaac insisted with a small chuckle, giving Stiles light smack to his knee. “Are we? Weren’t you kind of….” Isaac hesitated a moment, looking apologetic before he even said it. “Freaked out?”

Putting off his response Stiles looked down at his phone, screen lit up with a response from Melissa to his “Derek’s making waffles. You want in?” message.

April 11th 8:30 AM. From Mama McCall:

Sure, my shift doesn’t start till noon. Are you feeling all right? Scott called me last night and told me what happened. Do you want me to bring anything for your face?

Stiles rolled his neck to the side and let out a sigh as the sore muscles stretched, typing out a quick reply, wondering how many times he’d have to reassure his loved ones today. They were all acting like he’d never got punched in the face before.

April 11th 8:31 AM. To Mama McCall:

I’m good, Melissa. See you soon.

Well, it wasn’t really an accurate judgment. Obviously Stiles had gotten punched in the face before. Hell, he’d been tortured before and dealt with the Packs fretting for years. The new wave of concern was because they’d never really had to deal with him getting punched by someone they considered an alley.

While he sent off the message he imparted his answer to Isaac. “It’s not like it was an emergency.” Derek resisted an eye roll but just barely. “Like you said,” he went on, “I just had a little freak out. We don’t need to have meetings over freak outs.” They practically had meetings every other day anyway so there was very little left unsaid for long. “I mean, unless it’s Peter,” Stiles added in after thought.

Upstairs a gruff, slightly miffed voice rumbled out, “I do not freak out, thank you very much.” Derek snorted as he plugged in the waffle iron.

“Stiles,” Isaac admonished, all too primed for the other man’s particular style of deflecting.

“We can discuss it tonight,” Derek offered. He didn’t even need to look at his Mate to tell that his mood had sobered at the announcement.

Accepting that he wasn’t going to get away with pretending nothing happened to this extent, Stiles features pulled tight into a tense frown and his amber eyes trained on Isaac. The blonde stared back in return, sensing the atmosphere shift. “Scott already filled you in, right?” Stiles asked.

Isaac nodded, eyeing the bruise on Stiles face before glancing over to his Alpha. “Yeah.”

A small smile pulled at Stiles lips like it was trying to fully form and then fell away when it couldn’t
Isaac nodded again; almost wishing he didn’t have an idea of the words Stiles was about to say. “A guy called Valid is their First.”

Derek felt the stirrings of ire well up in his chest again as Stiles relayed the information to his Beta and he mixed the batter a bit more aggressively while the iron heated. Isaac looked down at the counter in front of him, eyes boring into the granite, looking anywhere but Stiles arm.

Stiles went on, tone and posture casual, bare feet swinging back and forth below him. “Charlotte was telling me about rumors one of her Sisters had heard. We don’t know if it’s actually them or some other Nest though.”

“What if it is?” Isaac asked softly.

“We deal with it,” was Derek steady reply as he sprayed the iron with cooking oil.

Isaac did look up now and stared at his Alpha, eyebrows pulling together in confusion. Upstairs he heard his phone go off in his room alerting him of a text message -the Pack wanting their updates- but Isaac couldn’t bring himself to focus on that. He just stared at Derek who had his back turned to him. “That’s it?” He asked, clearing expecting an elaborate plan or at least a suggestion of one. What the hell had they talked about all night long? “We can’t find a way to keep them from coming here? Maybe stop them at the border? There has to be some kind of Vampire repellent spell.”

“There are,” Stiles admitted, “But it wouldn’t work.”

“Not without affecting the other Vampires in town,” Derek added quickly, relaying Stiles words from when they’d discussed their options. Isaac was radiating confusion and Derek could understand that only too well. Magic was convenient until I wasn’t.

“Can’t we just run them out when they get here?” the younger wolf asked. “Derek, you, Ethan, and the Sheriff still have the patrols going around the border. Maybe the rest of the Pack can officially join in until these guys show up.”

It was Stiles who answered this time. “Not that I don’t appreciate the fact you’d be willing to take time off work, Isaac, but we don’t technically have a reason to run them out,” he said.

Isaac turned to Stiles now, eyes wide. “Are you kidding? They tried to kill you!”

Stiles sighed. His feet stopped swinging and he brushed his thumb over the pitted bite mark on his bare arm. “In New York. It was a fight between Charlotte and Valid’s Nest and we just jumped in. My actions weren’t affiliated with the Pack when I was there. Beacon Hills is Hale territory, but this is a Haven and there has to be a justifiable reason for keeping someone out.”

Isaac shook his head in disbelief. “How about the fact that they want to steal power from the Nemeton? Mess with the Ley Lines? Possibly rip your throat out?”

“So far that’s only speculation,” Stiles shrugged.

“What about the letter the Sheriff in Roseville sent us!?” Isaac insisted, voice getting higher in disbelief.

“They technically only let us know that they know of the Ley Lines,” said Derek. It was semantics really, but there were rules to follow after all. The Hale Pack didn’t take action without hard evidence that someone was doing something to harm their territory or the people in it. The Sheriff had made sure of that.
Derek could feel Isaac about to say something else, freaking out over the fact that Stiles didn’t seem to care as much as Isaac deemed necessary, but at that moment Peter sauntered in from the living room. “They’re right, Isaac,” the older man said as he ran his fingers through his slightly disheveled hair, fresh from the shower and already dressed for the day. He walked straight to the coffee maker and poured himself a cup. Isaac noted that the tired look in the older man’s eyes was replaced by a familiar secretive gleam. “When Stiles met those Vampires in New York he was not acting as our Emissary. Here, he has to play his roll according to the rules we set down for the territory. Beacon Hills is an important location for the supernatural community and banning access to certain individuals based on speculation would send a bad example. Supernatural creatures are free to come and go so long as they respect the land, people, and the Pack.”

The curly haired Werewolf seemed to think that still bordered on bullshit so Derek stepped in and added, “Beacon Hills is an official Haven, Isaac. We offer to take in anyone and to judge them by their actions while they are here.” Isaac remembered that.

“Think of it this way, Isaac,” Stiles said, sliding off the counter to take a proper seat on the stool. “If it does turn out to be them we will let them know that if they put so much as one fang out of line that we have every right to treat them as a threat that needs to be removed.” It was certainly a polite way of putting it and though the words on the surface were calm all three wolves noticed the way the tattoos on Stiles arms simmered.

“Well that’s....something I guess,” Isaac muttered, letting it drop. Derek poured the batter into the waffle iron and closed it, the rich buttery smell filling the air. Stiles hummed in appreciation and for a few moments only the sound of sizzling batter and rich coffee filled the air.

Peter sipped at his coffee and suddenly let out a sigh, setting it down. "Isaac, your phone has been going off for a while now. I think someone is trying to contact you."

Isaac jumped and looked up at the ceiling. "Oh, right," he slipped off his chair. The Pack. He was sort of dreading to see how many new texts he had.

"Tell them I'm fine," Stiles said, gazing at Derek's back while he continued to move around the kitchen, sneakily reaching for the bag of chocolate chips again.

Isaac paused a moment and a little smile pulled at the corner of his mouth. Of course Stiles knew. "Will do," Isaac said and then hurried out of the kitchen.

As soon as the other left Stiles phone jumped to life in his hand, the chorus to Renegade filtering through the air. Stiles answered, “Sup’ pops?”

“Is it a trap?”

Stiles made a face and blinked. “Hmm?”

“You text me at 8 o'clock in the morning knowing full well I don’t work till this afternoon and you mention chocolate chip waffles. Is it a trap?”

Stiles let out an affronted gasp. “Hey, I’m not as much of a food Nazi as I used to be. You still get to eat good things.” Peter snorted at the table.

“Don’t toy with an old man’s emotions, Stiles. If I come over will there be some gluten free, organic chocolate flatbread cardboard waiting for me?”

Stiles made a noise. “Jesus, one time dad.”
“I’m the one cooking, John,” Derek said loud enough to be heard over the phone. “And the only requirement is that you eat some fruit along with it and you don’t get whipped cream.”

Stiles narrowed his eyes at the other man but there was a sharp smile on his face.

The Sheriff let out a doubtful hum but Derek was his Deputy after all. “Seems acceptable.”

Stiles phone beeped again and he pulled it away from his ear to glance at it.

April 11th 8:31 AM. From Mama McCall:
I’ll head out in about 5 minutes. See you soon!

“Oh, hey, you can pick up Melissa on your way over. She’s got an evening shift too.”

“Yes, she called me after she got your text.”

“And you still thought it was a trap?” Stiles asked.

“I know very well that Melissa has been in on your schemes before.”

“Touché,” Stiles nodded. Scott’s mom could be wonderfully devious. “We’ll see you guys soon then. Later pops.” He was about to hang up the phone when he sensed his father pause. “Dad?”

“Hmm? Oh, nothing son, I’ll see you soon. Love you.”

Stiles smiled softly, knowing his dad was saving his questions for later. “Love you too, dad.”
Chris swallowed, rubbing his hand over his mouth before he spoke. “I think we’ve underestimated the numbers on this one.” The Hunter said vaguely. Stiles groaned and buried his face in his hands. Of course. Of fucking course.

SORRY FOR THE WAIT!!! Im trying to be better.

All the dull talking is almost done. I swear. Sorry for the delay again. Kidney stones man. I tell you....

No beta per usual. Excuse the mistakes like you have been so sweetly doing before. Unless it's a really bad one and then let me know and I'll fix it ^-^;

The Sheriff's cruiser rolled to a stop in front of the house just 15 minutes later. They'd all moved to the kitchen table by that point; Peter was on his second cup of coffee and reading the paper, Derek was setting out a giant plate of fluffy goodness, and Stiles was shooting texts at an alarming pace, which left only Isaac to answer the door. “Don’t everybody jump up at once,” the tall blonde muttered when he heard two pairs of footsteps climb up the stairs to the front porch.

Derek had an excuse at least. “Hey, I made breakfast.” Peter just turned the page of the paper and Stiles…Isaac doubted he could pry that phone from his fingers with a crowbar.

Knowing they didn’t even have to knock before someone let them in, Melissa and John were waiting at the door when Isaac opened it. Scott’s mom, their go-to non-supernatural medicine woman, was dressed in a lilac colored scrub top and blue jeans, dark curls pulled up into a pony tail. She smiled at him, eyes crinkling in the corners. “Morning, Isaac. You have a late shift too?” She stepped inside, kissing the young man on the cheek.

“Yeah,” Isaac replied, keeping the conversation light because he noticed both the adults look over his shoulder at the kitchen. “One of the dogs is scheduled for surgery this afternoon so I don’t work till then.” Deaton always liked to have him there when an animal was going in for surgery. Something about a calming, dominate presence. Except for cats though. Cats and hamsters did not like Isaac.

Isaac locked the door and looked over John's shoulder before staking a small step closer to the two adults. “So, you guys know?” he asked quietly.

John nodded, glancing towards the kitchen again. “Lydia called us last night. She said that Derek had already had a talk with Carla?” He’d be questioning his deputy about that regardless of how Isaac answered. He knew how Derek could be where his son was concerned and it was the Sheriff's
duty to make sure a local wasn’t being harassed.

looking uncertain as he remembered the scant words he’d overheard, Isaac shrugged his shoulders a little. “Well, he went to Carla’s. I think she did most of the talking though.”

The Sheriff huffed softly; worry pulling at the corners of his mouth and Melissa placed her hand on the man’s shoulder. “Well, there were no 911 calls, so that’s a good sign, right?” She offered him a little smile and pat his shoulder in solidarity.

John sighed and shook his head. “That’s not always a good thing in this town.” He recalled a few situations in the past when he would have loved a 911 call regarding his son and his friends- because damn, would that have made things easier- but the kids had been too stubborn or too protective to bring the BHPD into their own supernatural skirmish. Isaac and Melissa shared a sympathetic glance but didn’t comment. John let his voice rise above a whisper as they made their way through the living room to the kitchen. “Smells good.”

“Morning, Sheriff,” greeted Derek, nodding to both of them when they entered. “Melissa.”

“Sugar-free syrup in the fridge,” Stiles commented. Derek shot his boss an apologetic smile.

John sighed a little more dramatically than necessary. “Small favors.” Even from this angle they could see the discoloration on the side of Stiles face but it wasn’t lost on him that his son didn’t even look up when they entered.

“And how are you two this fine morning?” Peter asked with a charming smile as John pulled out the chair for Melissa and then sat down next to him. “Sleep well?”

John fixed Peter with a skeptical look and asked plainly; “Are you asking because you’re curious or because you know something and want to be patronizing?”

Undeterred, Peter managed to look offended. “John, please. I know a great many things and feel very little need to be patronizing over all of them. I am simply curious as to how the father of our Emissary and the mother of our True Alpha are fairing on this fine morning and if their night was uneventful.” He offered the two of them the coffee pot.

John and Melissa looked at Derek who shrugged. “Well, he’s not lying.” He put some waffles on a plate and set it in front of his distracted boyfriend before starting on his own. Peter just snorted. But then something struck Derek odd about his uncle’s words and he frowned. “What about last night?”

Sounding put upon, Peter sighed and turned the page, glancing over the articles. “Oh, nothing much,” he replied indifferently. “Just wondering if anyone felt any disturbance in the force.” When that last sentence failed to even attract Stiles attention Peter looked over his paper, fixing his nephew with an expectant eyebrow raise. “Okay, now I am being patronizing.”

“At least he admits it,” Melissa smirked, loading her plate with fruit and yogurt.

Peter set down his paper, staring at his Alpha with clear discontentment. “Really, Derek? Didn’t we just have a long, convoluted conversation with Alan about pack bonds? I distinctly remember having that conversation because it was so amusing.”

A little slower than he cared to mention, everything started to fall into place. Derek’s frown only grew as he remembered the definite feeling of unease he’d gotten before Stiles called him the night before, something tugging at the center of his chest “….Now that you mention it...”

“Hang on,” John held up his hand. “Derek, you guys saying you knew Stiles was in trouble last
“No,” Derek said quickly, slightly offended at the idea that John thought he’d keep something like that from him. “I just felt like….something was wrong, right before Stiles called me.”

“I wasn’t in trouble,” Stiles interrupted, finally looking up at them with a completely adult pout. Once the two parents got a full view of Stiles face Melissa’s expression grew clinical and his dad frowned.

John put on his dad voice and said in a serious tone, “Which is why Carla thought it was necessary to punch you in the face?”

Stiles huffed, looking back at his phone as he seemed to duck into himself. “Technically that just means Carla was in trouble.”

“Really not helping your case, son.”

“Anyway,” Peter cut in with a roll of his eyes, effectively taking the attention off an I-clearly-do-not-want-to-be-social Stiles. “Now that we’re all on the same page, maybe I can have an answer to my question?”

Melissa made an exasperated noise as she shook her head and looked the Sheriff who had much the same expression on his face. Isaac glanced at Stiles and shook his head as well. Peter gave an acquiescent flourish with his hand once everyone had confirmed. “Neither did I, so that rules out the other humans closest to Stiles and Betas as well. That leaves Derek.”

“Is it because he’s your Emissary,” Isaac guessed, looking at his Alpha. “Was it the same for your mom and Deaton?” He was almost a little hesitant to bring up his boss, wondering if one of the Stilinskis would start stewing in their familial anger again, but he was curious.

Derek didn’t seem worried about the question. He thought back for a moment, remembering the interactions he’d had as a child with their pack Emissary. “She could always feel when he was working magic better than the rest of us,” he recalled. “She said it was like a buzzing on her skin and a faint copper scent in the air whenever the man was around.”

“That might explain it if Stiles had been in the same room and not across town,” Peter said, putting the kibosh on that theory. “As an Alpha, Talia was more familiar with Deaton than the rest of our family but you and Stiles share a…. different sort of bond. Apparently, it allows you to notice less extreme occurrences, like, oh, freaking out and almost setting a water spirit on fire.”

“Because I’m the Alpha,” Derek supplied.

Peter gave him a condescending glower. “…Sure, let’s go with that.” Actually, everyone sort of gave him a dead stare after that comment and Derek blinked in question at their reactions, taking a bite of food.

The ‘adults’ continued the conversation amiably enough because Peter had everyone thinking that the key to their problems lay in figuring out why only some members of the pack- aka Derek- had sensed Stiles distress, when in truth Peter was just being a pain in the ass and filling the silences with his musings at his nephew’s expense. Isaac decided it was time for him to focus on the mountain of fruit-covered waffles on his plate and ignore the lot of them. To his side he noticed that Stiles had been ignoring all of them since he said his scant piece. Isaac scooted his chair a bit closer and glanced at the phone in his hands curiously, wondering what Stiles was doing that held his attention so thoroughly. Stiles didn’t seem to mind someone reading over his shoulder.
“What’s a Telluric current?” the blonde wolf asked, reading the small print with narrowed eyes. Peter stopped his monolog short, eyes flicking over to Stiles.

“Ley lines,” Stiles replied, not really paying attention.

Isaac nudged the other with his shoulder lightly, urging him to continue and Stiles just made a small face at the interruption but went on. “I’m just having some friends keep me updated about currents in their area. You know, earthquakes, unnatural storms, magic going haywire. The usual.”

Now that Peter wasn’t guiding along the conversation, everyone seemed to come to the unanimous assessment that Derek’s ‘special’ bond with Stiles gave him ‘special’ feelings and that it was best to drop it and move on to another topic. Derek was especially keen on this idea. “Any issues?” he asked.

Stiles made a face somewhere between a frown and a grimace, still not looking up. “Some activity but no one seems alarmed by it,” he admitted.

Derek knew that phrase well. Everyone else could think things were fine but Stiles wasn’t like everyone else. Apparently, the Sherriff was familiar with the phrase too. “Are you alarmed by it?” the man asked.

Stiles glanced up finally to see that four pairs of eyes were staring at him. “Oh…..” He said blankly, before blinking and answering quickly. “I want to at least keep an eye on it.”

“Maybe we should send someone to check on the Nemeton?” said John, looking at Derek for confirmation.

And for that Derek looked at his Emissary. “Are the Ley lines acting up here?”

Stiles hesitated for a moment, deciding what to say. “They’re not….really acting up. Just normal shifting,” he admitted, looking a little uncomfortable. “I’ve been keeping an eye on it. I mean, if Charlotte is right and we’ve got a Nest of century old Vampires set on paying us a visit I really don’t want them messing with anything that might be unstable. You know, apart from me.” He chuckled, intending for it to be a joke but no one seemed to find it all that amusing. Isaac made a small noise in the back of his throat and Derek’s face dropped. Stiles might seem nonchalant but judging from the bags under his eyes he was anything but. The reactions made Stiles wince and no one chose to comment. His phone buzzed again and the young man once again distracted himself with reading the text.

The silence went on awkwardly for a minute or two and even more awkward glances were exchanged between bites of food and sips of coffee before Isaac’s leg started to bounce under the table uneasily as he drenched his waffles in syrup. Peter was the one to finally start talking again as if there had been no break in the conversation. “Keeping an eye on it. Sounds like a good idea.”

Collecting herself with the ease only a nurse who worked trauma ward can attain, Melissa speared some fruit with her fork. “Okay,” she announced. “Let’s brainstorm then, shall we? No use just sitting on our hands.”

“Another sound idea.” Peter hummed and went back to his paper.

John cut into his stack of waffles, forgoing syrup and whipped cream as promised but not bothering with the sugar-free syrup either. “We’re still hovering around square one, but lets sum it up. We know about a dozen Vampires are coming, and we know that they know about the Nemeton. We know Charlotte and her Nest have suspicions about who these Vampires might be and if those
suspicions are correct,” he glanced at his son. “We know that we do not like these Vampires.” Understatement, but Stiles gave a nod of agreement and his father continued. “Stiles, I want you and Charlotte to sit down with our sketch artist and a profiler. I can post it to other stations on route from Roseville.”

Melissa looked concerned. “We can’t have regular police officers trying to arrest Vampires, John,” she argued.

“Not arrest,” John corrected. “But they can give us fair warning if they spot them.”

“And if it’s not Valid?” Isaac asked.

At the mention of the new name, Melissa glanced at Stiles. “Valid?”

Stiles finally looked away from his phone with a sigh and reached for the syrup. “He’s their First,” he explained.

John nodded, filing the name away for later use. “Either way; a profile on all of them, keep an ear to the ground, and possibly double the number of patrols around the border.” After a moment of thoughtful chewing, John added, “We should also have at least two uniforms or Pack members at the Nemeton till this blows over as well.”

Ethan and Derek, since joining the force, had taken to adding boarder patrol into their normal routines, their wolves ecstatic that they were ‘officially’ keeping their territory safe. For the last year or so danger had been so scarce it had been just them and maybe Peter and Boyd that did the patrols. They hadn’t had to patrol around the Nemeton for a few years now. Everything had been almost unnervingly quiet with the World Tree and the only attraction it offered was to some local magic users who wanted to hold a ritual. These rituals were obviously intensely pre-screened by Deaton, Lydia, Danny, and Stiles. The idea that they’d once again have to keep an eye on the tree that had quite literally made their town a supernatural magnet of doom was a mood dampener.

So Derek spoke up, knowing that routine was going to change. “I’ll let the rest of the Pack know that we’re doing rotations again with patrol in the Preserve. Ethan’s already got a good system going with Rodgers and Simmons though so I’ll leave that with him.” His Beta and the two deputies, a half-blood Elf and a Nadine were more than capable of using their supernatural gifts to keep the area under constant watch.

“If we’re talking new patrols let’s wait till Chris and Allison get here,” Stiles said before shoveling a forkful of waffle into his mouth. The silence stretched and he glanced up from his phone again, blinking and swallowing quickly. “Oh, wait, did I forget to mention they were coming over?”

Derek rubbed between his eyebrows and his father shook his head, clearly reflecting on his life choices when it came to parenting. “What time are they coming over?” Derek asked.

The wolves looked up when they heard footsteps on the porch and Peter raised an eyebrow. “Now apparently. Isaac, would you-”

The Beta was already out of his chair, waving his hand in an irritated fashion. “Yeah, yeah; doorman at your service.”

“When did you invite them?” Derek asked, standing up to get another plate. Seriously, hadn’t Stiles only sent word to Melissa and John less than a half hour ago?

Stiles made a face as he scrolled through his past texts. “Uh…. like not even 5 minutes ago.”
A second later both Chris and Isaac were standing in the doorway, the older of the two looking a little haggard and off kilter. Allison was behind him clutching a bright red file folder to her chest, the normal rosy tint absent from her cheeks. Derek sensed the tension immediately and his back straightened in his chair, eyes fixed on the Hunters. “What is it?”

Chris swallowed, rubbing his hand over his mouth before he spoke. “I think we’ve underestimated the numbers on this one.” The Hunter said vaguely. Stiles groaned and buried his face in his hands. Of course. Of fucking course.

Derek’s eyes narrowed as he reached under the table and placed a hand on Stiles leg. “By how much?” he asked.

Chris motioned for Allison to come forward. “Remembered the few of them that passed through Roseville? They were just the first group. Allison’s contact has been camped out along the route they seem to be taking and they just keep coming. Groups of three or four, and then groups of eleven or thirteen. So far his count is over 42.”

Somewhere in the back of his mind Derek was sincerely hoping that this was just some random Nest- or even a bunch of them- and not the particular one Stiles was worried about. Hadn’t Carla said that Stiles had virtually wiped all of them out? You didn’t build up a following of that size that quickly, Vampire or not.

“How does he know it’s Vampires?” Peter asked, eyeing Allison.

Allison dropped the folder on the table and a stack of blown up polaroid’s fell out. Photographs of groups of men and women. Some were walking, some were on motorcycles, some were driving in cars, but all of them had one familiar trait. Their eyes flared neon blue in the lenses.

Peter raised an eyebrow. “He just sits there taking photos of whomever comes down the albeit rarely used but obviously public road?”

Allison shot the older man a look. “He’s very good at his job.”

Melissa touched her fingertips to one of the photos and let out a slow breath. “That’s…more than a dozen,” she muttered.

“And a hell of a lot more than we can handle currently,” Allison voiced, looking at the Sheriff. “Dad and I have a small arsenal but nothing that can hold off 50 Vampires.”

“I doubt standard issue is going to cut it either,” John muttered, crossing his arms with a frown.

Before the worry grew too overwhelming Derek stood from his chair, more than willing to be the voice of reason. “Let’s calm down for a second,” Derek said, Peters words ringing in his head. “We can get more supplies and Stiles and the others can work on whatever wards we might need, but regardless of how many Vampires show up I do not want to greet them at gunpoint.”

Chris looked frustrated. “Derek, I understand the rules of a Haven, I helped make them after all, but when has a Nest of 50 Vampires ever been a good thing?”

Isaac fidgeted a little. “Family reunion?” he suggested meekly.

“We aren’t going to assume they are here for a fight,” Derek continued, brows coming together in a stubborn glare.

Chris let out a breath, looking like he was prepared for an argument the moment he stepped in the
Nests of this size are rare, Derek. Vampires are testy and tend to stay in small groups to ease tensions. If they are all coming to this town, as I assume they are, we are going to have a massive number of highly violent, bloodthirsty, incredibly strong supernatural creatures in one area. This can only end badly.”

Derek suppressed a growl but it was cut off when Stiles spoke, finally breaking his silence with an almost tired sounding voice. “I can’t allow the Pack to threaten them without just cause.”

The Hunter looked a bit taken aback by that. He’d thought Stiles of all people would be rearing to take a crack at these Nightwalkers. Isaac looked down at the table when Chris voiced the same opinion he had not too long ago. “Stiles, if we know about a threat and do nothing, it’s the same as ignoring the threat!” Chris insisted.

“Hold on now,” John cut in before any voices rose. “We’ll get more ammunition and bulk up the wards. We can add patrols as well. That’s not exactly doing nothing, Chris.”

“But letting them in?” Chris exclaimed, spreading his hands emphatically. “Sure, let’s let the Pack Sentinels meet them first, talk things over with them,” he said, motioning to Peter and John who were indeed one of their Sentinels. “But why allow them in town? Why not just keep them out in the first place and not deal with the whole mess?”

“If this was simply Hale territory and not a Haven, that would work,” Peter explained, folding the newspaper neatly in front of him. “But as it is not, we must abide by the rules a Haven comes with. We can not refuse them access when no wrongs have been committed here.”

Chris’s eyes widened and he pointed at Stiles. “They might be the same Vampires that attacked our Emissary in New York!?” He nearly shouted. Allison winced a bit at her father’s brash words and looked at her friend who was sitting there, rubbing his temples to fight off a headache.

Smelling the brackish odor of weariness roll of his Mate, Derek felt a rumble deep in his chest that rolled out past his lips as a growl. “We are not going to put Stiles in a position where he has to compromise his credibility as an Emissary!” He barked out even louder than Chris had been. He found that his hand had drifted to Stiles shoulder, anchoring himself and the younger man. He didn’t feel the buzzing in his veins die down till Stiles slipped his hand over his in silent thanks and reassurance.

Derek forced his shoulders to relax and glanced down at Stiles to see the man peering up at him from beneath dark lashes, a little, understanding smile on his lips. Derek was able to continue without feeling like Chris was personally challenging him. “New York is New York, here is here.” Needless to say, the odds weren’t as in their favor, but they still had to try. Derek looked around the table at all of them, fixing each of them with a heavy stare. “I want everyone to understand that we do not make a move on this Nest until they give us reason to. Anyone disobeying this order is doing so unaffiliated with the Hale Pack. Understood?” The finality in his tone coupled with the red haze in his eyes was enough to make all of them nod, humans included, and Derek didn’t go on until he’d listened to the steady agreement of their heartbeats. “We are going to prepare and wait for them to show up. When they do, we’re going to meet them like any other supernatural creature that has shown up. They state their intentions, we tell them the rules, and we make sure they follow them.”

Either Chris seemed to realize that he hand been slipping back into his old ‘shoot first ask questions later’ mindset, or he really had come to trust Derek’s authority, but the Hunter grunted and stood down. “Right. Got it Alpha Hale.” When Allison put a hand on her father’s shoulder, looking a little proud as she smiled at Derek, the Alpha knew it was a little bit of both.
For the next few days

Chapter Summary

Danny sipped at Stiles water listening to them go back and forth and getting way too excited about the resale potential of their anti-supernatural jewelry polish business with an amused smile on his face. 6 years ago if anyone had ever told him he’d be sitting at a café with Lydia Martin and Stiles Stilinski discussing the shopping the list for their spells as a yellow-eyed Halfling Fae refilled their waters, he would have suggested to his parents that it might be time to move. Yet, here he was and scenes like this didn’t even register on his ‘weird radar’ anymore.

Chapter Notes

I wanted to time skip over this stuff, but I cant transition worth a damn, so heres all the stuff.

Derek’s order was well received by the rest of the Pack when they found out later that morning via the miracle of the phone tree. Lydia had applauded the strategy when it was mentioned that she, Stiles, and Danny would be boosting the wards around the Preserve, and Boyd said he hoped he’d be in town when the Vampires finally decided to show up so he could be a tall intimidating presence. Jackson canceled any immediately plans he had for traveling back to England and told the pack there that he’d be back when his home town wasn’t in danger of turning into the set of Underworld. Erica might have been a little put out that there was no guarantee of action but Derek assured her that if anyone stepped out of line she was free to claw face to her wolfy hearts content.

After Stiles forced some waffles on the Hunters before they left the house Chris and Allison reached out to their old Hunter contacts to see if they could get some supplies sent to them as soon as possible. Special bullet casings and shotgun shells, extra protective gear, a few gallons of grade A holy water. Surprisingly there was a decent reaction to their call for aid. It seemed that a peaceful gathering of supernatural creatures in a Haven mean that they weren’t running wild somewhere else and many Hunters were actually supportive of that.

Derek’s sisters were kept in the loop as well and a good ten minutes or so was spent convincing the two women that no, they did not need to rush back to defend the territory.

“Derek, you better not let Beacon Hills get overrun by blood suckers,” Cora had warned. Her frown was practically visible over the phone. “It will affect my decision to come back and visit for holidays.”

Derek couldn’t help but smirk at his younger sister's threat. “You’d still visit. You like Melissa’s hot dishes too much to miss a holiday dinner.”

He heard the girl scoff. “Well, yeah, but I don’t want to wear a chainmail scarf to Thanksgiving. That’s tacky.” Laura just made Derek and Peter promise that if things got out of hand they would call them and she and Cora would fly over and bale them out.
Wanting to talk over the new patrol plan with Ethan and make sure no one had any qualms with his ‘let us talk to them first’ mandate, Derek left soon after the Sheriff. Though when he actually got to the station he ended up saying something long the lines of ‘if anyone fucks this up I’ll rip your throat out with my teeth.’ No one had qualms.

When Melissa left for her shift Stiles called Carla to let her know he’d be taking the night off. The Sylph replied with a heartfelt; “You still better help me refinish these damn counters Sparky or I’ll-!” He’d hung up the phone half way through the rant and called up a local contractor to take a look at the damage that very afternoon before the bar opened. He’d buy Carla a giant pack of light bulbs to replace the ones he’d exploded and she’d forgive him. Their relationship was special like that.

The call to Charlotte was a little more profound. “Stiles, I am so sorry for how I broke that news to you,” was her remorseful greeting. “When my Sister told me what she’d heard I just panicked because we have such a history with Valid and I didn’t want there to be any surprises and-“

“Char,” Stiles cut in, because it was odd to hear such a normally sultry sounding woman be so apologetic. “It’s okay. Seriously. Besides, we got some new information through Allison’s contact and it might not even be him. We think there is a large group heading towards us, maybe multiple Nests. I’m pretty sure that Valid didn’t regroup after his losses just to lay siege on Beacon Hills.”

He heard the woman sigh over the phone and Stiles pictured she was rubbing her temples. “I know. You’re right. Let’s just…hope we’re overreacting.”

Peter sequestered himself in the library when everyone had left and holed up with his laptop and an ancient, massive tomb written in Gaelic. When Stiles asked him what his pans were for the day the wolf mentioned something about reading up on his Ley Line and Druid lore. Stiles wondered if he needed to keep an eye on the older man but thought better of it. Peter could be secretive because now-a-days because whenever he chose to reveal them his secrets benefited the Pack.

Isaac had been the one to call Scott before his shift and let him know everything was okay. For the most part. The True Alpha was still wary of the whole mess, having been the ambulance driver during a few incidents involving Vampires and civilians, but he had been the most supportive of Derek’s plan. As they washed dishes Isaac voiced this to Stiles and Stiles just shrugged. “Scott still wants everyone to just get along,” he said. “I think the rules we have for the Haven let his morals rub off on the town in a way that isn’t overbearing.” Isaac could certainly see that.

After breakfast had been cleaned up Isaac decided that he was going back up to his room to sleep and be dead to the world till he had to work that evening so for the rest of the morning Stiles meandered around the house, making calls and reaching out to his contacts. He had everyone on alert and was glad that he’d finally settled that treaty with the Fae camping out in the corner of the Preserve. They didn’t monitor the whole forest but if anything wandered into their area they would be on them in an instant; so all bases covered. Or as covered as they could be. It was hard when you didn’t know who the other team was or if they were on supernatural steroids.

His phone beeped out a low battery warning after his fifth long distance call and he was forced to retreat to his room for his charger. He messed his fingers through his hair, sighing to himself as he climbed the stairs. With no one talking in his ear he couldn’t help but take it all in and compartmentalizing the events from last night and this morning. So much for his and Derek’s reassurances to each other last night, as therapeutic as they’d been.

Bare feet shuffling over the floor Stiles passed Isaac’s room and heard the man snoring softly so he pulled the door shut a fraction more without closing it entirely. When he got to his and Derek’s room at the end of the hall he glanced first at the unmade bed and frowned. Quickly plugging the phone in and setting it on an end table Stiles hurriedly straightened the covers and pillows till it resembled a
bed again instead of a nest. Once he was done with that he glanced at his phone hopefully but was
disappointed to see that not even three minutes had passed…but there was some clothing on the floor
from last night so he picked it up and tossed it in the hamper. Twenty seconds. He glanced at the
phone again and the little charging light blinked at him irksomely -Morse code for ‘you could be
doing something productive right now but you’re not.’

Letting out a quiet frustrated growl Stiles walked over to the closet and yanked out his large black
duffle bag, tossing it on the bed where the weight made the matrices bounce and sag. He practically
ripped open the zipper and started to remove everything before placing it back inside in a more
organized fashion. The house remained quiet around him though he could hear his magic buzzing
through it like a bee by his ear and once he zipped the bag up again the silence and stillness was
stifling. Stiles sighed and rubbed his hand over his face, suddenly feeling tired and jittery at the same
time.

“This is ridiculous,” he muttered.

He opened his bag again and dumped everything onto the bed once more, organized and reorganized
until he almost threw the whole thing across the room. At that point he started pacing. From the end
of the bed to the dresser, from the dresser to the closet, and back to the end of the bed again.
Somewhere between the dresser and the window he lit up a cigarette.

Ever since he’d cut himself off from Adderall and started using his magic he’d found a happy,
precarious medium between vibrating out of his skin and catatonic. He’d made it through breakfast
but now there was nothing to keep him busy. Isaac was passed out, everyone else was working, he
was too anxious to join Peter in the library and he didn’t want to try meditating when his thoughts
were this jumbled. He didn’t want to go to the station because he didn’t want to distract Derek or his
dad and if he attempted to do any more spells on the house he was pretty sure it would glow in the
dark for the next five years. He was sincerely trying not to start up another crime board like he had in
high school but he had a clear image of one in his mind, trying to remember if they’d left anything
undone, overlooked a small detail that might mean the difference between being prepared or being
caught totally off guard.

Once he was on his third cigarette Stiles heard his phone ping and saw that he had a text from Peter.
Who was still downstairs. Stiles waked over to where it was plugged into the wall and disconnected
it from the chord, opening up the message.

April 11th 12:05 pm. From Uncle Peter:

I hear you pacing up there. How many cigarettes have you had today?

Stiles looked down at the cigarette in his hand and sighed. Peter could probably smell the smoke,
even though the bedroom door was shut. That probably meant that Isaac was getting a lungful in his
sleep.

Stiles ground the ash into his palm and tossed the butt into an ashtray on the dresser before he walked
over to the large bay windows and opening them all, brushing his hands over the runes carved into
the sills and lighting them up for a moment before they died down. He then wandered out into the
hallway and opened those windows as well before checking to make sure Isaac was still asleep and
not sneezing like Scott had a tendency to do when he was around the smoke too much.
Rubbing his eyes as he took a deep breath, Stiles decided, screw it, he’d just open all the windows. It was a nice day and no one appreciated a house that smelled like smoke even if it was more of an herbal incense kind of scent. Plus, they’d be unhappy just for the fact that that Stiles was smoking so much at all.

So he went through house cracking open all the windows and encouraging a little breeze to stir the air inside each room with a flick of his hand and the glow of a rune. The buzzing in his ears increased a little but he could feel some of the tension ease out of his muscles.

The kitchen window above the sink was the last one and as soon as he flipped the lock in place to hold it open his phone notified him of another text. Peter again.

April 11th 12:13 pm. From Uncle Peter:

As long as you’re in the kitchen, I would love some of last night’s leftovers. I’ll show you something interesting if you comply.

Stiles stared at the phone for a while, blinking, before letting his head fall to the side as he stared down the hallway at the library door. “You are just an absolute mooch, you know that?” he said.

His phone pinged again.

April 11th 12:14 pm. From Uncle Peter.

Don’t bother to heat it up.

He really wanted to just go back upstairs, maybe start making lists or attempt a locator spell that he knew wouldn’t work because he didn’t know who was coming, but the promise of something interesting won out in the end. It usually did. Stiles threw his hands up in defeat and shook his head as he went over to the fridge. He didn’t bother to take anything out of the Tupperware and just loaded his arms up with random boxes. No fork for Peter, he could use his hands for all he cared.

When he opened the door to the library Peter was reclining casually on the couch with book on his lap, laptop open on the table. He looked up to see Stiles unamused face and raised an eyebrow. “Think of it as payback for all the times you’ve made me bring you food in here.”

“Yeah, yeah.” Stiles said, dumping the food onto a clear space on the desk. “Show me this interesting thing.” So I can go back to do absolutely nothing while Vampires slowly close in around us, he added to himself.

Peter sighed and shifted to the side so he could reach into his pocket and pull out his phone. Stiles was about make a very inappropriate ‘I hope you’re not going to show me dick pictures’ comment, but then Peter punched in a number and pressed the speaker button, holding the phone up. A second later a computerized voice chimed through the air; “You have one voicemail, sent today at 11:02 am.” Stiles crossed his arms, shifting his weight to the side as he waited to see what would be worth the room service. The slightly sour look on his face vanished when he heard the next voice. “Peter, it’s Derek.”
“As if I didn’t have caller ID,” Peter mused. Stiles hushed him.

“I know you’re going to be home all day doing… whatever it is you do in your free time so I need you to do something for me. If Stiles is in the house smoking and pacing a hole in the floor by the time you listen to this message you need to get him to go out and do something. As soon as everyone leaves he’s going to start worrying and I don’t want him to stress out alone.”

Stiles was surprised because this was some seriously thoughtful deviousness on Derek’s part. This was something Stiles would have pulled if their situations were reversed. Well, he wouldn’t have contacted Peter, but it was a good plan. Derek had known that if he’d called Stiles himself, Stiles would have made up some sort of excuse so the Alpha didn’t worry. No, of course I’m not making a crime board, Derek…. Physically….

“Say you want him to go pick up something at the store,” the message continued. “Make up some random fairy creature half-hybrid sub species thing that needs to be researched.” Really Derek? Stiles snorted. Fairy creature half-hybrid sub species? “Tell him to go get lunch. He barely touched breakfast. Or call Lydia and have her come up with some excuse. I don’t care what you have to do just make sure he’s doing something other than stress cleaning or smoking alone in our room with the lights turned off….Bye.”

Peter pressed the disconnect button and slipped his phone back into his pocket, looking at Stiles pointedly. “So. This is me doing something about your ruminating.”

How Stiles managed to huff with a smile on his face is a mystery but he said, “I wasn’t ruminating. And the lights weren’t off.”

“Stiles,” Peter drawled knowingly.

Stiles threw his hands in the air and turned away from the older man. “Well it’s daytime! Of course the lights were off!”

“If you really want me to call Lydia, I will,” Peter said, pulling out his phone again with a sigh. Stiles darted forward and snatched it right out of his hand.

“What ever happened to threatening me with disembowelment? Or vague sexual assault or something? And haven’t we had a talk about sicing Pack members on Pack members as a form of punishment?”

“I threaten the Betas with you all the time,” Peter announced, which….well, that was flattering. But still! “So do I need to involve Miss Martin or will you set up a lunch date on your own?”

The younger man let out a frustrated groan, running his fingers through his hair. “Okay! Fine, you win. I can’t do anything here anyway.” There must have been enough bitterness in his voice that the amused expression on Peters face softened. He moved the book from his lap and stood up from the couch, standing behind Stiles who had turned away from him.

“Stiles, tell me what’s more productive. Stewing over what ifs while you drug yourself with those cigarettes, or going out and actually talking things over with the Pack members who will be helping you with the wards over the next few days.”

“They’re working,” Stiles muttered, frowning at a bookshelf and god didn’t he sound like a petulant child.

“Lydia is self employed and Danny can take a lunch whenever he wants,” Peter said. “Now let me rephrase. You can either meet up with them or I can call my nephew and tell him that not only is his
Mate worrying himself sick, but he is refusing food and may or may not be making the lights in the entire house flicker.”

Stiles turned around quickly to face the man feeling a flare of anger at that last statement. “I haven’t been making the lights flicker, Peter.”

He was a little shocked to find Peter frowning right back at him seriously. “That’s exactly what you’ll be doing if you stay here and keep thinking about things instead of going out and doing them,” the wolf snapped.

Stiles narrowed his eyes, feeling the tension rise in the normally comforting room.

“Well, Red,” Peter said, spreading his arms to the side expectantly. “What’s it going to be?”

A quick phone call and twenty minutes later the Pack’s three practicing magic users were sitting at a table at an outdoor cafe coming up with a list of things they would need for the wards. Peter 1, Stiles 0. They had to reset the board every day because the numbers were getting too high.

“You know, I was sort of surprised to get a call from you,” Danny admitted, pushing some salad around his plate. He’d been at his desk when Stiles called, asking if he could take a lunch break to meet up with him and Lydia. He’d shut down his computer and told his boss ‘Pack stuff’ and he was given an unlimited lunch break. Being the protectors of the town really had its perks sometimes.

“Alphas orders,” Stiles sighed quietly from around his cigarette. He looked a little tired; not so much as the last time they’d seen him, but when he’d sat down he started bouncing his leg under the table and the other two knew he was restless.

“Were you stress cleaning?” Lydia asked with a raised eyebrow.

Stiles made a little affronted noise. “Why does everyone know I do that?”

“Remember when you shampooed the carpets and cleaned out the gutters at your dad’s house when we had that Pixi problem a few years ago?” Danny reminded him with a little smile.

“Well…. I wasn’t cleaning.” Stiles insisted, stealing a croton from Danny’s salad. “I can only reorganize my bag so many times, so…yeah. Derek kicked me out of the house via voicemail. So lunch. Peter sucks.”

Lydia glanced at Danny and he didn’t even know where to go with that so he cleared his throat and just changed the subject. “If we had any sort of ambition one of us would start an herb garden,” he commented, scanning over the list of things they required. He stole a carrot off Lydia’s plate and in retaliation Lydia snatched his bottle of tea.

“Let’s put that on our to-do list,” Stiles said. He slid his water over to Danny who took it and pushed the rest of his salad over so he could pick off the croutons like the whole thing was a well thought out dance the three of them orchestrated. No one actually had their own lunches during these meetings. For now though,” Stiles went on, “I know a hedge witch on Main Street that has a bunch of mistletoe she’s just dying to cut back. I’ll collect the fresh ingredients around town first so we can get started right away in the morning.”

“I’ll go to the jeweler after we’re done here and see how much silver they have in stock,” Lydia said,
popping a French fry in her mouth from Stiles plate. “Allison can melt them down and we can replate our weapons.”

Stiles reached up absentmindedly and fiddled with the silver ring pierced through the shell of his ear. “Remember to coat them with that mistletoe and wolfsbane polish I gave you,” Stiles reminded her. Their weapons had become twice as effective since the introduction of Stiles many polishes and varnishes he’d learned to make from Lady Marabeth.

Lydia rolled her eyes. “Of course,” she said. “I polish my jewelry with that stuff.” Both men suddenly had a new respect for the dainty little fashion accessories adorning the Banshees fingers.

Once the waiter came to collect their plates Danny leaned forward, elbows on the table as he looked at Stiles who was tilting back in his chair with his eyes closed, taking a long drag from his nearly finished cigarette while Lydia went on about how they should make polishes for all of the precious metals in her jewelry box. Stiles saw the practicality of it and thought it would be pretty badass to know that all of the women in the Pack could be dressed to the tens at a formal no weapons allowed meeting and still be armed.

Danny sipped at Stiles water listening to them go back and forth and getting way too excited about the resale potential of their anti-supernatural jewelry polish business with an amused smile on his face. 6 years ago if anyone had ever told him he’d be sitting at a café with Lydia Martin and Stiles Stilinski discussing the shopping the list for their spells as a yellowed-eyed Halfling Fae refilled their waters, he would have suggested to his parents that it might be time to move. Yet, here he was and scenes like this didn’t even register on his ‘weird radar’ anymore.

He set the water down once Lydia paused to finish off his tea. “Well, I can’t be of much help till we get the rest of the supplies,” Danny said, looking a little cross with the idea. “Is there anything you want me to do in the meantime?”

Stiles snuffed the cigarette out in his palm which still made Danny cringe internally, but the man already looked a little calmer than when he’d sat down. He nodded and leaned over to grab his bag. “Glad you asked Danny boy. There is something that requires your unique skill set.”

Danny tried not to smile, remembering a similar situation in high school that involved a grumpy cousin Miguel. “Illegal?” he asked.

Stiles waved a dismissive hand. “It’s a gray area.” He pulled out the red folder Allison had brought over that morning with the photos inside and set it in front of Danny.

“This was from Allison’s Hunter friend?” Danny asked, opening the folder.

Stiles answered with a confirming nod. “Dad can give you access to the departments national facial profiling database and software. I know you’ve got a feed into the security cameras around town so do you think you could come up with some sort of alert system if we get a hit on any of these people in the photographs?”

“Oh, that would be handy,” Lydia said, looking intrigued “We might even be able to adjust it to recognize distinct facial patterns from images in the Bestiary.”

Stiles looked interested by that idea. “It could let us know if a Kelpie gets in the school pool again.”

Lydia preened. “Not to mention we could even program it to recognize Hunters faces.”

Rolling his eyes at his friends and their complete disregard for the unfeasibility of it all, Danny shook his head. “You realize we’re not on the set of CSI, right?” Danny asked, cocking an eyebrow.
“CSI gets it from somewhere,” Lydia stated casually.

Danny sighed, rubbing the bridge of his nose. He supposed he could come up with some sort of still frame analysis program or something, but still, Danny did not think his friends understood that he did not pull code out of his ass. “I don’t know.”

Stiles folded his hands in front of him and bat innocent brown eyes his way. “So you’re not the world renowned programmer and hacker who single handedly broke through the Pentagons first three layers of firewalls on a drunken bet with me two years ago?”

“Hey,” Danny said, pointing a finger at Stiles. “You were the one that stole Scotts dads government issued laptop and shoved it at me and you know I can’t make rational tech decision when I drink tequila.”

Lydia turned in her chair and raised a hand, trying to get a waiters attention. “Sir, tequila please.”

Danny kicked the leg of her chair with a laugh. “Fine! Fine. The eye flares in these photos are going to mess with any facial recognition software but I’ll see what I can do.” He quickly added to Lydia, “No promises on the Beastiary thing though. Photographs and 300 year old sketches are not the same thing.”

They all said goodbye a short while later and went off to complete their assigned tasks –Stiles insisted on calling them missions for the greater good because Danny just wasn’t as enthusiastic as he should be.
Arrival

Chapter Summary

Stiles nodded with a smile and stared at the rabbit. It twitched a bit under Isaac’s hand, pink nose wiggling back and forth as its long ears canted forward. Stiles narrowed his eyes at the adorable creature. “Have you ever just gotten the urge to set one of the little ones free just so you can chase them back down?”

Chapter Notes

Annnnnnd things will start to pick up from here. Thank you for baring with the melodrama.

In the end it took Danny two days to alter the police department’s software just enough to suit their needs. It wasn’t perfect, but it was something. At this point the Sherriff just looked at is as free software upgrades.

By then the town was buzzing with rumors. The Pack talked down the more ridiculous ones –no Miss Anderson, a Vampire overlord and his 500 hell minions are not coming here to start a cult. You can still walk your dog at night- but word still got around.

Barry was on constant watch at the gas station eyeing every newcomer critically and if they were in the know he filled them in on what to expect if they stayed around. The Pack patrols were increased in the Preserve, going two at a time every night and morning, the BHPD had someone watching the security cameras around the clock. The Hale ‘Coven’ –Stiles, we’re not calling ourselves the Magical Avengers- added layers of protection to the wards around the Preserve and houses. Everyone from the smallest child knew to let someone know if they noticed anything odd. The Pack prepared and they waited.

Stiles finished making his rounds of the local Fae and Magic users on the second day and it was finally time for his last stop: Deaton.

Stiles saw Isaac through the window of the clinic and the man grinned and waved at him when he heard the Jeep pull in to the parking lot. Stiles nodded to Isaac with a smile, knowing the Beta had been on pins and needles where the Pack and his boss were concerned. It was hard to work with someone that your family thought was a habitual liar. Peter excluded.

Deaton met him at the door. The Druid was pleased as ever to see his former student willingly walk into his office and even traded a dry joke with him as he took the list of things he was handed. “I was wondering when you were going to get around to me,” Deaton said. “I’d heard you’d already stopped at the local home gardeners to ask for things.”

Stiles shrugged though there wasn’t much petulance in the gesture as there might have been. He hadn’t actually been avoiding Deaton this time around. He just wanted to get the fresh stuff first and Deaton was last on his list. “Have you got all this?” Stiles asked.
Deaton nodded. “You’re thinking general protection spells from the look of this list. I heard about Derek’s decree that the Nest wouldn’t be kept out of town by force. It’s a smart move considering you don’t know how many there will actually be.”

Stiles nodded. The wards couldn’t target Vampires specifically because of the Vampires they already had in town but he’d been able to use similar wards he’d used on the Pack house: putting up a barrier to those who would come in with bad intentions. He wasn’t sure how well it would hold up against a group of Vampires if they wanted to drain the town dry, but it would at least slow them down.

“So can you get everything?” Stiles asked.

Deaton nodded again. “It should be simple enough. I’ll check in back to see what I have available for immediate use.”

Once Deaton left the room Stiles rolled his neck, feeling his joints pop. “I will be so happy when these wards are done,” he sighed. That was sort of a half-truth and Isaac knew it. The tension that built up for the Emissary was always less once he came back from the Preserve smelling of ozone but it left the man with an excess of energy that was just itching to come out and be used.

“Will you be done with them tonight?” Isaac asked, removing a rabbit from its cage and bringing it over to the table.

