Groundhog Year: Book 1

by trethlus

Summary

(Completed fic!)

The new year just started when everyone got a text from Stiles to meet up at Beacon Hills High at exactly 12:42 am. Of a matter of Life and Death. And they learn that this gangly teen has been feeling the new year jitters for a long LONG while now.

"I guess I'll start of by saying Happy New Year. And well...

...this is the 17th time I've lived this damn new year.
And it's getting pretty old."

Notes

My second fic. still itchy with writing so i will accept any comments, constructive/destructive criticisms. Sporadic writer too (sorry).
I hope it flows well.
Basically the new year got me this plot bunny for Stiles. And I hope I can work on POV's of everyone. But I have a cast of 28++ to work with so it will get me a while.

Please comment if this featurette looks promising!
Revelation Arc Part 1: Happy Freaking New Year

Chapter Summary

T/W: None that I could catch.

It's a brand new year. Almost. Alcohol was flowing. Fireworks were popping. Lips were locking. And dear old Stiles Stilinski was researching like crazy as usual. Lydia had a party. He wasn't invited. Simple as that.

Well... Scott was invited, but so was Allison. Scott wanted to see her, but not see her, so he offered to make Stiles his plus-one. And then it will be a whole night of eye fuc-, I mean pining, between them and the Stilinator was not down for that.

The little right corner of his laptop screen said 11:59. He wiped his brow and waited. The Browns next door had the family over. And even with his human ears, he could hear the family chanting:

“SIX..
FIVE..
FOUR..
THREE..
TWO..
O-”

Then, everything was black.

At precisely 12:42 am, exactly 17 cellphones chimed and vibrated with text messages.

Derek was out patrolling this old building he just purchased this last year. He was more bored than anything. Too old to hang out with the other wolves, too young to pretend to have an adult life. The text was probably one of his betas – read Erica- drunk greeting him into the new year.
As he turned the southeast corner probably the 24th time that night, he bumped a gangly boy in a sweatshirt.

“It's actually the 28th time you went around, Derek,” he said.

Derek eyed the boy. Wait, huh?

“Check your damned text messages, Sourwolf” the boy bit back.


“I need you to check the message and meet me at your family vault.”

Derek blanched. How did Stiles know-

“I'll tell you how I know about the place the same time as everyone else. See you in 14 minutes. And, again in 22. You might want to bring an extra pair of socks and boots.” Stiles hunched his shoulders and left.

Derek watched the boy walk away. He smelled the same. He looked the same. But he acted.. different.

His phone lit up. It's 12:42 am, of the new year.

______________________________

S. Stil. sent a message.

“You may or may not know me. It is imperative that you meet me at the following address at 1:30 am. A matter of life and death. Bon jour pour mourir.”

______________________________

Scott and Allison ended up in their usual spot, making out and the glass was fogging up, when knocking came from the window.

“Hey, Scott, buddy. Check your freaking phone!,” Stiles screamed through the fog.

Both he and Allison scramble to cover themselves up. “Stiles, is that you?,” Allison asks.

“No, it's Bigfoot. Come on, guys. Check your phones,” He retorts. He jumps up and down trying to warm up. “I need backup for this.”

“Backup for what?,” Scott says, his head through his shirt. He starts to roll down the window. “You really couldn't ha-”

“-have come at a worse time,” Stiles interrupts. “I know. You've told m- You'll tell me like a dozen times this year. Just hurry up.”

Allison chimes, “Gimme a sec, I can't find my-”

“-your phone is under Scott's seat, closer to the mid compartment. Your keys are in your left jeans pocket with a pack of gum and a bolt for your crossbow. Be careful taking it out,” Stiles helps.

“Come on, Stiles,” Scott jokes. He starts to reach under his seat as Allison grabs her jeans from the back seat. “How can you possi-” The teen wolf grabs Allison's phone as her car companion pulls out
the keys along with the bolt and the aforementioned gum.

“Now that I have your attention, hurry up.” Stiles casually climbs in the back seat. “I need a ride to Danny's then to Isaac's. We have twelve minutes, and you have a lot of questions you wanna ask right now.”

Stiles gives as little information as he can.  
“I have to repeat myself 3 more times tonight, anyway,” he reasons.

He even gets off track a couple of times. Not entirely his fault.  
“No, I did not get super smell or wolfified, Scott”  
“I’ve seen them like 20 times anyway **ow ow ow** not intentionally, Allison!”

He even points out “fun stuff” along the way.  
“At this corner coming up, the house still has Halloween decorations. It's HILARIOUS!”  
“I never quite figured out why Ms. Connely got stuck in that tree today.”  
“Oh, this guy is gonna blow chunks in our direction in the next block. Either drive slow, or on the left side of the road.”  
“That bolt in your pocket is gonna kill something awesome in like 2 months. You'll never believe what happens!”

And every single thing gets more and more questions from the not-couple.

Their little quest does nothing to help either. Apparently, Danny has to convince Jackson to go to this meeting. AND, to threaten him with the Fresno Hooters incident of last year, and how Stiles has 2 eyewitnesses and a confession from “parties involved.”

Danny replies with a) “How the fuck do you know?” b) “Pretty Impressive. You weren't even there.” and c) “Wait, do you have Ian's number from that night?“

To which Stiles replies “His name is actually Jimmy. Jimmy Buntz. You were calling him the wrong name all night. His Facebook profile is public. And, he listens to country music. Total dealbreaker. Plus, he's best friends with that unmentionable Grindr date from Spooner St.”

Dear old Danny deadpans and promises (threatens) to have a word with him about that later. Danny drives off to Jackson's. And they drive over to Isaac's old home.

The 4 minute drive had the unfortunate company of an adorable question from Scott:  
“What's Grindr?”

To which, Allison blushes and Stiles laughs out loud. “Every single time, buddy. Same question every single time,” Stiles wipes a tear from his eye, a manly tear of laughter. “I'll leave that answer to Danny, Allison, and Liam's friend Mason later. Oooh, that reminds me. Allison, lend me your phone.”

All that's left is the sound of texting while Allison consoles dear old Scott.

They drive up to see the Camaro parked outside and Derek switching boots.  
“Told you, Derek,” Stiles smirked as they walked up to the door.

“What happened?,” Scott asks.
“I'll tell you later when two-thirds of the Brat Pack arrive here in 3.. 2..,” Stiles counts as Erica and Boyd walk up the street, all leather clad and broody.

“Hey Catwoman, Boyd!,” Stiles waves. “Bit chilly, innit?” He turns and walks up the path to Isaac's front door and walks right in, key in hand. Three minutes later, he walks out with Isaac, pocketing a small item in a balled up handkerchief.

The group converges by Derek's car, the new alpha staring down the hooded teen.

“What's going on, Derek?,” Erica chimes. “Why did Moles-for-Brains call us out here?”

“Fourteen minutes, Derek,” Stiles said, ignoring Erica completely. Stiles shows Derek his phone (12:56 am) “Everyone's on time this year.”

He pockets his phone and takes out a snack bag, starting to explain. Derek eyes the bag confused.

“The next part requires a little patience, guys. And a lot of faith. So please, have a little faith in me.” Stiles throws the contents of the bag in the air and that ash starts to form circles around each wolf. They start to scream and push against an invisible barrier. (“What the fuck? Stiles?!” “What is this shit?!” “Why can't I move?!”)

Stiles mumbles something under his breath and suddenly the wolves could no longer be heard. Allison draws her crossbow and Stiles just grabs it out of her hand. He dismantles it right in front of her face in 4 seconds flat. She grabs for a knife that isn't there. And Stiles just explains “I left them in your car.”

She readies for a fight. Unarmed? So be it.
“J need you to stop Allison, and I'll explain,” Stiles screams at her.

He just turns around then addresses the mute wolves as four of them start to growl and claw. “Stop growling and I'll explain all that I can.”

Stiles brandishes a knife and gun from behind him, “Gimme 3 minutes and a lot of faith. Please,” and hands them to Allison. "If not, then bon jour pour mourir."

“A good day to die?,” she asks.

“I'd rather live to tell the tale,” he smiles. “You can hear me. I canceled the sound from the rest of you. I guess I'll start of by saying Happy New Year. And well...

...this is the 17th time I've lived this damn new year. And it's getting pretty damn old.”
Revelation Arc Part 2: Beacon Hills High, Beacon Hills (Be)Low

Chapter Summary

It's been barely an hour into the new year, and Stiles just dropped the weirdest bomb with his friends - that he lived this upcoming year 16 times over.

He just ushers them on, saying they have a meeting to go to... at school??...

...he said he'll explain more there?

Who are they meeting at Beacon Hills High? Or should I say BELOW Beacon Hills High?

T/W: None that I could catch. Maybe gunshots.

Chapter Notes

I never expected comments and kudos. My first story was a bust, too complicated for a lot readers. And I couldn't ease it down due to heartstrings. So thanks for the follows and everything. -Sincerely-

See the end of the chapter for more notes

BENEATH BEACON HILLS HIGH SCHOOL, HALE VAULT, 1:18 AM

Derek Hale was leaning against a column, broody and grumpy as always. Boyd was barely a foot away, taking in the contents of the over-glorified basement.

Across the hall, Scott McCall had his arms crossed, and his brow furrowed over. Deep in thought, he sneaks glances once in a while at the jars and sounds of the room, and of course to Allison Argent - beautiful and, for once, guard down due to morbid curiosity. Dear Allison is going aisle through aisle with knife in hand, perusing each clove and alcove with care, and glossing over albums and photos with tact.

The loudest thing in the room was the humming from “Stiles” Stilinski, accompanied with the padding of his shoes as he (for the lack of a better word) starts shopping for herbs and potions in the vault. You would hear an occasional “What else?” and “Oh yeah!” and a laugh to himself. He knew the air was tense. But, time is critical. He knew that all too well.

So, Stiles being the wizard of tact decides to break the ice. “Do you need me to remind you of the plan tonight?” he asks the room.

Silence greets him for a while as he picks up another potion.

Surprisingly, it was Boyd who breaks the ice. “You do understand that what you said is a lot to take
in, right? Plus, having an underground lair under the school is pretty damn, I dunno, flabbergasting."

“See!,” Stiles exclaims to the heavens. “This is why I love you, Boyd. When you choose to speak, it's short, powerful, and to the point.” He flashes Boyd a smile as he stuffs some yellow and orange flowers in a basket. And Boyd, just like that, is back to silence.

“Allison, could you take Scott outside real quick so he can meet our next guests?,” Stiles announces. Scott is shaken out of thought. “Why me?,” he asks.

“Just do it, silly,” Allison jests and picks up his boyf- picks up Scott. They walk hand-in-hand up the solemn stairs.

Which is of course when Mr. Hale, decides to speak. “How are we sure you're you? Maybe you're some sort of shapeshifter just looting my vault.”

“Aww, come on, Der-Bear,” Stiles starts.

“Don't call me that!,” Derek grinds out.

“I know. I know. Laura and Cora told me you hated it,” Stiles replies, as he flips through a dusty old tome.

Derek just pales. Like 50 shades whiter. “How do you-”

Stiles stops and spares him a glance that throws Derek off. This one wasn't demanding, or confident, or know-it-all. This look in Stiles eyes reminded Derek of the old Stiles- true and vulnerable. “I'll tell you more about it later, okay?,” Stiles pleads and promises.

Sensing more of the tension, Boyd interjects, “Can you take off your sweatshirt? A red hoodie with a wicker basket is not the best combination for wolves. You look mockingly ridiculous.”

Stiles laughs to that. “Thank you! See! Boyd gets the jokes and the wardrobe choices! This, my friend is 100% percent purely intentional for comedic purposes! And magical purposes! And it's soft and cuddly and feels like it's made out of kittens! Have you seen that commercial? What am I talking about? That one comes out near April. Ugh, my comedy is lost again..”

Derek moves away from his post and starts to wander around. Clearly, this conversation is over. Was that a yes or a no to “talking more later”? No one knows. Well, maybe Stiles does.

“Where are they?,” asks Stiles, exactly 2 minutes later. “They should be on their way down the stairs now.” Stiles stares at the stairwell, basketful of goodies.

Soon he sees, Scott walking down the stairs with Melissa McCall yanking and yelling at his ear. “-never said you were going to a party! I mean I get a text in the middle of my shift about life and death from Stiles! I was worried sick! You are so groun-.”

Behind her, Sheriff Stilinski was walking down slowly, flashlight brightly pointing the way.

Last to enter, were the Argents, scanning the room in party garb. Dressed to kill is more like it. Victoria Argent in a stunning violet dress and auburn heels, matching (and suspiciously loaded) purse in hand. Chris Argent in a form fitting tuxedo and hair waxed to perfection. Both were
scanning the room as they entered before deciding to stare down poor Stiles Stilinski. Allison, in her walk of shame wardrobe, slinks in the back guiltily.

“Hey! Mr and Mrs Argent! Glad you could join us! Dad, the new year treating you well? Sorry to scare you, Mama McCall! Welcome! Welcome!,“ Stiles gestures wildly.