“That’s the plan,” Stiles replied. "I had to adjust them a little yesterday because some of the Dryads were complaining about getting dizzy.”

“Poor girls,” Isaac muttered. Stiles had a contract with their leader and they had been living in the Preserve for a few years now. They didn’t mind all the magic floating around, wrapped around the trees and the earth, but sometimes it became a little too concentrated for them. Stiles was constantly reworking spells all over the town to accommodate all the different races that lived there.

“Been busy?” Stiles asked, walking up to the table where Isaac was giving the snowy white rabbit a shot.

Isaac replied with a shrug. “I set a broken bone, ran some blood tests, cleaned out some cages.”

Stiles recalled him and Jackson coming back late last night after patrolling the Preserve. Jackson had been dripping wet. He growled that all was quiet and stomped himself upstairs to his room. Isaac had a grin on his face and just shook his head, following the other man upstairs. Derek and Stiles had been watching TV on the couch and just shared a confused look. “So what happened on Patrol last night?” Stiles asked.

Isaac snorted, a grin breaking out on his face again. “Yeah, Jackson thought he smelled something and wasn’t looking where he was going so he fell into the creek.”

“Graceful,” Stiles smirked.

“I thought so.”

Stiles nodded with a smile and stared at the rabbit. It twitched a bit under Isaac’s hand, pink nose wiggling back and forth as its long ears canted forward. Stiles narrowed his eyes at the adorable creature. “Have you ever just gotten the urge to set one of the little ones free just so you can chase them back down?”

Isaac yanked up the rabbit and held it to his chest, looking horrified. “What the hell man?! That’s twisted.”
Stiles blinked and laughed. “Jesus, I didn’t say chase it down and eat it! I mean like, when you get bored. Does your wolf just want to like…play or something?”

Isaac stroked the rabbit’s ears comfortably, eyeing Stiles like he should hide all the rabbits. “Just because I’m a Werewolf doesn’t mean I want to chase rabbits.”

Stiles chuckled and shrugged. “Scott did.” Because Scott was the pinnacle of Werewolfdom.

Isaac rolled his eyes with a smile as Stiles phone rang in his back pocket. The young man answered with a smile still on his face as he reached out and pat the rabbit on the head. "Yeah?"

Isaac recognized Charlotte’s voice instantly. She had been mother-henning since the incident at Carla’s, calling the Pack and checking up on them at all hours of the day. They had no how she’d gotten some of their numbers. Allison theorized that she didn’t want them to be caught unaware and Stiles just told them to be patient with her because she felt bad about his reaction the first time. It was sweet in a way, to know that Charlotte’s Nest had their back even if they didn’t necessarily want to enter into any fighting.

Isaac hadn’t been paying attention to the phone call, giving Stiles some privacy, but when he noticed an unnatural high pitch in the woman’s voice he frowned, putting the rabbit back in its cage. He saw the Stiles fingers tighten around his phone and Isaac’s full attention was on the conversation but he almost flinched back when the acrid scent of anger rolled off the other man. Stiles made himself physically pause as he took a breath and let it out. Isaac felt some of the strain in the air lessen as Stiles reached into his back pocket and pulled out a cigarette. He rolled it in between his long fingers for a moment before slipping it between his lips. Isaac eyed him warily but the man didn’t light it.

“Are you sure this time?” Stiles asked, voice low and guarded, and Isaac felt his stomach churn.

“I would know that Versace Pour Homme cologne smell anywhere, Stiles. You don’t exactly forget someone who’s tried to kill you for the past 15 years.”

Stiles ran his hand down his face and then rubbed his fingers together, the cherry glow lighting the end of the cigarette. He looked at Isaac who was clearly on edge, fixing his friend with a worried gaze. Stiles tried to give him a reassuring smile but by the way the concern on Isaac’s face grew he knew he’d failed miserably.

To keep from saying anything he’d regret, Stiles pulled a long drag from his cigarette, trying to let the mixture of herbs dull the tingling in his limbs. He was having trouble making senses of this. His wards hadn’t gone off. Barry hadn’t called any of them. None of his contacts had sent him a warning that anyone odd had come into the Preserves, and Danny’s software hadn’t pinged. Well, that last part made sense because they didn’t actually have photos of the first group that had wandered through and tagged up Roseville. Still, it should have been impossible for anyone to sneak in without them knowing, even a Vampire as old as Valid.

All of a sudden Stiles was really ticked off and he exhaled the smoke roughly.

The door to Deaton’s office opened and the vet came out carrying a small box of supplies, drawing Stile’s attention to him. “Deaton, I need to add stuff to the list. Quicksilver, pure iron shavings, holy water and juniper. Crushed, sprigs, fresh, don’t care. Anything that you have on hand.”

Deaton set the box on the worktable, not even commenting that Stiles was smoking in a no smoking area or that his list had gone from defense and protection to burning a Vampire’s skin on contact. “I can manage the others, but I’m afraid my holy water supply is low.”
Stiles nodded and rubbed his hand over the back of his neck, collecting his thoughts. “Charlotte, have they seen you?” Stiles asked, phone still held up to his ear.

“No, not yet. I saw them when I was coming out of the bookstore a little bit ago. That’s where I am now. They were heading east down Main street. Six of them including Valid.”

“Damnit,” Stiles cursed, and one of the exam lights flickered. Isaac shot a worried look at Deaton and saw the the man was frowning. The fact that it was only six of them was concerning. The letter from Roseville’s Sheriff hinted on at least a dozen which meant that they had split up and he didn’t know why. “Do you need me to come and get you?”

“God, no, Gambit I’ll be fine.” Charlotte insisted, but Stiles could hear the forced calm in her tone. “I’m a big girl and I’m going to get my Nest to the Jungle and hole up there. Just promise you’ll be careful.”

Stiles nodded and hung up the phone, a deep, angry frown on his face. He’d had some time to wrap his head around the idea that he might see Valid again even though he’d been praying it was just some random Nest. Two random Nests. Hell, three or four. Anything but that bastard Valid. He’d been a little vague when giving descriptions to the sketch artist at the station the other day because all he’d been able to remember were gleaming fangs sinking into his arm and bright neon blue eyes searing into his very soul as an icy cold fear gripped him harder than most anything he’d ever felt.

“Stiles?” Isaac asked finally, already knowing the answer from the uptick in the mans heart rate. “What’s the plan?” When he met Isaacs eyes his own were flickering pale violet.

Deaton broke the silence first. “It’s a little pointless for me to tell you to proceed with caution so I think I’d better collect the rest of those supplies. Please try to avoid killing anyone.”

No words needed to be spoken between wolf and Emissary and before Deaton even closed the door Isaac was calling their Alpha and Stiles was calling his dad.
Waiting for someone to pick up

Chapter Summary

“I know Charlotte and I gave descriptions of these Vampires but remember that Valid is their First. He's the oldest and the strongest. He looks to be around 30 years old, about 6'2, pale blonde hair, good build, dark blue eyes scar on his left jaw-,”

“Wears too much cologne and has an oddly charming accent?” the Sheriff interrupted tersely. Behind him, Stiles didn’t notice Isaac stop his nervous fidgeting and still, so he barreled on not missing a beat.

“Yes, that’s right, that’s….,” apparently he did miss a beat. “Actually that’s pretty specific how do you know that?”

“That’s what I’ve been trying to tell you,” his father said with an exasperated sigh. “They were already here at the station.”

Chapter Notes

This is the last short chapter I think. (well at least the last one that is THIS short. Really sorry about that....) I wanted to break up the scenes.... >.>

Waiting for someone to pick up at the Sheriffs station was number three on Stiles nerve-wracking-I-never-want-to-do-this-again list, right below waiting for the doctor to come talk to you in the hospital. He heard the phone click and his fathers voice came through on the other end. “Sheriff Stilinski.”

Stiles let out a sigh of relief but in his next breath his words were tumbling out. “Dad, they’re here. The Nest is here.”

“Stiles, I was just going to call-”

“Do not have any of your men try to engage without Derek or I there,” Stiles interrupted seriously. “It’s not just a random group of Vampires; it’s Valid’s Nest. Charlotte saw them walking down Main. I think there’s only six of them now so that could mean the rest of them have stayed behind for some reason, or that they’ve split up.”

Isaac was attempting to redial Derek’s number for the second time and huffed in frustration, looking at Stiles. “Busy signal.”

Stiles nodded at Isaac. “Keep trying.” And he went back to talking to his dad, his goal to keep the man as safe as possible till he met them at the Pack house. “Chris and Allison have some new bullets with iron and silver shavings at their house but for now load the ones with silver powder. I’ll have them bring a case out to the Pack house and you can switch them out then.”
“Son, can you-“

Stiles pushed on. “I put some crushed juniper in a bag in your drawer. It won’t do a lot of damage but it will give them the most intense bout of allergies they’ve ever had in their undead lives.”

Isaac’s growl was cut off when the phone finally connected on the other end and rang. He let out a relieved sigh. “Thank god,” he breathed, turning away and answering when he heard his Alphas voice. “Derek! I’ve been trying to call you!”

The Sheriff was still trying to get a word in edgewise. “Stiles, hang on a second and-”

“I know Charlotte and I gave descriptions of these Vampires but remember that Valid is their First. He’s the oldest and the strongest. He looks to be around 30 years old, about 6’2, pale blonde hair, good build, dark blue eyes scar on his left jaw-,”

“Wears too much cologne and has an oddly charming accent?” the Sheriff interrupted tersely. Behind him, Stiles didn’t notice Isaac stop his nervous fidgeting and still, so he barreled on not missing a beat.

“Yes, that’s right, that’s….” apparently he did miss a beat. “Actually that’s pretty specific how do you know that?”

“That’s what I’ve been trying to tell you,” his father said with an exasperated sigh. “They were already here at the station.”

Stiles felt the blood drain from his face and he finally turned to face Isaac who was already looking at him, mouth set in a grim line, phone held up to his ear. He pressed the speaker button and Derek’s voice broke the silence. “-ey requested a formal meeting with the Pack. Tonight at 9pm at the lacrosse field.”
Meet Bat

Chapter Summary

Stiles tapped his fingertips on his thigh, looking at all of them with a mix of irritation and impatience. He rolled his neck letting it crack a few times, loosening the muscles in his shoulders and exhaled smoke through his nose in what Erica liked to call Stiles angry dragon mode. “Oh ye of so little, little faith.” He pulled the bag off his shoulder and stood it on it’s end as he unzipped it. Stiles reached inside and pulled out…. A bat.

Chapter Notes

This one was a little ( a LOT) hurried because I just wanted it out there and I wanted to dedicate a chapter to Stiles bat. Because it deserves a chapter. 

Also, I am open to bat names if anyone cares to take a crack at it.

John held out a G41 Gen4 for his son to take. Standard police issue model plus a spare magazine with decidedly non-standard issue bullets. “Take this,” he said without any hesitation. 5 years ago the idea of giving his son a loaded firearm would have made John throw up a little. As a kid, Stiles was very good with a rifle sitting in one spot, aiming from a distance at one non-moving target, but a handgun? No way in hell. His general clumsiness would have made him dread that his son would end up shooting someone (or himself) in the process of checking if the safety was on. The gun was more likely to fly out of his hands rather than get off a round.

The phone calls had the Pack standing on various levels of shaken up. Needless to say everyone’s plans had been canceled after finding out that, hey, guess which undead, night dwelling creatures just showed up to say ‘hi’.

They all met at the Pack house within an hour flinging hurried explanations at their bosses, friends, and family who knew them well enough to just call out a general ‘be careful!’ The Argents rolled in with their two military looking SUVs and Scott and Melissa on the back of his bike, Melissa still in her scrubs and Scott in his EMS uniform. Lydia picked up Erica and Danny in her tiny sports car and broke some speed limits to get there just after Jackson and Boyd. Ethan, Derek, and John arrived in two squad cars and Stiles grabbed Isaac right out of the clinic the moment he hung up the phone with his father.

Lydia’s car swerved to a stop in front of the house cutting ruts in the dirt driveway. Erica got out before the dust even settled, all sharp movements and a little too much strength when she slammed the door shut. Boyd slipped an arm over the tense blondes shoulders as soon as she was close enough and gave her a reassuring squeeze. "Hey," Boyd said, face grave.

"This is such crap," Erica muttered gruffly, leaning into the solid mass of the other man. She caught Isaac’s eye and made a small motion towards Stiles to which Isaac shook his head. Their Emissary was making the air around him hum with his anxieties but his expression remained impassive. Erica frowned and huffed out a breath, leaning into Boyd more. “I know we said were weren’t going to
kick them out till they tried to do something stupid but can’t we make an exception?” She asked, a low growl in her voice.

“No,” Derek answered immediately. After being on both the giving and receiving end of their reasons twice now he didn’t want any slip-ups. Chris let out a small huff of a laugh and the Alpha glared at him. He stepped into Stiles space, feeling the air around the man shift like a curtain being pulled aside to let him in. Once the air around the brunette His hand rest on the mans lower back as though that could steady his nerves.

Lydia slammed her door shut almost as hard as Erica had, a fiercely annoyed expression on her face. “Why didn’t any of the wards go off?” she snapped, looking to Danny and Stiles for answers. “I know we didn’t make a mistake so why didn't we feel anything!”

“I don’t know,” Stiles muttered, rubbing his eyes with a sigh.

“What are they trying to pull?” Ethan growled, grinding his heel into the leaves on the ground. “They just waltzed right into the station like they owned the place!”

Scott glanced at his mom who was frowning, looking woridly at the agitated group; a look shared by the Sheriff. "This doesn't make sense," Scott said. "If they were so close wouldn't we have scented them on patrol last night?" he looked at Isaac and Jackson and both men huffed in annoyance.

"Vampires move fast," Chris said, leaning against his vehicle. "Chances are they were still fairly far away last night."

That didn't seem to appease Ethan who threw his hands in the air. "But we had so many precautions!!" More exclamations of outrage followed, making the wood echo with their ire. Erica kept watching Derek and Stiles and after about thirty seconds of loud, vocalized indignation she left Boyd’s side and stepped over to her friend so she could hug his arm.

Isaac growled at Scott as the fingers kept pointing. "I told you we didn't smell anything Scott, stop ragging on us!"

Danny got fed up with Lydia's implications. "Lydia, I did the same spell you did okay, calm down."

The Sheriff tried to calm his deputy. "Ethan, jesus, you are not going to call Barry and yell at him! Put your damn phone away."

Even Allison joined the fray when Jackson turned to the Huntress for answers. "I can't help it that only some of them decided to show up, Jackson. It's not like my contact followed them all the way down here!" Stiles rubbed his forehead and closed his eyes, sighing in such a way that Erica rubbed his arm soothingly and pinned Derek with a wide stare that clearly said; 'do something!'

Growling under his breath Derek took a step forward, unknowingly putting himself in front of Stiles and between him and his bickering Pack. He let his fangs drop, eyes bleeding red and let out a short roar that cut through the other voices. Silence fell instantly and all eyes were fixed on him. Derek felt the red haze fade out from his eyes and he pointed at the house. “Everyone inside,” he barked out. “We’ve already got a plan so calm down and stick to it. Get changed, gather the weapons you need, and meet back outside.” There was some hesitation, his Betas effectively cowed, so he snapped and waved his arm toward the house, “Go!”

Melissa, Chris, John and Peter, having stayed out of the argument and panic for the most part, shared sympathetic looks with each other as the youngsters shuffled into the house. Erica gave Stiles arm a final squeeze before she let go and followed the others. Waiting till most of the Pack were inside
Derek ran his hand down Stiles arm. "See you upstairs?" he asked softly. He waited till the younger man gave him a nod before he went after his Betas.

The Sheriff lagged behind outside with Stiles and entered last, keeping a close eye on his son. He finally asked, "Are you going to be okay kiddo?".

Stiles didn’t know how to respond. Okay? Knowing that the man who was a reoccurring theme for his nightmares had made his way to his hometown? Okay? Feeling his tattoos itch and burn against his skin as he thought about how angry he still was that he’d been bitten by that asshole? Okay? Knowing that one slip up for him might mean another massacre like the one that had earned him the name Little Red in New York?

No. Not really.

The Pack fell into a routine after that and with a small stampede of footsteps they each dispersed into their own rooms to get ready. Stiles followed Derek upstairs to find the man changing out of his uniform and replacing it with a Henley and dark jeans; his signature look that not only gave him enough room to move but made him look like an incredibly capable bouncer. Stiles always joked that Beacon Hills was Derek’s Roadhouse. Stiles opted for something a little more sentimental and Derek almost stopped him when he saw the familiar red hoody being pulled over his shirt and metal arm guards. Stiles was just tugging the zipper up when he caught Derek’s worried expression that he quickly tried to mask by stuffing his hands in the pockets of his jeans. "Making a statement?" Derek inquired casually, trying to keep the mood light for both their sakes.

Stiles parted his lips to say something and then seemed to change his mind. He gave the older man a small smile and shrugged. “It’s how they know me,” he said.

Derek frowned at that but nodded anyway, quiet for a moment before he said, "Okay."

Stiles nodded but his hand reached up to cover his forearm just below his elbow. "...I know," he said, hearing the unspoken question. "Don't worry. I’ll keep it together."

And god, looking into those nearly Beta gold eyes Derek wanted to believe him. So badly. His jaw clenched as he looked down at the younger man’s arm, pale fingers wrapped around the bite mark underneath the fabric and metal guard. In two steps the Alpha was pulling the younger man close, their fronts flush as he let their foreheads rest together. He didn’t like this. His wolf was agitated and restless, hyper aware of every distress signal coming off its Mate. He didn’t want these bastards to know Stiles by the color he wore. He didn’t want them to look at Stiles, or talk to him, or even think about him. There was no shortage of people who would be willing to escort their Emissary away from the situation if necessary but Derek was equally concerned about how well his Betas—or himself for that matter—could keep their own emotions in check.

Derek realized he’d been quiet for a bit too long when he heard Stiles call his name, inches away from his face. "Der?"

Derek opened his eyes, not know he’d slipped them shut, and stared into the warm amber ones in front of him. He knew sweet placations wouldn’t mean anything now, just as asking 'are you okay' would be met with a derisive silence, so he just tipped Stiles face up and kissed him, provoking the younger man with his lips till Stiles bit playfully back and told him to "Move it, sourwolf. We got a meeting to get to."

The sun set entirely as it neared 9 o’clock and the Preserve was doused in darkness lit only by the
lights from the house and the headlights on their cars. They’d all slowly filtered back outside one by one, a noticeable tension hanging in the air though the feeling couldn’t be discerned from their expressions. They were all clam, jovial even as Melissa reminded once again that even though she and Danny were staying behind and just because most of them could heal did not mean they wanted to spend the night digging out bullets and bandaging wounds. Danny second that motion, looking pointedly at Ethan who was still pissed off at how the Vampires had just walked into the station with smiles on their faces like they’d won some award.

Chris glanced up at John and his son, eyeing the gun held out between them as he shut the trunk of his SUV. “If not that one at least use one of my rifles,” he offered. Like the boys father he also remembered Stiles history with handguns but a few years of target practice -stationary and otherwise-allowed the Hunter peace of mind to offer the young man weapons without hesitation.

Stiles glanced down at the gun his dad held out to him and shook his head, hardly paying attention as he shouldered his bag. “I have a weapon already.”

Allison looked up from adjusting the tensions on her bow and cocked her head to the side curiously, eyeing the large duffle bag that Stiles had brought down from his room. The bag itself was a mystery. There were things in there that were decidedly unhealthy for some members of the Pack but a few of the Wolves had carried it with no problems. Lydia suspected Stiles had runes sewn into it like he’d done to his dads' uniform. “What are you taking?” Allison asked. “The Browning?”

“Nope,” Stiles shook his head. “Not a gun.”

Isaacs grunted when his shoulder popped as he used Scott to help him stretch. The Pack had really only seen Stiles use close combat weapons since he returned, like the tipped knuckle gloves -which he was wearing now,- knives –which were slipped into his vest and boots,- and the chain that hung around his neck. “So what is it?” the Beta queried.

Stiles paused a moment, looking at Isaac doubtingly and then at Allison. “Nope. You’ll laugh,” he said, reaching into his back pocket and pulling out cigarette number everyone-lost-count.

The Sheriff had become immune to the sight of his normally health conscious sons' new vice. “Not really the time for being ambiguous, Stiles.”

Embers flickered to life at Stiles fingertips lighting his face with a warm glow as he raised his eyebrow. The glint caught the amber in his eyes and the way Stiles grinned put everyone on edge instantly, especially since he’d been rather stony-faced for the last hour. It was the ‘this-is-totally-awesome-and-badass-to-me-but-everyone-else-is-going-to-look-at-me-like-I’ve-lost-my-freaking-mind’ look. It was never a prelude to anything good.

Scott actually braced himself. “Oh god,” he winced. “What is it?”

Stiles ignored his friend and puffed out a small smoke ring that was more of an oval than a circle. “… You guys remember that bat I carried around in high school?”

Scott blinked quickly, his brain processing and Stiles shrugged, making a motion with his hand that said; ‘well there you have it.’ Silence permeated the air till Jackson let out a loud snort. Derek pinched the bridge of his nose, wishing he didn't have to be the one to shoot down ideas that were clearly stemming from past high school traumas. “Stiles, you’re not going out there without a real weapon.”

“It is a real weapon,” Stiles insisted stubbornly.
Allison tried to interject sympathetically. "A Vampire isn’t going to be afraid of a bat Stiles, and these guys certainly aren’t if what you’ve told us about them is anything to go by."

Stiles sighed around his cigarette and crossed his arms, shifting his weight to one leg. “Don’t worry about it. It’s fine.” Only Derek seemed to notice Stiles holding in his breaths longer with each one he took but he didn’t try to intervene again. Something about the way the young man was standing there, tense but completely sure of himself, made him bite his tongue.

Lydia raised a perfectly sculpted eyebrow as she zipped up the Kevlar vest she’d put on over her tank top and athletic shirt. The humans were all equipped with it now and had been since the night it had saved Stiles from being completely run through with a magical tree branch. Her expression clearly stated that she thought Stiles was full of it. Even she and Allison were taking along Tasers as a precaution after all.

Stiles remained stubbornly resolute and Scott finally let go of Isaacs’s arms to leave the Beta to shake out his sore muscles. “Stiles man, I totally dig your new arsenal and stuff but isn’t it going to be like hitting a brick wall with a paper tube?”

Stiles eyes grew a little hooded and Scott shrank slightly. “I’m aware of how it feels to hit a Vampire with a bat, Scotty,” he said, tone dangerously even. Scott was sure someone was going to smack him in the back of the head for his comment but a second later Stiles shifted and calm expression slid over his face. “But it’s not a regular bat. I supercharged it.” Despite knowing that their friend was fueled by a metric ton of righteous anger and in all honesty probably had something up his sleeve, almost all of them rolled their eyes when Stiles wiggled his fingers for dramatic effect and it had the opposite.

John let out a sigh. “For my sake then. I’d feel better if you at least went in with a loaded gun.” And that was a sentence he never thought he’d have to say.

Stiles tapped his fingertips on his thigh, looking at all of them with a mix of irritation and impatience. He rolled his neck letting it crack a few times, loosening the muscles in his shoulders and exhaled smoke through his nose in what Erica liked to call Stiles angry dragon mode. “Oh ye of so little, little faith.” He pulled the bag off his shoulder and stood it on its end as he unzipped it. Stiles reached inside and pulled out…. A bat.

A bat that looked like it had served a half a life term in prison and then killed two guards to escape.

“Holy balls,” Erica murmured, quirking an eyebrow as she looked the bat up and down like she usually did people. That is until she got a whiff of something and her eyes actually watered a bit. The other Wolves standing closest to Stiles reacted much the same way.

The bat was essentially a four by four hacked into the shape of a bat by knives, or an ax, or, -for the creative minds- the blunt force impact of blasting out people's kneecaps. Peter’s head tipped back as he let out a loud laugh to fill the shocked silence and the Sheriff made a small noise and ran his hand over his face dolefully. Derek could really only shake his head, feeling his wolf chuff in the back of his mind.

“Stiles,” Lydia started, “What in the hell is-?” Interrupting the Banshee, Stiles cleared his throat while Peter caught his breath. The little blades on the knuckles of his glove caught the light as he motioned to the length of wood like it was a work of art, -which it sort of was, in a macabre sort of way.

“The length of wood like it was a work of art, -which it sort of was, in a macabre sort of way.

“Observe,” Stiles said, coolly. “Rowan and Blackthorn wood have been carefully crafted around a thin 35 inch iron core. 13 steel studs have been hammered into the end and a healthy varnish made from holy water, salt from the Dead Sea, and oils from Alder and Yew trees have been applied three times.” He picked the bat up and twirled it twice; long fingers and a strong hand controlling the
speed and rotation. “For a small additional fee this bat also comes with nifty red sports tape for maximum gripage.” The heavy thunk the bat made when Stiles tapped it back to the ground gave the impression that it easily weighed 6 pound or more.

Ethan’s eyebrows were up near his hairline. “Aaand, hello focal point of my nightmares for the next week,” he affirmed, thanking god that Stiles hadn’t possessed that monstrosity when he and Aiden had been in Deucalion’s Pack. He doubted he’d be standing here today if that were the case.

Melissa let out a motherly sigh that was just the right mixture of exasperated and worried, and Danny whistled, nodding his head. “Not gonna’ lie; that’s hot,” he said bluntly. Derek almost growled at the human but thought better of it when he realized how big of a hypocrite that would make him.

John just shook his head again and took a deep breath, clapping his smug looking son on the shoulder. “Okay. The bat's fine. Let’s all just try to remember that we are going there to meet with them,” he said, looking at all of them. “Not start a turf war.”

Chris was the only one by the display and he finished loading his rifle, bracing it over his shoulder. “It’s almost time.”

Stiles flipped his bat up and over so it rested on his shoulder and Jackson actually took a small step back when the motion sent a small blast of concentrated scent his way. “Ugg, god, yes, let’s go,” the Beta said, bring his hand up to cover his nose. “And I am not riding with Stilinski. That thing smells rank.”

Stiles rolled his eyes and picked up his duffle bag again, slipping the bat inside. Almost immediately the wolves noticed the lack of tear-inducing aroma in the air. “You’re such a pansy,” Stiles muttered.

Allison let out a small, slightly disbelieving chuckle and shook her head, wondering how she’d gone from the main weapons supplier to considering offering up some of her latest models in trade for some of her Pack mates home made devices. She tossed her keys to her father and motioned to the cars. “Okay, let's move out.”
Like a Clap of thunder

Chapter Summary

Ethans last name is Carver because you all know why. Also, from here on Carla is an Ondine. I must have originally wanted her to be a sylph (air spirit) but for some reason I made her a water fae. Anywho, I will be correcting the previous chapters soon.

No beta.

Recap: Ethan; Carver. Ondine; water elemental Fae. That is all.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Parking their cars in the lot of Beacon Hills High School brought back some seriously nostalgic memories for all of them and it was hard for the younger pack members not to feel like they were stepping foot on home turf. They found their eyes glancing towards certain locations without comment, each reminiscing in their own way. Lacrosse, prom, homework, detention, Harris, more detention, being shoved into lockers, people dying, running for their lives, Scott and that utterly appalling howl through the speaker system that made Derek cry inside. At least they would have something interesting to talk about at the class reunions.

The school itself was dark but the building was backlit by the bright lights on the field giving the gloomy structure a pale halo. The towering stadium lights were on as they would be for a night game, flooding the field with a clean white glow. It looked surreal almost; frozen in time like a scene from a movie, too careful and perfect to be comforting even in its familiarity.

Beyond the reach of the lights the forest seemed murky and sinister. A low rolling mist spilled out from the shadows, slowly creeping onto the field and everything was quiet but for the chirp of crickets and the light tread of their footsteps.

Scott almost winced at a cricket that decided to chirp particularly close to him. “Why are places so creepy at night?” he huffed out.

“It's not so bad,” said Isaac, who'd worked in a cemetery for the better part of his life.

Erica gave a small considering hum and added helpfully; “I’m pretty sure this is the setup to an early 1980’s slasher movie.”

The Betas dismissal did little to sway Scott who went on in a hushed tone, “And who in the heck left the field lights on? Waste electricity much? This fog is ridiculous. Couldn't we meet them in the morning?”

“Vampires, Scott,” Boyd reminded the shorter man, proving he was paying more attention to the conversation than his indifferent expression let on.

Shoving his hands into his pockets, Scott muttered gruffly, “That’s what indoors are for.”

Jackson scoffed, looking at Scott pityingly. “Just admit you’re scared of the dark, McCall,” the
blonde goaded.

Scott let out a small, affronted squeak and jerked his head around to look at the other. “Excuse you lizard breath, but I know what sneaks around in the dark so yeah, I am respectfully fearful.” Jacksons glowered and Allison sniggered at Scott’s easy admittance of his fears, sharing a mischievous look with Erica who was responsible for many a prank pulled on the True Alpha in years past.

“Kids,” The Sheriff interrupted in a mellow, placating tone, “is this really the time?”

“Yeah Scott, is it really the time to be a little pussy?” Jackson snapped only to have Isaac punch him in the shoulder. “What?” Jackson asked incredulously. “He’s a Werewolf afraid of the dark. How am I not supposed to make fun of that?”

“Oh my god,” Ethan said, looking amazed. “You just can’t turn off the asshole, can you Whittmore.”

“Scott’s right,” Chris of all people declared, earning him a look of astonishment from said Werewolf. “Something would be fundamentally wrong with you if you weren’t at least a little afraid of the dark at this point.”

Scott made some sort of aborted victory fist pump at Jackson. “Hah!”

“Don’t encourage them, Chris,” the Sheriff sighed.

Peter, strolling off to the side with his hands in his pockets, chuckled. “Human instincts are fundamentally hardwired to avoid dangerous predators at night- which speaks to the irony of our lives.” Peter paused a moment. “Which reminds me, Derek, you get to call Laura if anything goes wrong tonight.”

Tearing his eyes away from whatever he’d been staring at Derek leveled Peter with a stiff glare. “Way to be a jinx, Peter.”

"I play to my strengths," The older wolf replied without a hint of shame.

“Just shut up and focus,” Derek growled. The only reason he hadn’t stopped the blithe banter earlier despite the obvious need for stealth was that he’d heard Stiles give a small exhalation of laughter under his breath and, if only for a moment, the hand gripping his bat had some color return to his fingers. Peter seemed to know this as well because he just gave his nephew an innocent little smile and shut his mouth.

Derek pushed open the metal gate in the chain linked fence and it creaked ominously, propping itself open with a rattling clang.

“Still creeps me out,” Scott mumbled.

They filtered in slowly as though trespassing on private property through the field was anything new to them. A few seconds passed like an hour, time slowing down to a crawl as the enormity of this situation settle on them once again. They were expecting every rustle of the wind to be a Vampire flying out of the shadows, hissing and shrieking with claws aimed at their jugulars. Isaac kicked a discarded water bottle with his foot that was no doubt left over from the teams practice and watched it roll along the neatly trimmed turf.

"I don't like this," Erica announced finally. Never mind that she'd already decided she wasn't going to like these Vampires regardless of where the meeting took place, she wasn’t all that fond of being back in high school again.
The bright stadium lights seemed to be taunting them now, lighting up every shadowed place on the field and creating even darker shadows beyond them. Boyd made a thoughtful noise as he glanced around at the empty field. “At least it’s out in the open,” he offered optimistically.

“Double-edged sword,” Chris stated. Lots of room to move and see what was happening, but virtually no cover.

Standing even with her father Allison shifted her weight from leg to leg, nerves buzzing. "Does this feel like a horrible trap to anyone else?" she asked in a light tone, sounding both nervous and irritated at the same time.

“Yes,” Peter voiced unhelpfully.

Scott glanced around. “We’re not early, are we?”

John looked at the watch on his wrist. 9:02. "We’re on time." the older man replied quietly, eyeing the edges of the trees through the fog.

"They're here somewhere...." Chris said. His hand hovered over his holster in wait. “Anyone sense anything?”

Erica took a small step forward and sniffed the air a few times. Her nose wrinkled and she huffed out a little breath. “Smells like dirt...” She raised her chin and sniffed again and her eyes flashed in warning as she took a step back closer to the group. “You’re right, they’re here somewhere.” Lydia moved closer to Stiles out of habit and glanced at Derek.

“Just a meeting, right Alpha?” the redhead asked for everyone’s sake.

“Just a meeting.” Derek echoed. “Everyone takes queues from Stiles and I, or the Sentinels.” Peter, John, Chris, Ethan, and occasionally Scott held that title and the other Betas nodded in acknowledgment. They knew the drill but being reminded of it helped them remember just why they were all here.

A sudden clap like a gunshot through the still air had Scott swearing and the rest of them a combination of jumping a foot in the air or tensing up as rigid as a stone statue. They whipped around to face the stands, eyes flashing a mix of gold, blue, and red while the sharp scent of ozone seemed to burst outwards from their startled Emissary. Where only seconds before the bleachers had been empty now sat six dark figures; like black spots amidst the cold bright metal. A small motion drew their eyes to a solitary form and for a moment all they could see were a pair of pale hands clapping together.

Chapter End Notes

So far, my list for Bat names recommended by you guys:

Chomper-
Chapter Summary

Ethan looked like he was choking on a snarl, eyes flashing bright blue while Derek looked positively dangerous. "That's enough," he ground out. "It would be wise to not patronize my Pack, Alistar. Not when you need our permission to be here." And not when most of them were just itching for a reason to rip your throat out.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

The man gazing down at them with mild amusement and clear superiority was so obviously and painfully Valid Alistar that none of them even had to wonder. He didn’t look much older than Derek, maybe in his late thirties, but he didn’t have any tell tale signs of age. Classic good looks; chiseled features with a sharp predatory smile and narrowed eyes that were almost always looking down thanks to his generous height. His slicked back hair was platinum blond and the only marring feature on him was the dark scar on his jaw reaching from his ear to the tip of his chin.

"And Team Hale enters the field," came a low, amused declaration between the slow and frankly condescending claps. The voice filtered down to them and wrapped around their sense like a thick blanket. Allison, Chris and the Sheriff all felt their hands drift away from their weapons and the growling of the wolves eased to a low purr. They could all see Valid's lips moving but the voice sounded disconnected; disembodied, which was disturbing to say the least. "So glad you all could make it," the voice continued, rolling each syllable in a completely inappropriate way.

It was only when Stiles hissed under his breath that they knew something was wrong. The rune tattoo behind Derek’s ear flared up with a warm stir and his senses sharpened like he was waking up after a long sleep. He felt a flush roll up her neck and shook it away angrily, noticing that Allison and Lydia were doing the same. Both women looking a touch murderous that yes, this blood-sucking dick bag was actually attempting to Enthrall them. "Son of a..." Chris muttered, finally understanding what was happening as he wrapped his fingers around his gun again. Isaac flexed his fingers so strongly his knuckles cracked and Scott looked confused and ready to sneeze.

In the stands, the Vampire chuckled and Derek felt his eyes shift colors as he forced the last of the enchantment off, glaring fiercely up at the blonde. He could feel the violation of the other's magic like a bad touch and wow was he ever glad that he'd sat through that whole magical tattoo ordeal for a second time. The Alpha glared up at Valid and his companions with narrowed eyes. "Don't try that again," he warned brows drawn together in ire.

The Sheriff leaned towards Derek, keeping his eyes on the Valid as his hand went instantly back to his holster. "And...what exactly did he try to do?" he whispered out of the corner of his mouth.

Stiles answered before his Alpha could. "A stupid thing," he said and his tone was seething under the quiet as the soft glow from the tattoos on his hand slowly dimmed. Valid smiled as though he could hear the low words and Stiles narrowed his eyes. "Don't worry. The runes will keep it from affecting you too much."

The Sheriff practically had to peel his fingers away from the handle of his gun and he took a step
closer to his son, eyeing the Vampires with cold, defensive eyes. "What's our move?" he asked the Alpha and Emissary. The Wolves and Hunters behind them stirred anxiously, waiting for the response that determined if this whole mess would turn into a brawl rather than 'just a meeting.'

Valid crossed his arms, resting his elbows on the knees of his pressed black slacks as he placed both feet on the bench in front of him. He looked pleased- nonchalant even. "Ah, my apologies for the... influence," he said, pearly white fangs peeking out from behind a sharp smile. "You know how it is. Spend a century or two perfecting a trade and it just becomes second nature. Force of habit and all that."

Setting his own personal feelings about wanting to shove a claw into the Vampires eye, Derek glanced to his right at his Lupa. The younger man kept his jaw clenched tight as he took a breath and then muttered; "It's fine," which was directed at the entire Pack.

Languidly, Valid stood and the five behind him rose in unison. They moved like cats, feet light on the metal benches so they hardly made a noise. It was disconcerting to watch someone move and not actually perceive their footsteps even with their enhanced hearing. At least now they were picking up the smell of old, moist soil and sweet perfumes that Erica had caught earlier.

The closer they got the clearer the identical scars below each of their jaws stood out: the familial mark from their First. Not quite as large or damaging as Valid's own but no mere scratch either. Following behind the man like lustful shadows were two women who might have been sisters. They each had dark hair, darker eyeshadow, and blood red lips; a color Charlotte favored but wore with more class in Stiles opinion. The other three were men, one of them rivaling Boyd in physique and the other two closer to Derek’s size; shorter but obviously not scrawny. None of them were dressed for a fight but more like a night out which Derek took note of to some small relief. Where all six of them matched flawlessly though were their eyes: neon blue. No crystallization of color in the iris just a pale, un-faceted blue radiance with a small black dot in the center. Cold. Dead. Soulless eyes.

Without a sound, Valid sprang smoothly over the guard railing, dropping nearly five feet to land on the grass with his long coat flaring out behind him dramatically. To people that hadn't been on edge, it might have been an impressive little display of dexterity. But they were on edges as it were and were watching the Vampires every move. They were not impressed.

Isaac leaned in towards Erica a bit and muttered under his breath, “Think he based his look off Interview with a Vampire?” and thank god Vampires didn’t have hearing as good as Werewolves or Derek would have been forced to reprimand him. Stiles hand relaxed a little around the bat and the Alpha made a note to let Isaac pick the next Pack movie night.

“Thank you so much for coming,” Valid called out as soon as he'd straightened, sounding genuinely pleased to see them. Stiles kept his face as blank as he could, bat loose in his grip and resting along the length of his leg like a brace.

As the Nest drew closer Derek adjusted to his full height, shoulders straight and stance unyielding. Wordlessly the Pack formed a single line with Stiles standing to Derek’s right, both of them at the center as the others fanned out on either side of them. “You could have done without the theatrical entrance,” Derek finally responded. And the Enthralling. Let's not forget about that little gem, he added to himself.

Valid’s Nest lingered behind him a few feet but lined up as well, the hierarchy laid out clearly: Valid at the top and everyone else below. The slightly taller of the women smirked at Erica and said in a cheeky tone, “Where’s the fun in that, sweetheart?” The she-wolf growled without parting her lips and the Vampire just showed her some fang.
“Play nice with the puppy, Hanna,” Valid chided and the woman nodded placating, still smirking.

“Really?” Derek deadpanned while behind him Peter pinched the bridge of his nose, already voting to call it a night.

The blonde Vampire chuckled. “It’s all in good fun, I assure you.”

Derek let out a long-suffering sigh, choosing not to escalate the issue. They’d dealt with assholes before and dog jokes were probably the least offensive thing thrown at them. “You're Alistar then,” Derek asked, tone indicating that a sharp object through the man’s eye was not out of the realm of possibility yet.

Valid smiled charmingly and gave a bow, bringing the edge of his long coat up to his chest like it was a cloak. "Entirely at your service, Alpha Hale."

Derek doubted that very much. "Is this your entire Nest?” he went on, eyes not even flickering at the cold gazes the Vampires were fixing them with.

Valid glanced over his shoulder at his companions as though he was surprised they were even there. “Let’s see,” he pointed a finger at each of them in turn and counted. “One, two, three, four, five. Hmm, no.” He looked back at Derek with an easy smile. “No, this is only part of my Nest I’m afraid. The others are finding us a place to stay. I’m not quite sure how many decided to tag along but my best guess would be...eleven? Twenty maybe? The children do like to wander about.”

"I'll need an accurate number," Derek insisted with little room for argument. "I can't guarantee the safety of people I don't know about."

The blond Vampire smiled brightly, dismissing the veiled threat from the Werewolf with a wave of his hand. "Your concern is truly touching, Alpha Hale. I shall take a proper head count as soon as I'm able, you have my word. Since we are guests here though I’d be happy to introduce the Brothers and Sisters I have with me. Ladies first." He motioned to the women who seemed to preen under the attention, tucking their hair behind their ears and puffing out their obviously well endowed chests. "Hanna and Rachel. I found them in Georgia of all places, in jail for soliciting a local Preacher."

The two women tipped their chins up in acknowledgment, smirking at Erica, Allison, and Lydia who eyed them with unmasked aversion. “Pleasure to meet you,” they said in unison much like the creepy twin-like creatures they were. Rachel licked her lips as looked Isaac up and down, eyebrow raised. The tall beta just rolled his eyes and Derek, once again, sighed, much like the rest of the Wolves. The only reason they were taking this seriously was because A. it was sort of their job, and B. their Emissaries expression hadn't wavered once.

"Well, I just had to keep these young things off the street,” Valid said in a twisted paternal way, throwing a flirty wink at the girls who glowed at the Packs reaction to the whole scene. “The tall brutish looking one is Charles, who also happens to be the youngest. 67 and looking quite fit for his age, wouldn’t you agree?” Charles was built like a brick house and he eyed Boyd, Ethan, and Derek like they were personal challenges he wanted to bench press into oblivion. “Say hello to the nice Werewolves, Charles,” Valid instructed in a sweetly denigrating manner. He chuckled at the obvious posturing from his Brother when the man straightened and tensed all his muscles in his arms and chest. Boyd responded by folding his arms in front of him and an unimpressed raised eyebrow that they’d basically all inherited from their Alpha. Ethan looked like he wanted to pull a Derek and stab the Vampire in the eye.

Valid then motioned to the last two men behind him. "And here we have Samson and Alan, my Second and Third respectively.” Samson was a stocky auburn haired man with a vicious scar over
his forehead and eye and Alan was a rather surly looking blond who might have been Jackson's twin if Jackson was a little thicker set and had an aura of general homicide. Samson’s eyebrow rose in a cocky manner and he flicked his hand out in a wave to which Erica scoffed at till Scott nudged her in the side. Finally, Valid bowed theatrically again with one hand behind his back, “And I, as you already know, am Valid Loyd Alexander Alistar. But let's not be formal, you may call me Valid.” Introductions over he finally glanced down at the bat in Stiles hand and his smile grew sharper, neon eyes glittering. “I see you’ve brought and old friend,” he mused. "Alan, Hanna, what do you think? Are there more studs on it this time around?” At the mention of the bat the two Vampires shifted uneasily, eyeing the scarred length of wood with unveiled wariness. Valid seemed unconcerned with his companions discomfort but the Wolves could smell their scents sharpen with it. Valid placed a hand on his chest, smirking like the Cheshire cat. "My, my, I hope you didn't bring that just for little old moi, Red."

The healed bite on Stiles arm tingled under his sleeve where his arm guard wrapped around the old scar. He'd forgotten how much this asshole could talk and he didn’t know how much longer he'd be able restrain himself with the mere thought that he had a duty to uphold as an Emissary. And the whole 'let's try not to lose control and cause some sort of magical apocalypse' thing. “What can I say Valid," Stiles grit out. "Old habits."

Scott huffed, looking at his best friend with concern barely masked under frustration and patience. "Bro,” he said, his voice steady and sure when the situation called for it. It was enough of a distraction that Stiles clenched his teeth and inhaled slowly, letting the presence of his pack sooth whatever shit storm was threatening to brew up inside him.

Derek took the floor once he was sure that his Lupa wasn't about to start swinging around that murderous looking length of wood and dissolve this get-together entirely. "I and my Pack acknowledge you and those of your Nest who stand here. This meeting is to allow you to state your intentions so that we, as this Havens guardians, can make an informed decision as to the length of time you're welcome," he recited. He didn't even bother to introduce his Pack because that would have taken precious time away from not being anywhere near these Night-walking creeps.

Valid gave another nod, the cool smile starting to look frozen on his perfect face. "And I certainly appreciate all of you coming out to meet us," he replied, his cold eyes passing over each of them.

Derek's eye twitched and he could almost hear his younger Betas thinking affronted, degrading thoughts. "State your business here.” Maybe if he could get this over quickly everyone’s temper- including his own- could be kept in check.

"Oh, let's not rush things Alpha Hale." Valid said, hands out to his sides in a welcoming gesture. "This is such a rare opportunity after all!” He shook his head and looked them over a bit more slowly this time like he was cataloging each feature. "I must say it’s a pleasure to finally meet the famous Beacon Hills Pack. The rumors I've heard floating around about you are just astounding."

"Our Alpha asked you a question." Ethan spoke with a growl rolling under his words.

Valid raised an eyebrow and regarded the Werewolf pleasantly enough, not phased at all by the interruption. "Deputy Carver, correct? We met at the station. You must be a Sentinel like the good Sheriff there. What a high privilege for someone who was once in the infamous Alpha Pack. Which twin are you again?"

The sudden pry into personal matters threw the Pack for a loop. Ethan bristled. "I don't see how that's-"

"Not the straight one," Hanna interrupted with a giggle.
Charles smirked, lip curling up as he huffed out a laugh. "Didn't that one die."

Ethan choked on a snarl, eyes flashing bright blue while Derek looked positively dangerous. "That's enough," he ground out. "It would be wise to not patronize my Pack, Alistar. Not when you need our permission to be here." And not when most of them were just itching for a reason to rip your throat out.

Valid gave a polite quiescent nod as he held his hand up in a staying motion and his Nest fell silent. "My apologies. Someone who has lived as long as I have has little use for being anything but blunt," he said demurely and god if he didn't sound like he meant every word. He looked at Stiles again, putting the near mauling at the hands of an ex-Alpa behind him. "Now, Red, you've been so quiet. I remember you being much more chatty."

Derek heard Stile take a small breath before he let his body mute all signs of his discomfort. Pulse slowed, breathing steady, and even the sharp scent of anxiety fading away. What replaced it was almost machine-like, smelling of ozone and herbs. "Cut the bullshit, Valid." Stiles voice was clipped and short, edged with a clear warning of how little he wanted his not-so-limitless inner peace to be tested. "State. Your business. Here."

Valid let out a dramatic exhale, shaking his head in disappointment as he placed his hands on his hips. "Oh, Stiles. I can tell by that tone that you're not happy to see me."

"With good fucking reason," Isaac snapped, only to be cut off by a sharp look from Stiles and a small rumble from Derek.

Valid eyed Isaac like he was a piece of dirt under his fingernail. "Hmm...Isaac Lahey, I presume. You've gotten mixed reviews from the supernatural community. Checkered past, a little bit of a loose cannon. The first Beta, right? I always assumed you'd be taller."

"What did I just say about patronizing my Pack?" Derek warned.

Ignoring the way the Isaacs' eyes flashed Valid walked over to the sideline bench and sat down like it was a throne just waiting for his return. "How I shouldn't do it because I require your permission to be here?" Valid answered innocently. "I swear I'm not doing it intentionally, Alpha Hale. I'm merely repeating what I've heard. You can't fault me for being curious about the rumors."

Allison gave a small scoff under her breath. "Just like I can't fault my gun for accidentally going off," she muttered and that was just enough to make Isaac draw in his claws. Maybe Isaac and the Huntress got to pick the next Pack movie night, Derek thought to himself.

Valid however, was just not heeding the Alphas warning. "I just want to have a little conversation - there's no harm in that is there?" He picked up the water bottle Isaac had kicked earlier, eyed it for a moment and then tossed it over his shoulder where it landed in a trashcan. "I must say I'm a little upset by your reaction, Stiles," he continued with a pout. "Not even a goodbye when you left New York and now I've come all this way to visit and you're giving me the cold shoulder."

Then, like a voice of reason Scott finally stepped in, taking the reigns from his strained Pack members so they could remember why they were here and what they had all promised - begrudgingly- not to do. "Can't you just give a straight answer?"

Valid waved his hand in response to the demand. "Let me guess- arm tattoo, crooked jaw, oddly moronic sense of morals and underlying innocence- you must be Scott McCall, the legendary True Alpha."
"That's right." Scott replied, not taking the bait, bless his floppy labrador heart. "And that's the opposite of a straight answer."

Valid sighed, shaking his head. "You know, back in my day it was considered poor manners to not engage in at least 10 minutes of small talk before getting down to business. You young people are in such a rush now a days I almost don't even know why I bother to keep up any semblance of civility."

He wasn't getting the desired reaction from said True Alpha Valid turned his attention to Stiles again. "Now, Stiles, I wish you'd stop glaring at me like that," he said. "You must believe me, I feel just terrible about that whole Brooklyn debacle."

In a matter of seconds the tension level on the field skyrocketed. Stiles magic stirred the air around his skin like a volcano getting ready to erupt and even the Sheriff who had taken an oath to uphold the law as well as broker peace between the Supernatural and the rest of the world was considering firing a warning shot in this bastard's knee. Derek's jaw dropped at the sheer audacity Valid had just displayed while the Pack was momentarily stunned. In his anger -and because the ozone coming off his Lupa was starting to burn his nose- Derek was the only one who could summon a response, as stilted as it was. "You-!" he gaped. "It's supposed to make him feel better that you feel bad about it?"

"It should give him some comfort, yes," Valid nodded primly.

100% done with being still, Lydia shook her head and took a step forward and shifting in front of Stiles. Her green eyes were blazing with cold anger as she cleared her throat and even that small noise was enough to draw all eyes to her. Valid looked at the redhead, an amused expression crossing his face as she placed her hand on her hips resting just under the edge of her Kevlar vest.

"Please, Alistar," Lydia said, "innocence is unbecoming on you. And before you think about analyzing me based on rumors let me spell it out for you. Lydia Martin. Banshee. Apprentice to the Hale Pack Emissary and I've no time for bullshit. You wouldn't send us such transparent calling cards if you were just here to visit so tell us why you've decided to come to Beacon Hills and kindly do so without further antagonizing our Emissary or the Werewolves. None of them are overly fond of you as it is and I would so hate to see your designer outfits ruined by bloodstains."

Valid eyed the young woman a little more carefully that he did Isaac, though barely. Maybe as dirt on his hand rather than under his nails. "Calling cards? I'm sure I have no idea what you're implying, my dear."

Lydia's eyes narrowed. "Ignorance doesn’t suite you either," she said coldly.

Valid smirked. "You know, Banshees are quite rare; half human, half fae. I've met a few of your kind in my lifetime," he said. "I must say you've done a nice job retaining all your faculties. Aren't you worried you'll eventually go insane like the others?"

Lydia's small frame drew up to full height, eyes flashing dangerously and just like Scott, she lost all sense of niceties. "I would be more than happy to provide a demonstration of how in control I am of my faculties."

Derek had been carefully watching the Vampires while Lydia spoke, ready to jump in at a moments notice if they made so much as a wrong muscle twitch in their direction but his attention was diverted when he heard something crack. Slowly his eyes were draw down to Stiles hand. From underneath his fingerless gloves Derek could see the faint blue glow of the lines etched on his skin. They pulsed on his fingers and the bat thrummed with energy, creaking all the way to its metal core in a way that even the Vampires heard. Above them the stadium lights flickered precariously, drenching the field in uneven shadows as the fought to stay on.
When Stiles spoke, Valid's eyes fixed on him in a way they hadn't before; like a predator sensing a threat. In fact, all of them suddenly felt their defensive instincts itch in the back of their minds though only the Pack felt comforted by it. "I'll only say this once, so listen closely." Stiles amber eyes were hardened and serious, no room for banter or the side talking he was so fond of in stressful situations. "Under no circumstances are you to plan or participate in any act that would directly or indirectly harm the citizens of Beacons Hills or the territory of Beacon Hills. While you are here, you are under the jurisdiction of the Hale Pack, local law enforcement, and the Argents." With one easy motion Stiles brought the bat up, an extension straight from shoulder to tip, pointing it directly at Valid. Not even under the heavy weight of the wood and metal did his muscles twitch with strain. Valid looked at it with wide glowing eyes while his Nest took a noticeable step back feeling the raw magic coming off the weapon as much as its wielder.

Stiles continued, his voice even steadier than before and Derek checked Stiles eye color. Pale violet, but the Alpha was impressed with how well his Lupa was keeping himself in check. "While you are here anything that happened between us in the past means nothing." Stiles words were steady but rushed, like he wanted to get it all out in one breath. "You are free to enter establishments with permission from their owners but if you're caught coercing someone by Enthrallment, you will be detained. If you break any of these rules, you will be detained. Once you're detained, the Hale Pack reserves the right to deal with you and your Nest as they see fit. We will be watching every move you make because frankly, I would rather fight dozen trolls than place an ounce of trust in you. These are the rules of this Haven. Do you agree to them?"

“Oh, if I must,” Valid sighed, sounding put upon.

“Valid!” Stiles snapped and one of the large bulbs in the stadium light above them burst into a shower of sparks. "I'm about two seconds away from embedding these 13 iron spikes into your face."

The Vampire smiled and gave a small wave of his hand. "On behalf of myself and my Nest, I agree."

Chapter End Notes

Valid is an asshole. No question about it. But I like him.
“Bite me,” Stiles snarled venomously because no fucking way was he taking another generous helping of that sass. Every member of the Hale Pack fixed the Vampires with burning stares, daring them to make a snide remark.

It wasn’t until five seconds after Valids blasé compliance when Stiles was ready to turn his back on the lot of them, get in the car and drive back to the Pack house to drown his emotions in that expensive bottle of brandy his dad had gotten Derek as he house-warming gift a few years ago that the unexpected happen.

The Pack bond only gave Derek a fraction of a second warning to shoot forward and grab his Mates crumpling figure before he managed to land on the monstrous bat and puncture something. “Stiles!” The Pack converged on their Alpha and Emissary reacting to the sudden grunt of pain from the younger man as he clutched his midsection barely managing to keep his knees from buckling. Three more bulbs above them burst, sending down a shower of glowing sparks that faded out before they hit the ground.

Despite the insults and belittlements, the Pack had been willing to walk off that field with Stiles and Derek. They would have turned their backs on the Nest and they would have left. No battle, no bloodshed, no need for Melissa and Danny to break out the first aid kit. But now their Emissary was hurt. By something, they didn’t know what. But he was hurt and his magic was reacting to it. Panic, discomfort, and confusion were ricocheting through their Pack bonds. So, clearly, the Pack was not leaving.

“Stiles, what’s wrong!?” Derek hissed while his hand smoothed over the other man's face helplessly. Before a reply could be had a smothered cry caught in Stiles’ throat as Derek clutched his tense body looking ready to snatch the younger man up and run him all the way to the nearest medical professional. He could feel a sharp tug at the center of his chest and tasted metal on his tongue.

Drawing his gun on the Vampires, the Sheriff shouted furiously, “What did you do!” Cop mode was gone now. Enter Father With Fire Arms mode. Chris and Allison drew their weapons at the same time and the effect was instantaneous. The Wolves all shifted, aggression seeping out of every deep-chested rumble and movement while Valid’s Nest mirrored their reaction. Hanna and Rachel hunched over, rocking onto the balls of their feet despite their heel, eyes burning ice blue as they let out cat-like hisses. Allison’s eyes narrowed and she aimed her crossbow between Hanna’s ribs. The veins in Charles’ neck stood out as his skin paled to a grayish hue and his nails grew into razor points. Isaac and Jackson immediately growled at him their eyes flashing gold and blue while Boyd stared down Samson and Alan like he would crush them with his bare hands if they moved.

“Well,” Valid said slowly as Derek lowered a wincing Stiles carefully to his knees, keeping one hand on the back of the young man's neck. “That’s certainly a strong reaction to… something.”

A little more level headed -Ethan being a Sentinel and Scott being, well, Scott- the two of them moved in front of their Packmates while Peter took guard of the rear hovering next to the other humans holding weapons. Scott looked over his shoulder at Derek and beside him Ethan let out a growl, lip twitching over elongated canines. “Derek,” Ethan started, wondering what their next move
was. Attack the Nest? Bury Valid under the field? Grab their Emissary and high tail it so there was still a field left in ten seconds?

Kneeling down next to the Stiles, Lydia looked ready to throw what they all suspected was a small Molotov she’d stashed in one of her vest pockets. Her green eyes blazed. “If you’ve hurt him,” she stared fiercely at the Vampires, only to stop when she felt Stiles’ fingers close around her wrist.

“Hey,” Derek murmured, holding the younger man’s shoulders and keeping him close to his chest, acting as a barrier to the rest of the world. “Are you alright?” He didn’t spare a glance at the Nest or Valid. His Pack could take care of the maiming but it was his job to make sure his Mate was all right first.

Brow furrowing with tension Stiles shut his eyes tightly, looking pale and nauseous. When he opened them again violet lights flickered amidst the amber. “Ley Lines,” he said breathlessly, his free hand gripping Derek’s knee as if to fix him in place. “It’s just the Ley Li-ugh!” If any of them had bothered to look up they would have noticed the remaining stadium lights surge in warning and then fade in unison as Stiles tensed and then forced himself to relax. They could see, however, the tattoos glowing their way up Stiles’ neck and under his shirt collar before dying down again like a light slowly loosing power.

Impelled on by his sons’ response the Sheriff dropped the hammer back on his gun with resolute finality. “What. Did you. Do,” he hissed, not taking his eyes of Valid.

The Vampire looked up at the officer and raised his hands up, palms forward and a classic defensive position that was just way too incongruous given how he’d been acting up till now. “You can’t possibly think I was the cause of that,” he insisted.

Erica stocked forward past Scott. “We know it was you!” she barked and would have launched at them right then and there had Scott not grabbed her arm to restrain her.

“S’fine, Erica,” Stiles grunted through clenched teeth and the only thing keeping Derek from raging out of control in a blind panic was Stiles steady heartbeat. The way he moved indicated that his entire body was hurting, but he seemed more irritated than in agony. “Help me up,” he muttered to Derek and the older man grabbed him under one arm to assist.

Valid kept his hands in the air, bright blue eyes wide and innocuous. “I honestly had no part in whatever that was,” he insisted again and damn his un-beating heart gave nothing away. “In fact I think that might be a preexisting condition, Red. You should get that checked out.” Stiles managed a peeved glare. “Really, is that normal for you?” Valid went on curiously.

“Bite me,” Stiles snarled venomously because no fucking way was he taking another generous helping of that sass. Every member of the Hale Pack fixed the Vampires with burning stares, daring them to make a snide remark.

“Son, you alright?” John asked in a low voice not taking his eyes off the Nest. Stiles just grunted, needing a minute of adjusting in Derek’s grasp to get on steady legs.

Valid turned his attention to the rest of the Pack and with each second that passed, he lost a little more of that wide-eyed innocent bystander mien. “Well, now I’m just curious. Has this happened before? I’m sure the rumor mill would have been buzzing if Hale’s Emissary was ill.” Amusingly enough Valid really did look curious and a bit... bothered by the idea?

In the back of the group, Peter seemed even more bothered. “Honestly?” Peter glared at the Vampire fiercely enough to make Derek glad that his Uncle wasn’t crazy anymore. Or at least directing his
crazy elsewhere. “We receive anonymous messages about Ley Lines and on the night we meet you our Emissary says he’s on the ground because of them?” the elder Wolf his barely schooled his features from shifting.

Leaning on Derek, Stiles huffed, “M’not on the ground Peter,” and Derek almost let go to prove a point.

Peter ignored him although he did seem to bump a notch up on his fury scale. “How stupid do you think we are?” He asked this like it was a personal insult to him and his entire existence. Peter did not enjoy being underestimated.

“Obviously more than you think because I have no idea why he’s like that,” Valid replied defensively, motioning to Stiles with one hand.

In the blink of an eye Peter switched from anger to that eerie homicidal calm he was so good at. “Derek, as a Hale Pack Sentinel, I feel that this Vampires presence is not beneficial to the safety of the Haven,” he announced his as his claws came out. “Can’t say it was a pleasure meeting you Alistar. I’ll be ripping your heart out now.”

Valid’s features suddenly twisted, sharpening and whitening like a chiseled corpse. Even his voice changed; harsher and less seductive than the enthrallement layered timbre he’d used on them before. He formed sounds instead of words that echoed deep into the still air: a sound meaning threat. The only thing that stopped the whole lot of them from crashing into each other and aiming for the nearest soft spot was a loud, long groan from Stiles. “Stop!” He was finally steady on his feet as he let his hand drop from Derek’s shoulder. His face looked strained and his skin a little too pale but despite all that though he managed to look plenty pissed off. “No one is ripping anyone’s heart out. Everybody put your fangs away. Dad put away your gun.”

“Stiles,” Erica started, almost pleading, mirrored by Isaac shifting anxiously. Even Scott and Boyd looked like they were waiting –hoping- for the other shoe to drop.

Derek made an abortive movement with his hand at the wolves and they all found their eyes fading back to human colors. Chris, John, and Allison all lowered their weapons slowly.

The Vampires didn’t look like they were ready to lay down claw just yet, though, the threat from Peter still fresh in their ears. “Red,” Valid started, eyes glowing vibrant neon blue that stood out all the more thanks to the lighting failure. “I have accepted you and your Alphas terms and the first thing you and your Pack do is accuse me of breaking my word? You and your Wolves preach tolerance yourselves but automatically assume when something goes wrong. Where is the justice in that?”

Derek growled and his spine straightened when he noticed Stiles close his eyes for a moment and take a deep breath before letting it out. It was a tell he had from years back when his ADHD was at its worst and he knew he had to stop his shaking. He did it when his mind was racing too fast when he needed to force himself to be still and just focus on one thing. Breathing. If only for a moment. He needed to center himself now because if there was one thing he hated more than being insulted or listening to someone insult his Pack it was being preached at by a fraud. Preaching at him and his family when they had No. Right.

When he opened his eyes again they were alight with focus, the air around the man sharpening with the trace of metal. Stiles put the toe of his boot on the spiked end of his bat and pressed down using the leverage to raise the length of wood from the ground so he could grab it without bending. Valid eyed the bat, tipping his head back a bit and behind him Rachel started to emit a clicking, hissing vibrato until Valid snarled at her and she fell back with a whimper.
Stiles' eyes hardened the same way they had when he’d gotten fed up with David’s Nest at the Onyx. Calm, no nonsense, no give. “Leave the field Valid.” This meeting had exhausted him and now he had a migraine. “Find a place for the night, but just go.”

“Son,” the Sheriff whispered, taking a few tentative steps forward. “Are you sure you want to let them go?”

“They did something,” Erica insisted, fists clenched tight at her sides. “I know they did.”

Rachel and Hanna both smirked at the blonde Werewolf and Allison made a move to step forward but was stopped by her father. “Valid, you should know that we’ll have eyes on you the entire time you’re here” the elder Argent warned. "I don't know what you did it but you'll make some dangerous enemies here if you continue.”

Derek wanted to take a step closer to his Mate and lace his fingers together with the other man's but he restrained himself. “We don’t have proof now but someone is going to slip up. They always do.”

A moment later Derek felt a warm hand on his shoulder. Without looking at him Stiles had reached over to touch his Alpha, the steady hum of magic from his fingertips sending a tingle over his entire body. Derek wouldn't have been surprised if sparks lit up amidst the red of his eyes.

Valid's Third in command was actually the one to look most visibly worried by this whole situation and couldn’t seem to take his eyes of Stiles bat. “Valid,” Alan muttered. “Let's get out of here, yeah?”

Valid completely ignored the man and it was then that the Pack got a glimpse of what Stiles was so unnerved by. A glint in his eye, the brightness of his smile, the way his posture relaxed at completely inappropriate moments when just seconds before he'd looked like someone who had clawed their way out of a grave. Something had come unhinged in the man. “In all seriousness Stiles,” Valid said, "I really do think you should get that little seizure thing looked at.” The Vampires eyes glittered and the Wolves scented the sharp tang of misplaced excitement in the air. “It didn’t seem healthy.”

“Leave,” Stiles repeated. The Pack took the que from their Alpha. Twice their Emissary had asked them to leave and Derek’s eyes slowly filled with a red haze. They all bent their knees, dropping into familiar fighting stances.

Valid just laughed, knowing full well what the Emissary was doing. “You might be the Pack protecting this Haven but you must still abide by its rules. The whole, do as I say not as I do sthick doesn't really apply in this situation, Red, sorry about that.” Alan actually took a step back from his First only to be pushed forward again by the Second, looking rightly worried.

To no-one in particular Scott whispered, “Are we really doing this?” He shifted his weight from one foot to another.

Erica’s voice was low but her eyes flashed an eager and excited gold, sensing first blood begging to be spilled. “Yes, Scott. We’re doing this.”

Stiles eyes narrowed before they flushed violet, the Wolves growling dangerously. "Think about the chance I'm giving you, Valid," he warned. “Leave.”

Neon blue eyes flashed in return and the Vampire grinned wide. “No.”

Derek dug his feet into the earth and roared.
Chapter Summary

Derek crouched low and felt something tare along his back, ripping his shirt. A hand gripped his sleeve and he was yanked to the side just as he felt razor sharp nails slice through the air in front of his face.

“Eyes open, Der,” A familiar voice breathed next to his ear. He smelled of metal and wood. Stiles. “They’re faster than us.”

“Faster than you maybe,” Derek growled smugly as he caught the sharp glint of Stiles wicked smile before they pushed away from each other, fingertips the last to part in the silent promise.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Chris had been right about the wide-open space being a doubled edged sword. On the plus side there was nowhere to hide and you could charge in a straight line. On the downside there was nowhere to hide and you could change in a straight line.

The Vampires and the Hale Pack surged forward in a wave, claws, and fangs glinting like daggers. Chris and John had imparted on them a less lupine means of defense so it wasn’t surprising when Erica took a swipe at Hanna and then kicked her heavy boot into the side of her knee, snapping the woman's leg almost clean in half. It was even less surprising when she then knocked the Vampire to the turf with a clean left hook that John had been so thrilled to teach them. Valid didn’t seem concerned when his Sister collapsed with a shriek and Derek didn’t make the mistake of letting his eyes wander. It was a good thing too because if he had he would have missed Valid disappearing in front of him entirely.

Derek swiped out with his claws where instinct told him to aim, catching the edge of the other man's shirt as he appeared suddenly to his left. He heard the smug laughter and it made his stomach churn. “Come now, Alpha! You barely got fabric with that one.” Derek crouched low and then snarled as he felt something rake along his back, ripping his shirt. A hand gripped his sleeve and he was yanked to the side just as he felt razor sharp nails slice through the air in front of his face.

“Eyes open, Der,” a familiar voice breathed next to his ear. He smelled metal and wood. Stiles. “They’re faster than us.”

“Faster than you maybe,” Derek growled smugly as he caught the sharp glint of Stiles wicked smile before they pushed away from each other, fingertips the last to part in silent promise.

Valid lunged to go after the younger man but Derek thrust his hand out and shoved his chest while Stiles ran to help his father and Lydia fend off an irate female Vampire in stilettos. “You don’t get to touch him again,” Derek snarled. Valid smiled eerily and quickly recovered his balance, springing forward to attacking the Alpha again. The cut on Derek’s back had just started healing when Valid littered a slew of new scrapes over his arms and chest.
After a particularly vicious swipe had Derek wondering just why he thought it was a good idea to threaten to rip people's throats out in jest -because that shit hurt- a short burst of subsonic vocals from Lydia had him feeling a warm pulse just behind his ear. He braced for the pain the Banshees scream normally induced, coughing as the gash on his neck mended itself, but was pleasantly surprised to find that there was none, only the tingling of the burnako rune Carla had tattooed on them.

"Wohoo!" Erica called out, tag teaming Rachel with Chris. Lydia let out an excited laugh as Allison grinnned at her side and Derek caught Stiles make an aborted fist pump in the air before he changed tactics and slammed his bat into Alan’s back. The Vampire went down a little harder than even Stiles expected judging by the look on his face when he noticed the seared hole on the back of the man's shirt. He flexed his free hand and the runes on his fingers shimmered.

The Vampires weren't fairing as well with the assault on their eardrums -in fact their ears were bleeding and a few of them had bloody noses. Face gaunt with pain, Valid had slowed enough that Derek could see him easily. He hissed around his fangs and Derek roared as he charged, tackling the man around the middle.

The night sky had been clear of clouds when they'd arrived but slowly dark swirling masses had started to roll in, blotting out the pinpricks of stars above. The wind picked up and charged with electricity, converging over the center of the field. A sudden crack of thunder echoed above them and nearly everyone paused because hadn't the news predicted a clear night? For a heart-stopping second Derek lost sight of Valid again and his eyes immediately sought out Stiles knowing the Vampires intended target.

"Stiles duck!" It seemed that no one wanted their Emissary to go head on with the elder Vampire and the second Stiles hit the ground Valid was struck with four bullets and a crossbow bolt. John and Chris changed out their clips with almost robotic precision and the Vampire screamed angrily, stumbling back with smoking wounds as he ripped the bolt out of his stomach.

"Mistletoe? Really?!

While the blond man was distracted Derek jerked his head towards Stiles and Scott caught the movement, nodding as he made his way to his friends' side. He wanted someone close to his Lupa at all times and if he couldn’t be the one his Pack would fill that vocation. Erica called out to Isaac, throwing her current opponent a few feet before running over to help the other Beta grapple with a much larger Charles. Jackson joined in a moment later and they descended on the Vampire like beasts, clawing and biting and Derek couldn’t help but feel a little proud. Look at them being all pack-like and attacking their prey together.

"Ignoring people is rude, Alpha Hale," was the only warning before something slammed into his side. Derek smothered a cry of pain when a sharp set of nails dug under his ribs as they went down and an arm around his neck started to choke off his air supply. "One has to wonder what kinds of manners you're teaching your puppies."

Derek managed to drive the palm of his hand into Valid’s nose hard enough that the satisfying crack it made gave him a little pleasure. “I taught them not to antagonize someone till they literally want to rip their heart from their body,” Derek snapped, grabbing the man's arm to try and lessen the pressure on his neck.

Dark, partially coagulated blood oozed out of the blond man's nose but his arm didn't budge. “You attacked as Hale, let's not misconstrue the facts.” He landed two more hits to Derek’s torso before he was thrown off.

“I haven't misconstrued anything,” Derek growled, getting to his feet as he felt the small puncture
wounds start to heal. "You deliberately refused an order given three times by my Emissary!")

Valid wiped the blood away from his nose and mouth, a sneer pulling his lips to the side. “We weren’t done with the conversation yet so I had the right to refuse.”

Derek had only been partially shifted till then but he was done now. He just wanted to gather up his Pack and bury all of them under blankets at the house and watch Disney movies for the rest of the night. So he let his fangs drop fully and felt the bones in his face shift and reform. “The conversation is over now,” Derek snarled before launching himself forward.

Stiles heart was hammering in his chest, breath coming in deep steady gasps as he glanced up at the sky with mild concern. He could feel his magic buzzing under his skin and it was all he could do to not let it explode each time he landed a hit. Alan had gotten up from that last hit which was good considering killing someone during a peace talk was sort of a no-go in the Emissary books, but the Vampires skin was already bruising a deep, ugly blue and purple. Stiles could see it through the tears in the man's shirt. Like his other weapons, the bat helped him channel energy into a constructive, less volatile form, but the weapon could only do so much when his adrenaline was causing it to leak out into the air, stirring up the currents and reaching down to touch the Ley Lines beneath him. Ley Lines that were already stirred up for some reason and Stiles was really not looking forward to figuring out what had caused it. Each sound from a snarl to the wind moving through the trees struck his ears harshly and soon he felt like his entire being was humming.

Something akin to a hiss and a howl broke through Stiles thoughts and he spun around to see Jackson pinned to the ground by Charles. The Vampires ears were still bleeding a sluggish dark trail over his cheeks from Lydia’s scream. One hand held Jackson by the throat his other held a long thin dagger. A growing stain of darkness was seeping over Jackson’s shirt and the blade was coated with a familiar red stain.

Transformation flickering between reptilian and wolf as he tended to do when he panicked, Jackson let out a pained scream as the knife slid in a second time. He scrambled underneath the larger man, clawing at any part he could reach but Charles just brought his knife down again and Jackson was not getting up. Something pulled at Stiles' chest, urging him to move, help, protect, and before he could formulate any type of plan he’d already tackled the Vampire off his Pack mate, bat dropped somewhere behind him. Charles had more muscle, but Stiles was a little taller and fueled by a burning need to get this Vampire away from his friend, so once he had Charles on his back he put one knee onto the man's chest and wrapped his fingers around his generously muscled neck. When Charles started to claw at his sleeves shredded instantly as a poly-cotton blend was no match for the Vampires nails. The plated arm guards Stiles wore from elbow to wrist kept his skin from being cut to ribbons though, so that was a plus.

Out of the corner of his eye, Stiles saw Lydia and Alison push through the bodies to get to Jackson who had curled onto his side, clutching his stomach. The Beta groaned, more blood leak past his fingers as Allison pushed them aside to check the wounds. Her brows came together and she cast a worried glance at Lydia before pressing her hand over the bloody patch. “It’s not healing yet!” she called to Stiles, looking up with a frantic expression. “Wolfsbane?”

Stiles squeezed Charles neck harder, feeling his fingers bruising the man’s flesh. He had learned that supernatural healing abilities were harder to jumpstart when there was a continuous injury which is why so many who hunted the supernatural were so fond of torture. “What was on that knife!!?” Stiles demanded. He used the full weight of his body to try and keep the man down and it was only when
he felt a punch to his ribs signaling a protective ward had done an important job that Stiles realized Charles had not dropped his knife. "Oh, you son of a bitch," Stiles gasped, because this motherfucker had just tried to stab him, knowing full well he was human.

Instead of answering, the brawny Vampire reared up and his elbow crashed into the side of Stiles' head. The shock of it forced him to let go and he tumbled to the side, ears ringing. He felt something cold trickle down the side of his face and wondered vaguely about maybe finding a tattoo to combat concussions. Shaking his head to get rid of the ringing Stiles almost missed the way Charles flipped the knife in his hand and only managed to dodge the arc of the blade thanks his father discharging a bullet into Charles' shoulder from 20 yards away.

The sound of the gunshot echoed through his head far too long for Stiles comfort and he gasped, still trying to blink the spots away from his eyes as he felt the healing sigils on his skin flare up, sending his magic to injuries he hadn’t even known he’d gotten. Pulling from deep in his core he reached out to the members of his Pack as he tried to control his heartbeat. Just as he grabbed hold of the familiar connections -whole and alive- and let himself breath a sigh of relief, a heavy body slammed into him. His concentration broke and Stiles stumbled back. What had he been doing? Oh right, Vampire.

“Stiles, move!” Someone pulled him by the back of his neck and Stiles felt the gentle prick of careful claws. Scott shoved his way in between the two of them and almost instantly there was a sick sound of metal sliding against skin followed by a grunt.

Stiles froze.

A bullet ripping through the air.

Scott knocking against him.

The pain from the old scar on his back flared.

With a sick grin, Charles pulled away, twirling the bloody knife in front of Stiles' face as he flashed a sneer full of fangs. “You don’t stand a chance, Spark.”

The amalgamation of two great traumas in his life converged and Stiles breath caught in his throat. He could hear Scott shouting and the body leaning against him was suddenly gone. He felt hands gripping his shoulders. Someone was holding him but they weren't trying to hurt him.

“A little help over here?!”

Ethan’s voice? The soothing thrum of their Pack bonds shuddered and Stiles could feel another pull urging him to move, protect. His legs burned and he felt like he was walking on air. Something solid, heavy, and grounding was in his hands. He smelled burning flesh and metal. Someone was struggling against him. Someone he didn't like. The earth beneath him responded to his smallest whim and the bright light that blinded him surged to the back of his skull.

Gravity failed him and he forgot which way was up but whatever he was holding was still solid, still heavy, and dangerous, and biting.

Hearing his dad shout Derek's name made Stiles twitch and all of a sudden he felt a white hot pain erupt on his shoulder. He heard a roar and suddenly he was floating, the bright light flooding his vision. The sensation didn’t last very long however because something tore. Out of him. A searing pain jolted through his body and Someone screamed his name. The comforting weight in his hand dropped away. He didn't feel grounded anymore.
Dazed, Stiles looked to the side and saw Scott's face. Why did he look like that? He was mouthing something and a bright blue glow reflected in his flashing eyes. He moved his head a little and that same hot pain enveloped his entire right side. As a scream tore itself from his lips he could suddenly hear again.

It sounded like thunder had clapped inside his head and the metallic taste of ozone coated his tongue.

Chapter End Notes

Next chapter will be Derek and the others POV of that last bit where Stiles sort of lost his mind for a second..... >.>
Once bitten, twice shy

Chapter Summary

Scott, the closest to the proverbial eye of the storm was attempting what he did best; trying to talk his best friend out of a truly bad idea—in this case a magical devastation of the high school lacrosse field. “Stiles! We’re okay!” The approach of calm reassurances hadn’t really worked in the past -Stiles sort of had a one track mind- but over the years Scott had learned some tricks. Like emotional blackmail. “Buddy, I promise we’re okay but you’ve gotta’ calm down or that could change real soon!” He knew Stiles would never hurt them on purpose but the field was getting destroyed and good lord was that a piece of building flying through the air?

Chapter Notes

So, in the last chapter, Stiles had his little, uh... episode. It happened much faster in Stiles mind because well, he sort of wasn’t all there. This is from the POV of the rest of the Pack as they watch shit hit the fan.

no beta

Sometime during the brawl Derek had lost sight of Valid completely but he couldn’t bear to be too heartbroken about it because at least he wasn’t getting torn to shreds with his sharp little Vampire claws. It was like getting mauled by a very vicious cat. Small favors. He did hear Jackson screaming however and reacted immediately, going to help his distressed Beta who was pinned by the most muscular Vampire in the Nest- Charles.

Derek was only a few yards away but he paused his stride when he saw Stiles come careening out of nowhere and full on body slam the Vampire off Jackson. The smell of blood filled the air and Derek was a little concerned that his Lupa might have done more damage to himself than Charles but that was put to rest when Stiles immobilized the larger man, righteous fury coloring his face as Jackson dragged him over the grass.

Somewhere behind him Erica shouted at her Alpha to stop eye fucking his boyfriend and help me, damnit! She’s trying to bite my hand off! He growled at the blonde she-wolf because really Erica? Now? Allison and Lydia ran to Jackson and Derek knew Stiles had enough back up so he huffed and changed direction. Running to help Erica with only a slight nagging feeling in the back of his mind that he should have just told her to be a big wolf and deal with it herself, he didn’t see the knife slide off Stiles side as a ward flared and died. He also didn’t see the way Stiles eyes flashed an eerie purple.

He did however find his attention drawn back when a wave of unease and pure magic washed over him. And the thunder. It rolled through the air so palpably he felt it in his bones and made the metal taste of the Vampires blood in his mouth taste even sharper. His eyes were drawn to Stiles first because of the blue glow that was surrounding him as he stood stock still in the middle of the fray,
clutching Scott's shirt with one hand as his friend gasped for breath, pressing his hand over a wound on his side. Charles was running away. Derek had no idea what he’d missed. Boyd and Erica were at his side instantly looking equally stunned.

His eyes were drawn to Stiles first because of the blue glow that was surrounding him as he stood stock still in the middle of the fray. He clutched Scott's shirt when did he get over there?—shirt with one hand as his friend gasped for breath, pressing his hand over a fresh wound on his side that bled sluggishly through his fingers. Charles was running away and Derek had no idea what he’d missed. Boyd and Erica were at his side a moment later looking equally stunned.

Scott started panicking immediately when he felt the wind whip past him and the hand gripping his shirt lit up like a neon sign. He closed his hand over Stiles and gasped when he registered how cold his friend's skin was.

“What in the…” Boyd trailed off when another crack of thunder boomed overhead. All three wolves nearly dropped to the ground when they were hit with a gust of wind so strong that it almost knocked them over. No rain, no cold air: just wind, thunder, and lightning.

“Oh my god, did a tornado touch down?!?” Erica squeaked, voice almost lost in the noise. She pressed up against Boyd because honestly she’d started to feel here feet lift off the ground.

John and Chris had stopped fighting when they realized just how unnatural this storm was. Chris looked a little more beat up than the Sheriff but that was because he’d opted to go fist to fist with some of the Vampires while John chose to shoot from a distance. “Derek!” John called out, steps faltering when he caught sight of his son. The stadium lights above them flickered and sent shadows cascading and snapping back around them before a fracture of lightning lit the sky. “What the hell is happening to him?” John demanded, torn between letting a superhuman take care of it or maybe trying to slap some sense into his boy himself.

Derek called out to Scott, his vocal chords half shifted so his name came out in a partial roar.

Scott heard but shook his head quickly and found that he had to raise his voice above the howling of the wind. It snapped through the air like a flag in a gale. “I don’t know!” Scott answered, looking stranded. His hand had long abandoned the slowly healing wound on his side and hovered over Stiles like he didn’t know where to touch. “Stiles!” Scott called loudly, finally grabbing his friend by the shoulder and shaking him. Stiles expression didn’t falter. His body didn’t move. He wasn’t seeing anything. Scott looked a mix between angry and horrified. “Stiles, we’re okay!” Scott insisted.

Struggling to move against the storm pushing them in every direction Allison and Lydia finally made it over to them, half dragging Jackson who had a hand pressed to his bleeding side. Allison sported a shallow cut on her cheek and there was a tear on her sleeve but her crossbow was clipped to her thigh again, half the bolts gone from her carry case. Lydia’s pants and boots were covered in dirt and the Kevlar vest she wore had a long snag just over her ribs letting the world know that it had probably saved her life. “Did that Vampire do something?” Allison asked, strands of hair coming loose from its tie and whipping around her face.

Lydia’s eyes were wide and anxious, staring at Stiles and Scott as she shook her head. “No,” she said, voice a little high pitched. “No, Scott stopped him from getting stabbed.”

Scott could hear the Banshees words even above the wind. “Oh, Jesus,” John breathed tensely, rubbing the bridge of his nose. Scott turned his head to look at Derek and found that the Alphas eyes were just as wide as his own because yeah, they knew what had made Stiles snap.

A woman’s shrill scream of fear drew their attention just in time to see the phantom ghost of a
lightning strike fade back into the sky leaving only a scorched mark on the earth where Isaac had been fighting with Hanna. Both the Vampire and Werewolf looked spooked and had stopped moving entirely. Hanna was the first to back away, bright blue eyes staring at all of them like they were insane. Isaac let her go.

Ethan howled loudly, his fight with Valid’s Third in command far from interrupted by the wind kicking up and unnervingly well-placed lightning strikes. He and Samson were locked hand to hand each looking like they were trying to rip the others arms off. There was a large gash across Ethan’s face obscuring his left eye, and the bones in Samson’s leg were showing through three long scratches. Samson rinnned as he bent Ethan’s wrists at an impossible angle causing the wolf to choke out a scream, “A little help over here!”

Seeing the Beta Derek felt a surge of panic because no, their fight wasn’t over. “Erica, Boyd, go help-!” The Alpha bit off his words because Stiles was already running. Without a flicker of change in his expression he stooped down for only a moment to grab his bat from the ground and jumped onto Samson’s back, hooking the weapon under the Vampires chin. He yanked up hard, securing one end with the crook of his arm and holding it tight. The second the wood touched the Vampires flesh the man cried out in pain and released Ethan who dropped to the ground cradling broken wrists. Samson tried to grab his attacker and fling him off, hissing and spitting as his eyes filled with rage but Stoles didn’t budge. The Vampires long nails flashed through the air catching on the smaller man’s arms and hands where they weren’t protected, trying to find purchase in soft human flesh.

Derek and the others stared in muted awe and horror as their Emissary proceeded to choke and burn the life out of another man. On the ground Ethan grit his teeth as his bones reset themselves with loud snaps and cracks. Boyd ran over and quickly pulled him up and out of the way just as the earth runes on both Stiles fingers flashed sending a blue line streaking up his scratched arms and shoulders. The muddied turf split open underneath the Vampire’s feet and roots snaked out from the dirt and wrapped about the man’s ankles like hands reaching up from graves. Balance compromised, Samson let out a frustrated cry and at the last moment Stiles pushed up and withdrew his bat. He rolled head over heels when they hit the ground only to land in a crouch like a wild animal ready to strike. Thin white trails of smoke curled out from the bat in his hand, etchings of runes no one had even noticed burning deeper into the surface as magic coursed through the grains.

Hacking up what could only be blood and other viscous fluids Samson ripped the roots away from his legs and staggered to his feet. He gripped his neck, breathing like he’d swallowed a chainsaw. Thunder boomed above them, wind yanking at shreds of clothing that dangled from their bleeding bodies. Lightning struck the ground a mere few feet from Samson -who flinched and hissed like that would protect him- leaving singed grass and another flaw in the riddled field. “What the hell are you?” Samson rasped, face transformed and pale.

Scot tried to take a few steps closer and yelled, “Just get out of here!” “Our fight isn’t over True Alpha!” Samuel sneered, flecks of blood spraying from his lips and dying his fangs red.

Stiles gripped the bat tighter and the remaining lights above them popped as the bulbs shattered. Lydia yanked Allison out of the way of falling glass while Erica and Derek shielded Chris and the Sheriff. Samson -the hard-headed idiot that he was- actually attempted to square off with Stiles again but as soon as he met the glowing violet eyes he hissed and took a step back, identifying danger he just now realized he’d been grievously ill prepared for.

“Fine!” Valid’s Third finally snarled, the sound was wet and raw. He took cautious steps away from
the human in front of him while Scott felt it was safer to take a few steps forward. “Alan, Rachel!”
Samson’s Brother and Sister were already making their way over, shoving aside the stunned Pack
who weren’t even bothering to pay attention to them anymore. Having abandoned her fight with
Isaac, Hanna was already at the edge of the woods motioning for her companions and keeping a
wary eye out for the too close for comfort lightning strikes.

"This isn't over Hale!" Samson called as he retreated. Alan shoved him and hissing at him to shut up
and move.

Allison signaled to her father, putting her game face on as the last female leader of the Argent line.
“Dad, make sure they leave.” Her hair whipped around her shoulders as she dusted some shards of
glass off of them. She pointed towards the retreating Vampires and Chris nodded, motioning to Peter
who had been standing a distance away watching but not moving.

"Peter, with me,” Chris said. The Elder wolf didn’t start up the usual argument for once and just
nodded, expression grim. The two men ran after the Vampires making sure all the threats were well
away from the…blast radius.

Urgency in her frown, Allison then turned to Derek. “What should we do?”

Derek looked over his shoulder at the Huntress. He had been slowly inching forward, his wolf
howling for him to get this Lupa-fight, protect, hold. “Get through to him,” was all he could offer.
They’d made a promise to stop just this thing from happening and the Alpha was cursing himself for
not stepping in the moment the wind picked up. The trees at the edge of the field had let go of most
of their leaves; branches bending under the onslaught and Derek actually felt himself being pushed
back. Behind him Allison let out a little yelp and dropped down to one knee, shielding her face from
the wind.

"Derek this is getting intense!” she called.

“Stiles!” Derek shouted, shielding his face from the assault of debris that had kicked up, including
chunks of the field itself. Finstock was going to lose his shit in the morning. He looked around at his
Pack as his mind raced for options. “Call Melissa,” Derek barked out to Stiles dad, tone more
composed than he felt.  John nodded and pulled out his phone hitting Melissa’s number on speed
dial.

Scott, the closest to the proverbial eye of the storm was attempting what he did best; trying to talk his
best friend out of a bad idea; in this case the magical devastation of the high school lacrosse field.
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of had a one track mind- but over the years Scott had learned some tricks. Like emotional blackmail.
“Buddy, I promise we’re okay but you’ve gotta’ calm down or that could change real soon!” He
knew Stiles would never hurt them on purpose but the field was getting destroyed and good lord was
that a piece of building flying through the air?

Nothing suggested that Scott’s words were heard and Stiles just turned his head, looking off towards
the woods while his expression remained blank. Slowly, the runes on his neck and the side of his
face started to shimmer. Where they had been thin and sharp they suddenly started to expand and
grow. Like root as the tree flourished they started to expand and move. Like root as the tree flourished they started to grow.

Scott looked away for a moment to cast a pathetic face in the Packs direction. Derek was so busy
keeping his eyes on his Mate trying to figure out what to do that when the Sheriff suddenly dropped
his phone and screamed out his name time seemed to slacken its steady run in reality.

The two female Vampires had fled. Their Second and Third had fled. That left two unaccounted for.
Lydia screamed the warning too late. Seconds turned into minutes.

One. A dark blur swelled behind Stiles and Charles emerged like an avenging shadow, stepping out of the chaos around them with his eyes trained in a single point. The man's face had morphed into the gray skinned, blue-eyed killing machine Vampires truly were and he shoved Scott back with brutal strength as a thick, powerful arm wrapped around Stiles chest. His fangs speared out from his gums and with a crazed, furious expression he sank them into the smaller man's shoulder. Derek could hear John screaming over the sound of the muscles ripping.

Two. Before a breath could pass from Stiles lips Valid’s shadowy form flickered into sight only a few feet behind his Brother and his prey. His blue eyes burned colder than ice and the shadows on his pale skin made his face look skeletal and haunted. With a truly vicious snarl breaking past his lips Valid grabbed his Brother by the back of the neck and ripped him away from the Emissary. Stiles staggered with the jerking movement as Charles fangs caught on the fabric of his shirt and sweatshirt and tore a large hole. Two seconds and the same blood that now filled the Vampires mouth splattered the side Stiles neck and face.

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The echo of Lydia's shrill scream -the rune burning behind his ear told him it was the Banshees scream- was muffled to Derek, his senses tunneling. Not even realizing he'd moved a breath punched out from Derek’s lungs when he finally felt his arms wrap around his Mate. His wolf's high-pitched whines and howl filled the back of his mind as the weight in his arms crushed the breath out of him again. He could hear John next to him begging his son to focus, breath, anything because Stiles you’ve got to be okay kid!

Scott’s hands grasped Stiles face as Derek tried to keep him standing. “Stiles buddy, look at me! Come on snap out of it!” Scott shouted, but Stiles wouldn't meet his eyes. “Oh my Jesus- Derek lay him down! Pressure! I have to put pressure on-!” He gave his friend a shake. “Stiles, damnit, quit glowing you dumbass!” The whole time Stiles expression hadn't changed but finally, just when Derek started to fear that he'd gone even further into shock, a flicker of pain glanced across the young man's face. "Stiles?” Scott asked in a small voice. Stiles tipped his head back and screamed in agony, body seizing tight. “Son! The Sheriff shouted, gripping his arm. “Stiles it's fine, you'll be okay!” Derek didn't need to hear the man's heart rocketing in his chest to tell he didn't really believe his own words.

“Son!” The Sheriff shouted, gripping his arm. “Stiles it's fine, you'll be okay!” Derek didn't need to hear the man's heart rocketing in his chest to tell he didn't really believe his own words. Suddenly, all the fight seemed to drain out of Stiles and his body went lax in Derek's arms, his scream dying into a soft breath.

"Baby?” Derek whispered, running his hand over the younger man's face, smearing sweat and blood across the pale skin. "Come on Stiles, look at me babe."

When Stiles opened his eyes a breath of relief rushed out of Derek. The familiar warm golden brown orbs blinked slowly and focused. The Sheriff rubbed his hand over his mouth, sighing through is fingers. "Jesus kid..."

Stiles squeezed his eyes shut, brow furrowing as he let out a small groan. His hand reached up to clutch at Derek’s wrist. “S-shit.” he moaned. "Did I go Dark side?” Out of the corner of his eye he saw his bat lying discarded on the ground, each metal stud nailed into it smoking and glowing red hot. He groaned again, face falling. “Oh god, I did. I-I got bit. Shit, I got bit. That night walking
fucker actually-!

While Derek and John tried to soothe the distressed young man Scott felt himself kicking into work mode. The same work mode he hyped himself up to every time he put got behind the wheel of the ambulance. “Allison, do you have your-?” The Huntress tossed a flask into the air and Scott caught it with his free hand. “Thanks!”

Wrapped up in Derek’s arm and father hovering pale-faced by his side, Stiles grit his teeth and watched as Scott practically tore the cap off with his teeth. He swatted at Derek’s hand when he noticed the black veins trailing over his palm. "None of that," Stiles hissed. "It's not bad."

Derek wanted to argue but he stopped pulling pain, nodding to his Lupas request because he knew Stiles would tell him if it got too bad. Scott pulled some of the torn fabric away from Stiles shoulder and, as a credit to his profession, didn't even wince at the sight.

"I can do it," Isaac offered, stepping forward. His face looked a little pale and Jackson looked ill as he leaned on Boyd for support. "Take his pain I mean."

Stiles glanced up at the Beta, a small smile pulling at the corner of his mouth. "Thanks buddy, but I want a-" he winced as Scott tore the hole in his shirt further. "I want a clear head." Isaac nodded even more reluctantly than Derek.

“Okay,” Scott breathed. "Stay still man, there’s...there’s a lot of blood.” He tipped the metal flask and as soon as the water touched the wound steam hissed up, boiling the venom the Vampires saliva produced. Stiles flinched but didn't make a sound though the smell of sickness drifted into the air around him. The extent of the wound was revealed when the water cleared away the gore. The piece –no, the chunk- missing from the juncture between Stiles neck and shoulder had almost all of them swearing or wincing in unison.

Scot dumped the rest of the flask out quickly and Stiles finally growled in pain. “Shit, I can't f-fucking believe this,” Stiles breathed. He led out a thin moan as blood ran down his front and back only to start welling up again at the source when Scott had emptied the container. “Who’s idea was it to bring holy water again?” the brunette asked in a shaking voice.

"Yours," the Sheriff said in a sorrowful tone.

Scott’s hand was back on the wound again as the rest of the Pack hovered worriedly around them, watching every move Scott made to help their injured packmate. “He...he won't turn right?” Ethan asked and they all heard Johns breath catch.

Startling everyone, Boyd was actually the one who growled at the idea. “He was already bitten once,” the dark skinned Beta reminded the others with a grave frown. He had dried blood on his chin but was otherwise uninjured. “He’s...probably taken precautions.” It came out as more of a question and he looked down and saw that Stiles was giving him a pained smile.

“Lydia, come here for a second,” he said before looking around at his bloodied, dirt covered pack mates. When his eyes landed on Erica he pointed at her. “Erica, your shirt is the cleanest. Take it off.” Erica stripped down to her bra before Scott even finished the sentence and she tossed it to him. There was something to be said about friends who would give you the clothes right off their backs and they all know Stiles normally would have made a comment but going by his color they were 50% sure if he spoke he would vomit.

Lydia knelt next to them. “What do you want me to do?” she asked, voice low and determined.
“Put your hand over the wound where mine is and keep the pressure on it,” Scott instructed. "Derek, I’m going to need you to switch spots with me.” Lydia nodded, folding her hand over Scotts and he slid his own out from under hers, palm slick with blood.

Lydias expression wavered when she felt the warm current throbbing under her fingers but she only pressed harder making Stiles wince. "Sorry," she muttered.

“Can’t keep your hands off me Martin?” Stiles gasped out and the redhead glared at him fondly.

“Stiles, shut up,” Derek muttered, his tone matching the Banshees expression.

Scott moved swiftly and though it went against everything his Wolf was telling him, Derek released his Mate into the other man's care. Scott knelt and positioned himself behind Stiles so he could brace his back with his leg and hip, keeping him from tipping backward. The movement made Stiles groan and a slack look passed over his face that signaled he'd almost lost consciousness. "Der," he muttered in a small voice. "Pain drain now."

Derek let out a relieved breath mirrored in his Packs expressions and slipped off Stiles arm guard so he could curl his fingers around the man's wrist. On his bare arm Derek could see a faint glow from one of his tattoos; one that Stiles had told him meant Healing. It was probably the only thing that kept Stiles from bleeding out on the field.

“Okay, move your hand on three,” Scott instructed Lydia, ready to roll Ericas shirt over the wound. Blood spilled from between her fingers and Stiles was turning an alarming shade of white. “One, two, three.” Lydia moved her hand and Stiles hissed when the new pressure came back on the wound.

Lydia snatched her hand back with mild horror like she might have made it worse somehow. "You did fine,” Derek said gently, smelling the distress coming off her. She looked up at him and jerked her head in a small nod before returning her attention to Scott who was trying to keep their friend consious.

“Hey bud, talk to me okay,” Scott coached calmly, one arm wrapped around his friends shoulders to keep him in pace. “Keep talking till the ambulance arrives."

Jackson seemed to find his voice again though there was a slight hitch to it. “We should just get the car and drive him,” he suggested, already taking a step towards the exit.

“Melissa had the EMTs on standby and John already called,” Derek interrupted quickly because momma McCall always knew better. “They’ll be here quicker than we can drive.” True to his word the Werewolves heard the familiar whine of sirens in the background. “Someone needs to go to the parking lot and signal them down,” Derek announced. “Everyone else get to the cars. I want you ready to follow right on the ambulances tail and keep an eye out. I don't know where Valids Nest went but I better not see them again tonight.” Obeying orders with only a hint of reluctance –and Derek damn well didn’t blame them for it- everyone but Scott, Erica, Lydia, the Sheriff, and himself took off towards the exits.

Stiles swallowed with some difficulty and glanced up at his father who was looking a little sick himself now. “To-told you I didn’t need a gun,” he grinned sluggishly.

The Sheriff barked out a strained laugh, smoothing some hair away from his son’s forehead. “Right. I stand corrected.”

Erica knelt down next to Derek, her hand joining her Alpha in touching their Emissaries bare arm.
Her veins slowly bled black as she helped leached away some of his pain. Derek heard her swallow and her voice only cracked a tiny bit conflicting with the smirk on her face. “Hey Batman, you realize you’ve beaten the same Vampire twice right? Think he learned his lesson this time?”

Stiles didn’t answer right away. His eyes looked unfocused and glazed. “Stiles!” Derek snapped, gripping his wrist tighter. Stiles drew a quick breath and his eyes snapped open. “Wha? Sorry,” he muttered. “What did you say?”

“Valid,” Erica repeated with a small smile. “Think you scared him off this time?”

Stiles let out a low chuckle, shaking his head a bit till Scott told him to stop. “Are we ever that lucky?”
He is Pack

Chapter Summary

“Yes,” Derek mouthed, throat feeling dry. “I haven’t stopped.” He and Stiles had made a deal after one too many ‘oops, I didn’t expect that to backfires so badly’ moments, that Derek could only take his pain when Stiles was okay with it, or when he was too out of it to even notice. Right now he sort of bordered between the two.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Not wanting to stop midway with the treatment he’d already started Scott announced that he was unofficially clocking in and kicked one of the EMTs out of the ambulance. He, Derek, and Stiles father crowded into the back while Lydia rode up front with the driver. There was no question about whatever political or Pack hierarchy decided that order. Lydia took Stiles best interests to heart and she maintained a balanced head on her shoulder despite the blood on her hands. She would make sure that the driver was so focused on getting to the hospital that a Cyclopes could attack them and they’d still make it there in record time. Moreover, Scott was their emergency medical professional and would take care of his best friend better than any stranger no matter how well trained they were. The Sherriff was going to be with his son no questions asked or so help him god, and no one was going to try to tell their Alpha that he had to part with his Lupa and mate for even a second, especially when the only thing tying Derek to the human part of himself was his firm grip on Stiles clammy hand. The rest of the Pack and the suddenly off duty EMT sped along behind in their cars breaking speed limits at every turn and straightaway.

The Sheriff watched his son’s expression carefully as Scott tore off what remained of Stiles sleeves after Charles had shredded them. The braces on his arms looked to have protected him from the most severe scratches though the area just above the guards would need bandaging. Scott quickly peeled the protections off his friend and set them aside, the thick metal plates clanging loudly against the metal interior of the ambulance. Once he had bare skin Scott pushed a thick IV needle into

Once he had bare skin Scott pushed a thick IV needle into Stiles arm, carefully avoiding piercing the inked areas of flesh for fear of what the glowing lines might do in retaliation. The young man on the gurney didn’t even flinch which made his father a little sick to his stomach. Tattoos or not, Stiles still wasn’t fond of needles. “Derek, are you still taking his pain?” the older man asked in a hoarse voice.

“Yes,” Derek mouthed, throat feeling dry. “I haven’t stopped.” He and Stiles had made a deal after one too many ‘oops, I didn’t expect that to backfires so badly’ moments, that Derek could only take his pain when Stiles was okay with it, or when he was too out of it to even notice. Right now he sort of bordered between the two.

Despite the healing symbols glowing on his skin Stiles must have been reacting to the venom in the Vampires saliva- which was something akin to morphine- because the pain Derek was siphoning away made him light headed. It wasn’t really pain but it was a little overwhelming. Like standing up too fast and trying to run.

The ambulance rounded a corner and they all tensed with the momentum, the siren whining outside the vehicles metal walls. Derek heard John swallow. “Is it bad?” he asked both the wolves, relying
on their senses and Scott’s machines to tell him the truth.

Scott frowned, tapping the air bubbles out of the saline bag. “Apart from the blood loss and shock? I don’t know.” He glanced at Derek. “His tattoos are glowing. Do you know what they’re doing?”

Derek vaguely remembered Stiles telling him about his tattoos. Symbols for strength, protection, binding… “Healing I think,” Derek answered. “Or at maybe counteracting the Vampires venom. He… there was a tattoo over his first bite mark.” The very thought set his wolf’s teeth on edge. “I think he can fight against the effects.” God he hoped so. That he was somehow immune to it like Lydia. There were too many unknowns here.

“What-“ The Sheriff flinched as they went over a pothole and his hand shot to steady his son on instinct and Lydia hissed at the driver. “What are we going to do about the Nest?” he asked, and what he was really asking was ‘is this enough justification to throw them the hell out of my town?’

Before Derek could answer there was a small noise from Stiles: something between a grunt and a moan that had them all zoning in on his face. Stiles could barely keep his eyes open and they kept sliding in and out of focus while they flickered between amber and pale violet. He turned his face towards his father, but only just barely. “Nn, s’okay dad…."

“Stiles stop moving,” Scott snapped. He pressed his hand more firmly to his friends’ neck to quell the surge of blood that the small movement had caused. Stiles just smiled tiredly at him and his tattoos continued to pulse weakly in tandem with his heartbeat.