“I hope you like this place. The decorations are so authentic, aren't they? Sets the mood for the night.” Stiles adds on. There was a heavy pause as the adults just eye Stiles and his ridiculous basket, fraught with confusion.

“Well, I hope the Argents and my dad excuse what has to happen next.”

With that, Stiles brandishes a gun from his basket and shoots Boyd twice in the shoulder, and Scott in the stomach.

Well, what do you expect? Chaos ensued.

Beacon Hills High School Proper, Hallways, 1:20 AM

The hallways were dark and quiet. Creepy was always the flavor of quiet for this school. Not solemn quiet, not peaceful quiet, not boring quiet. Just creepy quiet. All the damn night.

And along the creepy quiet eastern corridor, Isaac Lahey and Erica Reyes were lounging about. The curly-haired boy walked quietly and bored out of his mind. His mind was reeling from the revelation moments ago outside his patriarchal house. Erica was just glossing it over, finding filing her claws was a more appropriate use of time than soul-searching. Or over-analyzing.

“Why do you think we're here, Erica?,” asked Isaac.

“I dunno with you,” she replied. “I was bored and didn't want to be home. Why do *you* think we're here?”

Isaac just shrugs and just walks some more. He wants to sigh, but he's too bored to even do that.

Not even a minute later, he had to fill the silence again. “What do you suppose we should be looking for? And, why do you think Derek believes Stiles? For all we know that jerk was just looking for something to pass the time. And making us walk these hallways was just a laugh and a half.”

Erica just rolls her eyes. “Really? You don't even- Nevermind.”

“What?”

“You should breathe deep when those two are in the same room. It should be enlightening,” she muses.

“Thanks for saying everything and nothing, jackass.”

“Jackie-ass, mind you. And what a fine ass this Jackie has, don't you agree?,” she smirks.

They walk more and more and more. Really?, Isaac thinks. Were we supposed to be looking for chipped paint or something? Or are Erica and I supposed to bore ourselves out tonight?

BLAM BLAM BLAM
Just then, they heard 3 gunshots coming from the front of the school. Erica and Isaac share a look and start running for the others. Before they turn the corner, Erica throws out her arm to stop Isaac.

“Shh!,” she whispers. She motions around the corner. The creepy quiet seemed to amplify the loud breathing of a 3rd person in the hallway. Whoever this person is, he’s running toward the gunshots. And that is stupid crazy if you ask anyone.

“What should we do?,” asks Isaac. And before Erica can get a word in, her chest vibrates....

No, it’s not some weird spider sense, you pervs. Erica takes out her phone.

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*Batman sent you a message.*

**Catch him. Knock him out. Bring him down here ASAP. And do not leave the human bleeding. - Stiles (1:28 AM)**

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Isaac reads the message and furrows his brow in confusion. “Should we do it?,” he asks.

Erica just bears a feral grin. “Hey, this is the first fun I'll have all night. The one who catches him first gets a free lunch!”

They book the hallways and run after the unknown victim.

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**Beacon Hills High School, Parking Lot, 1:27 AM**

Danny Mahealani pulls up to school in his modest Toyota Corolla. Music playing, he tries to make out how many cars are in the parking lot. Jackson Whittemore was riding shotgun, fuming at the circumstance.

“You have got to be shitting me, Danny! I mean, that dumbass Stilinski would not know anything about that night. It was first line only. Even Greenberg, the biggest blabbermouth on the team, was not invited!”

“Yeah, well he had his physical proof and knew too many details. So, I guess he really wants you to show up,” Danny concedes, as he turns into a parking spot.

They climb out of the car when Danny notices a familiar car drive in. “Lydia?,” he asks no in particular.

The two of them walk towards the car headed into park. Lydia Martin was staring ahead, phone in one hand, eyes glazed. Danny was trying to wave at the strawberry blonde driver, to no avail.

Jackson just knocks on the window and grabs her attention. “Lydia?,” he asks.

She was looking at him confused and opens the door. “What are you guys doing here? The party was over hours ago.”
“Party?,” Danny said. “We're at school, Lydia.”

“What?,” she replies, looking confused. She walks around her car twice over, phone in hand. “How did-”
She takes a millisecond, no-- shorter than that, to breath deep and compose herself. She checks her phone, a text open.
“Bon jour pour mourir... I guess I better stay to find out what's going on,” she decides out loud.

She crosses her arms, contemplative, and taps her shoes on the quiet concrete. She turns and glares at the two men. “Well?,” she blurts out. “You were obviously sent this text, too. Tell me where you're going. Ugh, hopeless!” And Lydia Martin, goddess as she is, just starts walking towards school.

Chapter End Notes

Sorry for the cliffies. I had to group my pawns together for the climactic revelations.

Any comments on the switching of scenes to different locations? Is it too abrupt or smooth?

More importantly, can anyone teach me how to do like a single line all throughout the page I see in other fics? The one that cuts fics in sections? I hate brute forcing it...
Chapter Summary

The arguably 3 prettiest teens in school bump into each other in the school parking lot, summoned to a meeting they know nothing of..

...a meeting, where Stiles Stilinski just shot two of his classmates in front of 4 of the most dangerous adults in town...

...a meeting, to where Erica and Isaac are tasked to drag an unknown victim...

Will there be any answers tonight?
Or just even more questions?

T/W: Descriptions of Bleeding and gunshot wounds

Chapter Notes

Hey guys, I write the summaries better than the actual chapter. I hope this chapter wouldn't be too boring, with all the details and whatnot. Action sequences are hard to write. I see the choreography in my head, but describing it is just ugh!

Thanks to KuroHi91 for the answer. Yup, Cora and Laura are just more questions to be answered... some time.

Oh, I said 17 texts were sent in Chapter 1. Isaac doesn't have a phone mind you. Can you guess who's left to show up for the revelation chapters?

And my gift: Stiles is extra BAMF in 5, 4, 3, 2, 1....

See the end of the chapter for more notes

BENEATH BEACON HILLS HIGH SCHOOL, HALE VAULT, 1:27 AM

SCOTT POV

My mind is still reeling. Stiles shows up and catches me and Allison in the middle of – … err, a date. And now he tells me he’s from the future or something, and that- that PERSON is gonna show up again. Oh, and people are gonna be coming back from the dead.

Next he breaks the news to DEREK of all people, who's been biting everyone without remorse. Derek- who hasn't said a word to us all night. Derek- who has a family vault under school that he conveniently forgot about. Something about memories and his mom. Derek- who can't get out of his ass for two seconds to see what he does to Stiles every time he shows up unannounced.
Now, Stiles had me bring my mom down here, apparently to let the wolf out of the bag after I told him it would be the worst thing ever. Doesn't he care how I feel about this? This is MY mom we're talking about!

But, what happens next is the worst.

The sounds were all I heard at first.
I saw my mom staring at me. Her eyes wide with shock.
I saw Allison also staring at me. Her hand starts to cover her mouth.
I saw Boyd clutching his shoulder.
Then, I saw Stiles, and the smoking barrel of a gun pointed at me.

The pain didn't seep through yet, I guess. I looked down and just felt... wet.
A red stain was starting to form.
There was no drowning feeling, so no hit on the lungs I guess. Just a dull pain.

“SCOTT!! NOO!!,” my mom ran to me, not knowing what to grab. She grabbed my face, my hair, the wound, back to my face. I was getting blood all over. I just leaned back into a wall and slid down. I wasn't dying, but standing was probably a bad idea.

I didn't feel a bullet anywhere, so I guess there has an exit wound too. And, both the entrance and exit wounds were healing. But Boyd, was in pain. It might be in the bone. Healing over that is a bad idea. At least that was what Derek told me.

“Mom,” I blurt out. “I can put pressure on my wounds. But you also need to help Boyd. I can put pressure on my own wounds. Please.” I try to sound brave. And I was, I guess. Because I knew I wasn't gonna die. No wolfsbane in those bullets. No poison. No dying from loss of blood.

Then, my mom had the audacity to hit me on the shoulder. “OW!,” I exclaimed.
“No! You do not do that to me!”

Allison ran beside my mom and pushed down on my wounds. I grimaced in pain. “Mrs McCall? Hi. Please do what Scott says. Doctors are always refrained from performing on family. You might not be the best care for him right now. Scott says he's fine, so we should trust him, right?” Allison just stares into my mom's eyes. God, I love her.

“But,” she adds. “Boyd over there. He has little brothers and sisters relying on him. He needs his part-time job to help with family expenses. A job, that will let him go if his shoulder benches him for too long. I can hold Scott and call 911. So please. Another friend and his family are on the line.”

3rd POV, 1:28 AM

The shots were aimed and fired perfectly. Scott's bullet would have exited, without damaging any internal organs. Boyd's bullets are embedded in an easy to reach bone. Someone with claws just needs to pull them out.

As fast and gently as he can, Stiles drops the gun and puts down the basket. He shakes his arms and long metallic chains loosen from his sleeves. He flings them at the Argents, as Victoria pulls a handgun from her purse Chris from a breast holster. The chains latch and disarm the handguns before the adults could set up aim.

Sheriff Stilinski ran into the Argents, only seeing the guns with intent to shoot his son. He tries to
hold them down as the adults wrestle to the ground when he hears a loud roar. He turns his head to see his son grab dust from his basket and fling it to the face of someone in a leather jacket lunging at him.

Derek Hale was blinded and missed his mark. He slid along the concrete into a column. As he tried to stand up and readjust for an attack, he looks down and sees another circle of mountain ash. The boy in the slightly glowing red hood pulls out a vial from his basket and throws it by the Stilinski-Argent parent pile. The vial sparks into smoke and the parents were pushed back slightly.

The unarmed adults started to stand up and were oddly... moving in slow-motion.

Stiles grabbed another lightly brown dust and started to walk toward them. He sprinkled them by their feet and the concrete started to melt. Like quick sand, their legs were sinking into the ground.

As the ground finally reached just above their shoes, Stiles screeched “Finite!”

Everything stopped. Well, the magic did at least. The Argents and the Sheriff were no longer sinking. There were barely past ankle deep in normal concrete. They seemed to be breathing back in normal speed.

Stiles was slightly out-of-breath. Allison and Melissa were whispering to Scott. Derek and Boyd were in circles of ash, both looking very human.

The silence was thick again. I mean, come on. Why can't there just be fun? It's the freaking new year.

“What-”

The silence was broken.

“-in FREAKING HELL is going on, STILES??!!?!,” the Sheriff screamed.

“Are you even Mr Stilinski?,” Victoria asks the hooded boy.

“What do you mean, is he him?!,” the sheriff snaps at the lady trapped next to him. “He's my son! Who else could he be? I don't what god-damned aneurysm made whatever happened happen- I'll repeat myself, what the HELL is GOING ON?!!??!”

Stiles walks over to the Argent's handguns and dismantles them easily. He shrugs the harnesses to the chains and rolls his shoulders. “It is me, by the way,” he replies to the adults in the room. “There's a point to all of this. I just need to wait for a few more people to show up so I can explain.”

Stiles walks up to Derek. “I need you. To TRUST me,” he pleads to Derek, staring into his eyes. Derek was caught unawares, brood disappearing from his face for a moment. Without hesitation, Stiles kneels down and breaks the circle without waiting from an answer from the dumbfounded Alpha.

Stiles breaks Boyd's circle and apologizes. “Here,” he offers. “Take this. It will numb the pain for a few minutes.”

“Hey, Derek,” Stiles turns around. “Please take out the bullets,” he requests. “I need to see to Scott.”

Stiles dashes to his friend. Melissa launches himself at Stiles and tries to punch him in his face. “HOW-” Jab.
“-DARE-” Punch.
“-YOU-” Punch.
“-HE’S-” Kick.
“-MY-” Punch.

Stiles covers his face and just takes it. When he sees his opening, he catches and holds both her wrists. “Mrs. McCall,” he whispers and stares again into her eyes. “Can you please let me go, so I can help Scott?”

She spits in his face and Stiles has to look away. “If you think, I will let you touch a hair-”

Stiles looks back in her eyes and Melissa just freezes. Spit on his cheek, Melissa sees tears trailing down the bruised face.
The tears come from eyes-
Iris flickering between its normal light brown and electric yellow,
corneas red from strain.
The eyebrows and forehead showing so much pain, it could break a million hearts.

The bruised boy pleads again. “Please,” barely a whisper. “I can stop the bleeding,” he explains.

“How did you-,” she starts to ask.

“I can explain later. I have to help Scott,” he answers. Deciding she was sufficiently pacified, Stiles lets go of her wrists and runs to Scott. Melissa slumps to her knees, mouth agape in shock. The other adults resort to trying to pull their ankles of the ground.

He pulls out another vial, and pulls off Scott's shirt. “This will hurt,” he supports. He adds a drop to each wound and Scott winces in pain. The wounds glows orange and closes right before their eyes. As Scott eyes open, they flicker gold, red, and back to gold. He starts coughing and ends up just out-of-breath.