In the front of the cab they heard the driver talking into the two-way radio. “Dispatch this is ambulance number 12. We are inbound with a Code 3. ETA 5 minutes. Victim has severe bleeding from a Vampire bite between the neck and shoulder. First responder was Scott McCall.” The hospital had long since been equipped to deal with injuries of the supernatural nature both with a change of staff as well as a special segment in medical storage that might as well have been named the Herbs, Poultice, and Magic Section. A year ago many of the hospital staff joked that the Hale Pack might as well have private rooms here. Now they had five.

“Copy that,” A crackling dispatch voice replied. “What’s the victim’s current status? Are we going to be dealing with a fledgling Vampire?”

“No!” Lydia snapped furiously, causing the driver to jump. “He won’t. They didn’t share blood.” One bloody hand was curled around the strap of her seat belt, holding on like it was keeping her tethered to the present rather than her seat.

The driver held the radio a bit above his shoulder after shooting the redhead beside him a fearful look. “McCall, status on the vic?” he called back and Derek wished they’d stop using that word.

Scott was growling under his breath, telling Stiles to keep his eyes open as he finished hooking him up to the heart monitor. A stuttering beep filled the air as the machine registered his pulse. “I flushed the bite with holy water in the field. He’s been started on saline and the wound is packed but his BP and temperature are dropping. We think he has runes on him that are helping dispel the venom or at least slow his bleeding.”

“Hear that Dispatch?” the driver asked and Lydia barked at him to keep his attention on the road.

“I copy number 12. We’ll be ready for you.”

Scott nodded and did his best to smile. “Hear that bud? We’ll get you fixed up- Stiles? No, no, no, wake up!”
Lydia might as well have had the ambulance driver at gunpoint for the way he floored it the remaining half mile. As soon as the ambulance came to a stop the Sheriff ordered Derek to break the back doors open -or at least he would have had Derek not all but wrenched them off their hinges first.

Everything at Beacon Hills Memorial was a sickeningly familiar blur of noise, smells, and unease and even though they’d run this drill a hundred times too many they still felt the adrenaline pumping through their veins the whole time. The panic never really went away.

The Sheriff was with them for a few steps before he broke away and headed straight for the receptionist, Ethan right behind him. He’d been through this too many times to not know how to make things go quicker. He was surprised to see that Danny was already standing at the desk, eyes following nervously as the Pack ran past, trailing a gurney and a team of nurses. “Is he okay?” The young man asked. His clothing was a bit disheveled like he’d been running around. He had been there when the Sheriff had called Melissa. “Melissa said...” Danny swallowed audibly. “She said there was a fight.”

John gripped the younger man’s shoulder as soon as he drew close enough. “It could have gone better,” he replied. Danny’s eyes flickered from Ethan back to the group rushing down the hallway and he nodded. Things usually could have gone better if someone ended up here.

While they both tag teamed the paperwork with methodical precision Scott held the saline bag with one hand and kept the other to Stiles neck as the gurney was wheeled in with the Pack practically on their heels. “His heart stopped once during transport but started back up after a few chest compressions,” Scott told a short, blue scrubbed triage nurse as she pressed a stethoscope to Stiles chest. “He’s been unconscious for two minutes.”

The short nurse took the IV bag from him and another moved Scott’s hands gently, muttering that it’s okay McCall, I got it. It was a miracle Scott’s claws hand punctured the plastic. The short nurse spoke quickly to her colleagues while the Pack trailed after them. They listened as they rolled their friend farther down the fluorescent-lit hall and heard the shallow beating of his heart, clinging to the sound of it.

“Amy, lift that rag up will you-” The head nurse ordered as she took a quick peek under the blood-soaked t-shirt. Derek very nearly hurled when he saw the angry open wound that had been bitten out of his mate. Subfascial avulsion. The artery doesn’t look to have been nicked but there is significant bleeding. Amy, you get him prepped for a skin graft and muscle reconstruction. Patient is human-.”

“Stiles,” Derek said without thinking. Victim. Patient. Dehumanized terms that allowed those in the medical profession to keep a clear head while treating. No. This was Stiles. “His name is Stiles Stilinski.”

The name caused the nurses eyes to widen.

“He’s a Spark,” Scott said at the same time.

Lydia, who was practically glued to Scott, bloody hand clutching the man’s shirt, breathed out a barely heard, “Pack. He’s Pack.” Her face was almost as pale as Stiles was and for a heart-stopping moment Derek thought she was about to scream. Lydia just swallowed hard.

The nurse gave all three of them a confused look before she glanced down and noticed her patient’s faintly glowing tattoos and barreled on with a nod. Her eyes took on a more serious sheen that had Derek respecting her a bit more. Their Sheriffs son. A member of the Hale Pack. Now she knew. “We’ve got to get him into the OR. No non-medical staff beyond this point. McCall, you are
officially off the clock.” The nurse sent a pointed glare at the whole Pack who’d matched their every step. “Please wait outside.”

Swinging doors banged open and the unconscious man on the gurney was removed from his Pack when it swung shut with a soft whisper.

Chapter End Notes

Lil bit short, but...yeah.
unbeated per usual.
In which everyone is tense and no one really knows what to do with themselves

Chapter Summary

He wanted to know why the wards Stiles, Lydia, and Danny set up hadn’t triggered. He wanted to know why he was standing here and why the decision to bite Stiles the first time his heartbeat had flat-lined in the ambulance had even been presented to him. There had to be someone to blame for this and he wanted to find them and rip their throats out with his bare. Freaking. Hands. His Mate was in surgery because someone had fucked up and his Lupa, his Mate, Stiles was….

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Bright lights illuminated the parking lot outside while the hospital observed a quiet lull, most of their occupants asleep while the staff handed off their shifts. Strangers passed them in the halls -doctors, nurses, janitors, patients, and visitors- walking or jogging, unaware of the events that had unfolded what only seemed like seconds ago. Some of them were smiling and talking or looking half asleep on their feet. The Pack received a few inquiring glances but everyone knew better than to ask.

Derek let his eyes search out the others looking them over with what could only be described as a numb sort of worry. The Sheriff had been speaking to the nurse at the front desk when the Pack made their way back to the waiting area in silence. Ethan and Danny stood grimly at his side and glanced at the man with worry every few seconds, trying to catch their Alphas eye for some type of reassurance.

“They took him to the operating room,” was all Derek said to them.

Scott pulled a haggard looking nurse aside and started conversing with her quietly, probably going over some medical jargon that none of them would understand, but their voices were lost in the general din of the hospital. Derek -none of them actually- could quite fully look at the True Alpha because he more than any of them looked like he’d been playing in red paint.

Erica fidgeted with a lock of her long hair twining it through and around her fingers endlessly while her eyes bored holes into the floor. Someone had lent her a jacket and her small form was swimming in the extra fabric. Her face was smudged with dirt and her eyebrows had come down into a deep, lost frown. Sitting next to her Boyd put his hand on her knee but neither looked like they felt the gesture. The tips of barely formed claws caught on the sturdy denim.

Isaac didn’t even bother sitting in one of the plush chairs or couches. He’d dropped right to the floor, his back sliding against the wall as he ran his fingers through his curls and brought his knees up to his chest. Lydia paced the floor tensely in front of him, her muddy heels tapping on the clean white tile leaving small flecks of dirt and grass. The Banshee was uncomfortable for a different reason and she kept one hand over her mouth so as to keep herself from opening it.

The Argents stood side by side in the center of the hallway with weapons still on full display keeping an eye on the waiting room and the entrances. Both were covered in small scratches and both paid them no mind, focused on a single task. If they were followed the trail would stop here, with them.
Abruptly.

Peter had slipped away sometime between spilling out of the car and Stiles being rolled into the OR and was now leaning against the wall off to the side, arms crossed with his eyes glued on Derek. The older Wolfe’s expression was indecipherable and Derek wondered if he had the same expression on his own face.

The only sound came from Jackson. A frustrated, slightly pained growl as he hunched forward on an uncomfortable couch, head in his hands as he gripped his hair between his fingers. He muttered curse words under his breath every few seconds, scrubbing his hands over his face till Danny walked over and sat with him.

“If I’d taken care of that asshole first-“ Jackson muttered through gritted teeth. Danny frowned sadly and put a hand on his friends shoulder.

“You didn’t expect him to have a knife,” said Boyd, understanding the other man's guilt. “Who knows what they put on that blade.”

Jackson hunched further into himself and Derek shivered at the sound his Beta made, wondering what would happen if he let his human side whimper the way his wolf was. “Not your fault,” he found himself muttering. He wanted to go on, tell them that none of this had gone as planned but they knew that already. He swallowed and started to pace to floor, counting steps and heartbeats to help him calm down. It was just…infuriating. They had been about to walk away, actually taking the steps, and then Stiles collapsed. Derek didn’t know what Valid and his Nest did but they had done something and everything had fallen apart. The Alpha felt anger well up in his chest because someone was to blame for this. Someone needed to pay for it - bleed for it, his wolf growled.

“So what do we do?” Scott’s quiet voice interrupted the wolfs revenge driven thoughts mid growl. Swallowing the building pressure in his throat Derek looked at the younger man who smelled of worry, blood, chemicals, and Stiles. “Derek?” Scott asked a little more quietly, tilting his head a bit.

Derek had to blink a few times before he responded and wondered about the sting he felt on his palms as he unclenched his fists. He glanced down at one hand and noted four sets of puncture wounds trickling blood down his fingertips.

“Hey, Derek?” Scott asked again, taking a slow step closer to the Alpha. “You okay?”

Derek looked up at him with a frown. He didn’t know how the smell of Stiles’ blood wasn’t driving McCall absolutely insane. Blood, Mate, hurt, all alone. “We…we need to call Charlotte,” Derek said finally, trying to keep the bite out of his voice. He was failing and had to clench his fists again, nails digging into his palms once more. “Let her know what happened.”

He felt a hand touch his arm very gently and his eyes snapped to the side to see Allison. Her face was open and calm her body language relaxed as she lowered her hand. “I called her on the way over,” the Huntress said. “She’ll said she’s on her way.”

The thought of another Vampire being in the same room as his Pack sent a surge of irritation through Derek’s wolf and it snarled in the back of his mind. Threat! Biting, danger, don’t get close! “Patrol,” Derek found himself growling. His uncle snorted off to the side and Derek’s lip curled in a snarl. “Problem Peter?” The older man just raised his brow in challenge.

“Someone can…” Scott started, looking up at the others. He trailed off when he was met with glowing sets of eyes and hard human glares. Scott frowned forlornly but with no real disappointment.
“We’ll start looking as soon as we can,” Isaac offered dourly from his seat on the floor as he sniffed and ran the back of his hand under his nose, sniffing meekly.

“I’ll call the station and get some deputies on it,” announced the Sheriff as he pulled out his phone mechanically. “We can start our own search once we know what’s going on with my son.” The last words were said with a sharp intake of breath and the older man cleared his throat and shook his head as he dialed, turning away for some privacy.

Somewhere deep in the back of his mind Derek understood that. Even as he’d suggested it his wolf had balked at the idea, incensed that he’d even think about leaving. An Alpha did not leave its Lupa; a Wolf did not leave its Mate—even if the sterile smell of the hospital was starting to get to him.

Next to Boyd, Erica tied her hair into a tired, messy bun, getting the loose strands out of her face so she couldn’t pull at them anymore. “What about Carla?” she asked. “Some of the Nest might end up at the Onyx.”

Chris deliberately even as he kept his eyes on Derek. “I called her. I told her to listen for any chatter and to keep an eye out for any new Vampires that come in to the bar.” Derek felt himself nodding numbly and Chris continued. “We should call Barry too. Make sure everything is okay on his end.”

Derek surprised himself by how well he managed to keep his wolf from tearing its’ way to the surface. Barry. He rounded on Chris who met his glower with a marginally defensive frown. “Barry. Call Barry.” He wanted an explanation as to why the Gargoyle hadn’t given them a warning. How he’d let an entire Nest of Vampires get past him.

“Derek, maybe you should-” Allison started only to be cut off by a sharp snarl from the Alpha and her mouth snapped shut.

He wanted to know why the wards Stiles, Lydia, and Danny set up hadn’t triggered. He wanted to know why he was standing here and why the decision to bite Stiles the first time his heartbeat had flat-lined in the ambulance had even been presented to him. There had to be someone to blame for this and he wanted to find them and rip their throats out with his bare. Freaking. Hands. His Mate was in surgery because someone had fucking up and his Lupa, his Mate, Stiles was…. He was probably afraid. Drugged out of his mind while knives and needles went to work on his skin, closing up the wound the Vampires teeth had left, putting needle and thread to the intricately inked flesh. Stiles hated hospitals. He was going to wake up freaked out and start panicking because that’s exactly what had happened last time. Stiles was going to wake up and panic because he’d been hurt again and then he was going to think he was deficient in some way because he’d been hurt and he was going to-!

“Derek, hey, calm down-,” Something other than anger must have shown on Derek’s face because Isaac scrambled up from the floor just in time to stand in the man’s way.

Derek couldn’t see how his own eyes were flashing between hazel and blood red. “Don’t tell me to calm down,” Derek snapped, taking a step forward. “I need to-,”

“What.” Isaac snarled sharply, baring his teeth and flashing golden eyes at the older wolf. He drew up to his full height, even taller than his Alpha and put his hands on the man’s chest with sudden but fierce shove. “What are you going to do? Tell me Derek! What are you going to do?”

The aberrant force in his Betas voice would have given a saner Derek pause but Stiles was in there bleeding because he’d been bitten again and Derek just couldn’t stop seeing bloodthirsty fangs ripping off a piece of him, stained and dripping with red-!
His derailing thoughts snapped back into place when he felt a heavy impact on his cheek. He tasted blood on the inside of his mouth. The riled wolf scrambling about in the back of his mind stilled in shock as his senses expanded from the tunneling sensation that had crept up on him. Isaac stood before him, his face flushed with one clawed hand digging into the fabric and skin of his chest. His features were drawn in anger and he leaned against the older man hissing, “He’s in surgery right now Derek and if you even think about going in there before that light is off I’ll have Chris, Allison, or the Sheriff kneecap you and I will throw you out of this hospital myself!”

A tight breath entered Derek’s lungs and he glanced slowly to the side. The Pack were staring at him, some with half aborted hands reaching out towards him all with equally cautious and empathetic expressions on their faces. Peter shifted minutely from the wall, frowning at his nephew while his stance remained tense and ready to spring. Even the Sheriff who had long since been done organizing his deputies looked a little worried and his hand had strayed a fraction closer to his holstered gun. “Son, why don’t you come back and sit down,” the older man suggested evenly. With a tentative glance over Isaac’s shoulder Derek realized that he was no longer in the waiting room. He’d been trying to force his way down the hallway to the OR and he’d made it a good ten feet even with a Werewolf acting as his breaks.

“Derek, Isaac!” Both of them turned and saw a familiar mass of dark curls in a neat ponytail and stern eyes behind a white mask jogging up to them. Melissa McCall shot her son a questioning look and was met with a tired frown and a shake of the head so she just huffed out a breath and rolled her eyes.

The Sheriff moved first. “Melissa,” his voice was quiet and strained and Derek immediately felt guilt rush up to punch him in the chest. “Have you heard anything?”

Melissa reached out and squeezed her old friend’s hand, eyes softening. “Not yet John, but I’m heading in soon. You would not believe the red tape I had to go through to even be allowed to scrub in right now.” When she looked back at Isaac and Derek her gaze hardened again and she pulled her mask down to her chin so her frown was in full view. “Both of you need to stop yelling,” she ordered. “This is a hospital and I could hear you all the way down the hall.” She waited for a nod from Isaac but Derek didn’t trust himself to move a muscle at the moment. Melissa shook her head glancing around at all of them. “Do we have to deal with any immediate threats?” She asked.

“Nothing that can’t wait a little while,” Scott replied, casting a wary glance at his Alpha.

Melissa nodded firmly. “Good. You should all be here when Stiles wakes up.”

Before Derek could even breathe the quiet steps of a pale nurse, someone who had run along side Stiles gurney- Amy?- pulled his attention away from Scotts mom. She was long and willowy, cheeks almost gaunt, but her most noticeable features were her eyes; albino pink with pale blue pupils surrounded by white eyelashes. Holding her clipboard tight to her chest she halted when she noticed Derek looking at her and gave him a small, revenant nod. “Alpha Hale,” she whispered respectfully and her heartbeat fluttered like an animal that was skittish around a predator. Shifting she glanced at the Pack, the intensity of their expressions doing nothing to ease her nerves.

“This is Amy, one of our triage nurses,” Melissa began quickly, motioning to the soft-spoken nurse. Most if not all of the supernatural creatures who wanted to work at the hospital were vetted exclusively by Melissa, Scott, and Deaton for safety reasons so they knew all the newcomers by name. Melissa pulled her mask back up over her nose and mouth. “I’m going to the operating room so Derek, stay out here and behave.” She squeezed the Sheriff’s shoulder and then hurried down the hall where she slipped through the OR doors.

The Pack drew closer to the young nurse. “Were you helping with my son’s surgery?” the Sheriff
asked keenly, face drawn with worry. "Have you heard anything yet?"

Amy shook her head, thin fingers tapping against the plastic of her clipboard. “No Sheriff, I just helped get him prepped,” she admitted. “I’m usually only needed for unusual complications.”

“How so?” Peter inquired. Derek hadn’t noticed the older wolf had come up behind him till he’d placed a calming hand on his nephew’s shoulder. Derek would never admit that it helped.

The young woman looked only mildly uncomfortable answering the question though it was more discomfort with the person asking than the question itself. Peter had a reputation after all. “I…have a very particular set of skills,” she replied softly. “The doctors didn’t think they were needed.” The others looked at her expectantly waiting for her to continue but her skittishness only grew.

Sensing that she was ready to bolt though she’d obviously come over here for a reason Scott managed to give her a small reassuring smile, taking pity on her. “Amy has Abath blood,” he told them, which explained a lot actually, including her unique coloring and tendency to shy away from predator Wereis.

The Sheriff ran a hand over his mouth taking a deep breath as he decided to seize the distraction for whatever it was worth. “Abath?” He asked.

It was Lydia who answered her voice a little shaky though she did well to mask it. “A female Unicorn.” She rubbed her blood stained hands over her already stained pants almost absentmindedly. “They have and affinity for magical purification and similar healing properties as male Unicorns.” The recitation of facts seemed to settle her thoughts and she let out a small breath at the end, shoulders relaxing. “They are also less likely to gore you.”

The Sheriff lips quirked weakly. “Well, that’s a plus.”

Amy nodded solemnly in reply. “As you know we have a number of supernatural on staff, most of which are helpful when dealing with the…not so common injuries. Had your friend already been turning from the Vampires bite when he was brought in I might have been called to assist.”

“Stiles isn’t turning though, right?” Boyd queried, his deep voice pacifying the anxiety that particular question stirred.

Amy’s eyes widened when he spoke, perhaps not expecting another Beta to address her. The nurse took a quick breath, bolstering herself. “Not from what I could tell, no, but there were a few things I was hoping to get clarification on.” She shifted her grip on her clipboard and reached for a pen clipped to her shirt. “I wanted to get a full idea of what happened and a little more patient history information.”

The Sheriff frowned at her, confusion evident on his face. “The hospital already has a full detail of my sons’ medical history,” he told her.

Amy nodded in understanding but went on placating, shifting her weight to one leg. “Yes, but his files have not been updated in some time.” Which was actually not all that surprising. Between all the impromptu ‘doctor’ visits to Deaton, home patch jobs, and New York, Stiles medical record was probably spotty at best. “We are prepared to accommodate many types of patients with various healing abilities but we always have to be especially attentive towards humans who practice magic, especially those who have magic inked onto their skin. The surgeons are trained to recognize archaic symbols but there is always a margin for error.” The Abath seemed a fraction more confident speaking to the human Sheriff rather than the Werewolves and even her posture relaxed a bit. “Does the patient have any dangerous markings that you know of?”
Derek swore to himself wishing he’d had Stiles tell Melissa or Scott specifics about his tattoos. One slip up with a scalpel could activate a protection or booby trap a magic user had placed on their body to keep them from harm. The Pack could only imagine the precautions they were taking with someone as mapped as Stiles.

Scott ran a worried hand over his mouth, thinking to himself. “I’m not sure,” he admitted. “I mean I’m sure he took into account he might get hurt so he wouldn’t have any dangerous tattoos.” He glanced at Derek. “Right?”

Derek could only shake his head in response because from what Stiles had told him the tattoos were mostly there to protect people from him. “Just…” Derek almost startled himself when he spoke, remembering the look on Stiles face that night as they traced the intricate lines on his body. “Avoid the larger ones on his chest and stomach,” he told Amy. “He needs those.”

Amy stared hard at the Alpha and Derek knew that she’d seen the tattoos he was referring to. The fail safes. ”Alright,” Amy nodded, making a quick note on her clipboard. “They shouldn’t have to go near those.” She paused, her lips pressing together for a moment as though she was hesitant to continue. “Now as for additional medical history, I noticed a few injuries that were not in his file. The one that concerns me is an old bite scar on his left arm near the inside of his elbow.” Her gaze shifted over each Pack member. “Is he a regular donor to a Vampire? Perhaps another Werecreature?”

“What?” Lydia gasped, looking vaguely insulted. “No! Why would you think that?”

Amy pressed her lips together for a moment, brow furrowing under Lydia’s glare. “I saw runes for healing and protection tattooed over the scar. The only reason I can think of for them is that he is constantly keeping himself from being affected by the effects of a bite.”

Now the entire Pack was on edge. “It’s a precaution,” Lydia supplied, tone hollow. “Nothing that would interfere with surgery.”

Pink eyes glanced around at the Werewolves after that admission, nervousness seeping into her scent and she almost cringed as she asked, “Did one of you…?”

“No,” Derek snapped a little more sharply than he meant to but he’d had to force that word out, slightly horrified at the insinuation. “No,” he said more quietly wishing the meek Abath would stop jumping at every sound they made. “Stiles was bitten by another Vampire a while ago. By an Elder. He was out of town so he wouldn’t have gone to a hospital which is why it was never in his file.”

Amy looked startled for a moment and no one blamed her. One didn’t simply just go around getting bit by Elder Vampires and live to talk about it. When no one contradicted the Alpha or made any move to elaborate the pale women nodded quickly and turned to Scott. “Scott, you flushed the bite with holy water right away?”

“On site,” Scott nodded and Amy mirrored the action, thinking to herself as she scribbled on her clipboard.

“Alright” She announced, pink eyes scanning over her notes. “I think this all works in our favor then. If he was bitten by an Elder before and didn’t turn it’s likely the patient has a natural or magical immunity anyway.”

“Stiles,” Derek muttered, rubbing his eyes. Amy twitched at the sound of his voice but Derek couldn’t bring himself to care. It was just a relief hearing that despite being unconscious Stiles magic was still very much awake and putting up a fight.
Before anything else could be said the clicking of sharp heels on the linoleum and the smell of overturned earth and perfume drifted through the air. Down the hallway a familiar dark haired Vampiress rushed towards them with her brunette Sister and Second, Isabelle. Charlotte looked beside herself, which was saying something. A Vampires appearance was essential to their survival but even though the woman was in a stylish designer dress and her makeup was immaculate, the pallor of her skin and the worry in her eyes could not be glamoured away. “Alpha Hale,” Charlotte called out, the clatter of her heels coming to a stop just a few feet from them. “I heard,” she glimpsed Allison out of the corner of her eye and nodded quickly in thanks for the call. “We came as quickly as we could. Did Valid- is he -?” Isabelle moved and reached out to the older woman as Charlotte brought her blood red nails up to her mouth, looking from person to person with growing dismay.

Allison finally holstered her crossbow with a small pat on the arm from her father. “Valid and his Nest ran off. Bunch of cowards.”

“And Stiles?” Charlotte made a small sound and sucked in a breath. Unfortunately the three Pack members that had been up close and personal with their wounded Emissary realized only then that they were still covered in his blood. Even a Vampire that wasn’t distressed could pick up on the scent of injured pray and the two women got a lungful of it before Derek, Scott, and Lydia could even step back to give them space.

Under the fluorescent lights the creatures stilled and grew paler in a manner of seconds. Their mouths flushed darker; too red to be real and their canines sharpened while shivers ran over their skin. Isabelle moaned breathily, her pupils fully dilated as her fingers gripped Charlottes arm. “Charlotte,” the Sheriff warned in a low voice.

Far from enticed like her younger Second, Charlotte looked enraged. Her fangs dropped past her lips and here eyes paled to eerie neon blue as a snarl worked its way up her throat. “Valid, that leeching son of a whore-!”

For a moment Derek felt his hackles rise and his Betas tensed, ready to react, but their Huntress put her foot down. “Charlotte!” Allison barked, her voice cutting through the rising tension in the air almost as sharply as the safety coming off on the compact Glock 27 she had on her belt. "Calm down if you want to stay.”

Charlotte flinched as though she’d been stuck and blinked in surprise, unaware she’d even shifted – Derek knew that feeling. Swallowing her anger immediately she put a hand over Isabelle’s and gave a firm squeeze while she took a step away from the blood covered Hale Pack. Her Sister took a shallow calming breath as her fangs receded back into her gums and she clicked her jaw shut. Charlotte’s fingers carded through Isabelle’s long brunette hair and Isabelle gently rubbed Charlottes’ back, mollifying her First as their glamor settled the beauty into their skin once again.

Voice tight as she met Derek’s eyes, Charlotte said, “My...my apologies. It has been a stressful night.”

Derek forgave her quickly enough, shaking his head. “It’s alright.” He couldn’t judge.

Charlotte let out a long breath, expelling whatever dark thoughts remained swirling around in her mind. “To think that Valid would go after Stiles again- I just can’t-!” She cut herself off with a sharp bite and flick of her head. “He isn’t an idiot. He’s old enough to know what he’d be up against coming here to Beacon Hills, regardless of Stiles being here or not. He plans too far ahead to travel across the country just to pick a fight with a few old enemies and if he really is here for the World Tree he would not risk expulsion from this land by aggravating the Hale Pack first. I cannot believe he would do something so foolish.”
Erica scoffed, chewing on her bottom lip. “I sure believed it when he let his steroid jacked Second bite a chunk out of Stiles’ shoulder.”

Charlotte pulled back a bit so she could look Erica in the eye, confusion drawing her brows together. “What?” two voices said at once, the second much higher than the Vampiress's seductive tenor. Charlotte finally noticed Amy standing off to the side, looking startled by her own brazenness. “I’m sorry,” Charlotte said. “You are?”

Amy’s eyes widened and her pulse jumped. She’d already taken a few steps back from them like a deer caught in the headlights. “I-I’m Amy. Amy Malay. I was the one who prepped Stiles for surgery. You’re Charlotte? You and your Nest run The Jungle?”

“I am.” Charlotte glanced down at the clipboard clutched in the woman’s hands and then back up at Derek and then the Sheriff. “Was I interrupting something?” she asked with a small wince.

“She was getting some background information on Stiles,” the Sheriff replied. “Valid is still recovering on their friend.”

Amy’s eyes flickered to the Pack and her lips parted slowly. “But I do have a follow-up question now that you’re here.” She looked pointedly at Charlotte and the Pack’s eyes snapped up to her as she hurried on. "I mean, some questions that you might be able to answer for me, as you are...well, Vampires.”

Isabelle’s eyes narrowed noticeably at her Firsts side. “And?”

The thin bit of plastic became Amy’s barrier as she clutched it to chest. “Well, the wound did seem a little too vicious for a traditional turning or feeding bite so I suspected it was actually an attack-,”

“We could have told you that,” Erica groused only to be shushed by her Pack.

Amy looked warily at the she-wolf. “But...normally Vampires avoid magic users.” Her attention returned to Charlotte. “Y-you can’t enthral them so it makes them harder prey, and from what I understand blood with magic in it is an...acquired taste?”

Charlotte’s eyes narrowed now. "Some Elders acquire it, yes."

“Well, with the amount of magic I felt just getting him prepped,” A weighty look came over the Abaths face, pink eyes shining for a moment with an empty sort of hypnotism. “I’m just surprised he was attacked at all, let alone twice by the same Nest.”

Charlotte was quiet for a moment, thinking it over as her frown softened. “Yes. I understand your confusion but seeing someone as prey versus as an enemy can shift our priorities. Stiles and Valid...they have a rather sensitive history."

“If by sensitive you mean volatile,” Isaac muttered.

Charlotte nodded with downcast eyes. “Yes, I suppose that's true. It's still odd though. Valid has always had a tight grip on his Nest. He’s particular about who he lets them feed on or bite and I just don’t see how he would have allowed his Second to bite someone he’d already claimed. “ Dereks eyes flashed red, a rumbling growl building in his chest and Charlotte backtracked. “I'm sorry,” she said quickly. “Someone he'd taken an interest in.”

“Well, he certainly wasn’t pleased,” Lydia mentioned. “Valid was the one that pulled his Second off of Stiles.”
Charlotte nodded slowly, digesting that information. “I see.” She fell silent for a beat or two before nodding again, letting out a slow breath as she released Isabelle's hand. “I’ve alerted my Nest of our unwelcomed guests. Was there anything else I can do to help?” She looked towards the Alpha for final confirmation.

Derek cleared his throat. "Stiles wants to avoid getting you directly involved with Valids' Nest."

The older woman's expression softened. "He would, wouldn't he," she murmured.

Isabelle stepped forward, the normally flirtatious glint in her eyes replaced by a seriousness that came with her age. "Still, there must be something we can do. It's our town too," Derek offered the woman a small, sincere smile and the Vampiress blushed a bit.

"Team up with Carla if you can," Chris offered. “Both of your business are privately owned so if you want them off your property the law will back you.” The Sheriff and Ethan nodded to confirm and Charlotte swallowed and licking her lips.

"No offense," Isabelle smirked lightly, "But our kind has our own ways of dealing with unwelcome guests."

"No offense," Chris retorted with a raised brow, “But we only met with some of the Nest tonight. We don’t know how many are actually in town and only the ones we met have committed a wrong we can prove. If you start a fight with any of them you'll be on your own until one of the Pack can vouch for you.”

A sudden surge of anger and guilt burst into the air and made the wolves flinch just as Jackson snarled out, “We should be running them the fuck out of town!” Amy scrambled as she very nearly dropped her clipboard. Jacksons' eyes glowed bright yellow as he dug his claws into his thighs. He's been the only one to remain seated the entire time, face burried in his hands, but apparently the idea that an all-out brawl was off the table sent him over the edge.

Isaac crossed his arms over his chest, looking at his Alpha pointedly. “I have to say I agree with Jackson for once. They attacked us Derek, even after Stiles asked them to leave. Three times.”

Derek rubbed his hand over his face feeling impossibly tired all of a sudden and it was Ethan who covered for him. “He didn’t ask them to leave the town. Wording makes a difference. Even if he had it only applied to the ones in front of us and they did technically 'leave'.”

“That is the worst sort of bureaucracy,” Jackson bit out. “We were the ones being civil the whole time and then they attack our Emissary with some sort of magic and-“

“They did what?” Amy interrupted suddenly, her soft voice cutting through the Werewolf’s rant. “We can’t attack anyone with magic,” Isabelle remarked, staring at Jackson like he was crazy. “Those bastards did something to him!”

“So Stiles just collapsed for the hell of it?” Jackson snapped, returning the look with some added anger. “Those bastards did something to him!”

“Stiles said something about the Ley lines,” Erica remembered, wincing slightly. “It looked like it hurt pretty bad.”

"His magic did kind of go bonkers after that," Scott added sheepishly.

The look on the Abath's pale face grew more and more concerned as they went on and Derek seemed to be the only one who noticed so his own worry was slowly on the rise as well. “Wait,”
Amy said, he voice suddenly firming. “Are you saying that your friend felt the Ley lines shift?”

Derek felt a small hand grip his wrist and out of the corner of his eyes he caught a flash of red hair. Lydia tugged sharply, her nails digging into the flesh of his wrist and for a split second his wolf almost snapped at her but when he turned and saw the woman’s face his stomach dropped. Lydia’s nails dug further into his skin with as much ferocity as she was using to keep her jaw clenched shut. She started to shake her head quickly, eyes closed while her other hand slapped over her mouth, trapping the small whine in the back of her throat.

This time the clipboard did clatter to the floor before a sudden burst of air filled Amy's lungs and she bolted towards the OR. Lydia let out a shuttered moan just as a voice over the hospital intercom announced:

"Nurse Malay, you are needed in Operating room three. Nurse Malay, to Operating room three."

Chapter End Notes

I .....am so sorry for the wait on this. This chapter was surprisingly hard to get out. And all my friends are forcing me to surprize pet sit (by that I mean getting a phone call at 6am; "Hey, so, my landlord said that if i dont get the dog out of here in an hour they will charge us $500. Sooooo, can you take her for the week? Because it's not like you have a 15 hour a day job, and the two days you get off a month are totally free for me to abuse your inability to say no?” I mean, the last part was implied, but yeah. I'm not sure I like animals anymore.
Speaking of Morphine

Chapter Summary

for the wait!

Chapter Notes

No Beata, sorry for the wait!

Silence.

The electronic hum of a machine.

Steady beeping in sync with the dull pounding in his head.

Muffled voices around him and the sound of a door shutting softly.

Slowly, warm amber eyes fluttered open, pupils dilating to accommodate the glaring lights on the white ceiling. There was a pressure on his hand just shy this side of painful. The beeping grew louder and then quicker, the pounding in his head more intense.

The first thing Stiles brain realized once his higher cognitive functions came back online was that someone was gripping his hand so hard he thought the bones might actually break. Shifting just a few millimeters his eyes landed on one passed out Derek Hale. Unlike waking up to the Werewolf’s sleeping face in their shared bed which filled him with warm fuzzys, this situation left Stiles with a hollow feeling in his chest because Derek? Derek looked terrible.

The 5’oclock shadow on the older man’s cheeks implied he hadn’t shaved for at least a day. He saw the bruises under the Werewolf’s eyes and the stoop in his shoulders, tensed from having been sitting too long in an uncomfortable chair.

Stiles lips parted to say Derek’s name, wake him from his uneasy sleep and let him know that ‘hey, I’m alive’ but his throat clenched as soon as he tried. Something was obstructing his airway. A breathing tube? Tears immediately welled up in his eyes as his body started to convulse around his lack of esophageal function. A breathing tube? Jesus Christ, what the hell happened to him?

Derek’s eyes snapped open as soon as he felt Stiles fingers twitch in panic and he was out of his chair calling for a nurse. Stiles instinctively reached to grab back his hand but pain seared through his entire upper body, radiating mostly from his abdomen and his shoulder. Melissa burst in with a nurse on her heels and rushed to his bedside but Stiles couldn’t hear what she was saying over the hammering of his heart in his ears and the feeling of the IV needles pulling at his skin.

Having a breathing tube removed was not an experience Stiles wanted to repeat. Ever. It was deeply unpleasant. He coughed for a solid minute while Melissa and Derek hovered over him, expressions blurred as his eyes watered.
“Take deep breaths,” Melissa instructed, handing the tube to one of the other nurses as wiped his mouth with a clean damp cloth. “I know it hurts but just try to take deep breaths.”

Stiles tried, but the first breath he took was not deep. It was thin and weak, his throat raw like he’d been breathing in dust and fire. It sent him into a coughing fit that wrenched him off his pillows shooting a sharp pain through his entire body and he was pretty sure he was going to die from this now.

Just as another fresh batch of tears was about to well up in the corners of his eyes a warm sensation rushed through his body. He would have mistaken it for morphine or oxycodone at least, but he was acutely aware of three sets of hands on him and the all too familiar sensation of his pain being syphoned away and not just numbed by drugs.

Body going slack as he blinked away tears he saw Derek, Scott, and Jackson all staring down at him, dark veins crawling up their arms. Scott looked anxious, Jackson looked mad, and Derek was scowling in his own downright relieved manner. Stiles sniffed and must have looked pathetic enough that the scowl on Derek’s face lessened into just relief. “Hey.” Derek’s hazel eyes were soft and vulnerable as his thumb rubbed a small circle against Stiles neck where the crux of his pain was centered.

Scott’s hand was wrapped gently around his wrist, smile watery. “So, that went well.”

Stiles tried to clear his throat and chuckle but just ended up wincing and decided that it wasn’t a good idea.

“You alright?” Derek asked, scanning Stiles face for signs of distress when he’d made the small noise.

Melissa slipped between Jackson and Scott. “His throat will be sore for a while,” she explained as she made a pointed gesture towards their hands. “Okay boys, he’s on painkillers so ease up on the pain draining.”

“Do you want some water?” Scott asked hand slipping away from his friend’s wrist and Stiles felt a little of his lightheadedness abated, replaced with a little more of the medicated warmth.

“Grab a glass from the table over there,” Melissa instructed her son without waiting for Stiles response. “I’ll get some food for you too if you feel up to it afterwards.” She reached for a pen clipped to her shirt.

Stiles almost knew the routine by heart now. Check vitals, check machines and check motor response. Are you feeling any pain? Do you remember your birthday? Do you know where you are?

He knew the standard hospital questions almost as well as he knew the standard police questions.

“Stiles,” Melissa started, “you can just nod yes or no. Do you know where you are?”

Stiles nodded. “Hospital,” he breathed quietly.

Melissa nodded, confirming the location even though it was an obvious answer considering how many time Stiles had been here. “And do you know what day it is?”

Stiles thought for a moment and then shook his head. He sometimes measured time by the amount of stubble Derek was sporting but he didn’t think anyone would appreciate him trying to make a 3, 4, 5’oclock shadow joke at the moment.

Melissa just smiled at him. “That’s alright. You’ve been out for almost two days. Not a coma, just
sedation,” she added quickly when Stiles eyes widened in alarm. The word ‘sedation’ must have caused a negative reaction on Stiles face because Derek opened his mouth to say something but Jackson jumped in first almost like he’d been on the edge of his seat waiting to let it out.

“You almost blew up the operating room.” Jackson blurted out.

“Jackson!” Scott rebuked while Stiles blinked in a daze, not sure if he’d heard right. Was it the drugs making him hear things now?

“What?” Jackson replied, fixing Scott with an unapologetic stare as he kept his fingertips touching Stiles inner elbow, careful of the needle. “It shook the entire building!”

Stiles flapped his hand, lightly smacking Derek’s arm for attention as his thoughts tumbled about in his head like an unbalanced washing machine. The headache was growing. “I…what?” His raspy voice made the other men wince and Derek shook his head sharply, commanding the other two to shut up with his eyebrows.

Thankfully, Melissa cut in before Stiles could say anything more and took the water from Scott and handed it to the patient. “We can deal with that later. First thing's first. Look side to side for me sweetheart,” she coached, pulling out a pen light and shining it at his face. Stiles winced at the bright light but did as he was told, looking left then right. “Okay, good. No increased sensitivity to light, pupil dilation normal, eye color normal,” she spoke out loud as Scott made a note on his file and Stiles sipped at the water slowly, feeling the ache in his head start to mellow. “Now how do you feel? Any aching in your jaw or stomach?” She reached out and put light pressure on his jaw with her fingertips and then repeated the action just under his chin.

Stiles frowned at her and shook his head. He sort of hurt all over like a giant throbbing bruise but he only suspected his jaw would hurt if he’d gotten punched in the face. Which he might have been. His memory was a little fuzzy. Okay, a lot fuzzy, but it sounded like she was checking to make sure he hadn’t turned or something, which was dumb, because of course he hadn’t.

“Alright, and any headaches?” Melissa went on. “Regular or magically related?”

Yes, always, Stiles thought numbly to himself. “A little,” he rasped in his normal volume and wow was that tube made of sand paper? Stiles turned his frown on the Wolves and Derek guided the water glass back up to Stiles mouth, urging him to drink. Stiles took a small slip wincing as the cold water hit the back of his throat again. “What happened?” he asked finally. Melissa’s expression softened into the motherly, wonderfully bedside mannered nurse that had been there when he’d been sick or was being woken up in one of the waiting room chairs. Her voice was calm and kind as she asked, “What do you remember?”

Stiles fell quiet thinking back and sorting through his blurry memories before the scream of the sirens and the giant aching pain that was his entire body. He had to close his eyes for a moment to school his mind into quieting its normal chaos, taking deep breaths to quiet it like Lady Marabeth had taught him.

“The Ley Lines,” he started quietly, feeling the urge to clear his throat. Derek tipped the glass up again and Stiles took a longer drink as he thought. “We started fighting.” Jackson frowned, taking his hand away from Stiles crossing his arms over his chest as a flicker of remorse flashed over his face. Stiles felt his head start to clear a bit more and tasted the iron on his tongue from the morphine. “Then… I used magic?” He rubbed his forehead to quell the latent headache and let out a tense breath. “Definitely used magic. Everyone was fighting, um, I remember getting really mad--” he cut himself off and looked up, fear taking some of the color from his cheeks and his hand scrambled for Derek’s wrist. “Christ that's right. I got bit.” Derek’s jaw clenched and he squeezed the younger
man’s hand. “What did I do?” Stiles voice cracked and died to a whisper, honey brown eyes wide and shadowed with dread. “Please tell me I didn’t cause a natural disaster or something.”

Scott shifted on his feet, looking hesitant. “Not really a disaster,” he defended. “The field got kind of torn up though. All the lights blew.” Stiles groaned and Scott went on, putting a smile on his face. “On the plus side you chased Valid’s Nest away!”

Stiles just groaned again but with a little more gusto.

“Coach is going to kill you.” Jackson added helpfully.

Derek glared. “Shut up. You two are not helping.” He didn’t take his eyes of Stiles. “We don’t have to do this now,” he said in a slightly more growl-free voice. “We can wait till you feel up to it.”

Stiles was shaking his head even as Derek looked at Melissa for support. The motion hurt something fierce, but it was all he could do. He wished it was just Coach Finstock he had to worry about but his memory was spotty at best right now and if he had a blackout period while working magic – lacrosse field destroying magic – he knew he was in deep shit.

“Stiles, maybe you should rest some more,” Melissa started, keeping an eye on his monitors and noticing his heart rate was going up. “Your body has been through a trauma and you need to relax in order to recover. In fact,” She said, looking at the three men, “I think it’s about time for everyone to step out and get some fresh air, right? So you all-”

“No,” Stiles interrupted tiredly, rubbing his eyes till he saw spots. “It’s fine. I’m fine. Where is everyone?” He asked, rubbing his eyes some more.

Derek let his thumb rub back and forth on Stiles wrist, settling back down after trying to convince himself that Melissa was right about all of them leaving. “Still around. You’re only allowed two visitors at a time.”

Stiles glanced at the three wolves with a raised eyebrow and took another sip of water.

Scott flapped his hand carelessly and shrugged. “I work here.”

“Convenient,” Stiles smirked and his friend grinned sheepishly. “Everyone’s okay?” Amber eyes sought out Jackson whose pained cries still echoed in his head, and the mans hand went instinctively to the bloody patch of fabric on his side where the rip in the shirt exposed healed but slightly pink skin.

Jackson nodded solemnly. “I’m fine. Just took a while to heal.”

Stiles pressed his lips together. “Did anyone grab the knife?” Jackson shook his head in the negative and there went the idea of testing to see what the hell had been on the blade. “Damn.” Stiles muttered. He touched the front of his neck, wincing at its tenderness. “The others?” He asked, hoping he’d been the only one admitted to the hospital.

Derek shook his head fondly at his Lupas fretting over the pack members he couldn’t see. “Chris, Allison, and Boyd are running a perimeter around the hospital grounds. Isaac and Danny are sleeping in the waiting room and Erica’s in one of the Packs private rooms helping Lydia clean up. Ethan’s been talking to the hospital security staff and I think Peter skulks around the break room when he’s not in here.”

Stiles winced slightly. “My dad?”
“Grabbing a quick nap in one of the other rooms,” Scott replied and damn it had been a good idea for the hospital to assign the Pack accommodations here. It saved so much trouble. “Should I go wake him?” his friend asked.

Stiles shook his head. “Let him sleep. God knows he’s as uncomfortable in a hospital as I am.”

“Melissa said you’re healing fast,” Derek mentioned, running his fingers through Stiles hair and eliciting a content sound from the younger man.

“Though you really shouldn’t be talking so much,” Melissa warned with a motherly glare. “But yes. You’re healing remarkably fast.”

Stiles smiled tiredly and wiggled his fingers. “Magic tattoos and morphine are wonderful.”

“Speaking of morphine,” Melissa muttered, reaching over and giving Derek a slap on the shoulder. “Stop that, Derek.” Stile looked over at the startled Alpha and noticed that spider web thin lines of black were vanishing from his skin. He fixed the older man with a scolding look. Melissa shook her head at the both of them with an exasperatedly fond smile. “Thank god I don’t have to lie to the doctors about supernatural healing and pain draining anymore.”

Had turning Beacon Hills into a supernatural Haven made their jobs easier? Yes, Stiles had no doubt in his mind. Had it made it harder. Yes, absolutely. Would they change it now that it was so? Not a chance in hell.
Could have, would have, thank god for magic

Chapter Summary

Stiles rolled his eyes. “Derek, no. I’m not doing the whole self-deprecating thing so don’t give me that look. This is not a pity party.”

“You just apologized for being in the hospital,” replied Derek in a low tone.

“I so did not,” Stiles argued. “Though, well, maybe by extension I did, but-!”

Chapter Notes

IF YOU ARE READING THIS THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR NOT GIVING UP ON ME! I had a long move to a new home and just got my internet set up this week. I'm SO SORRY for the wait on this update, I feel just horrible T.T I did keep writing however so I'll be able to crank out a few chapters on this as well as my other fics pretty quick, I just need to do some edits and such. thank you for sticking with me my lovely, lovely readers! Let me know what you think <3

No Beta

Derek’s thumb brushed over the bandages holding the needles in place on Stiles hand, careful not to press too hard against the instruments. “If the doctor says it’s okay you can check out in the morning and I’ll take you home.”

Stiles heart swelled hearing the affection in Derek’s voice when he said ‘home’ and the look in the man’s eyes as he simply imagined putting this part of the evening behind them. “Good,” Stiles replied with a pointed, grateful nod. “I suppose you’ll try to make me stay in bed for the next few days though.”

Derek smirked knowingly, shoulders shaking with a laugh at the idea of it. “Try being the key word.”

Melissa cut in with her typical no-nonsense I-know-better-than-you-in-this-area attitude. “The doctors and I are prescribing at least an additional day of bed rest once you’re out of here Stiles,” she said. “Let the rest of the Pack start looking for the Nest and you focus on fully recovering.”

Much to Melissa’s exasperation a light frown passed over Stiles features as his concern sparked back up. “We don’t know where they went?” It had been two days! He didnt really expect any trouble from them so soon but he thought Derek or at least his dad would have been on that shit.

It had been a Pack decision to hold off on the search party after all so Scott was quick to explain if only to keep the small flash of guilt off his Alphas’ face. “We wanted to wait and see if you were okay.” Stiles blinked at him and he quickly backtracked. “I mean, we thought it was best to see if-
"wait for you to wake up. Because of course you were going to wake up."

Derek rolled his eyes at the True Alpha and Jackson elbowed the curly haired man adding with a huff, “You and Charlotte know these guys best but you said you didn’t want to get her Nest involved with the fighting so…” He let the sentence hang in the air as sound reasoning.

“Was she here?” Stiles asked, curious as to how she’d faired in the trigger rich setting.

“When you were first brought in,” Derek nodded. “The hospital smell was getting to her.” Which made sense. Vampires – even socially polite ones- still had a hard time when there was literally fresh blood around every corner. "She's called a few times. Carla too, but she's been minding the bar in case any of Valid's Nest get thirsty."

Stiles felt a crick in his neck as he thought about all the crap he now had on his plate apart from listening to Mama McCall and getting himself better. He tipped his head to the side only to hiss, the reason for his hospital visit suddenly making his entire side throb and burn. A tired lament escaped him when he reached up and his fingers brushed over a thick bandage. Neck to shoulder the whole area felt like the giant bruise and torn muscle that it technically was. Everything was raw and stiff and he wondered just how bad this scar was going to be despite his magic helping it along. He could feel it slowly simmering through his tattoos like warm rivulets of water running along his skin. The healing symbols were just a little warmer than normal and Stiles hoped they’d get him back on his feet soon.

With another softer sigh Stiles let his head fall back against the pillows as he stared up at the white ceiling. “This is such a mess. I’m sorry guys.”

That was probably the last thing they expected their Emissary to say and Scott and Jackson in particular looked like they’d been slapped. “What?” they both said only to have Derek let out a frustrated exhale.

Melissa grabbed the two younger Werewolves by their arms and started to drag them towards the door. “Come on boys. Let’s leave the Alpha to deal with that little gem. Stiles, you push that call button if you need anything. I’ll send the doctor in shortly. Derek; deep breaths.”

Once the door was shut Stiles got the full brunt of Derek’s bitch face and if that wasn’t an ‘are you fucking serious right now’ face then Coach Finstock’s codename wasn’t Cupcake.

Stiles rolled his eyes. “Derek, no. I’m not doing the whole self-depreciating thing so don’t give me that look. This is not a pity party.”

“You just apologized for being in the hospital,” replied Derek in a low tone.

“I so did not,” Stiles argued. “Though, well, maybe by extension I did, but-!”

“You don’t have anything to be sorry for,” Derek interrupted, expression closing off. “The whole point of all of us being there was to keep that from happening. We had a whole meeting about it beforehand.”

Stiles made a face and shrugged. “Well, some things are out of our control, Der.” He fixed the man with a perceptive look. “And I know you well enough mister that I know you had a freak-out and blamed yourself anyway.” Derek glanced away and Stiles looked smug. “It was no one’s fault.” He paused, considering for a moment. “Well, it might have been Valids’ fault. I blame him for lots of things.”

“It was our job to keep everything calm,” Derek breathed out, shutting his eyes with a frown. “If we
had just left sooner you-.” Well, Stiles was having none of that and he reached out with a still
incredibly sore arm and slapped Derek’s cheek. Light a tap as it was it startled the guilt-ridden
Werewolf like he’d just been bopped in the nose with a newspaper.

“We were walking away,” Stiles reminded him. “If Valid was responsible for the Ley Lines then I
don’t think even he knew that was going to happen because as big a ham as that asshole is he doesn’t
like magic and I sort of did leave him with some nice mental scarring the last time I went nuts on his
Nest.”

“Stiles, he was provoking everyone-” Derek argued.

Stiles shook his head. “Because he’s a spiteful asshole, Derek. He’s old and cranky and crazy and
it’s just what he does.”

“So he was expecting us to just-?”

Stiles stopped Derek with a small snort of laughter. “Who expects to get hit by lightning?”

The older man let out another huff and slumped in his chair begrudgingly. He knew that this was an
argument he wasn’t going to win. “Alright. Fine. It was an accident,” he said, running his hands over
his stubble tiredly. “I still want to rip that guys face off though.”

Stiles shrugged his good shoulder, giving his lover a little smirk. “Get in line,” he said as he drained
the last bit of water from his glass. “Now, onto more serious matters. What did Jackson mean when
he said I almost blew up a room?”

Derek frowned in a way that meant he was thinking of the best way to organize a particularly
delicate sentence. He finally got up from the chair and sat on the side of the bed, taking Stiles hand in
his. He traced along his fingers and palm and Stiles grew a little nervous. “Okay Derek, seriously
with the suspense here. Is there like, serious structural damage? Did someone lose a limb or
something?” Oh Jesus, he really hoped not. The doctors here were awesome.

Derek shook his head but he didn’t smile at the half attempted joke so that had Stiles worrying that it
wasn’t actually a joke at all and he’d just made a very crude remark and had to go and apologize
profusely to a new amputee.

Derek finally opened his mouth just as Stiles was about to strangle him for his silence. “You might
have to ask Amy about what happened.” The younger man gave an inquiring tilt of his head. “She
was one of the nurses,” Derek explained. “She’s an Abath apparently. She was called into your
surgery room when you…” he shrugged one shoulder and Stiles raised an eyebrow, making a
motion with his hand to continue. “She said your magic went a little haywire and some equipment
exploded.”

“…Jesus,” Stiles muttered, blinking in astonishment. There were medical bills and then there were
medical equipment bills.

“We think it might have shattered the viewing room window,” Derek went on unhelpfully.

And the property damage just kept coming. It actually explained why his stomach and chest felt
rubbed raw at the moment though. The containment sigils would have immediately shut down any
outburst of magic that happened while he was unconscious but not before some serious mojo
happened to activate them. Magic users could do crazy things when they weren’t in control of their
faculties. “Was anyone hurt?” Stiles asked, dreading the answer.

Derek shook his head. “No. No one was seriously injured. It wasn’t as bad as Jackson made it
sound. Some of the doctors got a little scratched up but they underestimated just how much your
tattoos were already doing when they started working.”

Stiles made a face, wincing. “Right. I’ve got quite a bit of juice running through these suckers,” he
admitted, looking down at the sharp pale lines etched onto his hand and arm.

“I told them to stay away from the tattoos on your chest and stomach,” Derek went on, looking a
little guilty. “I didn’t think there were any dangerous ones.”

“There aren’t really,” Stiles affirmed. “I mean, I tried to make it so that I was only dangerous if I’m in
control. But I guess I was a little…I don’t know, charged up? After everything. I have a few runes to
keep me from physical harm but I’ve never really tested them when I was unconscious.”

Derek nodded slowly, staring at their clasped hands. He understood that; being so on edge that even
in a state of unconsciousness your body reacts in a defensive manner. Years ago if he’d been woken
up from a dead sleep he woke up shifted and snarling, claws already raking through the air. He
couldn’t imagine adding near sentient magic tattoos to the mix.

“Was it the Ley Lines?” Derek asked. “Amy seemed pretty freaked out when she found out you’d
reacted like that to them.” He looked up at Stiles, the dark shadows under his eyes a little more
prominent. “Is it really that bad to feel them like you do?”

Stiles heard the hidden question in there and shook his head. Was it getting bad? Was this normal for
people like him? Was there a ‘normal’ for people like him?

“The stronger someone’s connection to the magic is, the more sensitive they are.” Apparently those
weren’t the words of reassurance Derek wanted because his expression drew in, brows furrowing
and he huffed out a sharp breath and Stiles panicked a bit. He started to say Derek’s name when the
man tipped forward and pulled him into a firm kiss. It wasn’t passionate, or heated, or much of
anything other than a desperate need to feel the touch of skin on skin, feel the warmth of another
breath. Derek pulled away a moment later and bowed his head over Stiles so their foreheads touched.
Stiles waited for him to speak, knowing that whatever Derek wanted to say was important.

“Lydia almost screamed last night.”

The hazel green color was clouded with worry and Stiles felt a whine in the back of his throat that it
was too sore to let out. “Oh, Der…” Stiles started. “Hey, I’m okay.

“It brought you to your knees, Stiles,” Derek reminded him, voice low. The intensity of his gaze
forced Stiles to meet his eyes. “Do we need to worry about this?”

The question made Stiles sigh and he carefully pushed himself up on the pillow, waving Derek off
when the man tried to help. He waited till Derek settled back on the bed before he spoke. “I think…it’s something we need to keep an eye on. It’s been in the back of my mind ever since Kira told me it
was happening in Japan. I sort of put it on the back-burner though, what with Valid making an
appearance.” Derek waited for him to continue and Stiles closed his eyes, shaking his head. “I don’t
know, Der.” He admitted as his expression dropped. “I think…I have a feeling it’s all connected
somehow. I just can’t put it together.”

A warm hand cupped the side of his face, tilting his chin up and an even warmer touch brushed
across his lips. Derek kissed him once, twice, the second longer and with a small nip of teeth. Stiles
opened his eyes again and Derek touched their foreheads together before he nuzzled him fondly.
“We’ll put it together eventually,” he assured him. “Just like old times.”
There was a soft knock on the door and Amy poked her head in a moment later. Her long pale hair was pulled up into a graceful bun now, accentuating her long, slender neck. She held her clipboard clutched to her chest as she stepped inside and closed the door. Derek noted that there were shadows under her eyes made all the more prominent by her pale skin. “Hello Mr. Stilinski, Alpha Hale,” she said, nodding respectfully to the both of them. “I’m glad to hear your finally awake. I’ve asked the doctors to assign me as your primary nurse till your discharge.”

“Stiles, this is Amy Malay, the nurse who was helping out.” Derek introduced.

Stiles looked the creature up and down, amber eyes calm and serious. “Hi, Amy. Derek was telling me you got called in during my surgery.”

Amy nodded, meeting his eyes for only a moment before she focused a little bit to the side. Those who sensed magic tended to do that with him. “Yes, I did assist. Is now a good time to go over your surgery details?” Stiles nodded and Derek angled his body a bit so he was facing more towards the Abath but still sitting next to his Mate. “Well, overall it was a success,” Amy started fresh. “You’ve been under anesthesia for two days to keep you still and calm and you were administered antibiotic prophylaxis post op for any infections.” Her pen tapped on the clipboard absently as her pink eyes roved the notes that she had no doubt gone over a hundred times. “The initial plan was to suture the wound and then do a full thickness skin graft to help repair the damage and minimalize the scarring but it looks like your magic actually started to debride the wound in the ambulance. It brought us the time we wouldn’t have had otherwise.”

Stiles could only nod along because he’d never paid much attention to how his injuries were treated. Ironic considering how many times he’d been in a hospital but around his fifth surgery all the medical terms had started blurring together. He did have a tally of how many stitches he’d had in his life though. 407. Go him! But....

"What happened in the operating room?" Stiles asked.

Amy shifted her weight like she was becoming uncomfortable as she turned one of the pages over. “The surgeons had already repaired the worst of it but when they started the grafting your wards triggered to the supposed threat, in this case, the surgeon’s tools and medical equipment.”

Stiles pressed his lips together in embarrassment. “I take it that’s when you were called in?”

Amy regarded him for a moment, her pale eyes studying his every reaction as though he were under a microscope. “Yes. I was called in to dampen the residual magical output while your healing wards started working.” Her eyes flickered down to Stiles chest and grew cautious. “I do not think I need to tell you that your…containment wards were activated.” Stiles shook his head with a sigh. That’s what they were there for after all.

Amy nodded after a moment and took a few steps forward till she was at the foot of the bed, reaching for the chart that hung off the rail. She flipped through some of the pages, reading the notes Melissa and Scott had made. “Your body is healing itself rather quickly. Not as fast as a Were but faster than a human,” she told him. “Since you are a magic user I don’t believe you will have any side effects of the Vampire bite, but I do caution you to keep an eye on any sudden mood swings or fluctuation in pulse and temperature for the next few days.”

Derek nodded. “We’ll keep an eye on him.” Amy jumped when he spoke like she’d forgotten he was there and Derek resisted the urge to sigh.

“What about nerve damage?” Stiles asked. “My arm’s a little numb.” Derek could hear the actual worry in his voice and he gave Mates hand a small squeeze.
Amy didn’t look as worried. “You’ll need some physical therapy to regain full motor function but with the rate you are healing, I don’t think you’ll have any permanent damage.” Her expression darkened, pale brows furrowing and she pursed her lips. Stiles felt a scolding coming on yet she remained silent, just staring at him and Stiles started to feel awkward.

“Um, Amy, you might as well just say whatever it is you want to say,” he told her.

Her frown growing, Amy pressed her lips together till they were white and she finally let out a little huff of air. “Alpha Hale told me that before the attack you had experienced a shift in the Ley Lines. I felt it myself but not nearly as much as you apparently did. I am only a half-blooded Abath so I can only imagine what you experienced, but the level of power that it took to activate not only your defensive wards but those containment circles…” her eyes drifted to his torso again and if possible, she grew paler. Stiles could sympathize on some level. Deaton had pretty much the same reaction when he’d seen them and his tattoo artist had to be heavily fortified with alcohol to even consider putting them on his skin. “…Well, it’s alarming,” Amy finally admitted. “That bite literally tore out part of your muscle and if your magic had not been working to heal you, you would have died within minutes.”

Next to him, Derek stilled, a shiver running down his spine. Stiles instantly looked at him and gripped his hand hard. “Thanks Amy. Um, can I have visitors now?” He asked, forcing his tone to be light. “I’m pretty sure if I don’t see Lydia soon she’s going to start stress shopping online.”

Amy was very much aware of the tension she had caused the Alpha and she nodded quickly. “Yes, of course,” she said. “I’ll let them know they can come in. Someone will be back to check on you later.” With a hurried nod to the both of them, her skittishness returning and making her every movement more of a twitch, she excused herself and shut the door quietly behind her.

Chapter End Notes

Thank you again! I luff you all.
Peter snorted indelicately, rubbing his hand over his face and letting some exhaustion seep through. He sighed and rolled his neck. “Well, I’d say that meeting could have gone better but at least we know we don’t like them.”

“I already didn’t like them,” Stiles muttered.

Derek beside manner had greatly improved over the years as Stiles had pointed out many a time. No longer did he brood in a dark corner or creep in through windows –though it was a favorite past time-, or glare an alarmed confession out of injured people as to what happened and then wish them well with little more than a growl and a ‘don’t be stupid again’.

Derek was now sitting back in the chair and holding Stiles hand again while the rest of the Pack made an appearance. It seemed that everyone was going to ignore the ‘two visitors only’ rule because Derek didn’t leave his side as they came in two at a time. Lydia and Erica were first, dressed in the hospital scrubs Melissa had provided. They’d been waiting outside the door giving their Alpha and his Lupa some time alone before Amy stepped out and told them they could go in. The Abath gave their red-haired Banshee a wide berth.

The two women spent a solid five minutes berating Stiles for worrying them half to death and giving him equally strong hugs. Erica gave him a kiss right on the lips and told him if he had really wanted to put wind up Valid’s skirt he should have let her throw him off a building and skipped the mini tornado. Lydia looked mournfully at the bandages on Stiles neck and arms and she gently traced his tattoos while Erica pain drained till she was satisfied even though Stiles told her he was already high enough on painkillers.

Isaac and the Sheriff were next. Isaac looked like he’d aged a few years and the Sheriff a few years more but the relief on both of their faces when Stiles grinned and waved at them was palpable. The Sheriff had been surprisingly even-tempered but Stiles knew that while he’d been unconscious for the last two days his dad had been compartmentalizing. He did that with work often enough that it had become second nature when his work had invaded his personal life. Stiles made a mental note to make his dad a cake or something.

Isaac didn’t seem to want to leave and kept making excuses to stay, even going so far as to offer to sweep the room, until Derek stood up and gave the Beta a hug. The action seemed to shock Isaac as
the tension drained out of his shoulders and Stiles smiled at him. “Isaac, make sure my dad goes home and gets some food, okay?” Stiles asked and Isaac blinked back tears, his anxiety finally breaking. He swallowed and nodded as Derek pat his back and let him go.

“Come on kid,” the Sherriff said, putting an arm around the younger man in a perfectly fatherly manner. “I need about ten cups of coffee.”

“Two!” Stiles chimed in as his father led the chuckling Beta out the door.

Chris was in next and his visit was more of a status update than anything else. The area around the hospital had been secured and the security guards had been briefed to contact them or the police if they noticed anything. Parish was on duty and half the station was practically vibrating out of their seats waiting for a lead. Stiles had replied that he didn’t think any of Valid’s Nest would try anything for a while and Derek was inclined to agree. Valid had looked frankly pissed off when he’d made his getaway and it hadn’t been directed at the Pack. The Hunter nodded professionally and the Alpha and his Lupa did the same, but Chris gave them a small smile at the door. “Glad you’re okay Stilinski.”

Stiles made a little noise when the door shut and looked at Derek. “I knew he liked me.”

“Pretty sure Allison told him about your new weapons and he wants to borrow them.” Derek voiced, raining on his parade.

Boyd came in with Allison and the Huntress kissed Stiles on both cheeks and gave Derek’s shoulder a firm squeeze. She told them both to get some rest because they had a lot of work to do and Stiles I can’t believe you jumped on a Vampires back and tried to strangle him. She also commented that he was lucky he’d had his arm guards on or he’d be shredded wrist to elbow.

Stiles glanced over at the table at his personal effects that he’d been stripped of before surgery. His bat lay propped up in the corner of the room and he guessed one of the humans had thought to pick it up. It had probably been his dad. The man could respect whatever weapon Stiles could wield without killing himself. Even through a plastic bag Stiles could see that his clothes were a mess and there was no way he would be able to salvage that sweatshirt. Sure, it wasn’t the original red sweatshirt, but it was sentimental anyway. Under the tatters of his bloody clothing lay the arm guards and gloves, also in their own special bags. The metal plates had indeed been clawed to hell but hey, that’s why he wore them. It wasn’t the first time someone had come at him with claws or teeth too sharp for their own good. And he had spares.

He and Boyd fist bumped and Derek snorted at their bro-like affection. “Don’t know how I’m going to survive in Montana without all this excitement,” the taller Werewolf said.

“Love you too, Danny,” Stiles grinned as he rubbed his reddening cheek.
Ethan told them in so many words that he and Chris had put the fear of god into the security staff if anyone tried to mess with them while they were here they would bring down a rain of fire—some of them literally because hello; Ifrit on staff, thank you. Stiles worried they were turning the hospital staff into soldiers in scrubs and hoped they all took some time off once he was discharged.

Peter was the last to come in and say his piece. Maybe he’d been forced to wait in the break room too long with nothing to do but watch tv, at least that was Derek’s guess, because he just looked pissed. The eldest Werewolf walked over to the bed, pulling a chair with him and sat down.

“I am exceedingly happy you’re not a Vampire,” he commented casually.

Stiles nodded like he was taking the other man seriously. It was a damn good thing to be happy about after all. “Me too. I mean I already burn in the sun.”

Peter snorted indelicately, rubbing his hand over his face and letting some exhaustion seep through. He sighed and rolled his neck. “Well, I’d say that meeting could have gone better but at least we know we don’t like them.”

“I already didn’t like them,” Stiles muttered.

“You certainly did your share of antagonizing,” Derek reminded his uncle.

Peter was quick to defend himself. “I responded in kind,” he said with a one-shouldered shrug. “And if the rest of his Nest shares the same juvenile attitude I’m pretty sure the rest of the town will chase them out themselves. Trying to tear each other apart was the best part about meeting with them.”

Peter reached over to the table and started to pick through Stiles things, shifting the heavy bags till he got to the tray underneath that held the things deemed ‘not gross enough to be quarantined.’ What he ended up grabbing was a slim metal case. He looked at Stiles and shook the case that let out a light rattle and threw an herbal, spicy scent into the air. Stiles looked at it longingly but shook his head. “Can’t smoke in here,” he said in an apologetic tone.

Peter shrugged and set the box on the table again. “Well, guess my nephew will just have to keep taking your pain then.”

Derek growled just as Stiles eyes sharpened and he looked down at their clasped hands just in time to notice faint dark lines vanishing from the older man’s hand. “I’m on morphine!” Stiles cried out. “If you guys keep taking any more pain I’m going to pass out!”

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The others popped in to check on him every now and then along with some nurses but Stiles finally convinced all of them to go home. "You’ve all been here for two days and most of you are wearing scrubs," He said because they certainly couldn’t walk around the hospital all bloody and covered in viscera. "You are going to confuse the patients and I love you but you’re hovering. Shoo." There was no way he was going to die in the hospital anyway. The staff loved him too much and there was no way he was lucky enough to die lying in a bed with the love of his life holding his hand. That was too boring and idealistic for the likes of them.

“I thought they’d never leave,” Stiles groaned, tilting his head back on his pillow. It smelled like
bleach and white and he was already a little uncomfortable from the gaping hole in his neck.

“Can you blame them?” Derek asked with a tired smile.

“No,” Stiles huffed. After all the nights he’d spent camped out on waiting room chairs he really wasn’t one to talk about hovering. He turned to the side a bit, careful of the needles on his arm. “You can go home too you know. I’m pretty sure most of them are going to end up at the Pack house and eat all the food if you’re not there.”

“Pretty sure that’s why the food’s there in the first place,” Derek replied.

Stiles stared at Derek for a moment as though trying to read his mind. “You’re staying the night.” It wasn’t a question.

“Yes.” It wasn’t a discussion.

“These chairs are super uncomfortable,” Stiles went on with a little careless wave of his hand.

Derek smirked and stood up, walking around the bed and reaching for the long curtain hanging from the ceiling. He pulled it aside with a sharp yank, revealing a spare bed. “All of our rooms have two beds now.”

Stiles pouted though he was impressed with the VIP (Very Important Pack) treatment. “Aww, you don’t want to share now that I’m awake?” He patted the very narrow space at his side and gave his boyfriend his best set of puppy eyes.

Derek was unimpressed though Stiles knew he’d weighed the options. Derek was a closet cuddler. “We both know hospital beds can’t fit two people.”

“Not true,” Stiles argued. “I did it with Erica once.”

Derek paused for a moment and then shook his head. “I don’t even want to know.” He walked back across the room and flipped down one of the lights, settling the room into half darkness. The hard white light gave way to a more mellow, soothing ambiance and even that little change had Stiles feeling better.

Stiles held his palm out face up till Derek laced their fingers together. In the dim light the shadows under Derek’s eyes looked a little less severe.

“You know,” Stiles said after a moment of silence. “Apart from the huge magical fuck up, I think that meeting went pretty well.”

Derek raised an eyebrow in surprise. “How do you mean?” he asked.

Stiles glanced to the side, the corner of his mouth pulling up into a smirk. “Valid’s still scared of me.”

Derek looked like he was fighting a smile as he struggled to look serious. “As he should be.”

Stiles snorted. “Shut up.”

Nights passed slowly in the hospital, that much never changed. Even high on pain medication time seemed to drip by like molasses. Stiles was tired and wanted nothing more than to pass out but the mere fact he was in a hospital and aware of it made him nervous. He’d never had one good memory in a hospital and now this was just another bad one to add to the list along with his growing stitches
count. He had to be at least close to 480 now.

Derek wasn’t much help in the sleep department. Even though he’d relaxed into the chair and kept a light grip on Stiles hand his eyes barely wavered from the door. There wasn’t a lock on it but the hospital was quiet enough that he could hear anyone coming down the hall. Stiles wanted to tell the man to try and get some sleep but he knew Derek was just as uncomfortable in hospitals as he was. Hell, almost half his Pack had a hospital phobia.

Derek’s thumb rubbed along the healing scratches on his Mates hand while his other senses roamed outside the quiet room. He heard a nurse rolling a cart down the hall, the old man cough a few rooms down, a mother in the maternity ward singing a lullaby, and even the janitor mopping up something in the break room. He heard all of that with no issue, which explained why he was so stunned when he didn’t hear the door handle turn before it opened.

At first glance, the woman who opened the door in was not really remarkable in any way. She had the looks of a woman in her 50’s who was aging not gracefully, but well. She wasn’t particularly tall, nor striking, and her hair gray, braided over her shoulder. Her eyes were not particularly keen behind her small spectacles and she wore a plain white blouse and long tan skirt with sensible shoes and no jewelry except for a small clear stone hanging on a long chain around her neck.

When she stepped over the threshold Derek understood why Stiles grip tightened.

The moment her foot came down gravity increased. The air choked with the iron smell of magic and power, a force like a loud base speaker only a few feet away playing so loud it rattled bone. The lights above flickered and the force converged on Derek’s senses. He found himself returning his Mates grip while his wolf let out a high keen and sank to its belly in fear. Derek’s eyes flashed red and stayed that way, staring at the woman who shut the door quietly behind her.

The pressing sensation lasted for only a moment though because Stiles magic had a visceral reaction to the foreign aura. His wards shot up the moment she entered. His eyes shown a bright pale violet, wide and alert and the stillness in the air sat upon their bodies like they were at the bottom of a deep lake.

The older woman glanced around as though she could see the protections that had just flooded into the room surrounding the human and the Werewolf, but she didn’t even raise an eyebrow.

“Mr. Stilinski, Alpha Hale,” she spoke amicably, nodding her head to them slightly. “I am Elder Elena Bennet of the Druidic Order. I believe we have some things to discuss.”

Chapter End Notes

Dun dun DUUUUN!
Watch yourself

Elena’s cold gaze didn’t waver at the distrustful expression the young man settled on her. “Are you also aware that you have a rather long, negative list compiled against you as a result of your continuous negligent actions?”

Derek’s hand twitched in his. “He hasn’t-,”

Elena interrupted him without the slightest hesitation as though he hadn’t spoken at all. “You called a lightning storm into being two nights ago that spanned over 20 miles of Beacon Hills.”

Stiles winced at her tone. “20 miles, huh.”

Chapter Notes

No Beta, please forgive me for typos.
And, yes, I went with Genim as his real name. Don't hate me for falling back on that. I may change it later.

“Where to begin,” Elena sighed, frowning as she stood at the foot of Stiles bed. Stiles swallowed, feeling his heart hammering. Elder Bennet. He hadn’t seen her since he’d been in New York and living with Lady Maribeth but all at once he was back in the Hedgewitches living room. Maribeth was seeking comfort by holding a potted plant, their Witch had vacated the room complaining of a headache, and a shifter they had teamed up with had tucked herself in a corner, eyes glowing a steady green. Druid magic was like that sometimes, taking the earth around you and turning it against you, from the earth to the very air you breathed. It was tapping into the magic that was the life’s blood of everything. There was a reason there was an Order to protect that type of power.

“How did you get here?” Stiles voice was quieter than he would have liked, as though a blanket was in the air in front of him. It was more than he had managed the first time he’d met her.

The older woman took a slow deep breath and brought her hand up to her temple, rubbing away a headache. A fraction of the pressure in the room seemed to lessen. “A car Mr. Stilinski, but that is far besides the point.” When she lowered her hand she crossed her arms. “Were you not warned after your last encounter with this particular Nest, Mr. Stilinski, that we would be observing you?”

Stiles swallowed, all of his senses on high alert. He could only imagine how Derek was feeling so he forced his heartbeat to quiet as he’d learned to do so that those with enhanced hearing couldn’t hear it stutter with a lie. The real purpose was control and he hoped the steady rhythm would soothe his
Alpha. “I was.” He was totally and terrifyingly aware of Big Brother Druid.

Elena’s cold gaze didn’t waver at the distrustful expression the young man settled on her. “Are you also aware that you have a rather long, negative list compiled against you as a result of your continuous negligent actions?”

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Elena interrupted him without the slightest hesitation as though he hadn’t spoken at all. “You called a lightning storm into being two nights ago that spanned over 20 miles of Beacon Hills.”

Stiles winced at her tone. “20 miles, huh.”

Elena’s expression didn’t change. “You must also be aware that the Order has very strict rules about dislocating the natural current of the weather and climate on such a scale. What you did last night was a blatant disregard of those rules.”

Stiles felt Derek move at his side. “You don’t understand-,” the man tried to say but Elena cut him off sharply, holding up her hand.

“Be silent,” she ordered, and Derek’s mouth snapped shut. A growl rumbled out from the Werewolf’s chest as his back straightened in indignation.

Seeing someone assert their power over his Alpha made Stiles frown and he laced his fingers with Derek, feeling claws scratch his skin. “I have a right to explain myself,” he insisted. “There is a Nest of Vampires that-,”

“We do not care about your Pack politics,” Elena cut in offhandedly. “Nor whatever treatise you seek to make or fights you intend to start with other supernaturals. Our concern is that since you returned to Beacon Hills the Ley Lines have been fluctuating erratically, as every nature-based magic user within one hundred miles knows. Last night a disruption in the currents was registered and it was not at all tempered by the storm you conjured.” Her tone was full of disapproval and reprimand.

“I had nothing to do with the Ley Lines shifting,” Stiles argued, his heart monitor picking up a tempo by his side. This woman was just as pretentious and abrasive as he remembered but now he had the task of not only keeping his but Derek’s temper in check as well.

Elena’s eyes narrowed. “And yet since you have been here the World Tree has been more active than it has been in the last 20 years,” she snapped.

Stiles wanted to mention that the reason for that was because three of his Pack, including himself, had an unnatural connection to that damn tree for reasons having to do with the insane bathtub sacrifice Deaton had suggested all those years ago. He kept his mouth shut though because if the Order didn’t know about that then he sure as hell wasn’t going to tell them.

Elena seemed to relax a bit when Stiles didn’t try to speak again. “We have warned you twice now that there are penalties for abusing the balance of power in the world, Mr. Stillinski.”

“But he’s a Spark,” Derek tried to argue again when he found his voice. “He can’t help it if-“

“A Spark with the capacity to tap into Druidic earth magic, Alpha Hale,” the Elder cut in sharply, eyes narrowing. “All the more reason for him to exercise absolute restraint. We approached him once before in New York when he was under the tutelage of the Hedgewitch Marabeth Homly and told him that if he were to continue ignoring the rules set in place by the Druidic Order, by his very mother, then-“
It was Stiles who interrupted this time and it was his vitals monitor that suddenly emitted a shrill high pitched whine and then frizzed out, sparks flying out the back of the machine as all the lights went dark. Stiles' teeth were clenched and Derek lost feeling in his hand. The smell of anger rolled off the Emissary in waves as his eyes narrowed at the elder woman. Powerful Druid or not, his mom was still a touchy subject.

“I told you I won’t pledge any sort of loyalty to the Druidic Order,” Stiles said, his voice low with tempered anger. “The only allegiance I have is to my Pack.”

The tattoos made visible by the short-sleeved hospital gown pulsed light blue on his skin as if in warning. Elena saw this and drew a tense breath, her back straightening. “You may not be part of the Order but we are responsible for your actions in a way that you don’t seem to fully understand. Your abilities are too volatile to be left unchecked, Mr. Stilinski.”

“You made that perfectly clear the last time, Elder Elena,” Stiles grit out with measured calm. “And if you’re really watching me as closely as you say then you know I’m doing everything I can to control myself.” The tattoos underneath his bandages glowed with their pale light, illuminating the stark white bandages and the healing red scratches on his arms. He wondered how long they had till one of the hospital staff came to check why his vitals had suddenly been lost.

The older woman’s eyes flickered across the markings, her expression unreadable. “And we acknowledge the effort, but it is meaningless if you still cannot exercise perfect control.”

Stiles couldn’t help but scoff, even as his anger abated. “I think I’m controlling it quite well considering. I’m literally making this stuff up as I go. Even the local Druid is just throwing out wild guesses.”

A small peak of irritation passed over Elena’s face. “Ah, yes. Alan Deaton. We understand he was the one who trained you when you were in high school. Unfortunately, you made the choice to seek council from Marion Morrel.”

Stiles shifted on the bed, suddenly uncomfortable with how intrusive this was becoming. “I have a lot of contacts in the magical world. Not all of them are savory but they can be helpful. Marion has given me good advice and she put me in contact with someone who would help me when Deaton refused to.”

Elena looked unfazed. “Deaton would not have been prepared to foster your talents, Mr. Stillinski. I believe only a member of the Order would have been sufficient. If your mother had still been alive she would have-,”

“Don’t,” Stiles ordered sharply, and the lights above flickered.

Elena glanced up at them and then back at Stiles, her expression remaining cool and collected. “We would hate to see you stray down a dark path.”

Derek let out a low, threatening growl, his wolf’s hackles rising as a glint of fang peaked out past his lips. “Are you implying that Stiles would-?”

Elena shot him a frigid look. “Do not interrupt Alpha Hale. This matter is far beyond you and your input is not required.”

It was Stiles turn to bristle now and he wished he weren’t attached to these damn wires or he’d be throwing his IV stand right at Elena’s head. He snarled, “If you tell my Alpha to be quiet one more time, bitc-!” and was cut off when a tree branch slapped loudly against the hospital window, rattling
the glass but not enough to shatter it. The wind and picked up outside and Stiles noticed the Earth and Air runes on his hand were glowing blue-white. He clenched his fist and met Elena's glare while the wind died down and the glow faded. The tender containment wards on his torso warmed on his skin filling his chest with steadily boiling rage.

“Do you see how your emotions are controlling your powers?” Elena asked in a hushed tone. “I will tell you now that I am quite upset with these proceedings and yet my magic is calm.”

“You mean other than that massive freaking aura you brought in with you?” Stiles’ eyes stung as he felt the pale violet flicker with his amber color. “Well I’m sort of pissed off myself, Elena and my magic is pretty calm too, considering you’ve come here unannounced, after hours, and disrespected my Alpha. Maybe the fact that I only kicked up a little wind outside just indicates how much better I am at this than you.”

Instead of getting angry like Stiles feared a moment after he spat out those words, Elena just uncrossed her arms and leaned over, hands gripping the end of the bed frame. Suddenly her unnoticeable eyes blazed, staring right through Stiles. “The power you can channel is almost limitless. The Order has a right to be concerned.”

Stiles drew his legs up under the covers, crossing them so they were far away from the woman and he could tell that Derek was itching to place himself between him and the Druid but the wolf was really trying to not make things worse for his Emissary, or let the younger man make things worse for himself.

“I have never knowingly abused my powers,” Stiles insisted. “But if I or my Pack is in danger and something happens by accident I can’t just-,”

“You are too powerful to have accidents, Mr. Stilinski.” The silver-haired woman had a thunderous look in her steely eyes. “Don’t you understand that your very existence puts the balance of magic in this land in turmoil? If you continue to break the laws that have been put in place to keep that balance, the Order will be forced to act.”

Derek was standing now, hand drifting up to his Mate’ chest where he lay his palm flat over his heart, keeping him from moving and effectively putting himself between Stiles and the Druid as Stiles knew he would. “Is that a threat Elder Bennet?”

Elena scoffed, throwing a scowl at Derek, though she didn’t snap at him to stay out of it this time. “Don’t be absurd. It’s merely a warning. Genim,” the use of his name, his real name, especially in the softer tone Elena had suddenly adopted, had Stiles full on body flinch. For a moment he was too stunned to even react. “I implore you to see reason. Allow an experienced Druid of our Order to teach you. You would only remain with us until we are certain that your magic no longer poses a threat to-,”

“He’s not going anywhere with you!” Derek all but shouted. Stiles hand snaked out and grabbed the back of the man’s shirt just as Elena’s eyes flashed over her spectacles and she bit out a harsh word. A bright burst of light went off right in front of Derek deflecting off of the ward Stiles had put in place around them. Eyes glowing bright red, Derek slid back and crouched lower, protective of his injured Mate. Stiles' eyes flashed behind his Alpha's.

Elena blinked and stared at the both of them for a moment before she tucked a strand of graying hair behind her ear, her shoulders straightening. “I was speaking to your Emissary, not you.” She spat out the word Emissary now like it was something sour on her tongue. ”And the choice is his, not yours.”
“I’m not going anywhere with you,” Stiles repeated, voice low and calm.

Elena blinked slowly and the enormous magical pressure around her shifted from uncomfortable to overpowering. It was just for a second but the whimper that left Derek’s throat couldn’t be unheard as his wolf shivered inside him. Elena kept her eyes fixed on Stiles. “As you know, Druids are able to tap into the great powers of the Ley Lines, the magic of the very earth. It is the domain of Druids to keep this stream of magic flowing where it should. We do not use this power lightly, but if needed, we will use it, and the combined abilities of the Order are not something to be taken lightly. We’ve watched over the world for centuries and understand it better than you could ever claim to. I’m not threatening you, Genim, but do not test us.”

“I’m not going with you,” Stiles said again, trying to keep his voice from shaking. With fear or rage, he couldn’t be certain.

Elena just stood straight and brushed her hands over invisible wrinkles on her shirt. All at once she was the unassuming woman in plain clothes with plain looks and a general aura of average.

“Mr. Stilinski,” she said, “if you keep up this reckless behavior, you’re not going to have a choice.”

Having said her part, she turned and walked back out the door as quietly as she’d come.

Chapter End Notes

No one is going to like Elena, but....well, I'm going to try to make her seem rational. She'll be the bad guy we love to hate. Even though she's not really bad. Yet. maybe?

Villains are people too.

(((Edit 7/7/16: And I use the word 'villans' in a loose sense here because some people have been offended that I think this way??? Elena isn't really a evil villain in the traditional sense. She's not a bad person. She just has a job to do and she had dedicated her life to this job so she wants to do it well. Keep in mind she's had to deal with Stiles for almost two years now and he is NOT an easy person to discipline. So, like, it's okay to bash Elena, but maybe don't go so far as to wish death upon her? I mean, it's only been one chapter of her guys.....)))

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“Maybe telling her that you were better at magic than her might have pissed her off a little,” Derek mused and Stiles gasped, offended, while the rest of them groaned.

Chapter Notes

I think people forget Derek is the Alpha sometimes. Flex those leadership muscles Der bear!

no beta.

Thank you for waiting for this update guys! Been a rough couple of weeks for me.

Surprise visit from some old faces in the next chapter!!!!!! *sneekyface*

Exhaustion darkened the shadows under Stiles eyes even though they glowed unnerving violet while his tattoos simmered blue under his skin like the after image of a TV that had turned off moments before. The machine to his right was letting out a constant high-pitched whistle interrupted by a few stuttered jolts every now and then while his readings showed impossible numbers. He sat cross-legged in the bed with his elbows on his knees, mouth pressed into a tight line.

Perhaps the opposite of exhausted Derek was livid. His eyes flashed red intermittently while he went back and forth between pacing the length of Stiles bed and brushing his hand over his Mates’ tense shoulders. He was angry. Angry and on edge and he didn’t know whether he wanted to break down the door and go hunt that woman down or wrap himself around Stiles and breathe in his scent for the next hour. All he knew was that his hands were shaking, his wolf was incensed, and he was not happy about it.

It took a series of minutes for the lingering magic to die down and the room slowly aired out of its vacuum state while Stiles familiar magic dampened the tension and took back the space around its vessel. There were no words spoken to break the silence. They simply waited for time to resume its normal flow and someone to come check the machine. Neither of them bothered to push the alert button hanging off the railing.

A familiar patter of soft soled shoes alerted them of someone coming down the hall at a determined pace. Derek’s eyes flashed up to the door just before it opened. Melissa’s face was the first thing they say. Her eyes widened when she took in the scene before her, two pairs of odd colored stares flickering in the dim light. “What happened?” she asked, immediately rushing to the side of the bed to tend to the machines. Derek’s unease was almost palpable. “What’s…why is-?” She peeked around the back, sniffing the air and frowning at what she saw. “Why is there a burn mark on the back of this monitor?”

Between Stiles and Derek it took about two minutes to explain what had happened and about one
minute for Melissa to call Scott.

“I don’t know how she got past security,” Melissa breathed fiercely, hands busy checking Stiles over. Pulse, bandages, pupil dilation, pulse again, was he feeling okay, Stiles don’t put up a front, now, follow my finger back and forth. Her cheeks were red with righteous anger. “I swear I am going to rip reception a new one when I-!”

“Melissa.” Stiles placed a hand over hers where she was straightening IV lines that didn’t need to be straightened.

Melissa huffed but she stopped fiddling with everything, finally sitting on Stiles bed and taking a moment to simmering while she pet Stiles hand anxiously. “She got close to you when you were in the hospital, Stiles. This is my territory and I need to know I can keep you kids safe when you’re here.” Her words were fiercely protective and Stiles saw a glimpse of his favorite mama bear under her worry.

A small smile twitched the corners of Stiles mouth. “Territory?” God help whoever tries to fuck with a nurse's patients.

Running a hand through her curly hair, Melissa looked up with a questioning glance and then chuckled dolefully. “Hush, it’s a matter of pride.” Her smile waned a bit and she glanced towards the window where Derek stood silhouetted by the lights from the parking lot, arms crossed and glaring outside like he was ready to rip it open. The outside that is. Every line of his body radiated tension and while he’d stopped pacing, he hadn’t said a word since she’d come in the room. Melissa shared a concerned look with Stiles. If she was feeling upset about the intrusion she could only imagine how Derek was taking this.

“Der,” Stiles called softly and Derek turned around quickly, a statement to how wired he was. His eyes were still colored red under dark brows set in a frown. “Come’er.” Stiles beckoned with a roll of his wrist. “Let me help.” The man strode quickly across the floor and had Stiles wrapped up in his arms in less than a second, inhaling his scent past the medicine. He smelled metal and herbs and the shampoo they shared.

Melissa moved to give the two of them more room and Stiles brought his arms up around Derek, letting out a deep sigh, his own body relaxing noticeably at the contact with the Alpha. “That was unpleasant, huh.” Stiles really, really wished he’d been able to spare his wolf that but was honestly surprised at how well Derek handled himself.

Derek chuckled bitterly in response. “I wanted to throw up. Don’t tell anyone,” he added. When a Druid asserted their control over natural magic it tended to wreak havoc with the supernatural creatures in their direct vicinity. Stiles had witnessed a fully matured shifter forced into changing because of the overwhelming sensations coming from an angry Druid making a point.

So he laughed softly through his nose and ran his fingers through Derek's thick hair. “You’re secret’s safe with me.” He winked at Melissa over his shoulder and the woman shook her head with fondness.

“Well, your reaction explains what happened downstairs,” Melissa told them, hip braced against the side of the bed. “I was talking with Nurse Malay when she started feeling sick all of a sudden. Then one of our anesthesiologists passed out and a doctor threw up in a trashcan.” All of them were supernatural creatures and she’d never seen Derek like this apart from the time they’d gotten a Skype call from a bandaged up Stiles and he rattled on about how if he never saw a Rusalki again it would be too soon. This was the ‘I really hate feeling so fucking helpless’ Derek Hale. “My beeper went off about your vitals spiking a few minutes later.” Her eyes filled with sympathy as Stiles continued to
rub Derek’s back, hand laced with glowing lines. “Can I get you anything Derek? Water or something?”

Derek shook his head at the offer and Stiles glanced up at the nurse. “He’ll be okay in a little bit,” he said, reassuring both of them. “His wolf got rattled by the amount of magic she put out. The pure energy like that can mess with a Were’s instincts.”

“What about you?” Melissa inquired, reaching up and putting the back of her hand to Stiles forehead. “You feel a little warm.”

Stiles shook his head and then nuzzled Derek’s neck. "Same effects. My magic is trying to compensate."

They waited just shy of ten minutes, Melissa sitting in one of the guest chairs just watching over the two young men with a subtle, protective, motherly aura swirling about her. Soon, Derek, who had only just stopped his limbs from twitching, muttered onto Stiles neck. “Packs’ here.” A thundering of footsteps from the hallway had all three of them wincing—because, hey guys, still a hospital—and the door flew open with a bang for which Melissa hissed at them. The rest of the pack tumbled inside in various states of undress with various levels of bed hair. Lydia had at least put on a coat and boots but underneath Stiles could tell she was wearing a nightgown and the Sheriff had his gun out. The look on their faces said they had been expecting the worst but when they saw that no one had died, or was unconscious, or in any other state than awake and alive, a flicker of relief washed over them and was quickly replaced by anger and worry. Predictably, the questions came in a sudden rush.

“What are you both okay?” The Sheriff asked immediately.

“Fine, dad,” Stiles assured the older man. “You can put the gun away. You too, Ally.”

Lydia looking ready to shove an explosive down someone’s throat if the hand in her pocket was anything to go by. She slipped past Melissa and stooped over Stiles, eyeing his entire body like she was checking for an injury that wasn’t there when she left. Scott pushed in right behind her, jaw tense. It was his mother he hugged first, looking reassured by the sight of her. “What did that woman say?” he was in full-on pajama pants and old t-shirt that Stiles recognized from their high school days.

Erica’s eyes were flashing as she and Isaac regarded the room with mistrustful eyes and Jackson was frowning so hard it looked like it hurt. “Derek, what’s wrong?” Isaac asked, noticing his Alpha trying to loose himself in his Lupa’s embrace. That comment just started a whole new barrage of questions. Is he alright? Why does it smell like a copper factory in here? Did that woman do something? Derek, can you hear us? Stiles, why does Derek look sick?

Much to their surprise, Stiles just started laughing tiredly and Derek let out a rumbling growl. “Shut up guys, I’m recuperating.”

Scott, bless him, blinked. “…Did she stab you or something?”

Derek groaned while Stiles laughed again and even Melissa chuckled, shaking her head at her son. “Nobody got stabbed, Scott,” Stiles told his friend. “And believe me, if you guys had been in the room you’d be furry faced and throwing up in the corner.”

The Alpha’s voice went even lower, half mumbled into his chest. “Don’t talk about throwing up…” Stiles remembered his promise and shut his mouth.

“So no one is hurt?” Jackson asked tensely, glancing between Stiles, his Alpha, and the machine
Stiles was hooked up to.

“Just a little shaken up,” Melissa answered. “But no worse for the wear.” Danny put a hand on his friend’s shoulder and Jackson released a slow breath of relief.

Lydia let her hand trail down Stiles back lightly, as much to be comforted by the contact as to get a better sense of the man's energy. She glanced around, her eyes seeing something, ears hearing something that none of the others could. After a moment she scowled, looking a little green around the edges like Derek did. Stiles noticed as he glanced up at her. “Can you feel a disturbance in the force, young Padawan?” He teased with a little smile.

The redhead glanced at Danny who gave her a small nod. His magical instincts might not be as strong as hers or Stiles but even he could feel that something was off. “I can…feel the residual magic in here if I concentrate.” Lydia made a face, nose wrinkling and she rubbed her arms through her jacket. “It’s uncomfortable.”

The Sheriff moved past the younger group and walked over to his son’s bedside, a position Lydia relinquished by taking a step to the side. He still looked tired but the brisk drive to the hospital with Isaac had pumped a little adrenalin into him. He’d probably had more than two cups of coffee as well. “Talk,” he demanded, not at all fazed by seeing every one of his son’s tattoos lit up over his skin, or the normally amber eyes flickering pale purple.

Stiles continued to rub Derek’s back but started to explain. “Her name is Elena Bennet. She’s one of the 11 Elders of the Druidic Order. Basically, she insisted that the Order should ‘train’ me properly,” he rolled his eyes, “so I don’t become a danger and turn into an evil Druid hell bent on destroying the world and enslaving the human race with my powers.”

“She did not say that,” Derek snorted. Stiles pat the back of his head and shushed him.

Allison’s father was absent from the group along with Ethan but the Huntress was texting on her phone, mouth set in a grim line and Stiles didn’t doubt she was mass texting the entire Sheriffs department. “Are we putting out an alert? See if she’s still in town?” Stiles could see the wheels in her head turning, wondering how they’d split up the tasks of tracking down all the supernaturals who’d suddenly made it on their Most Wanted lists. Stiles hope the deputies were getting really nice Christmas bonuses.

However, a search party would do them no good in this instance. Not with the Druid, and Stiles wouldn’t put that magical cosmic burden on any of them. “Listen guys, I’m not gonna’ lie, I hate that she’s here, but it would be pointless trying to find her. She’s not allowed to do anything unless I do something wrong. The Elders have to follow the ‘balance’ rules as well and that means no action is taken against a magic user unless they’ve royally fucked up.” His dad was too relieved to chastize him for his language.

“Causing a tornado wasn’t fucked up enough for them?” Jackson asked skeptically.

“It wasn’t a tornado,” Stiles corrected, not that he was entirely sure because his memory was still choppy. “And I think they just thought it was rude of me to disrupt the weather patterns for 20 miles. I’ve gotten warnings but I don’t think I’m in the doghouse yet. That being said,” he added, glancing off to the side, "Elena doesn’t like me much.”

“Maybe telling her that you were better at magic than her might have pissed her off a little,” Derek mused and Stiles gasped, offended, while the rest of them groaned.

“I said my control was better, thank you," Stiles corrected in good humor, "and if you’re feeling well
enough to be recounting word for word then maybe I’ll just stop sending out calming juice, hm?”

Tattoos dimming just a fraction, Stiles loosened his arms from around the Werewolf and Derek lurched a bit, his claws coming out and pricking Stiles back. In fact, all of the wolves flinched a little, realizing that the reason they hadn’t been feeling the effects of rampant Druid magic was because Stiles was covering it up with his own familiar aura.

“Shear to god, Stiles, you are such an asshole,” the Derek growled, the sparse food he’d eaten in the last two days threatening to come up.

Melissa took pity on the older man. “Be nice, Stiles.” The blue glow on Stiles skin returned quite easily and Derek’s growl faded to a rumble. The light-hearted conversation seemed to calm the Pack a little but not much, after all, something had done that to their Alpha and they were not pleased.

Danny stepped forward, sliding up next to Lydia. “Do you think she would confront anyone else in the Pack?” He asked, apprehension lacing his tone.

“Unlikely.” Peter had slipped in last and was standing by the doorway as though on guard. He still had jeans on but was wearing an obviously looser nightshirt. He looked too smug to have been asleep when he got the call. As he walked over to the side table by the bed and reached for the pile of Stiles things, he continued, “Druids of Elena’s caliber tend to deal only with other Druids, like Stiles. From what I understand the Elders only get sent out to meet with extreme cases, again,” he smirked, motioning to their laid up Emissary as he tossed him the small tin of cigarettes he’d denied just a few hours ago, “like Stiles. If we were to get approached by any of them it would be one of the Orders 22 Apprentices and even then they’d have to have a good reason for it.”

When the small tin landed on the blanket Derek pulled away from Stiles enough so that he could glance over his shoulder at his uncle and pick up the tin without looking at it. “Have you been talking to Deaton?” he asked, disapproval and disinclination apparent. He handed the tin to his Lupa who took it with grabby hands and a muttered ‘ohthankyousweetbabyjesusdrugs.’

“Please,” Peter scoffed. “Stiles isn’t the only one who uses the library at the Pack house.”

“Um, speaking of Deaton,” Isaac stepped forward hesitantly, scratching the back of his neck. “He found out you’re in the hospital. He didn’t think it was a good idea to visit, but I got some texts from him. What should we tell him?”

“It could be worth it to bring another Druid in on this,” the Lydia admitted, carefully gauging Stiles for a reaction. “At least while you’re in here. He might have some ideas.” Almost as soon as she said it she regretted the words and rolled her eyes and huffing, “If he decides to share them.”

With a fortifying breath, Derek slowly pushed himself up and slipped into the spare chair beside the bed though he kept his hand touching Stiles knee. He didn't look nearly as peaked as he had before but all his color had yet to return. “What do you think, Emissary?” He asked once he'd settled.

Herbs and spice drifted through the air as the end of the cigarette burned between Stiles fingers. The young man shook his head, leaning back against his pillows with short huff. Honestly, he was surprised that Deaton hadn’t been here when he woke up, hovering and frowning emotionlessly down at him. “This was an attack on your territory, Alpha.” He breathed out a puff of smoke. “What do you want to do?”

It was an amazing how a natural show of reliance did wonders for Derek’s spirit, especially when in the span of 30 minutes or so he’d been on an emotional roller coaster from hell. Stiles deferring to his Alpha about how to handle the ex-Emissary took a weight off all of their shoulders because that was one less choice that was being laid at Stiles feet at the moment. One less thing he had to worry about.
Each one of them was even grateful to Peter for thinking to get the man something to calm his nerves and maybe chase some of the exhaustion from his eyes.

So, with a secret smile, Derek nodded and looked to the Pack with a flash of bright red in his gaze. The betas felt their spines straighten to attention. “Isaac, you don’t have to say a thing to Deaton, even if he asks. Peter, as a Sentinel, you can deal with him. Go down to the clinic first thing in the morning and fill him in. Ask him if he knows anything more about that Ley Line shift two days ago.”

"How detailed should I be?" Peter asked innocently.

His nephew fixed him with a steady look. "Use your best judgment." A dangerous notion, but a well played one. Deaton would realize that as well.

Peter managed to look smug and proud at the same time, a little smirk pulling at the corner of his mouth. "And if he starts being his nosy self?"

Derek's eyes narrowed. "Tell him if he has any questions he can call tomorrow afternoon. Not a second sooner.” If anyone wanted to sleep in there was no way in hell a vet was going to ruin it for them. Isaac nodded and Peter gave the younger man a mock salute so Derek continued down the line. “Ethan's out on patrol so, John, I think you should brief the guys at the station. Tell them to arm themselves accordingly to deal with Vampires. Allison, you rendezvous with your dad. We've got some traps in the Preserve that need checking so get some officers to go with you, preferably ones with enhanced senses. Erica, Boyd, Jackson,” he said to the more riled up looking of his Betas, "You don't have to stay long, but hit up Carla and Charlotte's place and sniff around. I doubt you see Valid or his Nest walking around but keep an eye out anyway. Lydia, Danny, I want you in the library researching anything you can about Vampires and what use they might have for the Ley Lines. We might have some info about Valid's history in there that's been overlooked. Cross-reference what we have in the Argents Bestiary." The Banshee and the human nodded, sleep now the furthest things from their minds now that they had their orders.

John didn’t have any arguments either and nodded his head sternly with the others. “You’re staying here tonight?” he said, not so much asking as assuming.

Derek nodded his head. “Anyone who wants to stay at the Pack house can, including you and Melissa. Isaac and Scott will escort you guys home if you decide otherwise.”

“I've got a bed set up in the break room,” Melissa announced with a wave of her hand. “Some of the staff are still dealing with that magic surge that woman put out earlier so I want to stay on call.”

“I was sleeping at the Sheriff's place anyway so we can just head back together,” Isaac offered. John gave him a thumbs up and the curly haired Werewolf grinned shyly.

Derek nodded agreeably. “Sounds good. Scott, you can join Erica and the others then. If the doctor is comfortable with it I’m bringing Stiles home tomorrow morning. We can come up with a plan for tracking this Nest down and making sure everyone who can help is brought up to speed before things get worse.”

“And the Elder?” Danny asked.

A firm look settled in Derek’s eyes. “Until we know more, I don’t want any of you engaging this woman or trying to find her.” Some of them looked like they were about to argue but Derek shook his head. “It’s like Stiles said, she can’t do anything right now. She’s low on our list of priorities. We’ve got Vampires targeting the Nemeton and no idea why or how. We have too many innocent
people in this town who rely on that magic for their well-being to focus on something else.”

“Should we be doing extra patrols in the preserve around the Nemeton?” Allison asked, phone still out and opened up to the conversation she was having with her dad. “Dad’s out there now with Ethan.”

“They’ve been doubled since we found out about Valid’s Nest,” the Sheriff reminded her.

“Lot of good that did,” Jackson muttered, and the Sheriff didn’t even scowl because he agreed.

“We should recheck the wards we set up at the county boundaries,” Lydia reminded them. “It makes no sense that nothing was tripped when they came in.” She looked at Stiles, a little bit of wounded pride surfacing in her eyes.