Stiles starts wipes off the blood from Scott’s face using his own discarded shirt. He then starts to address Allison right next to him. “Alli, I know this rollercoaster of trust is not fun. But, here,” he pulls out a tranquilizer gun from his other back pocket and offers it to her. “I know you can shoot me to knock me out right now. There's only 3 darts in there.”

He pauses to get blood off of Scott's ear. Poor Scott, out-of-breath from the rush of pain and healing. “In a few moments, 7 more people will show up. I need you to trust me and knock out person 2, person 4, and person 6. Got that?” He looks at her. “2, 4, 6. Easy. Even numbers. They're not gonna show up at the same time. But if you don't, we won't catch that bloody Kanima that's been killing people.”

As he finishes up cleaning Scott, he gives him an extra shirt out of nowhere. And walks over to the Argents. “I texted you to trust me. I knew you were gonna come armed even if I asked you otherwise. I also asked you to not speak of this to Gerard. Did you hold to that favor?,’’ he asks the adults. Stiles seemed to learn bitch face from Derek, as evident from the glares he receives from the Argents.

Stiles just gives them their answer. “I know you didn't tell Gerard. Because, him knowing that Allison knows is something you want to avoid.” He pauses. “I am not a threat to you. I can promise this. Your daughter is struggling with this. But for all the time we have spent down here, I have not spent a single moment intending to kill any human. I have answers about Gerard. I have news about-” and he whispers so only the two can hear the next word “-Kate.”
“I am trying to prevent the deaths of 4 more people currently in this room and I NEED you to trust me,” he proceeds.

-A pause-

“We hunt those who hunt us,” he continues. “I do not currently have the Brand of the Rose, but I’ve had it twice over the past 16 years.” To this the adults share a glance. “I just need you to wait-” he checks his watch. “-3 more minutes before you decide to kill me or not.”

The sheriff, standing next to this conversation, interjects: “Stiles, 16 years? You’re in high school.”

Stiles spares him a glance. And then a smile. “Three minutes, Dad. I promise everyone lives and everything will sorta make sense.”

That's when the Sheriff decides to spare HIM a glance. “Son, you shot two people. I know I'm the sheriff, but that's attempted murder, twice over! We need to get Scott and that kid to a hospital!”

“Three minutes,” Stiles whispers. He goes back to the basket and picks out another vial, and two more pistols. God, how many guns are in this werewolf lair?!

Stiles offers the pistols to the Argents and pours the vial on the concrete. It starts the sizzle and crack around their ankles. “Come on. Lift yourselves up. Use my shoulders,” he offers the adults.

Victoria, Chris and the Sheriff wriggle their legs. Apparently getting them stuck in concrete for two minutes does something to foot circulation. Then, they see to Boyd and Scott. The Argents grip tight the pistols offered like a lifeline.

Stiles was staring at his watch. Chris Argent checks his own: 1:40 AM. He decides that it's time for some needed answers and was just about to walk up to Stiles for questions. “How did you learn to use those chains?,” he asks.

“Up-up-up. Here's comes the next guests, fashionably late as always,” Stiles interrupts. Four teenagers start walking into the chamber.

Allison sees them walk in. Realizing who was there, she exclaims, “YOU! What are YOU doing here?!"

---

Chapter End Notes

Longest chapter I've written that isn't coded. I guess I should edit and repost my other fic here so y'all can see what I mean by coded fics.

Oh and the chains. The chain idea I saw in some movie or TV show, where like the chain actually latched into the gun barrel and the person used that to yank it out of their hands. It was awesome.

Stiles shouts "fih-neat-eh," trying to sound Latin or something for stop. not "figh-night," as in limited.

Sorry for the cliffies!
Still not a lot of answers. Sorry for that too. Maybe next chapter?
Who do you think are the 7 people showing up?
Makes complete sense who needs to be tranquilized, right? RIGHT?
Chapter Summary

Down in the Hale vault, tensions rose as the consequences of the shooting of Scott McCall and Vernon Bod played out. The shooter, Stiles Stilinski, had to quell the repercussions from the adults present, and singlehandedly smacked down 2 hunters, 2 angry parents, and an Alpha werewolf in 7 minutes time.

Questions still arise as he promises the arrival of at least 7 more to this evening's events.
Will the revelations ever end?
Will anything ever make sense?

T/W: Any gunshots in this chapter are actually Tranquilizer darts.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

BEACON HILLS HIGH SCHOOL, FRONT ENTRANCE, 1:26 AM

Everything was almost creepy quiet outside. Not one for subtlety or stealth, Lydia clacks her heels and commands a presence for the night as she walks to the front door. Her on-again-off-again boyfriend Jackson and his best friend Danny followed in stride, about five steps behind.

All of them were summoned here by a text from Stiles Stilinski. None of them knew why they were needed, or why it was a "good day to die." But, the biggest mystery of all was the circumstances in which the queen bee herself arrived.

Danny finally jogged up to catch up with her. "Lydia, are you okay?" he asks. She was frequently checking her phone as she walked. "Would you mind explaining to me why you thought you were at your party?"

"I don't have to explain anything to you," she shuts him off.

"No, you don't," Danny replies grabbing her arm. "But, I'm still worried. And..." He spares a glance to his best friend. "...Despite his difficulty with expressing it, I'm pretty sure numb-nuts here wants to know too."

Lydia sighs as she continues walking. "I don't know, okay? First, I wake up in the middle of nowhere last week. I'm pretty sure you remember that social debacle. Next, I'm following strange texts that lead me back to school. It's like sometimes I just blink and I'm somewhere else."

She pauses to take a breath.

"I'll never admit it to anyone else. But, something's GOT to give, you know? I just feel it in, no not in my bones... I feel it in my voice. That I have to be here, right now, to get some answers."
She arrives at the front door and tugs, to no avail. "Of course, it's locked," she grumbles. She turns around to address the two gentlemen. "Any ideas? I can't pick a padlock on the other side."
“How about we just ask the guy who's already in there with a key?,” Danny suggests. Walking along the inside hallway towards the front door was a curly haired guy playing with an honest-to-god large circular key ring. I thought those only existed in prisons. On second thought... It is high school...

Lydia knocks at the window to grab his attention. “Hey there, could you let us in?” The guy was surprised someone was there. He carefully unlocks the padlock and chain and peeks through. “Can I help you?,” he asks.

“Yeah, I left my textbook in my locker. I really need it for homework. I was hoping you could let me in just to grab it, then I can go?,” Lydia flirts.

“Lydia Martin? The queen of school actually needs a textbook for homework?,” he says in disbelief. “Listen, I'm really not supposed to let anyone in. They don't lend the keys to anybody. Plus, it's winter break. Who does their winter break homework on New Year's Eve?”

“How about I just beat the keys off of you, then?,” Jackson threatens. Danny just holds him back. The calmer boy just looks at the guy and apologizes.

“Wait a minute,” Danny supplies. “Aren't you on the Lacrosse team too? One of the new guys, right?"

The stranger just nods.

“Why are you here, then?,” he asks.

“Yearbook committee and school newspaper. Had to stay in over the break to clean up the dark room, develop some pictures, and set up for the back to school brochures and paper,” he explains.

“On New Year's Eve? That's cruel,” Danny replies with a winning smile. The stranger tries to hide a blush. Thankfully, it's too dark out to notice.

“Eh, nothing to do, nothing to lose. Besides, I do my best thinking here,” the man replies.

“Listen, Lydia really needs that book for winter break homework. School lets back in a week and she needs to start on it for a paper. Is there anything we can do to let you let us in?”

The stranger looks them over and bites his lip. “Lemme interview you guys for the paper. It won't even be half a page, and it's a deal.”

“It's a date,” Danny replies, smiling. “What's your name again? The team gets more and more people each year.”

“It's Matt. Daehler,” he says opening the door to let them in. As they walk in, he checks him phone for the time. “Listen, I really don't need to know why you REALLY needed to go in here. I'll lock up after you leave. I actually was supposed to meet Stilinski here for 1:30, so—”

“Stilinski texted you too?,” Jackson asked, surprised.

“Yeah,” Matt replies sheepishly. “I was actually trying to find out where I'm supposed to meet him.”

And just as they were about to mince more words, they heard a loud noise outside, right where the school sign is supposed to be.

“What was that?,” Lydia exclaims.
Jackson rolls his eyes and spares the group a glance. “Five bucks says that's where Stilinski is.”

---

**BEACON HILLS HIGH SCHOOL, SCHOOL SIGN, 1:35 AM**

When you're right, you're right.  
And when Jackson's right, he gloats.

So when they arrive to see a staircase leading beneath the school, Jackson has a smug grin you want to punch right off of him. Lydia groans and just walks in front of him down the steps. Jackson and Danny soon follow, and Matt trails the rear.

The four teens slowly descend down the steps. As they near the bottom, they hear voices coming from above and faint voices somewhere below.

“-can't throw a lifeless body down stairs, Erica,” a voice from above says.

“Watch me,” a female voice challenges back.

The four teens in between decidedly run downstairs, to try to get away from the dangerous sounding voices. A witness to a body is never good for a permanent record. (Albeit from the fact that two of them were accessories to a fiery murder the previous semester.)

As they reach the bottom, they arrive in a well lit room, shelves full of jars, and aisles full of people. One of them, grinning wildly was Stiles Stilinski.

“YOU! What are YOU doing here?!,” they hear. The see that it came from no one else but Allison Argent.

“Allison! Now!,” Stiles exclaims.

She points a gun and shoots. Jackson and Matt feel a pang in their neck, and soon the world turns black. Lydia shrieks and ducks, and Danny dives to catch Jackson's body. Poor Matt, slumps and hits his head against a wall.

Behind them, Isaac runs in hearing the scream. He has an unconscious man in BHPD uniform slung against his back. “What's going on?,” he asks. He hears a whizzing sound, and soon finds his captive has a dart on his neck.

Stiles walks to Jackson, and soon administers a potion for him to drink. “There, now he should be out for ten minutes. Erica, are you coming down yet?”

“Hang on to your panties, Stilinski,” she replies coming down the stairs. “I had to see if anybody else heard that scream.”

“Good. Now that everybody is here, I can FINALLY explain everything.”

---

**BEACON HILLS HIGH SCHOOL, HALE VAULT, 1:37 AM**

It took some convincing, but everyone was almost lined up along the middle of the vault.

Closest to the exit, Scott was standing, one hand clasping on the area where a gunshot wound should be. Mama McCall stood by him. Across from them, the Argents were standing with Sheriff Stilinski. The former had their hands firmly grasping either guns or their daughter's shoulders. Their fierce
gaze shifted between Stiles, located in the center of the room, and the pack of wolves near the back. Derek, Erica and Isaac stood protectively around Boyd, giving the couple a hard eye back.

And near the fourth corner of the room, Danny and Lydia were together, wondering how they ended up in this room, in this strange predicament.

Perhaps most important of all were three unconscious guests, Matt Daehler, Jackson Whittemore, and an unknown police officer, all handcuffed, gagged, and knocked out with tranquilizers, slumped against either a column or the back wall. Weirdly enough, only the first two were surrounded with a triple circle of mountain ash.

“Now that everyone is in place, can our two hidden guests show and introduce themselves?,” Stiles announces.

Clacking heels were soon heard from the stairs, slowly walking in. An older Asian woman walks in, eyes Stiles, then bows towards Derek Hale. A sign of respect, no doubt. She walks over to a corner. “Satomi Ito, a visitor from a neighboring county. I will reveal more, later perhaps?,” she asks, directed to Stiles. The teen just nods in agreement.

A male voice just appears from behind everyone, surprising all except the hooded teen. “Dr. Alan Deaton. Local veterinarian. Employer of Scott McCall, and adjunct emissary to the Hale Estate.” Deaton was dressed in all black leather trench coat, smile wide and open, greeting everyone in the room with his gaze.

“And of course,” the teen in the center of the room interrupts. “I'm Stiles Stilinski and I've come to you both to warn and ask for your help. But since, it IS a long story, instead of telling you... Perhaps with Dr Deaton, Lydia, aaaaaaand....,” Stiles eyes the room and soon settles and smiles. “...Danny’s help, I can show you.”

The Hawaiian teen was shaken at that last statement. “Me?!,” he asked in surprise.

“Yeah, you,” Stiles smiles. “Just come over here and hold my hand. It's serious business, and it won't hurt one bit.”

Danny and Lydia have a mini-conversation. Deaton walks confidently toward the teen. “I am still amazed what a few years does to you, Mr. Stilinski.”

“Sixteen is not a few,” the teen replies straight-faced. He pulls out what seems to be a long scroll. “Thank you again for coming. Three teens won't be enough power for this. And superb work on the invisibility spell. Almost didn't catch you back there.”

“And I can say the same for your quick potion work. Fastest liquification I've seen in years. And with concrete, too. And your hoodie? The craftsmanship on you adjunct spells are remarkable. Did you use African monkshood for the stabilizer?,” he asks. Danny and Lydia have come to a decision and start to walk over.

“Not African, but Elven,” Stiles answers Deaton. “Rarer and more powerful. Quite a story. I'll give you the details later.”

The two other teens arrive and only hear the tail-end of the conversation. Stiles unfurls the scroll on the floor. It easily reaches the length of the room. It looked frayed, browned with age. Yet, no writing was seen to the naked eye.

Stiles offers the two teens wooden bracelets from the basket. “Wear these. It will lessen the fatigue after. Plus, I chose to make them neutral colors so they can match both your outfits,” he supplies with
a wink and grin. “I just need to tap into your inner power to help with this spell. You can let go whenever you want. But if I cannot finish this spell, I can fall into a comatose state from feedback. If I do this alone, I will surely die. Again, you can decline helping at any moment. But, I will appreciate living after this.”

“Bon jour pour mourir,” Lydia replies with a smile. Stiles smiles back.

They hold hands facing the scroll as Stiles addresses the room once more. “I am Stiles Stilinski. I am a Spark, a being that can tap into the magical energies of this world. I have lived this upcoming year exactly 16 times.

I have seen heartache and triumph. I have seen life, and sadly I have seen death. I am here to warn you of my past and beseech your help for my future. And with this, I tell you my story.” Stiles eyes flicker a gaze of electric yellow. His red hoodie starts to glow. Lydia and Danny's bracelets start to vibrate and hum.

The tattered scroll shines bright white, resonating with power. Blood red words starts to form on the scroll, all in Stiles' handwriting. Words, paragraphs, diagrams reach their view. Voices start to flood the chamber. Laughter, idle chatter, screams, howls, undecipherable noise. The blood evaporates into the air into large globes of red, pictures forming in white. Soon, the parchment slowly bleeds into each sphere. The floor beneath the scroll begins to shine a bright light blue. It quickly spreads along the floor, running along the concrete. It climbs the walls and into the ceiling. The light engulfs the shelves and columns.

Soon, all that can be seen are the people floating above the clouds, blue skies as far as the eye. The scroll floats between them and the blood orbs coalesce into one single screen. It was like flying. It was haunting. It was breath taking.

And with this beautiful scenery, Stiles Stilinski starts to narrate.

“It started for me roughly 17 years ago, but for you, it started last year...”

Chapter End Notes

Next chapter will be very... enlightening and spoiler-y. If you haven't caught up to the show, a lot will be glazed over.

I apologize for the timeline change.
I do not apologize for the creative licenses regarding Sparks.
I also love seeing electric yellow eyed Stiles being Magic!BAMF in my head.
Chapter Summary

Stiles Stilinski introduces himself as a Spark, a being that communes with the magical energies of the world. For 16 cycles, he says he has lived the upcoming year. Along with Lydia Martin, Danny Mahealani, and Dr. Alan Deaton, the hooded boy ventures to show all present glimpses of his past and portions of their possible future.

How will everyone react to this news?
Who is this Satomi Ito, the 14th visitor?
Why were 3 people present knocked out, tied up, and gagged?

The inevitable explanation has begun...

T/W: Various Descriptions of Bleeding and Death

Chapter Notes

Two POVs and lots of imagery. Please comment if my writing played through the upcoming echoes well!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

DANNY POV

What is going on? Why am I here?

Barely an hour ago, I get a text and plea from Stiles Stilinski to drag my bestfriend to this meeting. A meeting, where no two seconds of walking in, Jackson was tranquilized, bound, gagged and heavily sedated.

Lydia was one of the closest people I had any semblance of social connection to. She was as confused as I was, but was looking for answers. I just wanted to leave.

Before I knew it, Stiles has talked me into holding hands, and wearing wooden bracelets. (Though I would admit, they were almost perfect a size and very compatible to my New Year's garb.)

But now, I can hardly believe my eyes: I was flying. It felt like it too. There was a soft cool breeze in the room and the horizons were as crisp light blue as I would imagine it to be. Wispy clouds were all around; thick clouds pasted below. In between the floored cumulus, I see an expanse of distant green and white. Everything was bathed in a beautiful radiant light.

I lost my breath for a moment. It was a sight I could never forget. Then a voice, shook me from my awe.
“It started for me roughly 17 years ago, but for you, it started last year...”

I realized the wooden bracelet was humming and vibrating along my wrist. That hand was clasping the oddly cool hands of Stiles Stilinski. His eyes were open and expression blank. But his irises, they had electricity playing off of them.

“... roughly six months prior..”
“...six months prior..”
“...prior..”

Voices echoed in the room. From his chest, a second Stilinski walked through. And a third, fourth, and fifth. Fifteen men walked out of his chest, a horrifying sight to behold. All of them had Stiles' voice, his same eyes, same expression. Yet each of them were different.

Half of them grew out their hair. It looked better on him. A couple shaved it all of entirely. One had a fauxhawk and was rocking leather and piercings. Their wardrobes ranged from goth to geeky. Their builds not entirely the same. Some obviously worked out more than others. A couple had guns holstered, one had a bat strapped to his back.

All of them stood in a circle facing outward, holding hands and telling the same story.

“I brought Scott McCall to the Hale preserve, on a whim to search for a body,” they all recounted.

“Laura Hale.” Twelve of them looked towards Derek. Two closed their eyes. One just looked away.

“We got separated. And Scott got home almost intact.”
“almost intact.”
“home.”

“Save for a wolf bite,” the main Stiles declares.

“Loup Garou.”
“Shapeshifter,” the chant starts.
“Beta.”
“Monster.”
“Creature.”
“Wolfman.”

“Werewolf,” they said in unison. Melissa stepped back away from his son, as he shielded his eyes.

The Stiles’ looked at Scott.

“Show her”
“Show us”
“Don't be afraid.”
“-ow her.”
“It is time.”
“Go Scott!”
“-Scott!”
“Go!”
“Show us!”
Taking two steps back, Scott stares at his mom. Unsure what to do. He was scared.

The man in the corner, who looked like Stiles' cousin Miguel, shouted “Go ahead, Scott.”

Allison's Dad looked at Scott and gave him a nod.

Scott lifted his hand to show a bare portion of skin. The cloth surrounded looked caked in blood. Was there a wound there?

Scott looked his mom in his eyes and apologized, “I'm sorry.”

Seamless as the sky, he grew sideburns and a stronger brow. Fangs sprouted from his mouth. His eyes glowed gold. Claws emerged from his hand.

I should be scared. I should be shocked. But, like pieces of the puzzle, everything seemed to make sense. His jump to first line. The chains in Stiles locker. The time he tackled me and tried to smell my cologne.

Maybe it was the sky around me. It had an effect on me. It made me more open to believe that, in the sky, anything can happen.

**MELISSA POV**

I have to be dreaming. I have to.

I've been pinching myself awake for the past 20 minutes. I just came from a double shift dealing with burn wounds and blown off fingers to receive a text from Stiles with the words “Life and Death.”

I rush to the address; it was Scott's school. I see John pull up in his car, as big a bundle of nerves as I am. Another vehicle drives in, I think they're the Argents. As we all park, we see my son and a girl walk up steps hand-in-hand, smiles wide.

I run up to them and scold him. I ground him and pull his ear. How can he scare me like that? He urges me to go down the stairs.

I reach the bottom and there was Stiles, amongst other people. Other objects were in the room. He says something of an apology and shoots this boy behind him, and then turns around. I shake from disbelief. Another deafening sound, and my boy slides down to the floor. What just happened?

I rushed down to my son's side. I try to examine the wound, I try to calm my boy down. My hands were shaking. He shouldn't hyperventilate or else his heart rate would speed up. If his heart rate speeds up, he will bleed out faster. I have to calm him down, but it seems I am the one in a big mess. Scott tells me to help the other boy. Scott tells me that he'll be fine. I'm his mother! I could never abandon him.

Later, Stiles starts to walk over. Is he going to hurt Scott more? How dare he?! I treated him like my other son! I throw myself at him and he takes every punch I throw. He grabs my wrists and speaks again- Another apology. And like that, I was frozen.

Am I even awake? What nightmare is this?

He walks away and performs first aid on Scott. I was frozen in shock. Next thing I knew, I was beside Scott and Stiles was addressing the room. Paper was thrown across the floor and people were
holding hands. Stiles is a spark? Something about magic?

The room starts to change and I cling to my son. He's alive and not showing pain. That is the only thing I can cling to.

More Stiles' appear. Their eyes are different. Is any of this real? Am I hallucinating? Was I injected by a drug?

They say that my son was bitten. That he was a monster. A werewolf. I take a step back to look at him. He looked the same! He's my son! I would have seen his pain. None of this true! When will I wake up?

Two men in the room urged him on. He looks at me with pain-filled eyes. He apologized. Just like that, he changed. A face I could barely distinguish. Eyes golden and full of pain I can hardly remember. I have never seen such pain in a pair of eyes. He hunches over and I can see claws from his fingertips.

I cover my mouth in shock. I try to pinch myself awake.

A mother's heart can only take so much.

---

**3RD POV**

Melissa McCall falls to her knees again. Twice, she was rendered speechless in shock. Her son, Scott McCall, and Sheriff John Stilinski rush to her and try to comfort her. Melissa keeps her arm out and pushes away her son, forcing a distance. Scott changes back and an indescribable pain is painted all over his face.

Assessing the situation, Sheriff Stilinski addresses the teen wolf. “This won't be permanent, Scott,” he pauses. “Give her a minute to process. Maybe a couple of feet to breathe. You can definitely talk later,” he reassures.

To this, the Sparks continue their chant:

“One hour.”
“Ten minutes.”
“One week.”
“Four days”
“Eight hours.”

“Two weeks was the longest it took to heal,” the main Spark announced. He smiles the warmest smile. “That honesty helped the McCall household weather the upcoming battle that will arrive over the next year. A tale to be told some other time.”

The orb once made of blood turned clear and soon turned white with craters.

“A wolf can only be made by the bite of an Alpha, a feral that had killed the one before: Peter Hale,” Stiles explained. A silhouette of a creature formed against the moon. Its eyes were red and full of malice.

“Peter tried to use Scott to get revenge for a tragedy borne years ago: the Hale fire,” he continued.
“This brings us to the Argents,” one of the 15 announced. Half looked fiercely at the family, half looked away dejected.

“A family of werewolf hunters.”
“Noble protectors.”
“Vile beasts!”
“Hunt those who hunt us.”
“-A code!”
“Generations of-”
“-it burns!”
“How could you?!”

“A family with a secret code to protect the world from creatures of the night. A noble code I understood many a time, and loathed all the other,” the main recollected.

A crest formed on the moon of a fleur de lis and a rose, emblazoned on a silver shield. An arrow was knocked into a bow. A floating gun was loaded in mid-air. Silver daggers were spinning freely in their midst.

“Out of this nobility, a dark seed sprouted forth. An Argent took the extremes and burned down the Hale estate.”

“A family!”
“Our family!”
“-unprotected.”
“Ignored and-”
“Children”
“How COULD you?!”
“Humans even-“
“Derek was-”
“-screams!”
“-to ashes!”

“Innocent lives were lost. Humans among wolves, children within the family. An act of bigotry carved a hole into the heart of the city,” Stiles sighed and breathed deep. Sweat was starting to form along his brow.

Images of the fire played out in front of them. The screams heard were ringing loudly in their ears. Many covered their ears. None can look away. It looked so real.

“Four escaped that night. Peter, the only adult, was covered in burns and was comatose for years. Once he was conscious, he enacted his plan for revenge. Peter tried to force Scott to kill with him. The deranged Hale threatened us, captured me, kidnapped Lydia, and trapped us in school. In the end, five teens and Derek Hale rallied together and was able to subdue the Fire Starter, and Peter Hale…”

Stiles entered a short coughing fit.

As he regained his composure, he continued.

“Derek Hale struck the final blow and became the new Alpha. He bit others and brought them into the fold,” Stiles narrated.

“-foolish to think-”
“-never ends-”
“-a gift!”
“What about me?!”
“-even think-”
“-a curse-”
“-alone.”

“Derek chose these 3 amazing people and brought them into our lives. For all of them, the change was a gift that healed and made whole,” Stiles explained, smiling at the pack. He was short of breath at this point.

“Which brings us to the future,” he declares.

The Stiles disbanded their circle and ran into people's personal spaces.

“I watched you die in flames, and I reveled in it.”
“The roof fell in. There was nothing I could do!”
“I ran after them! If only I was quicker then-”
“-we were burning up in flames. The smoke was-”
“-showed up behind you. It was too late by the time I-”
“-silver halide. There were too many..”
“-covered in blood. You shouldn't have run away!”
“-head was rolling on the ground.”

Each and every one in the room had died, in one way or another. Some more so than others: Erica Reyes, Vernon Boyd, Victoria Argent, and Allison Argent.

All the Stiles' grab their attention once more as they reform the circle at the center of the room, this time tears running down all their faces. “I have tried year after year after year to keep you all alive, cause you are all dear to me.”