Derek didn’t think that it was a good idea for two humans to trek all the way out to the border to mess with any sort of magic in the middle of the night, especially while their main magic user was laid up, and it must have shown on his face because Lydia went on. "I figure Dany and I can go out tomorrow afternoon. The moons almost full so the light will be good even as evening rolls around."

"I'll tag along," Jackson said, volunteering his enhanced senses.

Derek nodded in approval. He finally looked at Stiles, both of them all business and on equal footing. He squeezed his knee lightly. “You have anything to add?”

Stiles had almost finished his cigarette by then and removed the smoldering stub from between his lips. The stress lines on his face had smoothed out again and a little color had returned beneath the blue glow of his tattoos. “Scott, Allison,” his fellow sacrifices gave the Emissary their full attention when he spoke. “Let me know if you start feeling anything odd from here on out. You two are connected to the Nemeton as well and even if you can’t feel the Ley Line shifts, you might be able to sense if something’s wrong with our World Tree.” The two of them nodded grimly. “Dad,” he looked at his father. “Has the station gotten any tips about more Vampires around town since i’ve been here?”

The Sheriff shook his head. “Nothing substantial from any of the residents so far. Barry checks in every once and a while and he’s mentioned some movement outside the borders but nothing he wasn’t able to scare off with his shotgun. It looks like they might be laying low, maybe outside of town.”

“Or waiting for Stiles to get out of the hospital,” Erica muttered, eyes flickering with unease. Boyd put his hand on her shoulder and Jackson nudged her side till they went back to their human color.

Next to them, Isaac was sniffing the air with a confused look on his face and finally his gaze settled on the vitals machine behind Stiles. He blinked in confusion. “…Did you fry more hospital equipment?”
"Sorry," Stiles said again, holding still while Melissa fit him with a basic sling to keep his injury from being aggravated. "I just needed a little something to take the edge off." Jesus, was that what addicts said? He really hoped an Anonymous acronym meeting wasn't in his future.

Stiles was so ready to get the hell out of the hospital the next morning that not even a healthy dose of oxycodone was enough to dull his excitement. He sent Derek to the cafeteria for coffee and doughnuts and almost tripped over his pants trying to pull them on while Nurse Malay tried in vain to take his temperature. After the third attempt failed Stiles just started blurring out numbers to mess with her. "98.7 Celcius. 105! The freezing point of nitrogen!" Oxy apparently made him loopy and boy he loved the Abaths pretty pale hair it was like spider silk.

Melissa, who'd come into the room just in time to see her fellow nurse throw up her hands in frustration, rolled her eyes. "Settle down, Stiles." She steadied him before he toppled over as he reached for one of his boots. "Your dad will kill me if you break something on the day you're being released."

Stiles stilled for what might have been two seconds, or at least long enough for Amy to stick a reader in his ear and push a button. She noted his temperature had leveled out from last night with an exasperated but uniquely equine huff and let him be about his business without asking for another blood draw. There had been so many blood draws. "I wouldn't be surprised if he had a pool going at the station," Stiles mused. Other than a sore arm though Stiles wasn't feeling all that terrible and he was pretty sure he could keep himself from breaking anything before he got out of the hospital at least. His neck and shoulder ached and the scratches on his arms stung, but his healing runes were doing their job. Even the Abath was a little impressed by the work they’d done so far.

"Alright Mr. Stilinski," Amy said, glancing over his chart one more time. "The doctor has agreed to let you go home, but only on the condition that you rest. Aftercare is very important for the next few days."

Stiles was in the process of trying to shove his foot into one of his boots again without bending over and he managed a nod. Melissa, not too far from smacking the back of his head, knelt down and adjusted the boot so that it was upright. "Settle down." She helped him get his other boot on, tying up the laces for him. "Derek is driving you home so you have to wait for him anyway. Sit and take a breather." Stiles groaned and didn't so much sit as lean against the edge of the bed and fidget.

Amy stood in front of him while Melissa helped him ease into the sweatshirt. He was able to forgo a shirt thanks to Scott who had been the best bro ever and brought him one of his old zip up sweatshirts from home because lifting his arm too high made him want to vomit. Where the soft fabric slid over his exposed tattoos Stiles felt like burlap was running over his skin instead. Amy wisely averted her eyes from the now dull brown lines and the ancient symbols they formed. "If you have any questions please call the hospital right away," she insisted. "And please try to moderate your various forms of painkillers."

A flash of guilt crossed over Stiles face. Apparently just opening the window hadn't been enough to
rid the room of the smell of his cigarettes. "Sorry. Can you still smell it?"

Amy didn’t look happy, but neither did she look displeased and she pressed her clipboard to her chest, pale eye staring straight at him. "A little," she replied truthfully. "I understand why you did it, and it is not unpleasant, but it's still against the rules."

"Sorry," Stiles said again, holding still while Melissa fit him with a basic sling to keep his injury from being aggravated. "I just needed a little something to take the edge off." Jesus, was that what addicts said? He really hoped an Anonymous acronym meeting wasn't in his future.

With a scant shake of her head Amy shifted on her feet. "As I said, please be careful with your prescribed medication."

"Thank you, Nurse Malay," Melissa cut in, knowing Stiles would be given this speech many times over the next few days. "We'll keep an eye on it."

Feeling a little like he was being released from rehab instead of a hospital, Stiles groaned and looked longingly at the door after the pale haired woman left. Melissa tapped his cheek so he looked her in the eye instead. "Listen to what she says. Be careful with your medication and I want you to promise me you'll take proper care of that bite wound. If you don't, I will stop by every night to change the bandages myself and my bedside manner will become nonexistent. I've got Derek on speed dial so I'll know if you're cheating."

Stiles deflated a bit and gave her his best puppy eyes in the face of her mom stare. "I don't cheat."

Two cups of coffee in hand, Derek opened the door in time to see Melissa bark out a laugh. "Ready to go?" Derek inquired.

"Der!" Stiles cried, practically falling into the man and snatching the cup from him. "Yes. Lead the way, oh leader mine." He tipped back a large swallow of the dark caffeine and practically purred. Derek had cooled it down with an ice cube for him, that beautiful man.

"Easy on the caffeine, Stiles," Melissa reminded him. "The painkillers are going to make you tired and you need the rest." Stiles just took another rebellious sip.

Amused, Derek shook his head and took a bag from Melissa that contained Stiles old clothing and the weapons. He leaned over and kissed the older woman's cheek. "Thanks, Melissa. Are you going home now?"

The dark haired woman smiled at Derek, stress and laugh lines on her face mixing together. "Sure am. I've got an appointment with the sandman."

Derek's trademark worry-brow made its appearance. "Do you want me to send someone over to-?"

Melissa's laughter interrupted him and she and shook her head. "Oh, honey, don't worry. My house is almost as supernatural proof as the Pack house." This was true. The Mc Calls, Stilinskis, Argent, and Hale houses were probably the most fortified in Beacon Hills. Minus Barry's house. That gargoyle was super fond of his rock salt and sawed off shotguns. "Stiles," Melissa added, pointing at the young man. "Rest. No fighting monsters for at least a full 48 hours."

Stiles complained, leaning on Derek with a tired sigh. Derek pressed his lips to the younger man's temple. "But what if they attack me first?"

Melissa didn't budge an inch. "Then you rely on your incredibly capable pack to protect you. I'm serious, Stiles. You're lucky a bite that deep didn't turn you." That sobered the young Emissary
quickly and he nodded.

After placating Melissa and a few of the other hospital staff, Derek led Stiles out to the parking lot. Someone had brought over his Camaro last night – He suspected Boyd had driven from the lack of tire track marks so they set out for the Preserve at a leisurely pace. Stiles fidgeted in his seat, switching the radio station a few times before turning it off and just rolling down the window. Fresh, crisp morning air filled the car and Stiles breathed in deeply. “Hospitals suck,” he breathed out, finally going still with his arm curled to his chest.

Derek gave a little hum and Stiles scrubbed a hand over his face and a sullen growl slipped past his lips. “I mean, the smell, the lights, the noise….it just…it sucks.” His hands dropped to his lap where his fingertip traced over the little scratches on them that hadn't even warranted bandages. "Every time I go in there it's because of some traumatic experience. I mean, some people go in because they need to get their tonsils removed, or to donate blood, or like…they sneezed and think they have the plague. Why can't I go in for something like that?’"

The Alpha raised an eyebrow from the driver's seat. "You want a plague scare?"

"Something normal," Stiles grumbled under his breath.

"Your dad said you were in there for falling out of a tree when you were a kid,” Derek reminded him, trying to be helpful. "That's pretty normal."

"I was jumping off the roof and I hit the tree on the way down," Stiles chuckled softly.

Derek turned to give his mate a cursory glance. "...Why were you jumping off the roof?"

"I don't know," Stiles huffed. "Scott was there. Something to do with a dare. We were not 'truth' pickers."

Derek tried to suppress a grin. "And you wonder why you never get normal hospital visits."

Closing his eyes and leaning back in the seat Stiles let out a light chuckle. “You know what I mean.”

Derek nodded again, an understanding smile pulling at his lips. “I know.”

The rest of the drive was spent in comfortable silence, Derek slowing down for speed bumps and pot-holes that looked just a little too big till Stiles told him he wasn’t made of glass and if they wanted to get home today he was going to have to stop being an old lady driver. Derek most definitely did not hit the next pothole a little vindictively and Stiles did not cry out and punch Derek on the shoulder. Either way, Stiles didn't mention the speed again.

Along the way they drove past a road that was a straight shot view to the school's sports field. Stiles eyes nearly bugged out of his head when, even from two blocks away, he could see the damage. "Oh my god, was that rubble?" He'd be lucky if Finstock didn't try to hunt him down and beat him with a lacrosse stick.

"Don't worry about it," Derek said reassuringly. "Ethan says a Leshy and a few Fae are on the clean up crew so it'll be fixed up in no time.” Stiles just let out a pained groan and pulled the recline lever on his seat, dropping him out of sight.

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planned out by Derek and the rest of the Pack. The Hale family had the right idea building in the woods. The way the trees surrounded the house like a natural wall, the inclines of the hills and the small lake peeking out in the background all had a soothing, calming effect. Stiles seemed to relax the closer they got and when the house was finally in view, its dark shutters and little details becoming visible, Stiles let out a relieved breath.

Derek caught sight of a familiar lineup of cars trailing up the drive as they rolled past. He saw Lydia's expensive little two-seater and knew Danny would be with her, Scott's bike, Allison's truck, Boyd's car and Jackson's as well. As he went farther however, he noticed one car that he hadn't seen before parked right behind Lydia's. Stiles noticed too as they drove past. “Whose is that?” he asked curiously, blinking at it tiredly.

Derek frowned. “Parish?” He'd really ever known the man to drive around in a squad car though, and he walked almost everywhere else or rode his bike. He didn't even know if the man owned a car.

Stiles yawned. "He doesn’t really seem like a Mazda kind of guy.”

Seeing that his Mate was coming down off his high and adrenaline Derek quickly parked in his usual spot. “Doing okay?” He asked once he grabbed the bag from the back seat and helped Stiles out of the car.

Stile smirked sleepily. “No worse than I was at the hospital.” He kissed the man’s stubble-ridden cheek. “You are an excellent chauffeur.” Arms around each other's waists as much for support as for contact the two of them started walking towards the house, eager to feel their feet hit the solid wood porch.

Relaxing, however, was not in the cards just yet. The screen door opened with a familiar smooth creak and a young woman with long black hair stepped out. She had no shoes on but that didn’t stop her from taking a running leap off the deck onto the ground before the screen door even had a chance to close behind her. Derek froze on the spot, hazel eyes blown wide in shock. At his side, Stiles wore much the same expression, mouth hanging open. “Holy...Cora?”
Playing along with Stiles like it was second nature—seriously, it was second nature and it was not even funny, Derek crossed his arms over his chest and stared ahead at the TV. “I think it's the oxy talking, but if that was really a thing you would not be continuing this train of thought right now. I'm envisioning terrible, terrible things happening to you.”

A sudden bright, blinding smile broke out over Derek's face and he slipped his arm from around Stiles just in time to gather up a handful of his baby sister as she threw herself at him. “Oh my god, Cora what are you doing here!?” Derek laughed, spinning the young woman around in a circle, breathing in her scent.

Far from the sullen, hurting, please get out of my face or I'll punch it teenager they had met all those years ago, Cora grinned and laughed, hugging Derek tightly, rubbing her face into his neck. “Uncle Peter called us yesterday,” she said when he finally set her down on the ground. She immediately punched Derek's chest and he let out a grunt. “I can't believe that you waited so long to let us know what was going on! The hell, Derek?” She then turned to Stiles and her grin grew a bit softer, if not a bit more mischievous. “Hey there, Little Red. I hear you pissed off a Vampire.” Her eyebrows waggled suggestively.

Stiles rolled his eyes and let out a sigh. Peter and his big mouth. “I have pissed off so many Vampires,” he said. Cora eyed the sling and the bandages peeking out from under the collar of his sweatshirt. She caught Derek looking at it as well before they shared a hard Hale Stare which Stiles pretended not to see. After the eyebrow communication was done Cora laughed and stepped forward, giving Stiles a careful hug. Stiles snorted and hugged her tighter, not even caring about the additional pain in his shoulder.

After a moment, Derek swatted at his sister and took her place by Stiles side so neither of the stubborn idiots could hug the other into critical condition. The youngest Hale slid next to her brother and looped arms with him as they walked to the front porch. “Peter never mentioned he was calling you,” Derek said. “When did you get here? Did Laura come with you?” He tried to tone it down but Stiles could hear the excitement in the man's voice. He was happy his sisters were together and out of Beacon Hills, doing their own thing, but he missed them. They all did.

“She’s inside,” Cora replied. “We got here late last night. Lydia and Danny showed up around the same time we did so I didn’t have to pick the locks or break windows or anything. They filled us in
on the old lady druid who broke into your room by the way. What the heck is up with that?” They opened the door and Cora called out, “Frail human in the house!”

A squeal came from the direction of the kitchen and what had to have been a stampede started towards them. “STILINSKI!” Laura came bounding down the hallway at full speed and stopped with enough momentum that her socked feet slid over the hardwood and carried her right to Stiles and Derek. “Baby bro!” She planted a kiss right on Stiles cheek after she rubbed hers against it and did the same for her brother. Laura looked great, equal beautiful to Derek’s handsome. Chiseled features like her brother and stunning hazel eyes. Her hair was as thick and dark as Cora’s but cut shorter, above her shoulders. Stiles forgot how awesome it was to be in the presence of the Hale siblings. It was like basking in pretty. Maybe Stiles was still a little high.

Derek’s voice was fond, his expression fonder. “Already taken over the house?” She was wearing an apron around her waist and there was some kind of sticky batter on her cheek.

Laura winked. “Hey, Pack house is for Pack. Besides,” She added smugly, chin held high. “I’m the older Alpha.”

“Hah. Ha ha ha ha.” Derek deadpanned.

Stiles chuckled at the both of them and reached down to try and grab the bag from Derek’s hand. “Well, I’m gonna’ put this crap away and then come back and mingle.”

“Oh, no you don’t,” Laura cut in before Derek had the chance. Her mom voice was on. She grabbed the bag of Stiles things and handed it off to Cora. “Cora, put that in Derek’s room. Stiles, Der, you guys go relax in the living room. Erica and Scott brought down extra blankets and pillows for the couch and I’ve already started brunch in the kitchen with the others.”

Cora took a peek inside the bag and her eyes blew wide. “Jesus Christ, Stilinski, did you leave any blood in your body?” she looked closer. “And what heck are those? Spiked gloves?” She glanced up, looking impressed. “Lil’ Red indeed.” Derek aimed a kick at her and she scurried off with a laugh. “I better not step on any condoms in your room!” She called as she bounded up the stairs.

“Stick the walls then!” Stiles called up after her. Laura snorted.

"Come on,” Derek said finally hand settling on the dip of Stiles spine. “All your doctors ordered rest, so let’s get you on the couch.”

Stiles couldn’t hold back his yawn and he knew that Derek was all sorts of relieved. After all, if it was hard for him to say no to one Hale, two more being thrown into the mix didn’t give him a chance in hell. “I believe they said bed rest,” he teased, looking at the other man cheekily.

“Ohh, feisty,” Laura ribbed. She motioned for them to follow her into the living room where they found Scott and Erica lounging on the plush armchairs. “Hey, loafers,” Laura said briskly. “Back in the kitchen. There are vegetables to chop.”

Scott pouted and sniffed, a clear sign that he was man enough to resort to crying to get out of vegetable duty. “But onions make me cry.”

“Like a baby,” Stiles added, grinning at his friend.

Scott returned the grin and pushed off the chair. When he was close enough he brought his best
friend in by the back of his neck and bumped their foreheads together in greeting. Apparently, Scott had learned - or been told - that his Werewolf hugs were not meant for injured people. “Welcome home, man. We got the entire Star Wars series as well as the first season of Star Trek, plus the new movies. The one with the cute looking Spook guy.”

Stiles felt his eye twitch. “Spock, Scott. Spock.” Mending muscles or no, he'd strangle his best friend.

Scott grinned crookedly, eyes sparkling. “I know.”

Stiles aimed a kick at Scott's shin and the goober let him land it without even flinching. “Jerk” he muttered.

“Kitchen,” Laura ordered, pointing the way for Scott. “I want you crying over onions by the time I get in there.” Scott gave her a semi-serious salute and scampered off to join the others.

Erica had been watching the interaction with a pleased, Cheshire grin and she slid off her chair with more catlike grace than her pack mate had managed. She reached for Stiles hand once he was close enough. “Come on Batman. You've got at least a day of chillaxing and eating junk food to start on so sit your butt on this couch and snuggle up with your Alpha.”

Stiles raised an eyebrow as he was pulled gently away from Derek. "Nerdathon, junk food and Derek cuddles? You guys are taking this bed rest thing seriously. Did Melissa tell you to bribe me?"

Laura walked over to the couch and punched some life into the mess of pillows. “Are you kidding? First big hospital trip since you got back to B.H.? Vampires running loose? We're pulling out all the stops.”

Erica's nose wrinkled as she grinned at Stiles. "You're so spoiled." She gave his chest a little push with her wolf strength and he fell back onto the couch with a little 'oof.'

Laura reached out and scratched her fingers through Stiles hair out of habit, like a doting owner seeking affection from their favorite pet. Stiles was more than cool with it because it felt awesome. "Cora and I will be here to help you guys out for as long as you need," she told her brother. "If someone's trying to mess with Hale territory, they have to deal with all the Hales."

Derek had his sister wrapped up in a hug as soon as she straightened, scenting her and making up for missed time. “I really appreciate this Laura,” he told her quietly.

Laura smiled gently and rubbed Derek’s back for a moment, letting the scent of family and home wrap around her and her wolf. “Any time, Derek. You know we’ll be here in a heartbeat if you need us.” Derek felt honest to god tears starting to form but he laughed them back, giving his sister a final squeeze before letting go. Laura slapped the side of his head lightly. "But don't wait so long to call us next time doofus." She winked at him and headed back to the kitchen.

Erica had made sure Stiles was situated comfortably with pillows and blankets and a bag of red vines within reach. He pretended not to notice that she was taking away small bits of his discomfort when she rubbed the uninjured side of his neck. With a kiss to the cheek, the blonde smiled at him before she pulled away. “Getting a little fuzzy there Batman. Maybe you and your boyfriend can give each other a shave later if you’re not all passed out in your big ol’ love nest.”

"I'm on too many drugs to be trusted with a razor right now,” Stiles told her. Erica laughed and as
she left Cora came back down the stairs and gave them both a cryptic thumbs up as she side stepped into the kitchen with the others.

Stiles chuckled and made grabby hands at Derek, wincing a little as the motion jostled his injury. “My life is incomplete without my space heater. Come, tend to your poor injured Lupa.”

Derek sat down next to Stiles and propped his feet up on the ataman before he pulled one of Stiles legs over his own. “One movie and then I’m checking your bandages,” he said.

Stiles groaned, squirming his leg a bit against the others. “Don’t be a buzz kill. Three movies at least.”

“Two,” Derek compromised.

“Sometimes I wonder if you love me at all,” Stiles sniffed. Derek smiled and kissed his cheek, using the remote to turn on the TV. As promised, the Pack had a list of movies up for them on their shared accounts. It was an impressive collection. Even the Notebook had made it on. Stiles settled into Derek’s side, blanket tucked around the both of them and Derek heard the quiet noises from the kitchen.

"See, that there would have been a perfect time!" Came Scotts bothered whisper.

What the hell were they talking about now? Derek wondered.

Erica sighed. "I think they’re emotionally stunted....Or maybe they're just doing it to piss us off," she added a moment later.

“Stiles told us to drop it,” Lydia reminded them softly. “And Scott, stop being pessimistic.”

Derek made a face. They couldn’t be talking about that, could they? Now of all times? Oh god, had they been talking about it before they got here?

“It’s hardly something to get worked up about,” came Laura’s voice of reason. "There are plenty of Mated couples who never advertise it. Think of it as a safety measure.” Derek could just kiss her. “Besides, Der has never been in touch with his emotions. He’s like a dictionary. He’s got the words, but damn it all if he can speak them." Derek could punch her.

“Just you watch,” Cora chuckled, "Der is going to wait until the last moment on their death bed to say it. Those two are so melodramatic it's sad.”

Derek wanted to punch Cora too and even though she was teasing that thought terrified him. Stiles tapped his fingers on Derek’s thigh and he turned to see the younger man looking at him questioningly while the opening theme to Star Wars played out on the screen. “Sup, Alpha man?”

Derek sighed, lacing his fingers together with Stiles, noticing his silencing ward had flared to life on one of his fingers. “Oh, they’re just critiquing our love life while cooking.”

The smile on Stiles face grew. “Really? What are they saying?”

Derek reached up and scratched the side of his face with his free hand. “The whole…” He took a deep breath and muttered so low Stiles almost didn’t hear, “mate thing.”
“Aah,” Stiles said with a nod. “That. You’d think they’d give up already. I told them to drop it.”

Derek couldn’t help but feel a little dejected like he’d done something wrong. Like he and Stiles were doing something wrong. “I don’t think they will until they hear me say it.”

The ward on Stiles finger dimmed for a moment. “Or till they realize the kitchen isn’t sound proof,” Stiles said in a slightly louder voice. Behind them, some snickers and swearing were heard. “Just ignore them.”

Derek made a noncommittal noise. It would be easy to ignore them had all their concerns not almost come true over the last few days.

Stiles continued talking when Derek didn’t say anything. “I think they’re all just super romantics. Do you remember those goobers in high school? Scott and Allison? Holy crackers that almost gave me diabetes.” The haunted look on Derek’s face told Stiles the Alpha agreed with him. “I myself never watched chick flicks growing up so I happily skipped that phase. Dad and I banned them from the house after Sleepless in Seattle made us bawl like toddlers.” Stiles didn’t mention just which part, the beginning, or the end, had made the two men break down, and Derek didn’t ask. “I know for a fact that Scott’s mom made him watch romance movies and Lydia has forced anyone and everyone to endure the Notebook multiple times.”

“Point?” Derek asked with a little smirk.

“Point,” Stiles said, “is that they have all been predisposed to the world of doki doki hearts, grand gestures, and drama. They are all fluff monsters who have a chewy gooey center filled with flowers and love poems.” He tipped his head to the side and looked at his Mate fondly. “Just like you.”

Derek groaned, trying to keep the smile off his face. “Stiles, just…just shut up.”

“Point,” Derek asked with a little smirk.

“Point,” Stiles said, “is that they have all been predisposed to the world of doki doki hearts, grand gestures, and drama. They are all fluff monsters who have a chewy gooey center filled with flowers and love poems.” He tipped his head to the side and looked at his Mate fondly. “Just like you.”

Derek groaned, trying to keep the smile off his face. “Stiles, just…just shut up.”

“No, seriously Derek,” Stiles insisted, waving his hand in front of him in an all-encompassing gesture. “You’re like a deep ocean of love and tenderness. You are the Alpha of silent commiseration and boundless insight. You’re just allergic to words sometimes. Maybe we should have some romantic movie marathons so we can relate to these darned kids.”

Derek didn’t dare laugh because he knew that Stiles was only half kidding, “You want me to say it too?” he asked, feeling a small swell of nervousness that was only abated when Stiles squeezed his hand.

“No,” Stiles went on. “I want you to be more in touch with your feelings so they can stop thinking you’re repressing them. We’re causing dissension among the ranks with our pseudo-telepathic bond and the kids should know that daddy and daddy love each other. It’s detrimental to their mental health and future relationships. I read it somewhere.”

Derek’s eyebrows shot up. “Are you serious right now?” He asked.

Stiles put his hands to the side expectantly, eyebrows raised. “Well?” All Derek could do was laugh at his unbelievable boyfriend and Stiles frowned. “Hey, I’m being for real. The others are thinking you’re holding out on me or something.”

That had Derek shutting up, feeling his blood run cold. “What? It’s not, Stiles I’m not-“
"No, no, no!" Stiles quickly shook his head, cutting him off. “God, Derek, don’t be silly. I don’t think that at all. The others don’t either, but they just…well, I think they’re worried about all this,” he flapped a hand at himself, all scratched up with a bandage around half his neck and shoulder, “and they focus on stupid things. Like our love life.”

The older man sighed, rubbing his hand over his face as he leaned back against the couch, sinking into it tiredly. “They did this when you left too.” He said and Stiles made a soft humming noise. "Scott told me I needed to…you know, tell you things…before something happened…”

“I know. I bitched at them for it.” Stiles leaned his shoulder against Derek’s in solidarity. “Well, we certainly have a lot of stuff happening now, don’t we.”

Derek nodded and they were silent for a moment, listening to the sounds of the wind rustling the leaves outside and the noises of small appliances in the kitchen along with the soft conversation. It was tranquil and homey. “You think we’re going to pull this off?” Derek asked just as Stiles started tracing patterns on Derek's thigh with his finger.

The brunette let out a laugh through his nose. “Don’t really have a choice, do we? I mean, either we let Valid do something stupid with the Nemeton and then the Order gets involved, or we stop Valid from doing something stupid to the Nemeton and the Order gets involved anyway.” Stiles blinked, staring at the wall with an odd expression. “You know, even when we win, we lose. How messed up is that.”

Derek brought their joined hand up and kissed Stiles knuckles. He noticed the silencing ward had died down again and the conversation in the kitchen had pittered out. He knew the others were eavesdropping again. “Would it help if I composed a love sonnet to appease the children?”

Stiles tipped his head to the side and grinned at the other, forgetting for a moment about his aches, pains, and the unfairness of life. “Aww, would you write in prose for me, Der? Is your love like a red, red rose? Do you get lost in my soulful eyes? You don’t even have to write. Think it to me. Come on, think of our illicit love via psychic vibes.”

A dry snort erupted from the kitchen followed by a cackled, a slap, and some giggles. Derek loved his sisters but he wished the kitchen would explode and take them out. The betas too for all he cared. He could hear Erica snorting. Playing along with Stiles like it was second nature –seriously, it was second nature and it was not even funny- Derek crossed his arms over his chest and stared ahead at the TV. “I think it’s the oxy talking, but if that was really a thing with us you would not be continuing this train of thought. I’m envisioning terrible, terrible things happening to you.”

Stiles pressed his smile into a tight line the best he could and shimmied towards Derek in little squirming intervals while the Alpha closed his eyes, determined to ignore him. Stiles licked his lips and his smile broke through when he looked off to the side, pointedly away from his lover. “Derek, am I the moon your wolf howls for?”

In the kitchen where there was apparently a dying walrus who let out it's last guffawing rawr, a rail of laughter practically shook the walls. Or maybe it was the fact that two Werewolves had dropped to the floor trying not to pee their pants. Laura’s gasps and peals of laughter were almost louder than Cora and Scotts.

At the same time a thin, high-pitched sound escaped from Derek as he dragged his hands over his face. “Why are you…?” Derek asked in a breathy voice, shaking his head in wonderment. "Why do you say things like that?”
Completely satisfied now that his dirty work was done, Stiles lifted both his legs over Derek’s lap and put his arm around his neck, ignoring whatever discomfort it caused him. “Derek, you’re life would be stagnant and colorless without me saying things.” He stared straight into Derek’s hazel eyes and smirked. “And it’s my job to keep you humble.” He barely had to tug to pull Derek forward and then stole a not so innocent kiss from his Alpha. “What kind of Lupa would I be if I let my Alpha be a sourwolf all the time?” he whispered playfully against his lips before he gave him a quick peck again.

Derek let out a short, bright laugh and managed to settle the others body between his legs as he leaned against the arm and back of the couch. “Sit back and watch the movie, idiot,” he ordered while his wolf curled up contently in the back of his mind. *Tricky, naughty, devilish, little Mate.*
Family knows best....Also; Werewolf Mojo.

Chapter Summary

“As much as I’d love to have 'Property of Derek Hale' tramp stamped on your ass, you put so much effort into those tattoos I figured you wouldn't want anything marking them up.”

Chapter Notes

NOT. DEAD!
I have promised many people that I am still going with these Fics Im working on here and I WILL NOT LET THEM DIE!!!! December just sucks because I work in the shipping industry and its hella busy this time of year.

Aaaaany way, Iiiieeeeeeeeee, I don't know. I really don't know why this took me so long. I guess because it's a weird chapter of filler before more shit goes down? Also, I tried to write sex with a plot. Which just....yeah. It's an odd little blurb there.
Let me know what you think.

no Beta.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Laura, jewel of a sister that she was, brought her baby brother and his boyfriend food on trays so they didn't have to move from their cocooned comfort on the couch. Not a one of them made any comments about the conversation they’d overheard in the kitchen but Derek knew she was thinking about it due to the barely concealed grin on her face when they happened to catch each other's eye.

The rest of the Pack joined them a few moments later with plates of their own. Lydia took a moment before she sat down to look at the both of them with a wide eyes and a raised eyebrow. She didn't say anything either but someone must have filled her in. Secrets were not really a thing in a Werewolf Pack.

Plates in hand they scattered throughout the living room, all within arms length of each other if not sitting right next to someone. Stiles got as comfortable as he could settled between Derek’s legs, leaning against his broad chest while the his medication warmed him from the inside out. Every now and then an unavoidable ach would surface that not even the drugs could dull and he would tense, but he just took a breath as Derek's hand smoothed lightly over his stomach or arm and he let out a little glow, feeling his magic seep through his body.

Now that he had a moment to think about it, he noticed he hadn't really stopped since the hospital. It wasn't enough to read by or anything, but instead of being the pale brown ink they were when dormant the lines on his skin had taken on a bluish tint. Stiles remembered they’d done the same thing any time he’d been badly hurt and knew it was his magic working even without him telling it to, like a backup battery. Stiles chalked it up to being really stressed out.
For the rest of the day the house was filled with the sounds of the quiet -sometimes noisy but trying to be quiet for the sake of their laid up Emissary- comings and goings of the pack.

After hearing from Melissa how energetic his son was when he was released into the wild the Sheriff dropped by a little after noon on a righteous mission to put his foot down. When he walked into the house and saw Stiles half asleep on Derek’s chest however he just stole some leftover bacon that Laura had wrapped up in the fridge and told Derek he’d see him at the station tomorrow if he felt the need to drop by. He left a spare magazine of mistletoe rounds on the table by the door where Derek kept his service weapon.

Erica had gone to the daycare to chat with the kids - yes guys, I use children as my informants - because they see more than people think they do. She had permission of course. Generally parents who let a Werewolf, a Nymph, and an aged Troll half-breed tend to their little ones while they work were more than willing to enforce the ‘if you see something, say something’ motto of the supernatural community in Beacon Hills.

Derek got a text from Peter at 1:30 that stated in all Sentinel-ish seriousness:

Chatted with the Vet. He was concerned yet unhelpfully quiet. I've got my suspicions. Might have something to do with the fact that we had this conversation while he and Isaac were resetting the leg of a St. Bernard. On a side note, if you ever break your leg in full shift, your Beta has you covered.

Derek showed the message to Stiles and the Emissary let out a short laugh. They both knew Peter had waited till the most inopportune moment to visit Deaton.

The next message came at 3 o’clock, near the end of Anakin’s fiery volcano death match where he almost becomes Monty Python's Black Knight. Melissa alerted him that it was time to change Stiles bandages. Scott, their only real medical professional in the house, had left for a shift at the hospital before opening credits so the Alpha enlisted Allison and Laura to help him with the task. He roused Stiles from his half sleep and the man grumbled but sat up.

“Jesus,” Laura muttered with unrestrained sympathy and disgust as the bandage came off. “That’s nasty.”

Stiles let out a tired snort. “Tell me what you really think.”

They all kind of thought the same thing. As any bite from a vicious night dwelling semi-cannibal was want to do, the skin around the actual wound was red and irritated but neither Derek nor Laura could smell any foul odor so there was no sign of infection. Clear plasma made the already forming scar tissue and indentations from the Vampires teeth glisten but they could all tell that even with advanced healing magic at work the scar would be brutal.

“Don’t move,” Allison reprimanded, tossing the used tape and gauze into a trashcan. She’d seen way too many a traumatic wounds in her day to be perturbed by them. Or at least perturbed enough to let it show on her face.

“Doing okay?” asked Derek, keeping an eye on Stiles face as Allison repacked the wound with clean gauze.

Trying to pretend he was elsewhere and not missing a pound of flesh, Stiles hummed in the affirmative and Laura held the padding while Allison tore up some medical tape. “How long is it
going to take to heal?” The Werewolf asked quietly. Not having been in the thick of it with human Packmates as her little brother was, Laura had no real base of comparison for these types of injuries. As she spoke, little blue sparks lit up under the gauze and Laura's hair stood on end, a ripple of static charge passing from Stiles body to her own. Stiles shuddered and the tattoo lines closest to the injury flared up for a moment.

“Maybe a two or three weeks,” Derek replied, unconcerned with the light show. “The nurse said there was a lot muscle damage so he still has to do physical therapy.”

Impressed with the recoup time as well as the magical display, Laura's dark eyebrow rose. “Nifty.” She carefully moved her fingers out of the way as Allison drew the tape across the gauze. Stiles grimaced a bit at the change in pressure and sighed when it was over. He gave Derek's clenched fist a small pat.

“All set,” Allison announced as she slipped the strap of the sling over Stiles opposite shoulder. “Ice it later if it starts to ache too bad, but don’t let it get wet.”

Stiles thought that his entire body was one giant ache at the moment but he chose not to say anything. “How did patrol go last night?” he asked instead, covering a yawn with his hand and then another wince when Allison tightened the strap.

Allison shrugged a little, her movements clinical as she made the final adjustments to the sling and Stiles sweatshirt, zipping it back up. “Nothing jumped out at us. Literally and figuratively. A rabbit was stuck in one of the traps but none of the others had been touched. I was actually going to head over to the Sheriff's station with dad in a little bit and watch the cameras.”

“Check my dad’s desk drawer for donuts,” Stiles mumbled.

“Yeah, I’ll put that on my list of things to do,” The Huntress chuckled as she stood. “I’ll be back before dark. You two need anything before I leave?”

Derek shook his head and pulled Stiles back against his chest, sensing that the younger man was drifting off again.

Allison excused herself and Laura held her hand up in front of her face, strands of hair still defying gravity around her head. She looked at her fingertips like she was searching for escaped blue sparkles under her nails. “I know you guys have probably researched this stuff to death,” she said, “But I suddenly feel the need to go to the library and figure out what all this is about.” She wiggled her fingers playfully at Stiles. She and Cora might be Hale's but they were under no illusions that their lives were more exciting than those of their brother and the rest of the pack. Magic was no everyday thing for them.

Assured at least twice that Derek would call out if either of them needed anything - anything, Derek. I don't want you two moving from this couch unless it’s to a bed- Laura shut herself up in the Library.

The only sounds in the house for three or so hours after that was Cora snoring upstairs on the spare bed in Lydia's room, and the lowered volume of Return of the Jedi. As soon as the sun began to set Danny and Lydia returned with Boyd and Jackson in tow. They’d been out for a few hours walking around the Preserve and checking all the wards and by the look on Lydia’s face, she wasn't satisfied with the excursion. That meant that she hadn’t gotten the answers she wanted. They reported that nothing was out of the ordinary and the wards were still functioning, but Boyd had caught a decidedly musty, non-forest smell about 1000 feet from the Nemeton. Not unusual, but something to come back to. In other words, the wards were working as intended and the Vampires had just
somehow not set them off.

Tired and without anything else to do for the rest of the day, Lydia -gratefully- went up to her room where Cora was still passed out like a drunkard. Danny went Isaacs room. He would have bunked up with Jackson but the Werewolf with two packs wanted to skype with his pseudo family back in London and give them an update on how things were going. He’d been planning on going back soon but it looked like he was going to be extending his trip.

Boyd opted to go to his grandmother's house where his younger siblings still lived even though they had made it perfectly clear that they were all big kids and could look after themselves. His grandma had even hollered over the phone that she cold whip up some Hexes for them to carry around town, knowing Derek could hear her.

With a steady stream of updates from the rest of the Pack and no bad or good news, Alpha and Emissary relaxed for what seemed like the first time in weeks. They both sort of guessed that the Pack was purposely not bothering them with little things but they appreciated it.

Episodes passed by quickly, Derek checked Stiles bandages once more, they dozed off a few times, and by the time it was dark out the rest of the Pack had come home.

The ending credits were rolling quietly on the screen when Derek opened his eyes and a quick look and listen around told him all the lights had been turned off and everyone was already asleep. Someone had draped a blanket over the two of them and someone else -Derek suspect Peter because he was the only one quiet enough to do it- had jammed a pillow behind his head so he didn't wake up with a crick in his neck.

Gently waking Stiles, Derek managed to get the sleepy man upstairs.

“I feel like I got kicked by a horse,” Stiles grumbled as they shuffled down the hall.

“Because you're exhausted,” Derek supplied, steering the man to their door and opening it with a nudge of his foot.

“Carry me.”

“You’re five steps away from the bed.” Derek did, however, help the other out of his clothes and into some sweatpants. It would have been almost as catastrophic as Stiles getting dressed that morning, but thankfully he had help both times and did not fall on his face. The window they left open caused a little chill in their room so Stiles shivered when his sweatshirt came off and he had to stand there while Derek redid the sling. The temperature woke him up a little.

“I have to wear it while I sleep?” He asked.

Derek leaned over his shoulder, looking at the younger man while he adjusted the strap. “Were you really listening when Amy and Melissa were going over the aftercare instructions?”

Stiles huffed and shuffled over to the bed, wishing he could throw himself on it dramatically. He tried to, a little, but it was sort of ruined by the careful thought he had to put in it in order to keep his body from screaming in pain. “I feel like I wasted the day.”

“Resting is not wasting,” Derek practically recited. “You just got out of the hospital. Besides, everyone else kept busy. I thought you’d be proud they didn't hover around.”

Stiles tried to shift a bit on the bed so he could watch Derek undress. “I am,” he said, “Recovery just gets boring after a while. It lost its luster back in highschool.”
“48 hours,” Derek reminded him as he stripped out of his shirt and jeans.

Stiles made a face as he continued to watch Derek who was now slipping on a pair of sweatpants identical to the ones Stiles had on. It only took a moment for Stiles to realize that he was in fact wearing Derek’s clothing. Not anything new really, he almost always wore Derek’s clothes to bed, but the fact that Derek was dressing him that way himself made him smile a bit.

Derek climbed into bed opposite his injured side and drew the covers up, sealing in an immediate cocoon of warmth heated by his own body. Stiles had to lay on his back to find any modicum of comfort and managed to shift into Derek’s arms, feeling one slide over his bare stomach.

“Sleep now and I’ll have Laura make waffles in the morning,” Derek yawned against the side of his face before rubbing his nose against his cheek.

But Stiles was awake and antsy now after having been a couch potato all day and the chill his skin had been exposed too after almost an entire day curled up against his Wereheater still lingered. “Maybe I should walk around a bit. Like, around the house. I can check up on some of the wards. For exercise. Bedsores can happen even on a couch.”

The Alpha vetoed that hard.

Almost as hard as he bit Stiles on the shoulder to shut him up.

Stiles jaw dropped and he gasped, staring at the little red indents on his skin. “It’s like you have no respect for my recent trauma!”

“Exposure therapy,” Derek replied with a wolfish grin.

Derek tried -he really did- to get Stiles to go to bed, but it was hard to manhandle an injured person without accidentally hurting them and Stiles was not above whining like a child and letting crocodile tears spring up when Derek got the upper hand.

“Stiles, you promised Melissa you’d take it easy for at least 48 hours,” Derek reminded him, hoping the guilt trip would work if he put a little growl into it.

Stiles huffed loudly and sank into his pillow, his arm cradled to his chest. Satisfied that he’d won this round, Derek draped his arm across Stiles waste again, pinning him down in only the way a protective, sleepy wolf can. With a content, victorious sigh, Derek closed his eyes.

“Derek.”

Derek ignored him and tried to let the silence in the room speak for itself.

“Derek.”

His thumb rubbed circles on Stiles hip. “What.”

“Melissa told me to take it easy.”

One hazel eye cracked open warily. “Yes?”

“So I can’t do anything.”

Derek nodded, cheek nuzzling the other man’s shoulder. He could still smell lingering scents of the hospital on him, under the tangy iron magic.
“She never said you have to take it easy.”

Derek opened both eyes. He shifted his head so that he could look at Stiles, his face almost expressionless in disbelief. “Are you serious right now?” He wondered how many times he was going to ask that in the next 24 hours.

Stiles rolled his eyes but couldn't stop the red from creeping into his cheeks and the tips of his ears. “Dude, I'm too awake to sleep now, and you biting me did not help.”

Derek grinned, his fondness expanding the warm feeling in his chest till it hurt. Memories of past sexual escapades right after serious injuries and fights flowed back to him. Working around broken bones or sprains, easing through sore muscles, keeping each other awake after a suspected concussion, trying not to bleed too much on the sheets. Fond, painful, loving, painful memories.

“Der, come on,” Stiles whined, bumping his leg against the others. “I slept all day. Just a little fooling around won’t hurt. Look, I’ll even put up the silencing ward.” A blue light flared somewhere near Stiles hand and Derek heard the sounds outside their room fall away like they’d been pulled into another dimension.

“Save your magic,” said Derek almost immediately. From the tone in his voice it was hard to tell if he was frustrated, defeated, or amused, but as he shifted his arm and moved to position himself over the other man, fitting himself between his knees, Stiles saw a humor in his eyes.

Derek looked down at the other sternly. “If you try to move I will handcuff you to the bed, and not in a fun way.”

The response to that threat was a grin in the dim light, the cool evening air stirring the curtain by the large open window. “I didn't think you’d actually go for it,” Stiles admitted.

“What can I say,” Derek sighed as he loosened the knot on Stiles pajama pants, struggling to keep his expression neutral. “You're the moon my wolf howls for.”

The throaty snort of laughter Stiles let out was not a prelude to the glorious post injury ravishing Derek gave him soon after.

Years worth of material should have been proof and warning enough that the Hale Emissary had a very hard time not being involved. They had to loose the sling because Stiles kept pulling on it accidentally, causing a surge of pain to roll through his body, but Derek improved upon the idea by holding his boyfriend's hand against his chest, keeping his arm immobile and letting Stiles heartbeat thump against their joined hands.

“God, Der, do that again,” Stiles breathed.

“Mm?” Derek hummed without glancing up, scratching his stubble along the pale skin. He ran his tongue along a curving blue line that angled sharply away from -or towards depending on what direction you went- the iliac crest; the sensitive dip between the hip and groin.

Stiles let out a throaty moan, leg twitching in Derek's hand. “Yes, that, god, that was good.”
Runes the Werewolf couldn't remember the translations for glimmered against the lighter canvas, illuminating the living nerve outline of the younger man's body like a road map to every sensitive location. Derek's lips tingled wherever they brushed a glowing mark. The heady scent of arousal clouded the air while the Derek continued his exploration, pausing for moments in between to slide up and slot their mouths together, stealing breaths and small gasping laughs from the others parted lips. With nails able to cut through wood, stone, and metal, Derek trailed his fingertips over the various scars on the younger man's body, catching ever so lightly on the first of the Vampiric bites that had taken a piece of his lover. Stiles arm twitched when he felt that, perhaps remembering how the sight of the mark had made Derek react the last time he'd seen it in the throws of passion. Derek’s nails simply traced over it and then moved on.

“Hey,” Stiles breathed out. Derek didn't respond so he continued. “I made it through another one.”

Soft ministrations paused for a moment and Stiles felt a slow kiss pressed to the skin just below his belly button. “You’ll make it through the next one too,” Came a soft reply. There was no reassurance of safety, or of protection. No promise that this would never happen again. There were no naive plications between them because the world they lived in did not allow for that soft of comfort. Not here in the bed they shared, in the house they’d built for their family, in the town they’d given their lives to.

Pale violet eyes held fast to the Alphas red gaze as three unspoken words passed between them, filling the air with their quiet comfort.

At least their world allowed for that.

Night had settled itself firmly in the outside world by the time Stiles felt it was safe to lift the silencing wards from around their bedroom. Derek watched as Stiles ran his long fingers over a particularly red set of teeth indents on the juncture between his shoulder and neck, almost completely mirroring the not so tenderly given one on his opposite side. There was a contemplative look on his face and Derek made a sound of inquiry as his eyes strayed over the mans fingertips.

“Oh, just wondering if one of these will be permanent one day,” said Stiles.

Derek was actually kind of dismayed at the idea of intentionally scaring his mate even though his wolf beat its tail on the ground, thinking something along the lines of put a mark on him. Mark him, mark him, mark him, do it,  DO IT!

“No, no, not like an injury or anything,” Stiles corrected quickly, reading Dereks mind. "God knows I don't need another horrific scar like Mr. McVampass left on me.” His voice turned a bit bitter and Derek pressed his lips to his temple. “Something Pack related. You know, like how all the Betas have with their Turning Bites.”

It was valid, Derek thought. Most supernatural creatures who operated in groups had some distinguishing marking for families, or clans. Vampires marked their Nests to show who belonged, some fay had tattoos or spells on their skin, and most bitten Werewolves proudly bore the bite mark their Alpha gave them. However, Derek knew that Stiles was talking more facetiously of a fantastical 'this belongs to...' type of marking, so he responded in kind. "As much as I’d love to have Property of Derek Hale tramp stamped on your ass, you put so much effort into those tattoos I figured you wouldn't want anything marking them up."
"I could make room." Stiles sniffed with an air of sarcasm. “Point is, I am awesome and I think I deserve a Claiming Mark.”

As much as he loved to hear Stiles being self-assured and confidence was hot, Derek sighed, burying his face in the pillow while Stiles laughed at his reaction. “There is no such thing as a Claiming Mark, you dork.” Stiles opened his mouth and Derek went on to keep him quiet. “Or a Mating Bite, or Soul Bond, or whatever the hell else you’re thinking. I told you not to read Twilight.”

Stiles shimmied closer, shoving his good arm under Derek’s shoulders and pulling him in for a manly snuggle as best he could. Derek had insisted that the sling go back on. “Stiles,” Derek groaned. He didn’t try to get out of the others hold and he knew Stiles could tell he was fighting a smile against his chest.

Stiles snickered as he scratched his fingers through the older mans dark hair, chin resting on top of his head. “Okay, fine. So I have no physical evidence that we have a cosmic bond forged of magic, Werewolf mojo and our close proximity to a Hellmouth and a Nemeton.”

The Alpha barked out a laugh and shoved Stiles away lightly. “No, oh my god, no. You don’t get to repeat that ever and for god’s sake don’t let my sisters ever hear you say that because they will literally die laughing. Werewolf mojo. Jesus Christ. Please tell me the ward is still up.”

Stiles grinned and surged forward, arching his leg over Derek’s and yanking him back in again. Derek retaliated by looping his arms around Stiles waist and gently hooking his hands behind him, uttering “careful, careful,” under his breath as he steadied his still injured lover.

“Can I at least tell Peter?” Stiles asked. He heard a rumble of laughter in Derek's chest as the man butted their foreheads together lightly.

“Only if you do it while he’s eating because he’ll choke.”

“You are an awesome nephew.”

“Shut up and go to bed.”

Chapter End Notes

((((Okay. Okay, so I apparently can't write a sex scene without it turning funny or stupid deep. I'm sorry. This story may have to be generally smut free because I fail. O.o feeerrrk. I tried! I tried for you!! T.T tried so hard.))
The blue haired woman frowned and placed her hands on her hips. “I seriously came to see you. You're my friend Stiles, don't be so suspicious of me.”

“I'll be suspicious of Charlotte then,” Stiles corrected. “Who was she expecting at the bar tonight?”

“Interesting people,” Carla repeated pointedly. ‘And nothing for you; my business partner, or you; the Hale Emissary, to worry about.’ She waved her hand at Stiles and looked around the room at everyone. “Is he even supposed to be up?”

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Hooooooly beans, I am so sorry about that unannounced hiatus. The holidays wiped me out and work was crazy busy. Here is a chapter my lovely readers, and thank you so much for all your wonderful comments and encouragement the last few weeks. Comments fuel my soul!!!

As I've said before, I have no intention of letting any of my stories trail off into the 'void of abandoned works.' Thank you again to all of you who are sticking with me and those of you who have braved the realm of WIP stories! I won't let you down!

::::::::::::::NEW CHANGE THING!!::::::::::::::
I realize I have Carla classified as a Sylph. This is incorrect as they are AIR spirits. I had originally intended on making her a wind elemental but then I decided to go with water and forgot to change it. She is an Undine. I will work on fixing that in all the past chapters and she will be referred to as an Undine from here on. Thanks! Sorry for the slip up.

Also, NO BETA please forgive any mistakes. or point them out. I'll fix them.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Down time was rare. What with research, planning, fielding citizen requests, and keeping a general eye out for any apocalyptic omens all members of the Hale Pack tended to run around with a full plate. Even with the support of the community-a hard won but very much earned support mind you-it was sometimes all they could do to keep everything running smoothly. Having a mysterious new big bad and his minions thrown into the mix sort of mucked up any schedule they tried to keep and a new Big Brother—or Elder Sister in this case—showing up just when one of their packmates was injured did not help.

The Hale Betas were, however, uncommonly mature -don't laugh- for their age.

They might have started out as the stereotypical teenagers thrown into a world that was suddenly and
terrifyingly larger than they were, but they’d survived and flourished as was proven by their very standings within the community of Beacon Hills. They achieved that outcome in great part by learning to rely on the adults in their lives; those who had made it their goals to fight alongside and support the younger generation and tell them when they were being stupid.

Derek, Peter, John, Melissa, and Deaton had seen the kids through some of the toughest moments in their lives and without their counsel, whether they knew they were giving it at the time or not, had saved their asses time and time again.

Derek sometimes didn’t like to count himself among the wizened, experienced members of their pack—how could he live up to such standards when he still considered himself so new at this whole ‘I’m the Alpha’ thing?—but he had taken up the mantel whenever it was necessary and with little complaint. He had grown these past years as much as his Betas. That being said, Derek wanted to weep with joy the next morning because holy crap, his big sister was back.