“Why?”
“I tried!”
“Derek!”
“Scott!”
“The pain!”
“Dad, I'm Sorry!”
"Why?!"
"-again!"
"-best I could do!"
“I failed!”

Stiles falls into another coughing fit. Deaton catches Stiles by his shoulder and doesn't let go.
“Stiles,” Deaton admonishes. “You can't keep this up.”

“I'm almost cough cough done,” he counters.

After he re-centers, he continues his tale. “More people enter our lives this year. Some I have to expedite to save more lives. Some things I will try to change and I do not yet know what that will result in.”

The globe shows a man in a police uniform, and a girl with a katana. You see Satomi with various people surrounding her, sharing smiles and laughter. A girl with short curly hair smiles as she swings on a swing whispering to herself. A wolf-like creature appears in a cave and howls at the moon.
“This upcoming year will be hard, I know. But for all of you, all I ask is to have faith in that what I say is true.”

The globe fast forwards and shows multiple images to fast to see: skulls and guns, kunai and shuriken, fires and different colored eyes, faces they have yet to know.

The globe starts to spin quickly and dissolves to a clear orb. Droplets form and slowly cascade onto the scroll on the floor. The multiple Stiles let go of their hands and wave good bye and start to enter the main Stiles once again.

In the center of the ceiling, a speck of brown forms. The circle widens and spreads to the walls and along the floor. The shelves and columns reappear, along with the jars and its contents. The blue gets absorbed by the scroll and its shimmer dims. The far end starts to roll up and ends up in Stiles feet. As it closes, Deaton catches the majority of Stiles weight as his legs give way.

The hooded boy had his light brown eyes back again, and was immensely out of breath. Beside the Spark, Lydia and Danny were hunched over, hands on their knees. They were not as fatigued, but clearly well drained. Their bracelets were dormant. Stiles' red hoodie still had a faint glow about it.

The silence in the room was somewhat palpable, given this huge revelation. Everyone was soaking it in.

Stiles pulls out a water bottle from the basket, and downs it immediately. Bottle empty, he offers everyone his signature smile, still out of breath. For the first time all night, the smile actually seemed genuine.

“What are you smiling about?, Erica dares to ask.

“Normally, someone is dead by now,” Stiles explains. “So, so far, this year is going great!,” he explains. Some people blanch at that statement. Others gave a figurative shrug.

And as always, the one who knows what to say next fills the room. “Then, what now?,” Boyd asks.

“Now-,” Stiles stands up and cracks his back. He shakes his limbs to get feeling back. “Now, we end the night with a choice,” he explains ominously, as he turns and stares at the 3 captives slumped against the wall.

Chapter End Notes

I will be busy this weekend with real life. I will get back to you with a chapter sometime next week.

If you like convoluted plots, please check out my other fic!! http://archiveofourown.org/works/3120593/chapters/6762362

It's an interactive fic, that I have been trying to run through for the past 3 years. But everybody gets stuck at some point! So I'm thinking, the more traffic the better chance I have in finishing Book 1. (Or Arc 1 for crying out loud.)
Revelation Arc Part 6: The All-Seeing Eye

Chapter Summary

Stiles Stilinski used all the magic he could muster to give an unforgettable show—16 versions of himself gambling all they had to tell their tale. We learned that many have died and many have lived, all starting from the choices made years ago. Sadly, another choice is to be made next.

What repercussions will this choice rear?
Will we finally learn why 3 men are harbored against their will?
And what of Melissa McCall? Will she finally rear from her shock?

T/W: mentions and descriptions of murder, suicide, and terrorism, murder by anaphylactic shock/asphyxiation(?)

Chapter Notes

My laptop died a week after school started. I just finally saved up for a cheap one a couple of days ago. So yeah, I can update now, but I lost my timeline file. All my little twists and turns are now reforming in different ways, kinda like Stiles' future I guess. It feels like Life Imitating Art Imitating Life?

(Huh, that kinda sounds like a oneshot I wrote?) Lol

I'm in full gear writing again, so I hope I can get a chapter out every week or so. Sorry for the wait!
(Update 11/21/18. We have determined that this promise of a chapter a week was in fact a lie. I apologize.)

BEACON HILLS HIGH SCHOOL, HALE VAULT, GAWD-AWFUL-WHY-AM-I-AWAKE? AM

Stiles Stilinski was tired. This was one of the most tiring New Year's Eves he has ever lived. He stares at the captors and tries to stomach the choices he has to make. This is a fork he has to push everyone through.

“Dad, could you take Mrs. McCall and Mrs. Ito home? It's been a long day for Mrs. McCall, and Mrs Satomi probably needs to make a few calls soon,” he requests, without looking at their direction.

“Son, I don't think I should-,” the Sheriff starts.

“We are about to do something important. And illegal,” Stiles explains. He breathes a deep sigh and continues. “No matter how often this happens, I'd rather not have you see when I do something
wrong. You're still my Dad, but I need you to let me do this.”

Deaton walks up to the adults addressed and urges them. “I'll even go with you if it will make you feel better.” He turns around and addresses the hooded teen. “If that's okay?”

“I couldn't stop you even if I wanted to, Deaton,” Stiles replies.

Scott McCall stares at his mom, broken in the arms of the two men he respected in his life. He was choking on the inside, and gasping for breath. He felt as if his asthma returned but no inhalers could be found. He clenches his fist as the 4 adults leave the room. He doesn't know what to do with himself. Or at the very least, he doesn't know what to do next.

“If you can all come a little bit closer, I can explain a few more things,” Stiles addresses the room. The Hale pack inches closer, as well as the Argents. Somewhere along the side, Danny and Lydia are bubbling themselves as a smaller unit, unsure of where to stand.

“Now that the risky guests are mostly gone, I can continue with the next part of the revelation,” Stiles continues. “I'm sure you noticed that I have omitted a few things in the presence of those guests. Details such as the identities of Kate Argent and how Peter Hale got his power from Laura.” A few of them flinch at the mention of those names. Erica, Boyd, and Isaac were mutually as confused as Danny across the room.

“Some things I have learned to share bit-by-bit with these people. Too much can be overwhelming. But these next parts, I have to tear off like a band aid. After my revelation, we will be open for discussion because at that point, we will be equals. This includes Danny and Lydia, of course.” The two uncharacteristically bow to hide their faces at the mention of their names.

Stiles draws from within his hoodie a small worn book. He reads aloud what is written: “In two weeks time, the Kanima is cornered in a rave filled with young adults, both human and not. Amongst the unsuspecting, the Kanima is tranquilized and we learn that it is controlled by a master.”

He pauses, looks up and explains off-book. “The murders we've been seeing require an incision to the neck. This injects a paralytic poison that takes up to 3 days for a human to expel, and up to 3 hours by a werewolf if sped up by triggering of pain.

The first time this happened, three groups formed and argued about who the Kanima was, and how to deal with it. This in fighting caused tensions to rise, caused people to leave, and—”

Stiles glares at Victoria Argent.

“-and it gives you the fuel and flame to attempt to kill Scott McCall,” he finishes.

“Me?,” Scott replies.

“Mom?,” Allison interjects.

The Hale pack glow their eyes at the queen of the household, while Victoria's lips just purse into a fine line.

“Let me finish!,” Stiles interrupts. He opens his book once more. “Victoria Argent, during her stint at school, was able to find Scott's records and his previous history of asthma. Using a humidifier laced with wolfsbane, Scott was trapped to suffocate in a room of the building. Before the deed succeeded, Derek Hale shows up and derails the plan.”

The book was put down once more.

Stiles runs a hand through his hair and breathes deep. His eyes spark yellow, then disappear. “Time-
he muses. “Time- likes to have stationary points: facts that stay the same through every loop. I can't change when the full moon will be. Or the release of the next iPhone. And for a while, I thought that this argument was stationary. Out of the first 12 years, 4 lead to Derek killing Victoria with his bare hands. Eight lead to a situation where she would take her own life.” He pauses once more.

Allison was shocked. “Mom? Why would you kill yourself?”

“Yes,” Stiles supports. “Please explain to the room any reason for such an action.”

Victoria had her arms crossed, piqued at the situation. She sighed and started to reply. “The only reason I can theorize is- is perhaps if there was a chance I would turn into a werewolf.”

Discussions broke out for the next while. Stiles moved to a corner of the room and leaned against the wall, eyes closed.

Chris stood steadfastly right next to his wife while she answered any questions as short and succinct as possible. Isaac was especially chatty with the accusations. Scott was quiet in the corner with Allison calming him down. Danny and Lydia were quiet still, and barely 3 feet away from Stiles.

When the verbal attacks have slightly lowered, Victoria decides to unleash a final blow. “Mr. Stilinski?”

“Hm?”

“You said I was dead after the first 12 years. What happened in the next 4?,” she asks.

Stiles smiles and stands up straight. He stretches his torso, arms akimbo. “Astute as always, Mrs Argent.”

Stiles cracks his neck and opens his book once more. “Victoria Argent's death was presumably a stationary point for 12 cycles. Another stationary fact during these years was the influence of one other man: Gerard Argent.”

“Gerard?,” Chris perks up.

“Yes, Gerard,” Stiles answers and closes his book. “Going back to Kate for a moment- her bigotry did not arrive out of nowhere. That bad apple did not fall far from the tree that is Gerard.”

Stiles expression turns sour with anger after this. “He is a selfish no good man that will not stop until he gets his way. He wants to eliminate all supernatural creatures, yet at the same time he wants to live forever. I have not met anyone more selfish or hypocritical than he.”

Stiles pulls out a vial with a tar like liquid from his hoodie pouch, and throws it against the wall. The vial shatters, splattering the contents on the gray surface. The liquid bubbles and climbs, soon taking shape of a old male face.

“Gerard is sick, both figuratively and literally.” The face on the wall mimics coughing. It starts splattering globs from the mouth.

“He was given a few months to live, when all human medicine failed. It was when Kate Argent died that he remembered one thing he believed that would combat his terminal disease.” The face’s eyes change shape to something more feral. Soon, silhouette of a wolf against a full moon was etched in
black and grey.


“That's stupid!,” Derek spats out after that revelation.

“Why?,” Lydia asks, now intrigued by this mystery.

“Wolves can still die from disease. If we ever get cancer, our time line of death is much shorter than humans!,” Derek reveals.

Stiles continues to explain to the room. “When cells realized they are damaged and sick, commands in their systems force them to waste away. Cancer often occurs when these sick cells decide to reproduce, instead of killing themselves. Pair that with the supernatural ability to promote healing, and you get an exponential growth up to 128 times faster than humanly possible.”

Stiles walks to the tar imagery and dips a finger into the goop. From his contact, the liquid soon changes color to a dark purple, to a dark green, to blood red, and finally to a golden yellow with dark blue accents.

“Gerard desperately craves to live as the last supernatural creature alive. But in the last four years of my existence, he finds out that his daughter-in-law inherits this ability as well and decides to live.” Victoria's face forms in the newly colored solution. Her eyes were changing shape.

“That is preposterous!,” Victoria shouts.

“I used to think so. Until finally, after 12 years of seeing pain, I saw you make a new decision after my revelations...” The picture zooms out. Victoria seems to be smiling, a feast of either bird or swine in her hand. She is serving a table surrounded by at least 7 other people.

“... In those last four years, you decide to choose love.” Stiles stares at the picture forming. Details were hazy in gold and blue. But, the action and energy in that picturesque room spoke volumes. The Argents and their guests were happy.

The guests in the room could only stare at the picture. There was playfighting and laughing on unintelligible faces. The silence paid homage to a tranquil sight.

Stiles wipes a tear from his eye as suddenly a dark blue cloud bleeds through the placid meal. The cloud envelops everything and the figures cough and hack through the cloud. The wisps turn to shapes of flames the envelop the scene.

“Gerard Argent burns these supposedly peaceful meals to a husk. Whether in a home, or a picnic, or a public restaurant, Gerard finds out your familial plans and burns innocents to husks.” The picture splits into three flames that start circling each other and start spinning faster. A dark blue ring remains.

The ring blinks: It's an eye, creepily staring around the room.

“Just one question remains...,” Stiles hints.

Chris Argent's shoulders square off. Then, in a sheer point of clarity and anger, he continues that statement- “It's no longer a question of why, but a question of how he found out where we are.”

“Exactly,” Stiles answers. The cryptic teen walks in front of one of the victims.

The book comes out once more. “Adam Gutierrez, 26 years old. Two tours in Iraq. Forty-eight kills,
44 of which were supernatural. Out of those deaths, 32 were innocent. Most of his kills were clean and concise. He was so professional that he was employed by none other than Gerard Argent to be his eyes and ears in Beacon Hills.”

Stiles closes the book and continues on some sort of tangent. “When the first body was found in Beacon Hills, Gerard saw an opening. Adam came in as a transfer from another county. Dad was so busy with the politics of everything that Adam was able to slip in with the new deputies. A forged document here, a signature there and boom. An official Beacon Hills cop.”