Having left a snoozing, sore, slightly cranky Stiles in bed, Derek went into the kitchen lured by the smell of food and coffee. Derek made a mean waffle but he’d learned it from Laura. For the longest time waffles had been the only thing she could cook and they’d three square meals a day of them for almost a week and a half after their parents died. They’d reached a godlike quality that Derek had yet to duplicate no matter how much Stiles said otherwise.

Lydia was hovering near the coffee machine with Danny by her side, creating some beautiful concoction that Derek didn’t have the patience for. Danny was a morning person, already dressed for the day looking like a bronze adonis, and he waved at Derek as he entered.

“Black and no sugar for you, Derek?” Lydia asked, noticing him without looking up. She was wearing a lacy skirt and a thin t-shirt; a more casual look for her, but her makeup was on, earrings were in, and her hair pulled into a loose but complicated braid.

Cora was sitting at the table in a sports bra and sweatpants like the slovenly lazybones she was so Derek reached over her shoulder and snatched one of her waffles from her plate, almost getting a fork through his hand for his troubles. “Please,” he said.

Laura opened the double waffle maker, a hiss of sweet smelling steam filling the air. “I talked to Melissa this morning,” she said. “She’d going to be over to check on Stiles. John will be at the station till 4 and said that he’s got some other deputies covering so you can take time off if you want.” Derek nodded, remembering what John had told him. He knew the Sheriff would feel better if Derek—also a deputy—was by his healing sons side. “Chris also called with an update on the traps in the preserve. Three were set off but no one was in them. He thinks it might be some Nix playing jokes and he told me to tell you that, and I quote ‘he’s getting tired of those little bastards because they have no idea how hard it is to reset a trap that’s in the middle of a freezing cold stream.’”

Derek could only nod, but they’d all been in that boat before. The Preserve was a playground sometimes. “I also talked to Uncle Peter about our Vampire problem in great detail last night and wow does that guy sound like a proper douche. Lydia mentioned he was, what, over 200 years old?”

Lydia let out a small, delicate noise of agreement, seemingly content to let the older woman take the reigns on daily updates this morning. “At least.”

“I’d like to meet this Charlotte woman, too,” Laura went on. “I know you all trust her but her relationship with Vlad isn’t sitting right with me. You don’t hold a grudge against someone for a hundred years over something little. Maybe figuring out the initial problem will give us some clarity.” From his seat next to Cora through a mouthful of blueberries, Isaac corrected Valids name which Laura purposely ignored.
“We think it was a territory thing,” Danny said. “Apparently Vampires just don’t do well when there are too many of them in once place.”

Laura rolled her eyes with a hint of empathy in them. “Ain’t that the truth,” she muttered. “Allison also mentioned something about Stiles boss?” She raised her eyebrow at the last bit as if wondering just how in the heck that had happened, like apparently employing Stiles at a bar of all places was a thing she couldn't fathom.

Derek took the mug of coffee Lydia handed to him and went to sit next to Isaac. “Carla. An Undine,” he informed his sister. “She and Stiles own the Onyx together….Sort off. I don't know. Apparently, she stole his money and...something.” Derek couldn't remember the details this early in the morning. He sipped his coffee.

Laura let out a huff of a laugh and put another plate of waffles on the table that Isaac, Cora, Danny, and Derek all reached for. “Save some for Scott and Melissa you pigs,” Laura scolded absentmindedly before continuing with her plans for the day. “After I check around town I’m driving you and Stiles to the hospital for his first physical therapy session. Melissa mentioned that his head Nurse there was an Abath and they always have some hidden insight that can be pried out of them with few well-placed growls.”

Derek almost choked on his coffee. There were too many contradicting feelings running through him now. One, Laura was awesome and terrifying. Two, he recalled how jumpy Nurse Malay had been around him -he still got irritated remembering it- and three, how they hell had so many conversations happened so early in the morning? What was his sister? A robot? It was only like, 7am. He glanced at the clock on the wall to make sure and blanched in horror. The numbers read 10:30.

“Holy- why didn't anyone wake me up?” he demanded, still reeling. He hadn't thought it was possible for him to sleep in that long. Years of waking up at the crack of dawn to train had sort of conditioned his sleeping habits.

Laura shared a skeptical glance with Cora. Maybe Derek didn't understand just how dark the circles under his eyes had been when he and Stiles got back from the hospital yesterday. “I figured everyone needed the extra rest. A few hours of R and R won't kill you.”

Isaac yawned loudly, looking content and comfortable in a shirt three sizes too big for him -probably one of Boyd's- and what Derek suspected were Stiles sweatpants. Batman themed. “Plus, no one wanted to wake up early today. Jackson and Erica are still asleep.”

Cora paused for a moment and listened. “Naw, Erica just woke up.” Isaac rubbed his ear tiredly and shrugged. They'd all had a rough few days and once Stiles was home safe they’d made extra sure that things were running as smoothly as they could be so that they could all have some time to recuperate.

Lydia poured a generous helping of syrup on her waffle and was cutting it into little pieces while her caffeine potion cooled off. “I'm not sure that Stiles physical therapy is going to start so soon, Laura. He might be healing fast but it's nothing compared to Werewolf fast.”

Laura frowned and looked to the side. “Really?” On the fridge, someone had hung up a small dry erase board and on it was scribbled in blue magic marker; ‘Stiles - Physical Therapy @ 1pm.’ “Well, what’s that about then?” she asked, pointing at it.

Eyes narrowing, Derek scowled at the message. He recognized that handwriting. That was-

“I wrote that, don’t throw a fit.” Peter announced as he breezed into the kitchen. The partition door
swung shut behind him and he went straight to the coffee. “I was on the phone with Amy last night -
such timid little thing, isn't she?- and we both agreed that given the rate at which Stiles is healing the
physical therapy should start as soon as possible. Melissa has her doubts but I told her she could have
the final say.” The way he said it made it sound like he was doing the veteran nurse a favor or
something. “It would be a shame if his muscles were to heal over in a stiff, atrophied state due to lack
of movement after all.” He sipped from a freshly poured cup of brew and eyed Derek with a
mischievous smirk. “Though, maybe we could consider the physical therapy as having begun last
night, aye Derek?”

Derek felt his face flush and he scowled fiercely while Isaac choked and sputtered, “We all agreed
never to talk about the…” His voice dropped to a hiss, “sex stuff!”

Derek’s head whipped around to his Beta, eyes wide. “Since when?” was his incredulous retort,
remembering all the times his and Stiles sex life, relationship status, arguments, lovers spats, and
private conversations had been up for roundtable discussion with the Pack. Little assholes.

Cora laughed through a mouthful of food and swallowed a moment later, still chuckling. “Maybe
what you should be concerned about is the fact that Uncle Peter thinks he’s going to head up your
Emissaries physical therapy sessions,” she reminded her brother. “The man who has never stretched
or done yoga a day in his life. Also; the crazy.” Peter rolled his eyes and walked behind Cora, giving
her hair a rough tussle as he passed. She hissed and swiped at him.

“I’d be more worried about Stiles insisting he can go full throttle right off the bat,” Danny mused.
“And are we even sure he should be moving around at all? I distinctly remember you all saying
something about 48 hours of bedrest. It’s barely been 24, minus a few hours for the sex stuff.”
Danny winked and the Alpha growled.

Suddenly there was a plate with two waffles and some fruit shoved under his nose and Derek looked
up at his older sister. “Take this upstairs,” Laura ordered. “This shouldn't mess with his meds but I
can make oatmeal if it's too heavy for him.” Derek couldn't help but smile, seeing much of their mom
in his sister just then. God, he'd missed having her around. He managed to shove half his food into
his mouth and took the plate plus a waiting glass of ice water.

“Wake up Jackson, too!” Lydia called as he made his way out of the kitchen.

He climbed back up the stairs and walked back down the hallway where a smoky herbal scent
drifted to him even through the closed bedroom door. Stiles tried to make a point never to smoke in
the house even though none of them had ever said anything about it, so the easy morning lull Derek
had been in ebbed a bit. When he walked into the bedroom his eyes had to adjust to the dim light
once more. Blackout curtains were amazing but it was one of the reasons Derek hadn't realized it
was past 10 in the morning. Three points of illumination lit up the figure on the bed, each a little out
of place in the comfortable darkness. One was a small orange glow of ember from the tip of a
cigarette, catching the shine in warm amber eyes. The second was the pale glow of his cell phone,
bright and intrusive over the planes of the man's face and chest. The third, softer than the screen of
the phone, were the tattoos running up Stiles arm and over his torso. In this light, Derek could even
see the lines that ran under his hairline.

Stiles was using one hand to text and the other was held against his stomach to keep the injured limb
still. There was a small grimace on his lips and the cigarette moved slightly when he signed.

When he finally noticed Derek, Stiles looked up, surprised. He blinked wide amber eyes at him and
then seemed to realize just what he was doing. The phone dropped to his lap and his hand went
immediately to his cigarette, pulling it from his mouth. “Shit, sorry.” He waved his hand in a circular
pattern and Derek felt the air in the room shift, moving with a will of its own towards the open
window. Almost immediately all of the sweet smelling smoke left the room. “Sorry, I didn't mean to smoke in here,” Stiles apologized, but he motioned vaguely to the bag that Cora had brought up the night before with his clothing and medication in it. It was on the dresser on the other side of the room. “These were closer.”

Smiling fondly, Derek shook his head with a little sigh and closed the door behind him. He walked across the carpet and pulled aside one of the curtains. The morning light’s explosive rays were toned down by a sheer set of curtains behind it, leaving enough light in the room to see but still keeping it relatively dim. Derek set the plate of food on the end of the bed and out of the way. “Who are you texting?” he asked as he sat himself down, looking at the phone in the other's lap.

Stiles set the cigarette on the side table. Remarkably none of the embers dropped or marred the surface the hot end touched. “Lady Marabeth,” he replied.

“Really?” Derek inquired. He was curious about the woman who had taken a year out of her life to look after Stiles and turned him into what he would only consider a finely tuned weapon of mass destruction. “What did she say?”

A rueful sigh escaped the young man's lips. “That I’m an idiot and I should be more aware of my surroundings,” he quoted. “Also that she feels bad about not noticing Valid had left New York.”

The Alpha could understand that. If Beacon Hills seemed like a hotbed of Supernatural activity he could only imagine what a place like New York had to offer in the ways of weird. It wasn't exactly easy to keep track of everyone. “What did she say about the Elena?” Derek wondered.

Stiles grimace grew a little more intense at the mention of the Druid Elder. “Didn't mention it.” Feeling Derek's questioning gaze on the side of his face Stiles ran his hand through his sleep-mussed hair tiredly. “The guys would be here in a heartbeat if they thought I was in trouble with the Council,” he continued. “They have enough to deal with in the city and I do not want people to start thinking we’re gearing up for a war here. I’m already setting people on edge with my alert list.”

Derek frowned at the unfamiliar term. “Alert list?”

Stiles nodded. “Kind of like Twitter but for supernatural emergencies. Danny set up a one-way service and Parish and my dad got it around to other departments. Any Supernatural who wants to stay in the loop can sign up. Over 100 have signed up so far.” That surprised Derek more than it should have. He knew that Stiles had been in regular contact with a number of people outside of Beacon Hills trying to figure out his magical conundrum, and it was only natural that some of them would warrant an update on how things were going. Derek just sometimes forgot about the sheer number and variety of people that his Emissary balanced in his social circle.

“What's the latest update?” Derek asked, wondering if he should sign up if not just to see what his boyfriend deemed worthy enough to mass text about. He hoped Stiles didn't access this feature when he was drunk…

Stiles picked up his phone and pulled up his last alert. “‘Renovations to the Beacon Hills sports field are nearly completed, regular activities can be resumed the day after tomorrow.’” Stiles glanced at Derek. “Coach Finstock made me write that one,” he admitted, looking chastised. He cleared his throat and resumed; “‘Nature-based magical practitioners and elemental creatures in California and surrounding west coast areas should be careful of Telluric surges for the next few days. Beacon Hills residents: reports of suspicious activity can be filed with the Sheriff's department 24/7. Residents of all outlying counties and states: any instances of localized or widespread Telluric surges and anomalies should be reported to the nearest appropriate authority ASAP.’”
Derek was curious as to why the standard ‘if you find a dead body, call Stiles’ disclaimer wasn’t added, but then he realized that that was already kind of a known fact. Stiles probably got more dead body reports than the Sheriff’s office. “Maybe add something about the event Miss. Carter was holding later this week. She was planning on reorganizing some of the saplings in the northern part of the Preserve,” Derek added as an afterthought. People freaked out when plants started moving on their own and sometimes people forgot to look at the community message board at the grocery stores.

Stiles paused, looking at the other man in wonderment. “Wow, I totally forgot about Miss. Carter's training thing,” he admitted as he started to type one handed again. “Good memory, boo.” Derek snorted while his wolf preened at the praise. Stiles smiled a little and read the words out loud as he typed. “‘Beacon Hills; nature manipulation training for Dryads, Laumas, and Yakshis, etc, still on for the end of the week. Contact Andria Carter for details. Aaand send.” He put the phone down again, feeling pleased with himself and grateful to his super responsible Alpha boyfriend. Just because shit was hitting the fan didn’t mean that life around them stopped. People still had things to do.

Derek plucked the phone off the blanket and set it off to the side, out of Stiles reach. “Okay, pause on work. How are you feeling?” he asked, already expecting a traditional answer.

Stiles rubbed his thigh through the blanket idly, wincing slightly as something moved wrong. “Like I got chopped in the shoulder with an axe.”

“Pleasant,” Derek humored him. He leaned forward and grabbed the plate of food he’d set down and moved it closer to Stiles, holding the water out. “Laura made breakfast.” Stiles took the glass and eyed the waffles with a mix of hunger and hesitation. Past experiences had taught him that severe injuries and the medication that came with them could fool even the hungriest of stomachs. “She also said she could make oatmeal,” Derek offered.

A small, fond smile lit the younger man’s face. “You’re sister is such a mom.” Derek mirrored the smile and nodded. A moment later the smile dimmed on both their faces in the way only an old, distant hurt can do. Stiles took a quick drink of water whilst keeping the steady current of wind moving through the room, carrying the smoke away with it as it rose.

Derek eyed the tattoos lighting up on the man's skin and frowned with concern. “You don’t have to do that if you’re tired,” he offered. “The smell isn't bad.”

Stiles hummed a little while he drank and then pulled the glass away from his lips. “My magic is staying at a steady output level while it’s healing me so this is no problem.” At that moment Derek brushed his fingertips over Stiles' arm and a blue spark jumped out from his tattoos. It actually hurt and Derek stared at his fingers while a smudge of reddened skin slowly faded away.

“Ow,” he said simply.

Sheepish, Stiles set his water aside and moved his injured arm carefully, enough so that he could take Derek’s hand in his own. The sparks were still there but much smaller this time, like the static from a blanket. “Remember I told you about the seals?” Stiles asked and Derek's eyes flickered automatically down to the partially lit up runes and markings on Stiles torso. “I unlocked a few of them so I could have a steady, constant stream of magic work on healing me.”

“That seems…risky,” was Derek's honest assessment.

Stiles took a deep breath and looked down at his chest. “It was getting sort of hard keeping my magic bottled up and I don't want another incident like the Lacrosse field, so as long as I can keep it doing something productive it's actually a good thing. Also, I’m like a living tazer to anyone who tries to
Derek tried to wrap his head around the idea that his boyfriend was essentially an exposed, live wire of magic and wasn’t sure if that was reassuring or not. “Well, Melissa and Amy are coming over later to check on you so try not to taze them.”

Surprize smoothed the features on Stiles face. “Nurse Malay? Why is she coming over?”

“Peter,” Derek sighed arduously. “He thinks you should start physical therapy today.”

Stiles eyes widened even more. “Seriously?” For a moment Derek thought that Stiles was going to start being reasonable and actually admit that he needed some more rest first, but then the man continued. “I get to start today?”

“If Melissa and Amy say it’s okay,” Derek corrected, feeling like the brokenest of records. “If they say rest you aren’t doing anything and you’re leaving everything else to me.”

“What’s everything else?” Stiles asked slowly, eyeing Derek like the man was up to something.

Derek wasn’t going to fall for that. “Things. Other things. Looking around town, checking with contacts, following up on leads, stuff like that. Legwork.”

“I can’t do legwork?”

“You hate legwork,” Derek reminded him.

“My whole life is legwork,” Stiles responded. “Of course I hate it. But it will just be sitting in a car, driving to a place, and then sitting in that place and talking, then sitting in a car and driving to the next place and doing that all over again.”

“Eat your waffles,” Derek ordered, attempting to end the conversation. “I have to go wake up Jackson and I’ll get someone to help me with your bandages again.”

“Jackson needs his beauty sleep and I’m not hearing a ‘no’.”

“I will have Melissa or Scott drug you.”

Stiles made a sound “Pfft! Dictator Alpha.”

Scott and Melissa arrived just as Isaac and Erica, who had come downstairs up to snatch up the last of Lydia’s coffee, were doing the dishes. Stiles had tried to eat what was left of breakfast at the kitchen table but had been ushered by Danny back into the living room and was now laying on the couch like it was going to be his deathbed. Jackson, dressed in his old lacrosse shorts and sweatshirt, had been appointed his ‘guard dog’ and was taking great pleasure in his assignment.

“You’re moving again,” Jackson pointed out. Stile glared and finished scratching his chin with his middle finger out of spite.
“This is dumb,” Stiles groused. “I’m not an invalid. My shoulder hurts, it's not like I lost an arm.”

“No, you just had a Vampire bite a fist-sized portion out of you,” Jackson replied smartly. “The guys back in London said they’d send you a Buffy the Vampire Slayer get well basket. Stakes, garlic, crosses, high heeled shoes for you to fight in, a picture of Spike so you can recognize the bad guys.”

“Ha ha,” Stiles laughed erroneously though he did applaud the creativity of Jackson's pseudo pack across the sea. “What’s a good way to call someone an asshole in the UK?”

“Asshole.”

“Seriously?”

“Yes, you are.”

“...Oh, I see what you did there.”

Half way through a war of the birds featuring all the middle fingers available to them, Melissa walked into the room with her son. “Boys. Really?” the woman asked with a raised eyebrow. The birds flew away.

“Jackson's being a bully,” Stiles tattled, pushing himself into a sitting position. His bandages felt stiff under his sweatshirt. “Scott, sick’m.”

Stiles jostled a bit when Scott hopped over the back of the couch to sit next to him. “Fight your own battles, bro,” he said. “You sick’m.” Melissa rolled her eyes as Laura came out of the kitchen, ready to help. Lydia followed with Danny and the soft conversation between Isaac and Erica filtered through the door before it closed.

“Sorry,” Laura said, giving Melissa an apologetic smile. “Lydia made coffee and declined to mention it wasn't decaf.”

“Decaf is for the weak,” Lydia, Danny and Stiles replied at the same time.

“Alright,” Melissa announced with a clap of her hands. “Everyone with a weak stomach please leave the room. Stiles, slip your arm out of your sweatshirt please.”

Maybe it was the fact that all of them had been grievously injured at one time or another and were numb to the sight of such things, or the that they were putting on a brave face as a show of support, but no one in the living room made to move and Laura shrugged offhandedly. “I helped with the bandages last night so I’ve already seen it.” Isaac had helped Derek this morning and had looked green the entire time but he and Erica came out of the kitchen anyway, perhaps curious about what the nurse would say. Erica went to sit in one of the armchairs, watching Melissa help Stiles with his shirt. She was still in her pajamas and looked content to meander about in them no matter where she went -the tight top and shorts would draw attention either way- but she’d done her makeup and her hair was styled. “So,” She started, looking pointedly at her nails so as not to seem too invested in her friend's injury. “Cora and me were going to stop by the Onyx on the way to get groceries,” she announced. “Anyone want to come?”

“I could use a drink,” said Jackson.

“The bar won't open early for you,” Stiles told them, knowing that Carla would probably pour them all drinks anyway. She seemed to find it funny to give alcohol to Werewolves. Like a personal test to see how drunk her 'special' concoctions could get them.
“I’m going to the Sheriff’s station to work on their systems,” Danny said. “Barry wants me to set up new security at the gas station too, so my day’s full.”

Isaac was watching Melissa carefully peel back the side of the bandages, looking nervously at Stiles reaction. “Got the day off,” he muttered absentmindedly. “Just gonna stay home.” Cora gave the Beta a little nudge with her elbow that startled him out of his intense stare. She bared a toothy smile at him and he returned it sheepishly.

“Laaaaame,” Erica groaned, tipping her head back. She pulled out her phone from her back pocket and started to text. “I’ll ask Boyd if he wants to come.”

Back from showering and changing his clothes, Derek came down the stairs just as Erica made this declaration. He’d put on jeans and a BHPD t-shirt and his hair was still slicked back from the shower. “He’s helping his grandma out today.”

“Bah!” Erica grunted, lettering her phone hand go limp. “Ethan?”

“Working till 5,” Derek shrugged. He walked over to the couch and leaned over Melissa's shoulder. “How does it look?”

Melissa studied the wound carefully and took Stiles elbow with one hand, lifting it up a few inches. “Any pain?” she asked.

Stiles shook his head though his mouth twitched. “Just stiff, like I pulled a muscle or something.”

Melissas’ eyes widened and she stared at Stiles in bewilderment. “Well...you're missing part of your muscle, so I guess that's...sort of comparable.” She took a deep breath and shook her head. “That’s good though. The blood is clotting well and still no sign of infection. I’m going to move your arm and shoulder so let me know when it becomes painful.” She took hold of Stiles wrist with one hand remaining on his elbow and stretched it out to the side slowly. Stiles frowned but didn't wince. Melissa brought his hand back to his chest and then only raised his elbow. After a moment she paused, her face going slack. “Stiles?”

The brunette blinked innocently. “Hmm?”

Melissa was staring pointedly at a little red love bite Derek had left on his side, right over his ribs. Stiles noticed what she was staring at and his entire face started to get red. “Uh…” That was a whole different kind of ‘my mom caught me jerking off’ kind of feeling. Even Derek flushed and looked at his feet.

Scott snorted a laugh and had to cover his grin with his hand. “I swear,” Melissa sighed sharply, moving Stiles arm again. This time he winced for a whole different reason. “Just out of the hospital after a major surgery, ordered to bed rest, and you go and fool around. That’s just great, Stiles,” she was building momentum as she went. “It's like you’re all trying to give me an ulcer. Actively trying . Derek, I expected better from you at least.”

Before the Alpha could even apologize or feel the true weight of the Mom Guilt Trip, Peter strolled into the room casually like he was out on an afternoon walk. Where he’d been before that no one knows. “Don't worry Melissa, I happen to know for a fact that Derek was very careful.”

This time it was Melissa who looked embarrassed. “Peter, my god, what is wrong with you? Don't you have any kind of social filter?”

Flippantly, Peter replied, “None whatsoever.”
Isaac made a wounded noise and covered his ears while Erica and Cora laughed at everyone else's pain. Laura rubbed her hand over her face and let out a long, exasperated sigh before walking over and punching her uncle on the shoulder hard enough to stagger him to the side. He just laughed and rubbed at his arm. “I apologize on behalf of my ridiculous uncle, Mrs. McCall. I feel bad that you sane, reasonable adults have had to deal with him for all these years. Please tell Chris and John that you are all are free to throw wolfsbane at him whenever he misbehaves.”

“We’ve had to deal with him too, you know,” Jackson pointed out.

Laura’s eyes narrowed and she grinned sharply. “You probably deserve it.”

The bickering was halted by a gasp of pain and a surge of blue light that bathed the living room in cool tones for a second. Melissa swore under her breath and immediately lowered Stiles arm from its previous position. “Sorry sweety, are you alright?” she asked. Almost before she could finish her sentence she drew her hands back sharply, a little current of blue light followed her fingertips. “Oh!” she cried out in surprise. “...Well, that’s...new.”

With a grimace of discomfort, Stiles held on to his forearm and flexed his fingers experimentally. “Sorry, it kind of flares sometimes,” he said. Underneath the bandage, the blue light continued to glow.

Scott shifted closer to his friend and mother on the couch, hands already extended and hovering. "Can I help?" he asked, wondering if he should try taking the other's pain.

“Nope, nope,” Stiles replied quickly, “Just healing.” The runes on his chest pulsed three times before dying back down and Stiles let out a relieved breath, body un-tensing. When he did so the rest of them felt their shoulders relax as well and Jackson leaned back in his chair again. Derek placed a hand on Melissa’s shoulder, brows furrowed. “Your hand okay?” He asked.

The older woman nodded quickly, showing the Alpha her fingers. “It was only a little shock.” Her eyes were focused on the bandages which were still glowing from underneath as though someone had inserted a little LED light there. “Stiles, can I look under the bandage again?” she asked.

Stiles nodded but Scott stepped in. “Let me take it off,” he advised. He peeled the gauze and tape back as carefully as his mother had and they all leaned forward to take a look.

“Well, would you look at that,” said Cora, who was now leaning her hands against the back of the couch. Around the edges of the wound little sparks played against the torn flesh, jumping back and forth like the needle on a printer and ever so slowly leaving less irritated, less bloody skin in its wake. Cora nodded her head a few times and hummed. “That's freaky.” she announced. “That's healing, like, Werewolf fast.” And it was only like because it was most definitely not the same. The skin and muscle were not regenerating themselves like they did with a Werewolf’s accelerated healing. The magic was simply replacing it, filling in the void that was there with itself. The resulting new skin took on a scar-like sheen, similar to the rest of them on Stiles body, though, unlike a normal scar - unlike normal skin really- the tattooed lines that had once trailed over the area slowly healed along with it, resulting in an ink that was slightly darker than the rest.

Stiles knew what was happening and didn't look too worried. “Spark,” he offered as a simple explanation.

From a medical and fantasy nerd standpoint, Scott looked impressed either way as he stuck the gauze back down. “It’s already looking a lot better since yesterday.”

Melissa crossed her arms, tapping her fingers irritatedly against one elbow. “Alright, Peter,” she said.
“You were right. Physical therapy should start sooner rather than later.”

Almost half the room sighed, knowing Peter might choose to be a smug jerk for the rest of the day. “Wonderful!” Peter said. “I’ll go get some weights from downstairs.”

“Amy will be supervising the therapy,” Melissa cut in. “Scott can assist. You on the other hand, have not been trained for this at all and I don’t trust you not to torture the patient.”

Peter held a hand over his heart. “Melissa, you wound me.”

“I have Laura’s permission,” The nurse reminded him sternly.

Danny cleared his throat to get everyone’s attention. He’d gone over to the window and was looking outside towards the driveway. “Hey guys, do we know anyone who drives a lime green truck?”

Jackson stood up and went to the window as well. What he saw made him gag a little. “That is the most hideous thing I’ve ever seen,” he said seriously. “It’s even worse than your Jeep, Stiles.”

The man on the couch made an affronted noise but it was Derek who answered. “That’s Carla’s truck,” he said, already moving towards the door. He exchanged glances with Stiles before he opened it and Melissa helped Stiles put his sweatshirt back on, securing the sling over his clothing.

Outside they heard the engine die, a door slam shut, and the sound of boots walking across the gravel. Derek opened the door and waited. “Alpha Hale,” came Carla’s clear voice in greeting.

"Hello Carla," Derek replied, moving to the side a bit.

Carla, in all her aquamarine haired glory, strode over the threshold. She looked a little different away from the dim lights of the bar. Her colors looked brighter and a little less mysterious but the way she moved was just as fluid. Her sea colored eyes scanned the people in the room and stopped when they landed on Laura and Cora. “Newcomers?” she asked, looking between Stiles and Derek for confirmation.

“My sisters,” Derek explained, noticing how the Undine had tensed slightly.

Laura took a step forward, shoulders straight as she eyed the Undine with unwavering confidence. “I’m Laura, that’s Cora. We just arrived.”

“Hmm, more Hale’s,” Carla hummed and nodded her head. “Pleasure to meet more of Derek’s Pack. I’ve heard about you two.”

“We’ve heard about you,” Cora said, tilting one hip to the side. She’d moved to stand beside her sister, a trait that most Werewolves seemed to have when encountering someone new; putting forth a united front.

Carla smiled at the display, eyes glittering. “All bad things I hope.”

“Carla,” Derek interrupted. “Why are you here?”

The Undine looked at Derek and suddenly the smile dropped from her face. “I actually wanted to borrow a few of you,” she said. “I got a call from Charlotte this morning. She told me that I might have some interesting people coming to the bar tonight. I’d love a Wolf presence.”

Derek looked skeptical. “You came all the way out here to ask that?”

Carla put on an offended pout at the question. “Of course not! I came to see Sparky.” Cora’s
eyebrows rose and she looked at Stiles, mouthing ‘Sparky?’ Stiles ignored her as Carla strode past the others to the couch and stood in front of the young man who was eyeing her warily. Without warning she leaned over and grabbed Stiles face, planting a big kiss on his cheek, complete with the ‘mmwaa!’ noise and lipstick residue. When she touched him a shimmer ran over her skin, like a layer of liquid had been disturbed. She only raised an eyebrow at that but didn't comment. “You little scamp, how do you get yourself into these messes?” she asked. Her expression was playful on the surface but deeper, hidden behind the smile, was real relief and concern.

Stiles smiled wryly as she rubbed the lipstick off his cheek. “Talent. Now seriously, what are you here for?”

The blue haired woman frowned and placed her hands on her hips. “I seriously came to see you. You're my friend Stiles, don't be so suspicious of me.”

“I'll be suspicious of Charlotte then,” Stiles corrected. “Who did she think was coming to the bar?”

“Interesting people,” Carla repeated pointedly. ‘And nothing for you; my business partner, or you; the Hale Emissary, to worry about.” She waved her hand at Stiles and looked around the room at everyone. “Is he even supposed to be up?”

“He’s already healing,” said Cora. “And I for one would love to meet these interesting people.”

Carla raised and pierced eyebrow. “Would you now,” she asked, amused. Her attention turned to Derek. “Alpha Hale?”

Derek shrugged and sighed. “I don't see why not, unless you had specific people in mind.”

What Carla said next surprised everyone. “You, Peter, and Lydia actually, but your baby sister can tag along. Big sister too, if you want. All them Hale eyebrows going at the same time will be a sight to see.” Three sets of equally intimidating dark brows furrowed.

Peter leaned against the wall casually, a sly smirk on his lips. “And of what use could I be to you, my dear Carla?”

Carla looked at him like he was stupid. “You're a Sentinel.”

“So are John, Ethan, and Scott,” Peter pointed out.

“They all have real jobs,” Carla shot back with her nose in the air. “And none of them have your particular infamy, old man. You wanna tag along or not?”

“You’re older than me, ma’am,” Peter grinned wolfishly.

“What about me,” Lydia interrupted before Carla could threaten to drown Peter where he stood. “Unless you think you’re going to need a particularly loud set of pipes, Allison would be the better choice for a human good in a fight.”

Carla seemed happy to ignore Peter in favor of answering the redhead's question. “I’d like both your skills as a Banshee and the fact that you’ve been studying magic. Your reputations are what I want, Miss Martin.”

All this time Stiles had been smart enough not to interject and say that he was more than willing to ride along with them and lend a hand. One, he was sure he’d be stopped, and two, Carla was making a request for specific members of the Hale Pack, as was her right. She could request or refuse the help of any of them at any time, as could all of the citizens of Beacon Hills. “So you want to make an
impression,” Stiles guessed.

Carla snapped her fingers and smiled. “Spot on. I don't need a brute squad, I need an authoritative presence. Presence over numbers has always been my forte.” That was completely true, as it was for many of the higher Fae. If your reputation and presence alone could make someone cautious, the battle was half over.

Erica sighed dramatically in her chair. “I guess I'm going grocery shopping all on my lonesome then. Thanks guys. I feel the love.”

“Sorry, sweetheart,” Carla said apologetically. “You’re normally good for business in those little skirts of yours but I think tonight might be better staying low key, just in case.”

“When do we need to be there?” Derek asked.

Carla looked at her watch; a bright plastic waterproof design on her wrist along with a collection of glittery bracelets. “Let's see, it's about noon now, so be there at 5pm. Lydia, you can come armed if you want. Just no Molotovs. Let's not forget I serve flammable product and Undine or not, my bar is made of wood.”

Chapter End Notes

I also did a little editing to Chapter 6 and 7 to make the insults against Derek and Stiles a little more vulgar, this warranting a glass being smashed into someone's face. It's mostly at the end of the chapter, but I cleaned up the rest of it a little as well to make it flow better.
The Present.

Chapter Summary

The nurse started to look uncomfortable again. Much like Werewolves, Vampires had a keen sense of smell. They could gauge emotions more readily though because their own abilities relied so heavily on manipulating them. They ascertained a person's mental state strictly from their pulse, and more specifically from the blood that made pulse. Some Vampires fed and enjoyed the smell and taste of fear, others of lust and want. Either way a Vampire was better than any bloodhound, and if any foul play was suspected in the getting of that mysterious blood, Charlotte was the lady to go to.

Chapter Notes

I have absolutely no doubt that I will be revisiting this chapter for edits. I had some last minute changes and chose to post instead of doing a thorough proof reading >.> I just wanted the damn thing up T.T

Please feel free to comment on any discrepancies you notice and I will be sure to address them.

I am SOOOOOO Sorry this took so long, please don't give up on me T.T

___________________

6-16-17: Finally caved and got me a Beta reader for the latest chapter. Thank you to everyone who has offered and I may still ask for advice in the future (especially for my other ongoing fic, The Promise. God damn my inability to be multi-lingual.)

Thank you so Kinniska for loading a spell checked version of this chapter to google docs for me <3

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Carla didn't say long after she’s made her request, but she made sure to linger just long enough that Stiles could tell she’d really been worried about him. They even talked business for a while -much of which went over the other’s heads because when did Stiles worry about something like distribution and sales permit fees? It made more sense when he was talking about the restorative properties of burdock root.

After she left, the three Hale siblings all went upstairs to finish getting ready and Peter wandered off into the house. Lydia took refuge in the kitchen again so she could read the newspaper in peace with the coffee close by. Erica smiled sympathetically at Stiles as she got ready to leave. “Hey man, at least you’re spared this horror,” she told him, motioning to the bundle of reusable grocery bags under her arm. The bi-weekly food trip for eight Werewolves plus the odd human or seven was serious work.
Sprawled on the couch with the blanket Derek had tucked him into, Stiles gazed out one of the windows longingly. He hadn't mustered up the heart to fling off the heavy throw just yet, even though he was melting. “At least the window’s open,” Stiles said. “So I can see the outside world and pretend I’m a part of it.”

Always one to roll her eyes and laugh at his dramatics, Melissa chuckled. “For god’s sake, Stiles, it's not a life sentence.”

Not to be dismissed, Stiles wiggled his good arm out from under the blanket and reached towards the window. “Nature,” he whispered slowly, making grabby fingers at the scene. From his chair, Jackson rolled his eyes as he flipped another page of his magazine. “You don’t understand my pain, Jackson!” Stiles called over to him.

Erica smirked at her friend while she tied her shoes. She was generally his partner in crime when it came to drama time but even she knew when Stiles was being over the top. “Do you need me to pick you up a houseplant or something? Maybe a cactus you can name Fern?”

Muttering about all his friends being insensitive jerks and Fern being a perfectly acceptable cactus name, Stiles leaned back on the couch. Sympathetically, Scott pat his shoulder. “You just need something to do. Weren't you translating that old Elvin thing Deaton found?” He asked, trying to be helpful.

A totally viable option, Stiles thought, however; “My brain's going to melt if I try. Ancient Gaelic, man. Not for the faint of heart or busted of arm.” He flapped his injured hand in the sling.

Jackson let out a snort without looking up from his article about what Stiles could only assume was the newest formula of extra-hold McPerfect hair gel. “Instead of griping like a baby,” he said smartly, ”How about you take advantage of the vacation while you can. God knows it won’t be long before one of us is bleeding out again.”

Erica hummed. “Reasonable, callous, and snarky,” she noted with bland approval. “Well done, Whitmore.”

Jackson flipped another page with a snap of his wrist. “Don’t you have grocery shopping to do, little woman?” Erica, Scott, and Isaac gasped but it was Melissa’s glare that really made him realize what he said. Like the fury of a thousand stay-at-home-moms that took none from no pig-headed man. Jackson cleared his throat and wisely buried his face behind the magazine.

Shoes on, Erica strode over to the couch and leaned over so that her face settled right in front of Stiles. “Just chill, Batman. I’ll be back soonish and I can make us a pile of pizza rolls for lunch.”

“Pepperoni,” Isaac added. He’d sprawled out in front of the unlit fireplace like he normally did on his days off. He usually fell asleep on the rug and provided Stiles with unlimited dog jokes.

Erica waved her hand the curly haired beta. “Yeah, yeah, it's on my list,” she assured him before looking back down at Stiles. A little smirk pulled the corner of her mouth and her voice dropped low, for Stiles ears only. He eyed her warily.

"...What?” Stiles asked with a little bit of hesitation.

Erica smiled wolfishly and he immediately regretted asking. “Are gonna be good or do I have to find Derek's cuffs and chain you to the bed?” The other three Werewolves made small sounds of distress. Upstairs he knew Derek was turning red as a tomato and at least one of his sisters were grinning like
“What maniacs. Probably Cora.”

“What did she say?” Melissa asked her son curiously.

Scott shook his head, pinching the bridge of his nose. “Nothing, mom. Nothing.”

Stiles shook his head and managed to push the blankets down to his waist, leaving his legs toasty warm. “I’ll behave till this sling is off.” He looked down and wriggled his fingers, feeling the pull of the tendons all the way in his shoulder and neck. His tattoos were still glowing with their soft blue light like a battery pumping out a steady stream of reparative magic throughout his body, but he was sure that if he tried to raise his injured arm any higher than his head, he’d hurl.

“What’s the physical therapy going to be like anyway?” Jackson asked out of the blue. “I mean, Stiles, you’re really the only person we can ask considering the number of hours you’ve put into it.” Stiles turned his head slowly to see the other man looking at him with an air of innocence. Someone was being a little douche-wolf this morning. Jackson shrugged one shoulder in response to Stiles look. “I’m just saying.”

The Werewolves upstairs must have resounded with a few warning growls that neither Stiles or Melissa could hear because Isaac glanced up at the ceiling, looking a little alarmed. Stiles knew Derek wouldn’t get up in arms about Jackson being, well, Jackson -he’d been around all of them long enough- but Laura and Cora might want to knock him down a peg and that was an argument none of them needed right now.

Erica placed her hands on her hips with a no-nonsense brow raised high as she puffed up her chest. “I supposed you’ve completely forgotten the part of your life you weren’t a Werewolf?”

Jackson shrugged again. “I went to the hospital twice as a kid and Stiles has a medical record longer than his police record, so my point still stands.”

“Maybe I just had a much more proactive approach to childhood that you,” countered Stiles. Scott could back that up just based on how many times Stiles had volunteered to climb trees to retrieve frisbees instead of waiting for their parents to come home.

“Reckless and proactive are not the same thing,” Jackson returned and Stiles rolled his eyes, remembering how many times he’d had to just let Jackson’s barbs slide in High school. They were adults and they could talk about things like adults.

Erica seemed to think the same and she shook her head, disappointment clear in her expression. "Eat a Snickers, Jackson. You're bitchy when you're hungry."

Isaac and scott snorted at the reference. They didn’t have to make snide remarks and backhanded comments and be all passive aggressive but when one of them was being intentionally mean, there could be some backlash, so when Jackson opened his mouth and out came; “Did epilepsy require physical therapy?” Shit hit the fan.

Melissa -the mother who loved these wayward young people like she’d raised them right along with her own son- straightened, her spine suddenly made of steel. Outraged, she demanded, “Jackson Michael Whitmore, what has gotten into you?” Jackson actually looked startled by the tone of the woman's voice and Stiles, for once, didn't feel the need to interject on behalf of the bullied. Melissa had this.

Erica, far from looking hurt -maybe she felt the same as Stiles- just crossed her arms, jaw tense. “Yeah Jax, what bug crawled up your butt and laid a colony of asshole babies?”
Growling, Jackson tossed the magazine back onto the coffee table, looking at the ground. “Jesus, never mind, okay. Don't be so sensitive.” Suddenly the walls were up and a familiar, closed off scowl washed over Jackson's face.

If the disappointed frown was any queue, Scott wasn’t going to let that go. The True Alpha held his hands out to each side, balancing them like a scale. “Asshole. Not asshole.” Scott said tersely, moping each hand up and down in turn. “You do so well some days but the rest of the time you’re like pre-bite high school Jackson the asshat who everyone hated. Aren't you flying to the other side of the world to get some help with that?” Scott's words had everyone tensing all over again because that was right up there with those intentionally mean things being said that might incur some backlash.

Melissa tried to step in before Jackson could react, moving calmly as she inched closer to Scott, maybe getting ready to push him out of the way. “Okay boys, find something else to do. Outside maybe. Isaac and I can-,”

“No, mom,” Scott sternly interrupted, straightening as he kept staring at Jackson. “Man, whatever it is, get it off your chest.” He turned to Stiles, Isaac, and Erica, unflinching at their surprised expressions, and explained in a calmer tone. “He was pissy on patrol last night too, and not the normal level of pissy I've come to expect from him.” He turned to Jackson again. “You’re even more grumpy this morning, man. What's the deal?”

Stiles felt a frown pull at the corners of his mouth and a smidge of worry welled up in his stomach. Looking at Jackson a little more closely Stiles could see the tired shadows under the man's eyes and noted his general unkempt appearance. Jackson was the type to fix his hair after waking up but it just looked like he’d pushed it all back this morning to tame bedhead. It wasn't messy by any means but it was a little wild for him. Jackson actually looked at Stiles then, a small gleam of hope in his eye, like maybe he thought the man would intervene with some light-hearted something or other and make the tension disappear, but Stiles kept silent. Sometimes it was easier to let someone with enhanced senses and a bit of a chip on their shoulder to needle another into talking. Scott was that person. Nevertheless, Stiles threw up a silencing ward around the living room, muttering a small apology when a tattoo on his hand flared and everyone's ears popped. He shot a text to Derek letting him know that everything was fine and they just needed a minute so he should keep his sisters upstairs till they were done.

Scott had risen from his chair, but Jackson, surprisingly, hadn’t moved. He rubbed at his ear sullenly though he did look a little less cornered now that the ward was up. When he finally did speak he sounded as sullen as he looked. “Everyone was pissed that we didn't find anything, McCall, not just me.”

Scott shook his head, not buying it. “You’ve been in a mood since we took Stiles to the hospital three days ago. This is a persistent bad mood.”

“I’m tired,” Jackson grit out, glaring at Scott. “This has been tiring.”

“No,” Erica interrupted slowly, thinking about the last few days now as she sat on the arm of the couch. “Scott's right. What’s with you lately?”

Now that they were all on the same page, Isaac shifted, looking at Jackson with concern. “Is it because you've been away from your other pack for too long?” he ventured. “I know you put off going back this time around.”

Jackson looked at the younger Beta with surprise coloring his face and Scott latched onto that, trying to be encouraging. “Hey,” he ventured, ”you know you can go over there whenever you want, it’s
That was obviously not what was bothering him because Jackson snapped, a growl creeping into his voice. “Like hell would I leave right now, Scott! You know me better than that.”

“Okay,” Isaac said evenly, “so it isn’t about not finding anything and it’s not about going back to London…” he summarized as they waited for Jackson to continue.

Glancing around the living room, his cheeks coloring with mild embarrassment, Jackson grit his teeth and took a calming breath. When he let it out Stiles heard the little shikk of the man’s claws receding. “I’m dealing with it.”

Isaac made a skeptical face, eyeing the other man knowingly. “Are you sure?” Jackson's fingers clenched into a fist but he clearly couldn’t bring himself to snap at Isaac, so he looked up and Stiles saw that his eyes were just fading from their bright Beta yellow.

Stiles held eye contact with the other man for a few moments, thinking about how best to broach the subject and wishing Danny were around. Jackson wasn’t a talker in much the same way Derek wasn’t a talker. It took a lot to pry feelings out of those guys but Stiles had been slowly whittling away and kicking at those walls for years now. “What’s up, Jax?” he asked his friend simply.

Jackson blinked at Stiles lack of finesse but that was what probably made the situation tolerable. All the fight went out of Jackson then and there and he slumped in the chair as he let out a grumble. “It’s…it’s a lot of stupid stuff,” Jackson finally admitted. He rubbed his hand over his face, groaning as if he was in pain. “I…at the hospital I was, I don't know...feeling guilty or something. About the fight at first. You wouldn't have gone after Charles like that if I hadn’t gotten stabbed, right?”

Stiles frowned, trying to dredge up his memories of that whole mess. “You jumped on his back and tried to strangle him with your bat,” Erica muttered next to him.


Jackson sighed again. “Right, so you do that crazy, stupid thing, and I didn't even think about grabbing knife he stabbed me with so that was another clue down the drain. Then we waited in the hospital while they were operating on you and we could have been out tracking the Nest down, and now we can't find them.” Jackson started to look a little uncomfortable again. “I know we can’t do anything about that now and being sore about it is stupid, but it just kind of...jump started my bad mood.”

Melissa had taken her seat again and was watching Jackson with motherly concern, though the sternness in her face said she wasn't beyond using his middle name again. “What kept it going?” she asked.

The young man huffed, crossing his arms over his chest. He was unwilling to make up any excuses now, especially not to Melissa. He did, however, glance at Isaac and Scott. “It’s Marco’s pack, alright.” The two looked surprised to hear that they might have been on the right track earlier in mentioning his London home away from home. “I talked to them last night. I was just giving them updates.”

Stiles heard some thumping from upstairs and had the sneaking suspicion that it was Cora telling them to get on with it. It was the slightly guilty look on Jackson's face that had him saying, “Well, that's fine.” He and Derek had no problem with Jackson sharing information with Marco. If the Durand Pack was willing to take care of Jackson half the days of the year then they had a right to know what was going on. They worried about their packmate just like the Beacon Hills Pack did...
when Jackson was over there.

Scowling, Jackson went on. “They asked if we wanted help.”

Stiles nodded agreeably. Again, that was fine. He didn’t really think they needed any more Werewolves in town what with Laura and Cora showing up though. Still, the offer was nice. “What did you say?”

Offended, Jackson scowled. “No, obviously!”

Stiles raised an eyebrow in question. “Why are you so mad then?”

Letting out a growl of a huff, Jackson rolled his eyes and finally got to the root of the problem; the thing that was making him an all around general asshole this morning. “We don't need them! I...I just... you guys are my pack,” he tried to explain, grasping for the best way to do so. “My first pack. If I can't help you guys out on my own, what's the point!? I’ve been flying to London for the last few years to train with Marco and deal with this Kanima crap so that when I come back I’m not a...a...a giant lizard asshole all the time! So that I can actually function in a pack like I’m supposed to!”

That revelation was met with a momentary stunned silence. No one knew what to say so all eyes immediately turned to Stiles who was regarding Jackson with neither sympathy or pity. “Jackson,” he said. “They didn't ask because they think you can’t handle it. They asked because they worry. They would help us just like we would help them.”

Jackson all but sank into his chair and disappeared. “I know,” he grumbled, barely audible. “That’s why I said it was stupid….” Some of the tension eased out of the room now that Jackson was more embarrassed than angry and Stiles let the ward down, apologizing again half-heartedly when everyone's ears popped.

Situation handled, he texted to Derek.

“If anything,” Erica noted, her tone light as they heard footsteps coming down the stairs. “I bet his pack is bored over there without you around and wants in on the action. Pretty sure they’ve never had a good old Beacon Hills Experience before. Like summer camp for Werewolves.” After a beat of silence, Isaac snorted trying to contain a laugh and even Jackson couldn’t help but crack a chagrined smile. Pleased with herself, Erica winked at Melissa who was giving her a conspiratorial look.

“What did we miss?” Cora asked as she popped into the living room, Laura looking over her shoulder with mild curiosity. She was dressed in people clothing now and her hair was no longer a rat nest. Laura looked as put together as ever but now had a little makeup on.

Derek, who always cleaned up nice, walked past behind them and headed for the kitchen. “None of our business,” He told his little sister, not even looking as he mimed catching a kiss Stiles blew at him.

Cora just ignored him and pressed on. “Stiles, is that a thing you do all the time?” she asked, staring at the Emissary with a grin. “Oh my gosh is that what it’s like for humans? You get to have secrets!? That is so not fair!”

“Oh, yeah, what a shame you had to learn tact as a child,” was Laura’s sarcastic reply, grabbing her sister by the back of the neck and giving a shove. Cora stumbled into the living room and then dashed over to the rug to sit down next to Isaac.

“Seriously, privacy in your own house,” Cora insisted. "That’s awesome.” The sad part is that she
was being totally genuine. Poor born Werewolf babies.

Stiles grinned and waved his hand at Jackson, shaking his head at Cora’s enthusiasm. “Well, Jax, just make sure you get Marco on the phone again and apologize for telling them to fuck off.”

The man’s eyes flew wide open in surprise. “You heard me?” He asked, and Isaac snorted again.

Stiles did a double take and nearly sat up, sending pain screaming along his arm. “Holy crap I was kidding! What is wrong with you!?”

A cheeky grin broke out on Jackson's face as Erica placed a hand on Stiles head and kept him seated. “Messing with you.”

Stiles gaped while Cora smiled even though she didn’t know what was going on - the thought was actually thrilling to her. Erica sauntered over to Jackson’s chair and dared to ruffle his hair, effectively forgiving him for his previous comments. The Beta batted her away with very minimal effort. “Yeah, yeah. Don’t forget the hummus,” he reminded her. He watched as Melissa arranged some things next to her on the coffee table; ice packs, heat packs, a layout of fresh gauze and tape. “Danny will kill you if you forget the hummus.”

Erica rolled her eyes and pulled out a list, easily a foot and a half long and in small print, from her jacket pocket. She still had her leather one from high school whereas most of the other originals had been shredded by now. She scanned down the list. “It’s not on here,” she told him, leaning her elbows on the back of Jackson's chair and resting her chin on the top of his head.

“Add it,” Jackson replied smartly. Erica smiled and nuzzled her face into the top of his head. “Don’t forget the hummus,” Jackson groused again.

Laura had been hovering by the opening to the hallway and glanced over her shoulder to the front door. “A car pulled up,” she announced, glancing at her watch. “Must be the nurse.”

“Definitely the nurse,” Erica confirmed after tilting her head to the side to listen. "Listen to that heartbeat go. She sounds like a deer."

“Abath have a close resemblance to deer. More docile,” Lydia commented as she came out of the kitchen with a still steaming cup of fresh coffee. If she had noticed the ward going up or the serious taking going on a moment ago, she gave no sign of it. "It's the male counterparts that resemble horses. More temperamental."

“Harder to think about getting trampled or gored by a deer,” Stiles noted and Lydia nodded, raising her cup in agreement.

“I still can’t believe unicorns are violent,” Erica complained, shooting a vengeful glare at Stiles. “You ruined that girlish fantasy for me.”

Laura’s eyebrows rose as she kept her eyes on the front door, listening to their visitor approach. “Her heart really is going fast.” She knew about Abaths but perhaps she hadn't quite believed Derek when he told her how timid the woman was.

“Poor thing probably thinks we’re going to eat her,” Erica stated.

Melissa sighed, shaking her head and asked rhetorically, “Why do you all always harass my Nurses?” The Pack revered the medical professionals in Beacon Hills but they saw them so often they just had to poke at them every now and then.
“Hey Larry the Salamander, try not to cauterized my wounds by mistake this time.”

“Hi Alma the Djinn, if I wish for immunity against poison, do I only get to wish against three different kinds?”

“Jordan, if you have to pick up a sock a patient left behind, are you set free? Oh, shoot, wait, that’s house elves. My bad.”

It wasn’t like the on-call staff neglected to return the favor. Dog treats in the pudding cup, flea bath in their shower stalls, a newspaper in the corner of the room. They had fun.

Erica looked towards the door and sighed. “Well, I’ve got my list and I’m going to need a few hours to get it all. See you guys later.” She gave Jackson a wet kiss on the cheek which he looked horrified by and she hoisted the bundle of bags over her shoulder.

“Got Oreos on the list?” Laura asked as she passed into the hallway

“Double stuff, at the top!” They heard Erica open the front door and call out to Amy who was apparently at the steps “Don’t worry Nurse Malay, the big bad Alpha is in the kitchen so no one is going to eat you!”

A few moments after Erica made her exit the front door opened again and a soft voice called, “Pardon me. May I come in?” Laura smiled and pushed off from the wall, going to greet the woman. Amy wasn’t in scrubs now but instead wore faded jeans and a white t-shirt. It said something about her coloring that her hair shone brighter than the shirt and her skin was almost the same shade.

“Hi,” Laura said, offering the woman a smile. “You must be Amy. I’m Derek’s older sister, Laura.”

Amy had frozen by the doorway, her light red eyes wide as she took in the sight of yet another new Werewolf. “Yes,” she acknowledged rigidly. "Peter had mentioned that you and your younger sister were staying here as well.” She glanced inside, perhaps looking for more people.

“Come on in Amy,” Melissa called out to her. “We’re all in the living room.”

Amy glanced at Laura again and then stepped inside when the taller woman nodded for her to join them. She towed her shoes off at the entrance, barely making a sound. Laura gave the woman a wide berth and Amy stepped out of the entryway and into the opening to the living room, hovering at the edge of the rug on the hardwood floor.

“Did you find the place okay?” Scott asked once the Abath was in sight.

Amy nodded. “Peter gave me adequate directions. Though he did mention ‘taking a left at large rock that McCall trips over every time we do a drill.”

Scott’s ears turned red and he rubbed his hand over his face. “So...Yeah..... Stiles. Mom and I took a look at his wound earlier and rebandaged it.”

“He didn’t wear the sling to bed,” Jackson cut in.

“Fink,” Stiles muttered, shooting the beta a glare. Jackson shrugged.

Amy’s full attention was on Stiles now, the curiosity that had lit up her eyes in the hospital present once more. She stepped off the rug and onto the hardwood only to instantly freeze in place, her entire body going still. “Mr. Stilinski,” her voice rose an octave. “Is something wrong?”
Confused, Stiles blinked. “...No?” He glanced around the living room, wondering if there was a fire he just hadn't been aware of. Nope. Everything was good. Still, the Abath looked overly tense, even for her, and Stiles finally noticed that a light blue glow was coming from beneath her foot. A ward.

It was a little startling for Stiles that he hadn’t even noticed it go off. The constant thrum of energy he had running through him now must have dulled his senses to it. That needed to be fixed immediately. He quickly released the ward that was trapping the Abath and all at once Amy let out a breath and shifted to the side a step.

Jackson was on the edge of his seat, looking as tense as Amy had been. “Why did your ward react to her?”

Frowning, Stiles shook his head. He took a moment to mentally inventory the marks on his body, separating the normally inactive areas from ones he was currently using, all of which were connected to his runes and wards that lay all over the house and Preserve. His frown grew a bit colder when he recognized the purpose of the ward Amy had set off. “Vampire,” he said.

The Werewolves bristled even without fur and Melissa stood up slowly, keeping her eyes on the pale woman though her stance had become just as defensive and wary as the rest of them. “Amy?”

Derek had been content to stay in the kitchen if only just to avoid having to deal with the skittish Abath, but that wasn’t a comment he could ignore. The door to the kitchen opened and the Alpha walked out, a frown darkening his face in a way that was probably not good for Amy’s heart. To top it all off Peter sauntered down the hallway on the opposite side of the room and stood there in the doorway, arms crossed with a blank look on his face. What he’d been doing all this time, as usual, was a mystery.

The pale haired woman froze like the frightened deer surrounded by the 7 wolves that she was. Even Lydia had an air of threat to her as she sipped her coffee and waited for a response. Amy swallowed audibly, her muscles rigid and ready for flight, but then Isaac elbowed Cora who was starting to growl and she let out a funny noise that broke some of the tension. Amy swallowed and forced her shoulders to relax a fraction of an inch. “I apologize Emissary Stilinski, I didn't think there would be a precaution like this. Please allow me to explain?” Stiles nodded slowly and Derek walked over to the couch, standing behind him. “As you know,” Amy went on, forcing out her words with some effort, “In case of emergencies we keep a reserve supply of blood and supplements at the hospital for residents that have such dietary needs.” There was an entire cooler that was kept in good stock and came in handy whether a supernatural creature was severely injured or on the brink of insanity. It wasn't easy for some to go about their daily lives when they were in contact with what was essentially a buffet for their kind, morning, noon, and night. “I was taking inventory earlier this morning and noticed an entire deposit tray in the cooler with no labels or time stamps. Almost 7 liters worth.”

Scott's brow furrowed. “That’s...all the blood in a human body,” he said, mostly for the benefit of anyone in the room not medically minded.

The Abath nodded. “Apart from select specimens like deadman’s blood, the stock in the cooler has to be rotated regularly so I thought it must have been a technician in the middle of restocking, but then I noticed that the IV bags were not the same as the ones we use at the hospital. There is always the risk of error, but we’re very careful about keeping the supernatural supplies separate from the ones we use for human patients.” Amy reached into her pocket and removed a small plastic bag with a sealed tube of bright red, almost watery liquid in it, and held it up for them to see. “I didn't have time to run a proper blood panel so I thought the next best option would be to consult a third party about its origin.”
“Charlotte.” Everyone jumped when both Derek and Stiles spoke at the same time.

The nurse started to look uncomfortable again. Much like Werewolves, Vampires had a keen sense of smell. They could, however, gauge emotions more readily because their own abilities relied so heavily on manipulating them. They ascertained a person's mental state strictly from their pulse, and more specifically from the blood. Some Vampires fed and enjoyed the smell and taste of fear, others of lust and want. Either way, a Vampire was better than any bloodhound and if any foul play was suspected in the setting of this mysterious blood, Charlotte would be the lady in town to go to.

“Yes, I went to see Miss Charlotte.” Amy told them, turning the thin vial between her fingers. “I took a much smaller sample to her earlier this morning. She confirmed that there were extremely high levels of anticoagulants mixed in.” Stiles body tensed and a stab of pain lanced through his shoulder. The ward reacting made perfect sense now.

Laura frown was as heavy as Dereks and she looked to her brother. “Why in the world would someone leave something like that in the hospital?”

They’d seen all sorts of strange and grotesque calling cards over the years and a bunch of blood was probably the least of it so it was Peter who answered. “A message, most likely.”

“Seems a little far-fetched,” Lydia countered, sounding skeptical. “It was just by chance that Amy was doing inventory at that particular time and not many people knew she was Stiles head nurse or that we would even see her today. It could have been days before we even got word of it.”

Jackson scratched at his temple, trying to get up to speed. "Alright, so why did the ward go off?’’

The Emissary just stared at the vial containing the bright red blood and Amy flinched when she saw his eyes. They’d turned a cool purple and for a moment she almost withdrew the sample to hide it away. Stiles felt Derek’s gaze from behind and then a warm, firm hand touched his good shoulder. Stiles pulled his gaze away from Amy and his eyes faded back to their normal amber color. "It’s a body's worth of Vampire blood, Jackson. Someone killed a Vampire to send us a message.”

Chapter End Notes

*slams face onto desk*

I mean, at least its kind of a longer chapter......
Hey all, first off, no, I have not forgotten about this or my other fics. This last month has been pretty bad for me. I had to have back surgery recently and for an entire month before and after, sitting and sleeping were very difficult for me without extreme pain. Needless to say sitting at a computer was not going to happen. (Though I did manage to write a crap ton of the story on post it notes bumming around at work >>) Anyway, I just had to run a three day art booth by my lonesome and I've got a flight out of the country in two hours. In all: super sore super sleep deprived. I will certainly be continuing this story when I return (srsly there is a Beginning and a Middle so there has to be an Ending. My ocd demands it.)
Thank you so much for sticking with me guys, I just have to ask you not to get too frustrated with me while I get my shit together. TT luvs u guys so much.
Driving and contemplating

Chapter Summary

“No if they're just trying to confuse us,” the oldest Werewolf pointed out. “Because I mean,” he motioned with his hands, encompassing their general consensus. “Mission accomplished.”

Chapter Notes

Short chapter update. Trying to work on an update for Promise.

Laura sat tensely in the passenger's seat of her hard loved little 5 seater as Derek drove out of the Preserve, careful of the dips in the gravel road before they hit the pavement stretch. She'd been away from her childhood town long enough that construction had messed up her mental map, meaning it was up to her brother to find their destination and she was left to gaze out the window in wonder of all that had changed in her absence.

The silence in the car was like a blanket, muffling even their heightened senses in the face of the unsaid words in the air. Though it was sorely needed, Derek hadn’t turned on the radio, instead choosing to sit in the driver's seat and think deep, brooding thoughts. Laura’s expression wasn’t much different and her brows were furrowed and her mouth turned down in a pensive frown. The resemblance was uncanny.

With the list of things they needed to do only getting longer as the morning dragged on the Hales decided that they would all step out and get some air. Get some air meant they’d go question Charlotte, and step out - in Derek’s case at least- meant Laura glaring at him and insisting with her eyebrows that he let Stiles have some alone time with the medical professionals. That last bit might have been Lydia mostly, who had shared an understanding glance with her friend and pointed Derek in the direction of the car without saying a word. Their Emissary had taken everything in stride and was processing all of this new information and possible implications and he didn’t need his Alpha hovering over his shoulder, sniffing the air to make sure there wasn’t going to be a lightning storm in the middle of the living room. Having Jackson, Isaac, and Scott stay behind with all their protective Werewolf testosterone along with Amy and Melissa to look after him was more than enough supervision. The Alpha didn’t much more prompting than that.

While deep thinking contributed, however, the current frown Laura wore might have been mostly due to Peter. When they were all in the car and ready to go, Peter had gone back into the house while they waited impatiently and then he sauntered back out with a smug smile on his face. Obviously, he refused to tell anyone what he’d gone back inside for and no one was in the mood to ask.

Refusing to let herself become overwhelmed, Laura gave herself sufficient time be thankful that she and Cora were only visiting Beacon Hills and not living here anymore. Being long distance members of the Hale Pack certainly was less stressful.

“So,” Laura announced, finally breaking the silence, “Dead Vampire.” Her thumb pressed into her
temple. “If we’ve got no body and no other clues, how do we figure out if it’s one of the good guys or one of the bad guys?”

Derek turned on the blinker and stepped on the gas, passing a slower moving vehicle while he tapped his fingers on the steering wheel. The older car purred at the acceleration and Cora fiddled with the air vent behind them. “That’s why we’re going to see Charlotte,” he explained. “She probably contacted her entire Nest as soon as Amy left and I’m tired of waiting for people to call me when something happens.” No, if he was going to get kicked out of his own house early today, Derek was going to proactive.

“Are there any Vampires living in town who aren't part of her Nest?” Laura asked.

Lydia answered, not bothering to look up from her examination of her nails. “No permanent residents.” It’s not that they wouldn't have been welcome, but Charlotte's Nest had gotten there first. It was an unspoken courtesy not to set up camp in another Nest's stomping ground. “Also, Barry would have called the station if he noticed anyone new coming in.” The Gargoyle, who was understandably irritated that someone had gotten past while he was on watch, was pulling double duty as of late and he, unlike most of the supernatural protectors of Beacon Hills, didn’t need to sleep.

“We could just hope it’s one of the bad Vampires,” Cora pointed out. She was sitting in the middle seat, wedged between her uncle and the Banshee and looking none too perturbed by it. As the youngest child, she’d usually get saddled with the middle seat. “I mean, you said they just started coming in droves right? They’re probably all over the place and they pissed each other off or something.”

Lydia pressed her lips together, gazing out the window. “Well, that would be a problem with larger Nests,” she admitted. “But that's not the way you kill someone who just pissed you off a little, and you certainly don't leave the evidence in a public place for someone to find.” To her, just leaving a dead body in the Preserve, or dumping it in one of the small lakes, hell, even a ditch would be smarter. Taking the time to pump a body full of anticoagulants, exsanguinate them, vanish the body without a trace, and then hide the blood in a freezer seemed asinine.

Lydia made the last comment out loud and Peter huffed out a small chuckle. “Not if they're just trying to confuse us,” the oldest Werewolf pointed out. “Because I mean,” he motioned with his hands, encompassing their general consensus. “Mission accomplished.”

Lydia almost tipped her head in agreement and Cora snorted.

Derek wasn't paying much mind to any of them, proving Peter's point. “It has to be one of the Vampires involved,” he said softly, almost to himself. “Nests stick together and follow their First, so a loner would have gotten us a disturbance call or a missing person's report at least.”

Disbelief made Laura turn and look at her brother. “Okay, I've never met this Vlad guy,” Cora corrected his name and Laura ignored her. “but do you really think a prick like that wouldn't jump at the chance to say that his people went missing or got killed on Haven soil? He’s been trying to get a rise out of you even before he got here!”

“Maybe he doesn't know yet?” Cora offered hopefully.

Derek let out a sigh, taking a turn off the freeway. He didn't know what to think at the moment but if he was being honest, the bags of blood were lower on his list of priorities than other things. Some jaded, cynical, basic part of his brain was thinking ‘One Vampire I don't have to worry about anymore.’ The thought made him feel guilty but he couldn't deny he’d had it. His wolf was restless.
in the back of his mind along with that thought. It saw the Vampires as a threat and was having a hard time recognizing a friendly Night Walker from a fiendish one so the fact that they were driving right into a Vampires home base was making its claws itch. He almost wished he hadn't agreed to go to Carla's that evening. Duty -and Stiles- would have prevented him from refusing, but still. The idea of the others being alone at the house when he’d clearly seen Stiles struggling with his wards made him uneasy, adding to the layers of unease he was already wading through. Those were supposed to be a line of defense but with Stiles magic working overtime to heal him and even the simplest of wards against eavesdroppers making everyone's ears pop, he’d really considered telling Carla to shove it.

Leaving Cora's question hanging in the air, Derek turned on the radio.
Housewarming gifts

Chapter Summary

Derek sighed and shook his head, hoping unrealistically for the day he didn’t have to try to explain his Uncle. “He’s not always….He helps. For the most part.”

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

The Jungle -being the most nightly of nightclubs- wouldn't be open till the sun went down which left them with a decent amount of time to kill before going to the Onyx to deal with Carlas’ guests. The entire concrete and iron building looked different in the daylight. Less... happening , more warehouse and private property and if you try to break in something unfortunate might happen to you.

“Remind me again why you thought a place like this would be a good place to live when you came back to Beacon Hills?” Cora asked, peering up at the building as she got out of the car. “And by this, I mean an industrial warehouse made of cement and depression.”

“Wow, don’t tell Charlotte that,” Derek told his little sister gravely, though he couldn't think of any other answer because yeah, in daylight, this place reminded him of his old loft.

“They must still do good business,” Laura commented, looking around. The parking lot was free of litter, the shrubs around the building were trimmed and only tasteful graffiti coated the walls.

Derek nodded as they walked across the parking lot to the main entrance. There were refurbished rooms above the club that Charlotte and her Nest lived in so there were already some cars in the lot. Next to him, Laura was sniffing the air but she wasn't familiar enough with the scents in town to pick anything up like the Alpha could. The familiar earth and sweetness that veiled a Vampire like a seductive perfume were heavy around the building but so many people went in and out it was diluted by other creatures. Upon his investigation, Derek even caught hints of the Pack mixed in and knew Ethan had been patrolling the area recently.

Cora scratched the back of her neck, looking around with a frown. The tenseness of the car ride hadn't exactly affected her as much as her siblings because she’d spent most of the trip trying to get a peek at what Peter was texting on his phone. The man had expertly elbowed her away till Lydia finally rolled her eyes and told them to behave or she’d make Derek pull the car over.

Cora glanced over her shoulder, making a bored but succinctly curious face. “So, Der, What is it that Peter actually does around here?” She looked over her shoulder again and raised an unimpressed eyebrow at the sight. “Because so far he’s just being annoying.”

Derek glanced back at the car where he could see Peter in the back seat typing away on his phone. Without looking up from the screen when they’d parked he’d said he’d follow them in shortly and boy wasn't that just so very Peter. Derek sighed and shook his head, hoping unrealistically for the
day he didn’t have to try to explain his Uncle. “He’s not always….He helps. For the most part.” Lydia didn't scoff outright only because she’d grown to appreciate the ways Peter did choose to help his new Pack. Also, he had stupid deep founts of knowledge about random things that kept her and Stiles amused.

Laura was the first to reach the main door and stopped in front of it. Her eyes narrowed and immediately a frown pulled her expression down. The door was made of heavy, solid wood and was stained a deep, indulgent red. Given the nature of the owners, if Laura hadn't been able to smell the varnish she might have thought they used some other medium to stain it. The overly sweet scent of something too ripe hung around the area like a perfume; it was rich and floral and utterly compelling to humans whose noses weren't strong enough to pick up the underlying scent of death. Clearly marked territory and a warning to other Vampires. Laura wrinkled her nose a bit as she grabbed on to the polished brass handle and turned. It opened without any resistance. “I really hope this being unlocked isn't an ominous thing,” Laura stated.

“Everyone knows who owns the club,” Lydia told her. “It would be dumb to break in, especially during the day when it would only make them cranky.” Nothing like being a supernatural creature to deter burglars.

Laura nodded and pushed the door open, stepping inside. While the eldest of the Hale siblings only remembered the Jungle from when she’d been younger and looking for a fun night, Cora had never been inside. The youngest eagerly looked around as she walked in and grinned when she saw no less than four strategically placed disco balls hanging from the ceiling at different levels. “If there is a 70s theme night, I’m so in,” she announced.

Laura muttered something about Cora’s inability to Hustle and while Cora shoved her a velvety female voice in the darkness drew their attention.

“It's every third Friday of the month,” It said. “Bell-bottoms are optional.”

Derek, who had walked in with Lydia, gave a small nod of his head to the owner of the establishment who had just stepped out of the shadows without a sound. Charlotte was dressed form-fitting cerulean dress and her shoes had heels like dart points. Her dark hair was pulled into a tight bun, accentuating a long slender neck and If it had not been for the dark discoloration of fatigue under her eyes she would have been immaculate. Behind her strode Isabelle, an equally stunning blonde woman who shared a playful, challenging look with Lydia to which the redhead just raised an unimpressed eyebrow. She wore blue jeans and a shirt; quite the opposite of the revealing number she’d worn the night of Stiles welcome home celebration.

Charlotte looked both Hale sisters up and down as she drew closer. “You must be Derek's sisters.” She flashed them a sharp but not unkind smile though both of them tensed a bit, sensing the predator in their midst. “The family resemblance is striking. Alpha Hale, Miss Martin, always a pleasure.” Charlotte tipped her head to Derek as well and motioned to one of the booths. “Shall we take a seat?” She raised a hand to a young man behind the bar who was shelving some bottles. “Caleb, dear, four drinks for our guest, please. House specials.”

“Five,” Cora corrected. “Peter's procrastinating outside.”

Charlotte nodded again and held up another finger to Caleb before they all sat down. “This is Isabelle,” she said, motioning to her blonde companion for Laura and Cora's sake. “One of my Sisters and my Second. I hope it’s alright that she joins us.”

“It’s fine,” Derek said, trying to get comfortable in the booth when Laura and Cora were squeezing in next to him like the protective Wolf sisters they were.

“Now, before we get down to why you’re here,” Charlotte started, “I must ask; how is Stiles?”
“Recovering,” Derek told her, not too keen on going into any details. “Bored.”

Charlotte let out a soft chuckle but actually looked relieved, some of the fatigue in her eyes lifting. “Yes, I can imagine. He seems like the type to go stir crazy. I’m sure he’ll be on his feet in no time.”

Isabell gave a good-natured grin at her side. “We were thinking of sending him a get well card. Something corny like ‘You look drained! Feel better!’”

While the resident Hale Pack might have been cool enough with these Vampires to let those kinds of jokes slide, Cora’s eyes narrowed and she heard her Wolf click its claws. “You do know our Emissary almost died, right?”

Taken aback by Coras reaction Isabelle blinked a few times, mouth gaping. “Yes, of -of course I do. I’m-” She looked between Derek and Charlotte, worry draining some of the color from her face. “Sorry, I didn’t mean to sound-”

“-Really insensitive?” Cora finished. No amount of free drinks or childhood party fantasies would make her forget the chunk of flesh that Vampire teeth and taken out of her friend.

Derek sighed and put his hand on Coras’ shoulder to calm her down and praise her at the same time, insanely proud as a big brother and Alpha that the girls’ instincts were so on point. “It’s been a stressful few days for my Pack. I’m sure Stiles would love that card. He’s weird like that.”

Charlotte hummed softly before sending her Sister a chastising look. “He would, but Cora is right. It’s not something to make light of.”

“Sorry,” Isabelle muttered quietly, shrinking into herself.

Charlotte straightened and put on her business face as the bartender walked over with the drinks. Derek smelled the barest hint of wolfsbane in four of the glasses and Lydia’s was the color of nightshade and probably something concocted to tickle her Banshee taste buds.

“So, what can I do for you all?” Charlotte finally inquired, placing her hands neatly on her lap as some of the heaviness once again returned to her eyes in a very dignified fashion. “Or should I ask in what capacity you are here, first?” It was important to make it clear just how Derek wanted to present himself when dealing with another Supernatural creature in their own dwelling.

He took a deep breath before he spoke. “All capacities,” Derek replied. He tried keeping his tone as light as possible even though his expression was one of impatience. “Carla said you mentioned some interesting people were going to be at the Onxy tonight.”

The Vampires eyes narrowed suspiciously, the wheels turning in her mind. “I spoke to her earlier. She told you this?”

She wondered why Charlotte looked like she was confused. “Why does she think there’s going to be trouble?”

Charlotte took a deep breath as she raised an eyebrow and picked up her glass with one hand. “Well, considering the Onyx’s normal patrons I think it’s safe to assume there could be trouble any night.”

Laura frowned, her warm eyes hardening as her ‘I saw my Alpha mom do this a few times’ training started to show. “Are really pretending to not know what he’s talking about?”

Charlotte quickly held up her hand in apology and took a drink. She shook her head once the glass left her lips. “Sorry, I’m generally not a day person,” she said. “But I am curious as to why Carla would tell you about a private conversation. She deals with unsavory characters all the time and is...
“She asked us to be at the club tonight,” Derek told her, watching the woman carefully. It was hard to read someone who didn’t have a heartbeat but if Charlotte gave anything away, he’d catch it.

The Vampiress blinked, her face remaining impassive. “Did she now? Well, at least she took my words to heart I suppose.” Derek had been hoping that Carla might have been jumping the gun in asking for a Pack presence at the bar but now he wasn’t sure what to think.

“Care to elaborate?” Lydia asked when Derek just continued to stare the woman down.

Charlotte’s eyes flicked over to the redhead, a hint of irritation showing through but it was soon covered. “I spoke with Carla about some concerns I had in light of recent events. The truth is, I-”

The truth would remain unspoken for a bit longer because the main door opened and the light from outside spilled into the dimly lit interior. A soft gust of air flowed into the club and directly to their booth. It completely blew away the relative calm that had been the atmosphere thus far.

Charlotte froze mid-sentence and Isabelle stiffened, their eyes shifting to Peter’s lone form, silhouetted against the light outside, as they glowed an eerie neon blue. Cora and Lora’s eyes flashed in retaliation and they were almost out of their seats before Derek and Lydia pulled them back down.

Charlotte hadn’t even bothered to look at the two Werewolves who’d been ready to attack, showing how little she thought of them as a threat, or perhaps how little she cared about the threat in lieu of what had attracted her attention. Her voice was deceptively soft but it carried well when she spoke. “What are you hiding, Hale?”

Peter let the door close behind him and stayed just at the threshold. He didn’t look surprised even when the others turned to him in confusion. “Ah, yes,” he said after a moment’s pause. He reached into his pocket and pulled out….a bag. A bag with a rune drawn on it in magic marker. One of Stiles herb bags; charmed to keep the smell from sensitive Werewolf noses.

A Vampire’s nose, however, was much sharper which is why Charlotte and her Second had reacted, but on sight of the bag Cora wrinkled her nose and Derek felt a growl rumble out of his throat. Inside the bag was a ball of stained fabric. A piece of Stiles sweatshirt the night he’d been bitten; the same one that the hospital orderlies had cut off of his body, crusty with blood and still smelling of pain.

Derek felt another growl slip past his lips as he started his uncle down. “What the hell, Peter.”

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A few miles away in the peaceful surroundings of the Preserve with Scott sitting on his feet and Isaac snoring on the rug in front of the fireplace, Stiles let out a distressed groan as his head fell back. His phone was in his hands, opened up to his latest text with Peter. “Oh my god he actually did it.”

Partially distracted by the infomercial on TV, Scott popped a chip into his mouth. “It might not be all bad Stiles, relax.”

“You might rip Peters smug grin off his face,” Stiles muttered. He held his phone up so he could
glare at it from his dejected position. “She’s going to be pissed.”

Still in his chair but sprawled in a much more relaxed position, Jackson held out his hand towards Stiles and cleared his throat, looking at the other man pointedly. Stiles huffed and tossed his phone to the Werewolf without complaint.

Jackson scrolled through the text messages and scoffed when he was done. “You told him, like, five times it was a bad idea. Of course, he’s going to do it.”

"You both are pretty chill for people who just stood by and let him walk out the door with that bad idea," Stiles groused. "I would have cast a spell on him if I wasn't worried I'd blow his legs off or something."

"What's done is done," Scott announced. "Derek and Laura can handle it." He passed his friend a pity potato chip from the bag. Their bro-bond let Stiles know there was food in front of his face and he took the chip between his teeth, eyes still closed as he lamented the fact that he had not been able to run after Peter himself earlier.

When the eldest Hale had sauntered back into the house he’d offered no explanation as he made his way upstairs, thumped around a bit, and came back down with his hands in his pockets. Peter had never been one to backtrack so Stiles was immediately suspicious. Melissa had gone into the kitchen to wash her hands and Amy had been in the middle of checking his shoulder for extenuating muscle damage. She’d been a little too fascinated watching how his magic was healing his muscle and tissue. “Peter,” Stiles had called out, ready to frown and it had nothing to do with the fact that the Abath had poked the magical seam of healing flesh for the second time.

The older man paused mid-step to look at him, face blank in innocence.

“Peter,” Stiles said again. The eyes of the Werewolves in the room were now on him as well. Peter took a step back so he was in full view in the entryway and raised an eyebrow.

Stiles growled a little when his magic jumped to shock Amy’s prodding fingertips again and she reached for the bandages quickly. “I don't trust your face right now,” Stiles announced. “What are you doing?”

Peter scoffed and rolled his eyes. “I forgot my wallet.”

Stiles didn't take his eyes off the older man because there was no way he was buying that. “Guys?”

“Lying,” Isaac, Jackson, and Scott voiced in unison.

Melissa walked back into the living room in time to hear that and when she caught sight of Peter, not missing a beat, she said; “You’re surprised?”

Peter raised an eyebrow but didn't look offended. “It's so nice to know people have faith in me.”

“Spill, Peter,” Jackson boredly demanded.

Peter rolled his eyes again before answering. “I thought I’d bring Charlotte something, as long as we’re going to see her.”

Isaac sniffed the air and narrowed his eyes. “...And it was in Derek and Stiles room?” He asked slowly. Their room was the only one that smelled like Stiles cigarettes and wouldn't Derek be mad his Uncle had been feeling.
The older Werewolf let out a long, loud sigh and brought his hands out of his pockets to cross his arms over his chest. “I’m bringing her something that Stiles wore during his fight with Charles.”

Scott barked out a laugh only to have it cut short when his head tipped to the side as he listened for any jump in the man’s pulse. “Oh, jeez,” he said after he heard nothing. “You’re serious.”

Stiles had already started shaking his head. “You are not bringing bloody remnants into a Vampires home.”

Peter just raised his hands in the air. “Sorry, Stiles, but I for one would like to explore my options on finding Charles before they all run off into the night and away from Hale territory. Besides, Amy did it.”

At his side, the Abath froze once the attention was on her, her eyes widening. She quickly looked from Stiles to Peter and then back again. “…It was logical.” she reasoned in a fearful voice.

Stiles did his best to ignore her. “Amy was acting on her own Peter, and you are acting as a Sentinel for the Hale Pack. You can’t be reckless like this!”

The older werewolf waved his hand dismissively. “It’s hardly reckless. The Abath is right; Charlotte is the logical option right now. If any Vampire blood is on the clothing she might be able to tell us where to look. Now, if you’ll excuse me, Derek is wasting gas out there,–”

“Peter, don’t- Ow!”

“Stiles, stop moving!” Melissa chastised, her attention drawn back when Amy dropped the scissors she was using because Stiles had tried to sit up and strangle Peter from across the living room.

Scott had risen from the couch and walked towards Peter in his friend stead. “Maybe it’s not a good idea Peter. She might be Stiles friend but she’ll still be mad if you spring something like this on her.”

Peter rolled on, taking a step towards the front door. “I’ll be very polite and if Derek tells me to step outside I will gladly do so, but I do happen to know that everyone in the pack, you included Scott, wants to find Valid’s nest before we have to make another hospital visit.”

Stiles flinched back a little at those words and his gaze shifted around the room. Apart from Amy, who was just finishing up with the tape around his neck, everyone had glanced off to the side. Jackson looked a little bit smug and Scott had stopped advancing; even Melissa was keeping her hands busy packing up the rest of the medical supplies.

Isaac picked at some of the thread on the rug nervously. “Charlotte can say no if she doesn’t want to, right?” he asked hesitantly.

Taking a deep breath before he responded, Stiles rubbed his eyes. “I don’t want to put her in that position in the first place, so-” The front door shut. “oh, fu- damnit, Peters gone. Dammit, Peter! Don’t you-”

“He says he’s not listening,” Jackson relayed, craning his neck to look out the window as Peter hopped into Derek’s car and they rolled off down the gravel driveway.

“This is- I- he can’t-!” Stiles muttered disjointedly to himself as he grabbed for his phone and started to jab at the screen.
Now, only a short while later with Amy gone and Melissa randomly tidying the house, Jackson was looking at the last reply from Peter.

*From Uncle-not-creeper-wolf:*

*As lucid and amusing as your arguments were, I've kept them waiting long enough.*

“Well,” Jackson said, tossing the phone back to Stiles. “She can help or she punches Peter in the face. We win either way.”

Charlotte stared at Peter and the bag with something akin to revulsion in her eyes. To a Vampire, what Peter had done was the equivalent of bringing a friend's severed finger in an envelope, or telling a recovering alcoholic not to drink the fine glass of wine. A little of both really. Either way, Charlotte was not amused. “You would bring *that* in here?” she asked, her dangerous tone indicating it was a rhetorical question. She rose slowly from her seat, keeping her hands on the table where her nails had cut into the dark laminate. The motion itself was enough to cause a similar reaction in Isabella and the bartender who had stopped stocking bottles and was more glowing blue eyes than face at this distance.

The eldest Werewolf held up his hand in way of peace, making sure that his movements were non-threatening, like his tone. “I am aware it is in rather bad taste but I *did* bring this for a reason. Stiles had this on during the fight in the sports field,” he explained. “It has his blood on it but I thought that it *might* very well have some of Charles blood on it too. Stiles did get a few good hits in after all. We haven’t been able to pick up any other trails so who better to ask than our lady Charlotte here?” He held the bag up and shook it, a suave smile on his face. “Would you my dear?”

“Oh my god,” Laura hissed under her breath, pinching the bridge of her nose.

Lydia had been watching the Vampires as the shadows on their faces seemed to sharpen, the look in their eyes growing more predatory. “Derek,” she said softly, trying to get his attention.

“Peter, get back outside,” Derek ordered, eyes flashing. He stood up slowly but with purpose. “We should go.”

“We haven’t gotten any answers from these lovely ladies yet,” Peter reminded them.

Isabelle’s lips had parted and a thin hiss passed through a slowly sharpening set of teeth and Cora rose slowly from her seat, watching them without blinking. "Doesn't matter Peter."

"Wait." Charlotte seemed to still for a moment when they moved and then swallowed hard, forcing herself to blink away the glow from her eyes. Her body was undeniably tense and her skin had paled to an almost ethereal color but she no longer looked like she'd open her mouth and a set of razor-
sharp teeth would reveal themselves. She reached out and touched her Sister's wrist causing her to shudder and close her eyes as well. When Isabelle opened them they were no longer glowing but they still looked hungry. Charlotte tucked her dark hair behind her ear and sat back down quietly. She settled her hands on her lap, probably to hide the fact that her nails were still a little sharper than they had been. She started speaking carefully, her tone just shy of a hiss. “You bring cloth drenched in my friend's blood into my home and business and you think that pandering to my vanity will negate how inappropriate it is?”

“I hoped it would ease the shock some, yes,” Peter admitted truthfully, and then the smile slid off his face, becoming serious. “I did so without the knowledge of my Alpha as well. Stiles may be against asking you to get directly involved and he certainly didn't want me to do this, but I didn't think you've have any qualms helping local law enforcement locate someone who assaulted the Sheriff's son.”

It was never wise to challenge the hierarchy of your Pack, especially when in the presence of another Supernatural creature, but in a way, Peter was being smart about this. Derek had already said he was here as an Alpha and as a Deputy. Pack or not, it was his job to look into local cases of assault. It was also safe to say that no one in the room liked the idea of Valids Nest running around unchecked after what had happened, Charlotte included.

It was that logic that had Charlotte letting out a tense sigh. “You play a dangerous game, Mr. Hale.” After another moment she reached out her hand, dark nails glistening, and Peter walked forward. “Isabell,” Charlotte said, “you're excused.”

The younger woman shook her head though she did lean back like she was bracing herself, watching the bag in Peter's hand like a cat watches a mouse. “I'll stay,” she replied calmly.

Derek had taken his seat again but he was ready to be out of it at a moments notice. “Charlotte, you don't have to do this.” Stiles was not going to be happy that they were making Charlotte choose to help them this way but he couldn't help but want to take the aid if it was offered. This could be the first lead they had in days.

With a deep, fortifying breath Charlotte took the bag once it was within reach. “Alpha Hale, if my Second cannot control herself you have my permission to act accordingly.” Isabelle swallowed and her body went still like she was contracting every muscle at once and freezing it in place. Derek just nodded.

Charlotte opened the bag as if she was opening a bottle of wine; carefully and with a delicate touch, keenly aware of that first burst of aroma that hit the air in front of her. Her eyes fluttered and her expression slacked to one of wanton pleasure. Fear, pain, anger, life; the stuff was an aphrodisiac to Vampires. Isabelle remained tense by her side, eyes widened so that all of the white showed. The Wolves' noses twitched at the assault to their senses but none of them looked away from the Vampires. Perhaps four seconds went by before Charlotte's breath ended and her eyes snapped open. Her fingers slid across the seal in one quick motion, cutting off the overpowering smell. Charlotte handed the bag back to Peter with a little more force than necessary and Peter put it right back in his pocket. “You stand over by the door with that,” Charlotte ordered and Peter complied with a tip of his head.

Cora crossed her arms, waiting for someone to speak as Peter made his way back towards the entrance. “Well?”

Charlotte didn't look at the youngest werewolf but at Derek instead. “First, was there anything else you wished to discuss with me during this visit?”

...
Derek dipped his head as his brows furrowed, unsure why she was changing the subject but answered anyway. Far be it from him to deny a lady a moment to compose herself. “Amy Malay stopped by this morning.”

“She also brought a rather inappropriate gift,” Lydia added, green eyes narrowed dangerously though it was uncertain as to who it was aimed at. “The same, we hear, that she brought to you first.” Charlotte glanced at Peter, a neon blue flashing over her irises.

Peter's entire demeanor seemed to relax with a smug satisfaction like this reaction had been exactly what he’d been aiming for. “She was also under the impression that you were the woman to see about blood-related matters.”

Charlotte shook her head, using her straw to stir the ice in her drink. “I cannot help you located Charles,” Charlotte said abruptly, but before anyone could interject, she continued; “The blood on the fabric and the blood the Abath brought me are one and the same. Charles is no longer an issue.”

After a beat or two of silence, Cora shook her head and waved their hands in the air, batting away the questions hanging there. “Wait, wait, wait,” she said quickly. “Someone killed the guy that bit Stiles?” She looked around at all of them, clearly confused.

“You know,” Peter mused from his side of the room, looking thoughtful, “In retrospect, it seems kind of obvious.”

Lydia rolled her eyes. “Everything is obvious in retrospect,” she shot back at Peter, sipping her drink with a frown on her face. There was a general nonchalant curiosity in her tone that indicated she didn't give two shits about the Vampires bloody end. Derek had to concur.

“And you're positive it's the same guy?” Laura asked.

Charlotte nodded in the affirmative. “The sample the Abath brought in was diluted, but I’d never mistake the source,” Charlotte mentioned, mirroring what Amy had told them at the house. “A terrified scent like that is impossible to fake.”

“What do you mean?” Derek asked.

Charlotte regarded her drink calmly. “Torture most likely. I’d say that the anticoagulant was injected while Charles was still alive and was used to flush out his veins and drain him. It would not have felt very nice.”

Laura looked mildly disgusted and Cora shrugged, leaning back in the booth. “Well, I’m seeing no problem with this.” She looked at her brother. “Now we just find the rest of the Nest and stick to them like white on rice till they do whatever evil thing they want to do, right?”

Derek let out a tired sigh, crossing his arms. “Easier said than done.”

“We could consider that they are using magic to hide,” Lydia pointed out and Peter nodded his head from across the room. "After all, if they didn't alert Stiles wards when they came the might have a magic user with them or something of the sort."

“Unlikely,” Charlotte interjected. “Valid is the old order of Vampires. Absolutely hates magic, and after his encounter with Stiles in New York, well....”

Derek nodded along and finished, “It’s unlikely that he’d hire himself a Witch.” He was still going to talk it over with Stiles but noted. He eyed Charlotte calmly. Even though Vampires didn't have a heartbeat he could listen to, Derek knew Charlotte wasn't telling him everything. “Thank you for the
information about Charles. I know a lot of people who will be relieved that he's out of the way.” Stiles father for one. Derek knew he'd have to let the Sherrif know right away so the department could change their game plan. "Now if we could get back to the topic of why Carla wants us at the Onyx tonight."

Charlotte didn't look surprised but she did look like she was thinking something over. After a moment she spoke. “Someone called the club last night and left a message. He simply said that he was going to Beacon Hills Neutral ground to be heard. He didn't say who he was or what he wanted and I couldn't recognize his voice. It was a strange call so I thought I should let Carla know.”

Derek ran his hand down his face. “You probably should have called me immediately,” he said in a bland tone, too done with the whole situation to be truly angry. He just wanted clear, concise answers to clear, concise problems for once. Was that too much to ask?

Charlotte looked mildly chastised but also a little fed up. “I didn't mention anything to you because I wasn't sure why I was called in the first place. If it was concerning your Pack he should have contacted Stiles, or one of the Sentinels first, after all I've no power to set up meetings for you if that's what he was even aiming for.”

“A heads up might have been nice anyway,” Derek said, feeling a full on scowl coming on.

Laura waved her hands in front of her and a dramatic gesture, shaking her head. “Hold on,” She said. “So how do we know the blood was supposed to be for the pack anyway now? ” She asked, frowning at Charlotte. “Amy went to you first, you got the mysterious phone call, and I hear you and Valid have some kind of history. How can we be sure Charles death wasn’t caused by someone in your Nest or that someone is trying to draw you out?”

Far from looking like she took that as an accusation, Charlotte smiled in understanding. “My contention is with Valid himself and vise versa. I never had any personal grudges against his Nest so killing Charles would have been meaningless.”

Not having gotten the answer she wanted, the expression on Laura's face was one of disappointment but she was still determined to get something out of this. “Okay, so what stick did you shove up this douchebags ass to make him hate you so much?” Peter snorted at his niece's phrasing and Derek just rolled his eyes, letting his older sister do what she wanted.

Charlotte closed her eyes for a moment and then sighed, looking tired again. “Something like a property dispute, though I hate to even call it that.”

“It was mentioned that he tried to cut your head off at one point,” Peter interjected from across the room.

The woman sighed again and waved her hand. “If you argue with someone for 20 years about the same thing, eventually words just aren't enough to get the point across. So far we've always ended up walking away to lick our wounds.” If Charlotte admitted that her Nest wasn't actually being made to fight her battles for her, her word could be trusted. A dispute between Nest leaders was personal and fortunately, between older Vampires at least, it tended to stay between the Firsts. They were the ones who remembered the gritty details after all and despite the loyalty a Vampire had for their sire, personal grudges stayed personal. Actually, it was more like they fought to pass the time between the years and it was easier to have one constant enemy to hash it out with.

Sceptical, Laura looked at her brother in question. Derek shook his head and cleared his throat. “We should head out,” he announced. “I've got to update the rest of the Pack and we have to get to Carla's.” They all stood up from the booth without question, expressions ranging from tired, to
dissatisfied, to irritated. In all, not really a happy end to the meeting.

Cora quickly downed the rest of her drink and set the glass on the table loudly. “If you send Stiles that crappy get well card it better come with a gift card,” she warned Isabelle.

The blonde nodded slowly, perhaps wondering if the young Werewolf would shift here and there if she argued. She and Charlotte followed behind the group as they walked to the door but before they reached it, Laura, not to be dissuaded, turned and faced the two women. “Mind if I ask what this property dispute is, Charlotte? We can’t really afford to have anything else come and bite us in the ass.”

Charlotte tipped her head to the side, regarding Laura for a moment and then she looked at Isabelle. The blonde actually gave an uncaring shrug as if to say ‘go ahead.’ Charlotte conceded with a minute huff of air. “Apparently my Second is Valid’s direct blood descendant.”

Derek rubbed his temple, groaning softly and even and the others winced in sympathy. It was the equivalent of a Werewolf from another pack biting one of your nieces and then completely disregarding that she already had a pack.

“Totally overreacting,” Isabelle insisted with a dramatic roll of her eyes. “I don't even know the creep and all of a sudden family bonding time is important to him? Psh, yeah right.”

Charlotte shrugged and stirred her drink with her finger. “When you live facing eternity, you can hold on to grudges for a while.”

Chapter End Notes

kind of a weird spot to end but i think the next chapter will be up tomorrow.
Rules are there for a reason

Chapter Summary

“No, it’s a perfect time,” Derek told his sister. “I don’t like surprises that could get people killed. Stiles,” He switched conversations abruptly. “can you put one of my Betas on the phone? Take it off speaker.” He heard Stiles sigh and say ‘well, good job guys. Told you he’d be mad.’

Chapter Notes

Little shorter for this chapter. Next one will be longer.

If The Jungle was downtown than the Onyx was Uptown with a drive of 20 minutes in between. Derek called John before he started the car and the relief in the man’s voice when he told him the news was palpable. He told Derek that he’d notify Chris and Allison and they’d tell Danny if he was still playing around in the department’s surveillance room. Now, Derek was driving while Laura held his phone between them on speaker for Lydia’s benefit in the back seat. The call to Stiles was a little difficult for everyone but Derek. Everyone in the car knew that Peter had gone against the man’s wishes and that there was no way Scott, Isaac, and Jackson hadn’t been there since they were on guard duty. Derek had demonstrated in the past how very little he appreciated people not listening to Stiles and Cora, Laura and Lydia were preparing themselves for a second hand chastising. Peter didn't look worried, but then again, Cora kept side-eyeing him so he must have at least smelled a little nervous.

Derek had just finished explaining what they’d learned and all things considered, Stiles took learning about Charles demise pretty well. The phone had some static interferences for a moment but that was pretty much all the reaction they got. Also, the idea that Valid might be using magic to help hide had Stiles going silent for a moment before he hummed and said he’d look into it once both Lydia and Danny were back at the house. The end of the meeting recollection actually had Stiles laughing.

“So Isabelle is related to Valid,” the man repeated with a chuckle. “Well, that sucks for her, but it’s definitely not why he’s here.”

“Agreed,” Derek said.

“So what’s the plan?”

“Meet up with Carla for now; see what’s happening at the Onyx,” Derek replied. “If it’s nothing serious we keep looking for Valids nest.”

Stiles got updates on his phone every once and a while to keep him from being bored to death, but the Pack had been trying to keep it mellow for the sake of his recovery. “Still haven’t got any leads from anyone, huh?” Stiles asked.

“Some tips, but nothing concrete,” Derek replied.
“Well, I'm holding out for Erica learning something from her kids at the Daycare,” Stiles said. “Because how great would it be if a 3-year-old helped us? We can reward them with candy and fidget spinners.”

“Don't bribe children into being informants.”

“You can make bank hawking fidget spinners at a train station.”

“Did Lady Marabeth know about your seedy dealings?”

Stiles chuckled. “It was her idea.”

Derek smiled a little and shook his head. “Sure it was.”

“So what if it is serious,” Stiles continued. “at Carla's?”

“Well, Carla did ask for us specifically so we will be able to handle whatever it is.” Cora or Lydia might have jumped in at any one of these sentences to offer their input or assurances, but the look on Derek's face as he spoke, while his tone was light, was nothing short of sour. The only thing keeping him from growling was the fact that he was talking to his boyfriend.

“Okay,” Stiles sighed. He knew that offering his assistance would just be shot down so he didn't bother. “Just be careful. Laura and Cora don't have the Bernako rune tattoos yet so if Lydia screams it's going to hurt.”

“Noted,” Derek assured him. “But back to the Nest. I'm starting to think Charles getting killed might have just been a ruse to distract us from other things. They could be moving around or gathering more people. We've got patrols at all the hot spots right now though so I'm not sure what they are waiting for. It might be best for you to reach out to some of the magic users in the surrounding counties. Your dad and I can coordinate with other precincts to avoid stepping on anyone's toes.”

“Didn't we discuss the whole rouse thing before we got to Charlottes’?” Peter asked from the back seat.

Perhaps the lack of irritation in the Alphas voice made Peter think it was safe for him to interrupt. Maybe he thought Derek wasn't actually all that mad at him. Either way, he was wrong and it immediately brought Derek back to the reason he was in a foul mood.

Derek glared at his uncle in the rearview mirror. “Apparently a lot of things were discussed before we got to Charlottes,'” he growled.

Peter let out a small sigh and leaned back in the seat. “Alright,” he said defeatedly. “I’m ready. Let’s have it.”

“Okay Peter,” Derek said with false cheer. “Let's talk about the fact that Stiles told you not to bring that blood into the club and you did it anyway. Or the fact that you had the whole car ride to tell me, but you didn't.”

“Yeah,” Cora added. “They looked like they were about throw down Peter. Not cool.”

“Cora,” Laura muttered from the front. “Not the time.”

“No, it's a perfect time,” Derek told his sister. ‘I don't like surprises that could get people killed. Stiles,” He switched conversations abruptly. “can you put one of my Betas on the phone? Take it off speaker.” He heard Stiles sigh and say ‘well, good job guys. Told you he’d be mad.'
Jackson was the one who took the phone and he sounded much more confident than Derek was sure Scott or Isaac were feeling right about now. “Yes?”

“Where were you three while all this was happening?” Even off speaker, he knew that the Betas and the True Alpha could hear him and he did his best not to use his angry dad voice. He hated reprimanding his Pack, who were technically adults now, but damnit they should have known better.

“Derek, I think Peter was right,” came Jackson's voice. “Now we know Charles is dead and we don't have to look for him. There were three other Vampires there with Valid and I'm sure we can find them if we-”

“Jackson, I don't care about that right now,” Derek told him. “I'm asking why you three didn’t back our Emissary.”

Silence lay heavy in the car and even Peter had the good grace to shut up. “Bringing that blood into Charlotte's home is the same as bringing a wolfsbane plant into the Pack house. It could have gone really wrong and if Charlotte hadn't been Stiles friend she could have challenged us on the basis of trying to provoke her and her Nest into breaking the Haven rules.”

“Amy did the same thi-”

“Amy is not a part of my Pack, Jackson.” Derek snapped. “She’s not responsible for the safety of everyone in Beacon Hills and she isn’t the one that people look to for order and leadership. We don't do things just because we think they might be a good idea. We have to think about how it will affect others in the long run. Stiles job as an Emissary is to think of these things and we need to listen to them.”

“Derek,” Isaac had taken the phone from Jackson and Derek could picture him there, curled up next to the other two and trying to keep his voice down so that Stiles wouldn't hear. “We have to find these guys okay? We know they're going to do something really bad and we can't let anyone else get hurt. I know it was a risky move but I think if Peter hadn’t done it, someone else would have.”

Derek didn't know how to argue with that because he saw the truth in it. Every single one of them wanted to move forward. Any of the Betas would have wanted to bring up tracking to Charlotte and it could have even been one of the humans like John, Chris, or Allison that finally took that risk. In the long run, the fact that it had been Peter might have been a blessing in disguise. Peter was known for not playing by the rules.

The alpha stopped and took a deep breath, forcing his upper body to relax and stop gripping the steering wheel like it was trying to get away from him. When he spoke again some of the bite had gone out of his voice. “It's not that I don't appreciate the thought you guys, but we've got to be smart about this. This isn't high school anymore where we could try to cover things up if we made a mistake. Most of Beacon Hills is supernatural now and word gets around fast.”

That was a sobering thought indeed. The whole reason supernatural creatures felt safe in Beacon Hills was that they knew they had the backing of the Hale Pack. If they started to lose the trust of the people, the Haven would become obsolete.

“Now,” Derek said. “Tell Stiles you're sorry for being bad Betas.”

Laura snorted in the passenger's seat and Jackson made a pained noise on the other end of the line but Derek didn't repeat himself. Somewhere in the background, he could hear Stiles squawking and telling Scott and Isaac to get off him. Shuffling was heard a moment later and the sound dampened. When the sound resumed, Jackson sounded all ten shades of embarrassed. “You heard me the first
Jackson must have put his hand over the receiver to shield himself from a public apology. Lydia rolled her eyes in the back seat.

"Happy now?" Jackson groused.

"Humiliated now?" Cora asked.

"Shut up Cora."

Derek cut in with a much lighter expression on his face. "Put Stiles back on."

"You need to stop adding fuel to the fire of these dog jokes," Stiles told him once he had the phone back. he sounded a bit breathless and hoped that Scott and Isaac remembered that the man was injured when they'd made their contact heavy apology.

"You're welcome," Derek smirked. "Now take it easy. I'll call if anything comes up."

"Will do. Melissa's making dinner so don't do anything stupid and end up late because I'm not saving plates for any of you."

"Love you too Stiles," Cora called.

Derek laughed softly and shook his head. "See you tonight."

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