Stiles starts to pace and smear the painting on the wall. The eye keeps reforming and blinking, staring creepily at the teen. The magical gold and blue eye follows him around- the creepiest thing you ever did see. “Adam has his ears to the ground, and eyes everywhere as a cop. He had his avenues as an adjunct hunter. So when he heard of my involvement of the pack, he started keeping tabs on my father's breaks for 'family reasons.' “

The eye on the wall sparks red and stares at the man slumped on the wall. Stiles seethes with rage as he continues, “Because of this- this bastard... for 4 freaking years, four innocent humans died and there was nothing I could do about it.” Stiles punches the wall so hard, a crack forms.

“This guy.” Chris supports. “This guy has been Gerard's eyes and ears in Beacon Hills.”

“Yes,” Stiles answers, fists clenched. His shoulders slump forward and breathes deep.

**Chris Argent POV**

Nights like these are common in my field, as a hunter. Threats to your family, to your life, to your future- as common place as bullets in my arsenal.

Everyone wants a piece of you, and they will not hesitate to tear your psyche to pieces.

Victoria, the rock of my life, the apple of my eye- she has been with me through thick and thin. We shared so many missions that a look can say it all. She has had my back through countless monsters, recon, and investigations. Her scrutinizing eye has no match in this world.

Then, our worlds changed 15 something years ago, when we found out that we were pregnant with Allison. That little bump shook me to the core. I no longer protected the world from itself. I no longer hunted those who hunted us. I worked, toiled, and fought to protect my little girl from the world she will never see.

And Victoria- she retired from the mission. The community was highly against it. “The best sniper in five states,” “fastest hacker in Silicon Valley,” “the best weapon designers since Colt, Smith, and Wesson”- the hunting community missed her for her skill alone.

But as always, Victoria adapted. She raised Allison through juice cups and diapers, through scrapes and school projects. She was there for every single show and tell, and parent-teacher conference. She traded her recon skills for arts and crafts; her hacking skills for sewing skills, her aim with a gun became a precision in baking. She still commands the room in any PTA summit, delegating each task to perfection. She never ceases to surprise me with her strength.

Tonight's revelation is no exception.

I have barely any clue how to raise my daughter on my own. Now, Stilinski has claimed that our law has left us alone, a widower and a motherless child, for 12 repeated years. Yet, Victoria remains unfazed. For her, all of this is just another fact to tuck away and deal with.
After that nerve-wrecker, we learn that my father is about to meddle in our lives for the worst. This fire will kill four humans that night.

“These humans?,” I start to ask.

Mr. Stilinski looks at us with tears in his eyes. “April 28th, we lose the lives of Melissa McCall, John Stilinski, Chris Argent, and Allison Argent.”

3rd POV

Victoria Argent's nostrils flare in anger. Scott McCall roars in outrage, and Allison grabs his arm in fear.

Stiles Stilinski wipes his eyes with his hoodie sleeve and tries to continue. “After their deaths, an all out attack was hatched against Gerard Argent. Three people died in that battle: Erica Reyes, Victoria Argent, and Cora Hale.”

“Cora?,” Derek starts to ask.

“A longer story Derek. I'll tell you more later, PLEASE,” the teen pleads. His eyes fade in and out of yellow again.

Victoria Argent, ever on task though signs of anger were still breaking through, decides to break the silence and move on.

“And these two other gentlemen? What are they here for?,” Victoria Argent asks, arms crossing.

“I'm glad you asked,” Stiles answers, lips pursing. “Meet our supernatural killer: Jackson Whittemore the Kanima, and it's first master, Matt Daehler.”

“What?,” Lydia Martin speaks. The queen socialite breaks from her sacred bubble in desperate confusion. “What do you mean Jackson's a killer?”

“I'm sorry, Lydia. It's the truth,” Stiles answers.

“I thought Lydia was the Kanima,” Derek chimes in.


Stiles walks closer to the mountain ash circle and takes a knee. “No, my dear friends,” Stiles mutters under his breath. “What Lydia and Danny are, well, they're something entirely different.”

Regaining his volume, Stiles continues reading from his book, flipping a few pages ahead: “The Kanima is a creature of vengeance, borne of a halfling lost in translation and lacking identity. Unlike werewolves whose instincts push to hunt, to look for a mate and to roam free, the Kanima's instincts resolve to guard and follow one master until its master's vengeance is exacted.”

Stiles closes the book and continues. “Let me double back for a moment to catch everyone up. A Kanima is a halfling. And despite common belief, Isaac was not Derek's first bite after his ascension to an Alpha status. Jackson rushed to the remains of the Hale house and demanded for the Bite. And for reasons known to Derek alone, he bit Jackson, expecting him to turn into a werewolf.”

Isaac look a bit hurt at that sentence, while Boyd and Erica, the other wolves in the pack perked up in half interest.
Before anyone can interrupt, Stiles continues: “But, the bite has an interesting effect, magically speaking. It bores into the soul of a person and creates an inner creature resounding to the essence of their personality. It enhances their needs and transforms them into something faster, stronger, and more resilient. A wolf protects and roams, in search for a pack and family. But deep down, Jackson had always been pursuing something more. Isn't that right, Danny?”

Eyes turned to the teen by Lydia. The queen was lost as well, and looked to Danny in turn. The young Hawaiian teen was surprised put into another position of attention. Lydia addresses Danny, “What is he talking about Danny? Why would you know more about this than anyone?”

Danny looks to Stiles, trying to read the hooded teen's eyes. Should he tell all his friend's secrets? Which one? Why would he know anything about all of this confusion?

Stiles returns a strong affirming glare and a slight nod. It's as if to say, this is a safe place. You will find support here.

Danny gulps, and steps back from Lydia and looks away. “I really don't know how to say this..”
Revelation Arc Part 7: A New Year's Kiss

Chapter Summary

Stiles Stilinski warned the group of the deaths of at least 7 of their own due to the work of one of their captives. And Victoria Argent, doomed to death or the Bite, could lose her life or her family by the hand of Gerard Argent. Then Stiles sheds light on the two other captives: Matt Daehler is the master of Jackson Whittemore- the human form of the Kanima. The Kanima is revealed to be borne of confusion and a lack of identity, forever cursed to enact the vengeance of its master, and can only be released by this loss of confusion. And now, Stiles reveals that the only one present who understands this confusion is Danny Mahealani, who seemed hesitant and quite tongue-tied.

Will Victoria Argent hold on to her facade until the end of this meeting?
What other revelations should we expect?
What is Danny so hesitant to share?

T/W: Descriptions of Anorexia, Bulimia, Stillborn Birth, Drunk Driving Accident

Chapter Notes

Trigger warnings for some mental health issues! Also, I changed Jackson's biological last names from Gordon and Margaret Miller to something else. Cause who would want to be stuck with parent's named Gordon and Margaret? (Hope I don't offend anyone with parents with those names...)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

BEACON HILLS HIGH SCHOOL, HALE VAULT, ALMOST DAWN

3RD POV

Danny steps back from Lydia, afraid of what happens next. Stiles somehow knows what Danny knows. For some reason, he had to tell everyone in this room Jackson's deepest secrets, and bare his best friend's soul.
Should he?
Shouldn't he?

“What's he talking about, Danny?,” Lydia asks. “What is it?” Her eyes search his desperately. Danny's forehead scrunches as he looks away. “Don't hate me,” he mutters under his breath.

Danny looks toward Jackson. “I know everyone knows that Jackson is adopted,” he starts. “Jackson hates it. Getting chosen second meant he wasn't the first. That kind of pushed him growing up.”

“He has a hero complex,” Erica fills in. “He always has to be the center of attention.”
“No, it's more than that,” Stiles stops her.

Danny chuckles bitterly. “Yeah, you could say that. The spotlight is on his perfect life, perfect money, perfect grades. But, you don't see him as I do behind close doors.”

“This might help explain,” Stiles supports, and throws something to Danny. The surprised teen catches the projectile and hides a small smile.

“Actually, it would help to have this.” Danny shows everyone the object in his hand: Jackson's phone.

“So what?,” Erica retorts. “It's a phone. Everyone has one. Oooooh it's the newest most expensive model out there. Whoop-de-doo.”

Danny fiddles with his device and opens the device and pulls up a screen.

“Six thirty am, protein shake, 13, 200.
6:40 am Morning Workout, 300.
7:25 am Morning weigh in, 8.4%. Two pound increase. Cheeseburger with Lydia from yesterday.”

“What is that?,” Scott asks, while Lydia just covers her mouth and gasps. She starts to ask, “Is that a-”

“Yeah,” Danny answers. “It's his food diary.” He stares at his unconscious friend. “Jackson is borderline anorexic.”

“What?,” Isaac answers from his corner. “What do you mean he's anorexic? He's not skin and bones.”

“He said borderline,” Stiles answers. “Jackson will choose not to eat to keep a figure. He would rather eat protein shakes, and fake health food than scarf down a healthy meal. This lack of real nutrients can be dangerous.”

“Last month, I almost caught him with a toothbrush in a club after a night out with friends,” Danny adds.

“A toothbrush?,” Scott asks.

“It's commonly used by bulimics to force themselves to throw up when they think they've eaten too much,” Stiles answers.

“I thought he was only borderline anorexic? Now he's bulimic, too?,” Erica chafes.

“That's what I thought, too, “ Danny answers solemnly. “He was so close to jumping down that rabbit hole.”

Tears were slowly going down Lydia's cheeks, mascara be damned. Her mouth was covered. With shock. Allison approached her friend to comfort her as Danny continued.

“The look he gave me when I saw him, it- it was like deer in headlights. 'It's not what you think. Not what it looks like. I was only thinking about it.' Needless to say, I spent the night talking him out of it. The next day we just went for a longer run than usual. And as far as I know, he's been struggling since.”
“Why?,” Allison asked on Lydia's behalf. “Why go to that length?”

“Because he has to be perfect for everyone else to see,” Stiles answers. “Danny, show them the calendar.”

Danny fiddles with the electronic device until a grid showed up, color coded and filled with notes. He shows everyone the word-filled screen and explains.

“Jackson has the most-detailed schedule I have ever seen. He has listed every hangout with teammates, every goof off, and every practice in all the sports he participates in. He has yearbook photos listed for photo ops. He has dates with Lydia, and anniversaries, with annotations of which ones to pretend to forget. He has doctor's appointments and personal trainers listed for 3 different gyms, when he's only allowed one.

And on highest alert are the meetings, dinners, and requirements for his parents- every test, midterm, and PTA night. He calculates what score he can get to maintain his grades but not look completely nerdy to our teammates. He will intentionally fail certain tests and pretend to struggle to get that A so he won't be branded a nerd. He'd act a straight up douche to get the most likes in the social climb to perfection.”

Danny had to breathe deep to continue. “He works every single day to make sure he is perfect in the eyes of the school, in the eyes of the girl he's seeing, and of the parents that he never had.”

Stiles walks over to Danny and grabs his shoulder comfortingly. He nods for the teen to continue.

“There are days-,” Danny continues with. “-days that he'd crack a little and say he's tired of it. Then, he'll just brush it off. I've been calling him out for years. He'd lean on me for support but I never went soft on him. I reeled him in when he went too far. But, Jackson and I have been through thick and thin. No matter how far he ran, how high he dreamed, how unrealistic his ambitions are- he kept me in each and every plan. His ambition have pushed us both for years to be the best that we could be. And, sometime in between we just... just knew.”

The silence runs thick for a good while. “Knew what?,” Boyd asks knowingly.

Danny tries to look at Lydia, then looks away. “Jackson kissed me this New Year's midnight.”

Derek and the Argents rolled their eyes with all this teenage drama. That sentence hung in the room as everyone tried to process. A good minute struck by as that sentence deafened the room.

“Please slap me,” Danny screams to Lydia. “Scratch me, scream at me, claw my arms off,” he continues to plead. “Just please be angry and do SOMETHING, please!”


Danny bit his lip and looked to Stiles, hoping he can take the rest. The hooded teen just nods.

Stiles claps his hands and rolls his shoulders in preparation. “I've always wanted to try this spell so close to the New Year. Let's see...,” he says rummaging through his basket.

He quickly grabs a handful of dust out of a violet trimmed green velvet pouch. He blows the ash into a cloud in the air. “Temporo idea oculi,” he mutters, eyes brimming yellow.

Yellow sparks form within the cloud and the dust starts to spin and swirl. Danny's voice echoes from within. “What are we doing here, Jackson?”
Jackson and Danny are out by the edge of town, on a lookout point. Jackson checks his watch and you see it's almost midnight.

“What are we doing here, Jackson?,” Danny asks. Jackson was lying down on the grass and tracing the stars. “We never leave Lydia's parties this early,” Danny submits, as he plays on his phone. They were sitting kinda close on this cool night.

Jackson just breathes deep and continues tracing. He mocks a gun with his fingers and shoots down Orion from the sky and smiles.

“I'm tired, Danny,” Jackson spouts.

“Then, let's go home,” Danny answers prepping to stand up.

Jackson grabs the hem of Danny's shirt. “No, wait.” Danny looks at Jackson, confused.

“I'm serious, Danny,” Jackson said. “I'm tired and I don't know what to do anymore.”

Danny sits back down and puts the phone away. He lies down and stares at the sky with Jackson. “You need to be a bit more specific here, Jacks.”

Jackson pouts. “I think Lydia and I are breaking up again.”

“So? That happens every month,” Danny answers, eyes rolling.

“What if I dated you next?,” Jackson throws out.

Danny sat up so fast to that statement. “What?!”

Jackson, for the first time in a long while, could not look his friend in the eye. “I just thought, you know... if you were up for it, maybe...”

“No,” Danny answers.

Jackson winces. And unseen for the varsity teen, he doesn't run away. His eyes do start to water. Fingers play at the hem of his varsity jacket.

Danny breathes deep and starts to explain. “You love Lydia.”

“No, I don't,” Jackson tries to stammer out.


“But- I love you, Danny,” Jackson answers.

“No, you love me TOO. 'Too' being the operative word, Jackson,” Danny explains. The teen turns to his side to look at his vulnerable friend.

Don't get me wrong, Jacks. I-” Danny choking up a bit.

“I love you, too. I just- I just know how much it will break you up to choose between me and Lydia. And the things it will do to your social life, the things you've been working on for years; you'll hate yourself for that.”

“But-,” Jackson starts to interrupt.

“No, stop. I love you, Jacks. This is not a no. Nor is it a yes. I mean, I dunno,” Danny lays back down spread eagle and huffs.
The breeze blows lightly and the leaves rustle.

“Talk to Lydia for me, will you?,” Danny answers. “I love her, too. And, I think you'd be surprised how she'd react. I'd just hate for her to be blindsided and hurt. Because, then you'll hurt. Then I can't- mmmmf”

Danny's interrupted by Jackson's lips on his own: the athlete trapped beneath a kiss. Jackson's hands cup the Hawaiian teen's face. Danny feels tears falling onto his cheeks. The kiss deepens as Danny closes his eyes to feel more of this warmth. He reaches out to caress Jackson arms.

Suddenly, his wrist vibrates, and fireworks explodes in the horizon. The colorful light forms a silhouette that takes both of them down from their high. Jackson opens his eyes to a solemn and sad stare as their lips part.

“Happy New Year, Danny,” Jackson says sadly.

“I love you too, Jackson,” Danny answers.

The scene disappears from the cloud.

Stiles narrates what happens next. “Jackson and Danny drive home. Danny was insistent that all three of them talk. And Jackson, has been struggling with his feelings towards Lydia and Danny. He lives the lives that others will see as perfect. He pursues a body that is seen as physically perfect. He tries so hard to live someone else's life, not knowing if he can choose his own destiny. This internal struggle is borne of the sole fact that he thinks he was left behind by his biological parents willingly.”

“It wasn't willingly?,” Danny asks Stiles surprised.

“Nope,” Stiles answers with a smile. “Isn't that right, Erica?”

Eyes turn to the blond teen who is shocked. She shrugs and answers. “No, it wasn't willingly.”

“How would you know?,” Lydia musters the strength to ask.

“Because, my dad was the insurance investigator for Jackson's biological parents: Colton and Holland Hayne,” Erica answers. “On the way back from the hospital after Jackson's birth, a drunk driver collided head on with Mr. and Mrs. Hayne's car.”

“On the same night,” Stiles appends. “Attorney Jack David Whittemore rushed his wife to the emergency room. Mrs. Whittemore had complications and their unborn child was delivered stillborn. An hour after the surgery to stabilize Mrs. Whittemore, an ambulance rushes in with two bodies clinging to life, and an infant screaming to high heavens.”

“Within an hour of waking up from the anesthesia, and shaken from grief, the Whittemore's learn that the family in the adjacent ICU have flat lined, leaving an orphaned child. Taking it as a sign of fate, the Whittemore's looked to each other and decided to file for adoption. Two families were broken that night, but something could grow from those rough patches. They kept the name Jackson, laughing at the irony that Mr Whittemore's first name is Jack.”

Stiles rubs circles into Danny's back to comfort him. “In my 16 years of living, one thing I've learned time and time again is that the Whittemore's always loved Jackson. They only wanted him to be happy. Whatever choices he makes, they will have his back. There is and will be love. Jackson just needs to see that.”
Danny sobs at that statement. He falls to his knees, only to be caught by Stiles. He tries to cover his eyes, and wets his sleeve with tears. Lydia is in the same shape, crying into Allison and clinging onto her friend’s blouse with a steel grip.

Stiles crouches down and continues to rubs circles into Danny’s back as he looks around the room. He was clearly exhausted; another spell drained him away this night.

On the other side of the room, Isaac shortles sarcastically. “So that means he'll inherit two family’s fortunes when this is over?”

“Yeah, the Hayne's were stacked too. Jackson's gonna be flipping rich when he turns 18,” Erica answers.

“Guys, please stop,” Scott requests. “This is somebody's life we're talking about.”

Erica turns her head disinterested with a 'hmph'. Isaac had the sense to apologize to no one in particular and soon found his shoes more interesting than the ceiling.

After a few minutes has passed, Victoria Argent thought that it was time to switch gears. “So, if I understand correctly, disposing of the young Mr. Whittermore will be heavily opposed by everyone here.”

She is answered with heavy glares by a few present.

“Of course,” she answers her own question. “Then, Mr Stilinski, how did you resolve this issue in all your past experiences?”

Stiles stands up and shakes dust of his pants, and stretches his back. “In my past 16 years, we attempted to save Jackson by killing his master. But, the Kanima just finds the next most vengeful spirit in the area and latches on. In most cases, it latches to none other than to Gerard Argent.”

“Gerard?!,” Chris Argent exclaims.


“Needless to say, that the results were always disastrous. So, I did all the research I could as each plan played out. People died, some lived, and every time, I became more and more numb to the destruction. Until last year, I found one critical new piece of information from the Arthur Archives.”

“Arthur Archives?,” Scott asks.

“King Arthur? Owns a round table? Ring a bell?,” Stiles quips. “Long story and very tangential. Anyway, it seems that the Kanima can only be released on the whim of its master. Which is next to impossible, since the requirement for becoming a master is being hellbound to vengeance.”

“So, what? We torture the kid to let Jackson go?,” Derek answers bluntly.

“No,” Stiles rebuts angrily and quickly. His eyes spark yellow once again in anger. A quick breeze flows strongly in the room and quickly disappears as Stiles calms down. “Because, the master can easily order the Kanima to kill itself permanently.”

Derek looks away, dejected.

“Then, what do we do?,” Scott asks.
“We either get one of us to become the new master by killing Matt, or we get to heal Matt from his own hatred.”

“Is the latter even possible?,” Chris Argent asks.

“I never thought so, until I found one key ingredient to a possible cure. This also requires the support of someone very vital to Matt's life. Someone that hangs over his head from day's start to night's end.”

“Me?,” Allison asks. Eyes look to her in confusion. “Uh, I recently found out he's been stalking me for a while, but I don't know how I can help him,” she supports.

“No,” Stiles answers.

“The only person that can probably help him now is none other than Isaac Lahey.”

Chapter End Notes

Any Janny fans out there? Didn't plan any of that, but this story is writing itself. Did not even plan the anorexia there too..
Revelation Arc Part 8: Judge, Jury, and Executioner

Chapter Summary

Jackson Whittemore, the teen trapped within the scaly vestige of a Kanima, was cursed magically by a lack of identity. We discover that this chip has been chafed by his struggle with his physical self-image, with his emotional attachment to Lydia Martin and Danny Mahealani, and with his self-convinced abandonment by his birth parents- a case disproved conveniently by Erica Reyes. Stiles Stilinski wishes to free Jackson from this scaly prison and the grasp of his vengeful master by revealing his gamble at hand: a possible cure that can only be administered by the surprised Isaac Lahey.

Will Jackson be cured by the end of this night?
If so, who will he choose to love: Danny or Lydia?
Will he have any love left for himself, to stop abusing his own body?
And, what surprises are in store for Isaac Lahey?

T/W: Descriptions of Death by Military Service, Group Consensus on Murder. Also, Underage drinking, Survivor's Guilt, and drowning is glossed over.

Chapter Notes

A/N Sorry I took a while. I struggle with exposition. It makes the story feel choppy. I'm working on it. The good news is, I might have the Arc wrapped up in 2 more chapters, then the new stuff begins. And I can finally get to my goal: Sterek, and Matt/Isaac feels.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

BEACON HILLS HIGH SCHOOL, HALE VAULT, ALMOST DAWN

“Me?,” Isaac asks. “Why me? Yeah, we hung out twice during elementary school. We don't hang out. We were on the Lacrosse team together. We both warmed the bench, that's it...,” the confused teen tried to explain, more to himself than anyone else.

“Yeah, well you are more connected than you think,” Stiles answers walking away from Matt and browses through a basket no one noticed before. “Do you recognize this?,“ Stiles asks, lifting a small item in a red and white handkerchief.

“Isn't that the thing you took of Isaac's house earlier?,” Derek asks.

“Yup.”

“What is it?,” Scott asks.
Stiles just nods towards Isaac, who decidedly looks away again. After a deep breath, he answers, “it's my brother's.”

“Your brother's what?,” Erica asks.

Stiles starts to unfurl the hankerchief and more stripes show. A patch of blue shows up in a corner, littered with white stars. A small lump of metal rolls out as the cloth unfurls.

“It's my brother's flag and medal,” Isaac answers. “For his service, you know? Before he-” Isaac's throat closes up. Everyone else could finish that sentence.

Danny and Scott approach Isaac and clap him on the back for support. The hurt teen's eyes just looked more empty than anything. He wanted away from this confusion and from the memories of his brother: the hero he could never compare to.

“Camden Lahey was a strong soldier, and a leader in his team,” Stiles supports. “He was deployed twice. A surprise attack on his convoy from an RPG decimated his team and had him severely wounded.”

“They got to patch him up so h-he didn't bleed it out,” Isaac continued. “But, a loose piece of shrapnel that wasn't removed got the better of him. It ruptured some internal organs while he was resting. Two days from the attack, we got the call. A week later, we got the flag and the medal.”

“While Camden was still bleeding, he carried two wounded comrades to safety out of suppressing fire,” Stiles explained the medal. “He worked his best to save the bodies of the rest of his team. Eight dead but were identifiable.”

Stiles walked closer to Isaac and draped his shoulders with the flag. He also offered him the medal to hold.

Afterwards, the hooded teen walks to the middle of a room and builds a magic circle.

Feeling the medal in his hands, Isaac points out one more thing. “What does Camden have to do with all of this?”

Stiles keeps etching out on the floor as he answers. “Camden got his leadership from being captain of the swim team for 3 years, under your dad as the coach. The swim team would have parties at your house, and your dad let everyone drink, even tough they're underaged.

One night, Matt walked over to play a game or something, and the swim team was there having fun. They saw Matt, and teased the little boy, 'Look who's trying to sweeten up the coach's kid'. They splashed water at him and were laughing up a storm, while Matt was at a loss for words. He just wanted to get through the backyard.

He walked around the far side of the pool as the team was splashing water at him. The next thing you know he slips into the pool.”

Stiles finished his drawing and walks over to his basket.

“Matt hadn't taken swimming lessons before. He fell into the deep side of the pool. He flailed and kicked, while the drunken teens just laughed. Soon, Matt's flailing slowed down, and Camden immediately noticed. He swam over and took Matt out of the water. He performed CPR and Matt was soon breathing.

Meanwhile, the other team members ran inside to get the coach. As Matt came to, your dad grabs
Matt and threatens him to tell no one. He called him an idiot for not knowing how to swim. And if Matt told anyone, he'd be dead.”

Stiles pulled a few flowers and vials from his basket, and sprayed its contents on the magic circle.

“Matt ran away, angry at himself and the team that almost killed him. He developed a psychosomatic aversion to water, and would get panic attacks frequently. This fueled his rage and confused him. Because, if not for Camden, he'd be dead. How can he be grateful and vengeful to the same group of people?”

Stiles pauses to murmur a small incantation and the circle glows red and yellow.
He turns around and addresses the room once more.

“When the Kanima chooses a master, the person doesn't have to have vengeance already on its mind. But, the act of being chosen, it magnifies the rage a thousandfold. Kanima law states that it cannot attack anyone innocent. But for their kind to be prolific, their master must take a life of an innocent. Then, the master soon turns into a Kanima as well.

So, the master becomes the monster, because its puppet fuels the flame.”

Stiles adds more reagents to the circle. A few sparks here, and a puff of smoke there, and soon the circle is humming with energy, glowing green and blue.
With that last change of color, Stiles claps his hands loudly and startles the room.

“So, here is the big event of the night: who lives and who dies?”

“What?!” Danny, Lydia and Scott scream, almost at the same time.
The Argents bristle at that statement, and the wolves set on edge once again.

“This man,” Stiles points to knocked out hunter. “-is responsible for innocent deaths in multiple timelines. And in each timeline, this group of people choose to act differently time and again.”

Stiles walks towards the Argents. “How far will YOU go to protect your family? And what if those who hunt you are humans, as well? How will you abide by your code?”

“And you-,” Stiles stares at the wolves of the room. “-where does your moral compass point here and now? Will you rein in your instincts for bloodshed and side with a conscience?”

“Danny and Lydia,” Stiles continues. “Knowing all this, will you stand by what the group decides? Or will what you believe is right cause you to fight and stand tall?”

“And most importantly, Derek-” Stiles looks softly yet sternly at the Alpha wolf. “-will you listen to what everyone says? Or will you act in haste once again? Will you trust us, those who stuck with you through thick and thin?”

Stiles stalks to center of the room, faces the group in attention. He shakes his left arm strongly, and a long staff flows through his sleeve. With a circular flourish, he spins the polearm into the air as he spins around. He catches it behind him and flurries it into the air once more. He catches above his head and slams one end into the ground- the sound of a gavel echoing into the room. The wind picks up and his eyes spark yellow once more.

Stiles continues on, his voice echoing sixteen-fold.

“We-“
“-we are-”
“We are judge-”
“-judge, jury, and-”
“-and executioner!”

“Plead your case!,” Stiles emphasizes with a bang of his staff.

DEREK POV

The scents in this room are overwhelming. I have been challenged again and again by Stiles, in this one night. And for some reason, I can control the wolf within. My wolf respects this Stiles for some reason, and it weirds me out.

Only the week before did I stare at him and would scoff at his juvenile behavior. His loyalty and fealty infuriated me. And now- everything changed.

I don't know what to do, but wait. He respectfully asked and, for some reason, I am patient. Why is that?

I am confused and it is so infuriating!

But, for some reason, this pull inside stops me from being angry. Or sad. Just patient and tranquil.

“-tell you later, I promise;” Stiles said earlier.

I have to hold him up to that. But, as for now-

“I think Jackson should live!,” someone said, breaking the silence.

I feel oddly calm about this once more, but why?

Everyone looked, his name's Danny. Figures. His best friend on the line, he would make the first move. He lists the boy's strengths and insecurities- how he had no choice in this. I decide to correct him.

“He had the choice,” I command the room. “After I gained the Alpha status with the help of most of the teenagers in this very room, Jackson came up to me and demanded for the bite. He wanted to change so drastically, that he went against all common sense and challenged an Alpha wolf for a position in a pack. As werewolf law, if he fails to turn into a wolf, he is deemed unworthy to live.”

“So, you're saying he should die?!,” Danny replies angrily.

I raise my hand and shake my head. This serenity is too unreal for me. “I am merely stating werewolf law: a concept I may have to explain more in the future. As to whether I would enact upon it, I say no. But, as it is, I deem Jackson neither guilty nor otherwise.”

I look to Stiles after addressing the room. He smiles at my reply. I feel satisfied with that smile, feeling like I did the right thing. (And, just like that, I'm back to being confused.)

“And what if the boy kills again?,” Victoria Argent adds to the room.

Danny looks to the adult hands clawing for reason. He can give no reply and his eyes showed it.

“I believe Stiles gave us a solution already,” the red-headed teen beside Danny answered. Lydia was her name, I think. “Killing the master, the Kanima will seek a new one to obey. I believe that Stiles
would only support this information, if he thinks that one of us can become its new master instead of, Gerard I believe, the man that supposedly will kill more using Jackson.”

She conveyed each word with confidence. Her hands were shaking though, as she grabbed one of Danny's hand for support.

“And, if I remember correctly as well,” Mrs. Argent rebuts. “Mr. Stilinski also said that the new master will be infected with rage, until the master too becomes another Kanima. What of that issue?”

Lydia mulls the statement for a moment then looks to Stiles. “Can I ask you a simple question?”

Stiles motions to continue.

“If the master is already another supernatural creature, can they still turn into a Kanima?”

Stiles offers a sad smile, and replies. “Unfortunately, I do not know. You've asked me that many times before, but it is something we have not yet tested.”

“Well, from your description of supernatural abilities and soul resonance, it must come to effect that one soul cannot take two forms.” Lydia turns to the rest of the room. “I motion to the group, that if no other option can be made, that we force the new master to be one of the supernatural creatures in the room. One that, as we vote, be the most level-headed of the lot.”

Stiles looks about the room. “Any objections? Argents?”

They shake their heads no, surprisingly.

“And what about the hunter?,” Erica asks. “Should he live?”

The room is silent. I would think everyone would say that the man should die, but no one had the guts to fire the first shot.

“No.”

“I support their decision,” I add. “I try to protect what I care for, and it seems that this man has and will threaten this city more than what can be pardoned.”

Stiles asks for objections once more, and none were given. I thought Scott would spare the currently innocent man. But Stiles words rang through my head, “April 28th, we lose the lives of Melissa McCall, John Stilinski, Chris Argent, and Allison Argent.” This man holds the noose around Scott's mom's future. Desperation wins over his conscience today.

“Will the execution be public or private?,” Stiles asks afterward.


Before hysterics break loose, Chris answers once more. “Publicity will cause more harm than good. Although I do not approve of the number of werewolves in Beacon Hills, I believe I can handle this situation better with less outside involvement. A public example of Mr. Gutierrez will lead to an influx of hunters that abide to no code. And supernatural or not, these less than honorable hunters will cause more harm than good to the city.”
No objections were made and Stiles slammed his staff in conclusion. Vines started to form and wrap around the hunter's torso and mouth, wrapping the man for easy transport.

“Lastly,” Stiles addresses the room. “actually, no, wait- hold on a minute.”

Stiles takes a deep breath. “I would actually like to address the room on behalf of Matt Daehler.”

Stiles walks toward Isaac and asks to borrow his brother's medal.

“With the permission of the group, I would like to try something I have never done these past 16 years.” He holds up the piece of medal and throws it into the most recent magic circle he made. “With your permission-” he pauses. “-I would like to attempt to cure Matt Daehler.”

Chapter End Notes

A/N I have been trying, TRYING, to keep this story as faithful to canon, and as standalone, as possible so that readers that (for some reason) have not seen the show will still get the personalities and relationships of everyone in the show.

But then again, not everyone is still alive, so a cast of 20+ is soooo tiring to write comprehensively. Especially for a new fanfic writer with no betas, who insists to proofread his own work and tries to make it as grammatically correct (and lacking misspellings) as possible. Run-ons and comma splices have been my kryptonite though.
Revelation Arc Part 9: Gambling Deuces

Chapter Summary

The penultimate moment of the night leads to these 3 decisions: the life or death of the 3 captives beneath Beacon Hills High School. Danny and Lydia successfully defends Jackson's right to live. The croup unanimously agrees that the captive hunter should die. And, before the group decides the fate of Matt Daehler, Stiles Stilinski requests a gamble: an unlikely cure for the Kanima's master.

T/W: Descriptions of gunshots

Chapter Notes

I had to ground myself midsemester because I failed a test by writing a fanfic instead of studying.

Now that the semester is over (and I have caught up to all my show :-P) the writing continues.

Second to last chapter for this arc. Please lemme know how I'm doing, for someone who doesn't have a beta/co-author. I love your kudos and comments!

BEACON HILLS HILLS HIGH SCHOOL, HALE VAULT, FORESHADOW O CLOCK IN THE MORNING

Stiles Stilinski- wannabe auror, experienced spark, and tonight's judge, jury, and executioner; has addressed the room with a proposition ne'er been considered before: an attempt to cure Matt Daehler.

“This again? How will you go about curing him?,’ Allison scoffs.

Stiles nods yes in reply. Stiles puts down his retractable quarterstaff (a sentence he never thought would ever exist) and pulls out his book. Different from the rest of the night, he clumsily fingers through the pages and mumbles to himself “no's” and “maybe's” and bites down on the hem of his hoodie to concentrate.

Derek smirks. This is their Stiles- quirky, focused, and determined. All in all, lovably aloof. The smirk disappears faster than flames on water.

“Aha!,” Stiles exclaims, then continues to mumble to himself.

“A Kanima's master is bound to blah blah blah...
yadda yadda link...
antivenom produced by inoculation.

Here we go!

Once the bond is severed from Master to Kanima, the bond attaches itself to the nearest host with the most potential of vengeance.”

Stiles slams the book and starts talking, unvariably with his hands flailing everywhere. “When we found this text in the Library of the -whoops- can't say that one yet. We found this tome on Dragonkind, or reptilian creatures. Lydia, Laura and I were translating this tome like crazy because of the -urmph, argh- stuff chasing us. And this one sentence, this one freaking sentence bothered the hell out of me. Lydia, Deaton, and Mrs. Nakamura told me it only translates to sever, or synonyms of sever.

No one else, since the beginning of TIME has tried using the link to reach out and cure the Kanima.”

“Is that even possible?,” Scott asks.

Stiles stares back to the room, a look of determination so strong that steel would bend. “I am hell bent on trying.”

“And if you fail?,” Chris Argent asks.

“I have a feeling...,” Lydia answers for him. “Bon jour pour mourir... You would die, wouldn't you, Stiles?”

Stiles smiles sadly. “Brilliant as ever.”

The silence thickens as the reality of death sinks once again.

“What do you need?,” Danny asks.

Everyone looks to him.

“What do you need to cure them?,” Danny steps forward, repeating himself.

“I need at least four people,” Stiles answers. “Two people to hold the link, two to connect to Matt and Jackson. So that means I need Isaac, and either Lydia or Danny. As for the last 2 people, supernatural affinity would be nice to have.”

“You have me. Whatever it takes,” Danny answers immediately.

“No,” Lydia stops him. “You have us.”

Lydia takes Danny's hand and offers him a reassuring smile. “Whatever it takes,” she mirrors his reply.

Eyes look to Isaac who is mulling it over with the hem of his hoodie. Moments later, he replies “I'll do it. Camden owes him. Camden would've wanted to help him. If it would brighten up the darkest portion of his life, I will do it.”

Stiles looks to the rest of the werewolves in the room for the last tribute. Scott starts to walk forward when Derek asks a question. “Would an Alpha be preferable to a Beta?”

Stiles smiles at that reply. “Yes, it would, actually. It is up to you though.”

Derek uncrosses his arms and walks forward.

“Wait, what about us?,” Scott asks.
Stiles shrugs his shoulders and just looks to the others. “I'm guessing that this will be quite personal, so it depends on the others here.”

Lydia, Danny, and Isaac, unsure as they were, did not mind the audience.

It is at this point that Victoria Argent raises a question that shows her experience with the supernatural. “Mr. Stilinski, this requirement of a bond requires an unbroken connection, am I correct?”

Stiles just nods yes.

“Should we be worried of outside disturbance? Or worse over, could the connection fight back this resolution?”

Stiles mulls it over quickly and answers, “I am not sure. Given the self-preservative qualities of magic and its essence, it is highly likely that the latter should happen. With that being said, I would highly appreciate any offers of protection.”

The Argents ready their guns and Scott bristles his arms, raring for a fight. Boyd and Erica look unsure.

“Do we need to know anything before this fight?,” Erica asks.

“Two things affect magical attacks: mistletoe and electricity, Mistletoe acts like a magical sink, but I doubt we have a lot of that down here. Electricity can either empower or weaken a magical construct. But you won't know until you try. Also, electricity won't connect if the construct is ethereal, or not of the physical plane.

The last thing would be other magic. With that being said…” Stiles chants something towards the Argents and their firearms start to glow.

He explains that the clip currently loaded are now magically charged but will only damage if it physically hits. He can't charge another clip since he needs the magic for the curative spell.

“As for Scott, Erica and Boyd, you can't do anything about them if they're ethereal, so just sit it out. If they become physical, keep them away from us. Remember- three of us don't magically heal.”

And with that, Stiles claps his hands and rolls his shoulders to prep for the spell.

Stiles pulls up his sleeves, and everyone can see runes scarred into his flesh. He lays Matt and Jackson close to each other, but nearer to the circle. The circle of mountain ash follows the bodies by themselves. He holds two bodies by their pulse points on their wrists and breathes deep.

“When I say go, Danny and Derek, grab on my shoulder with one arm, then grab one of Lydia and Isaac's arms. You will be a physical link between all of us. I do not know what will happen, what pain we will feel, but whatever happens, DO NOT LET GO.”

They nod in understanding.

Stiles steps into the magical circle which start to produce a purple and yellow flame. Stiles's runes glow purple then start to sizzle blue in turn. He starts chanting in an unknown language, as the wind in the room picks up.

Matt and Jackson start to glow a bright white and blue.
“Hello?! What's happening??”
“Hello?! Who's there?! Where am I?!”

“Jackson!,” Danny screams.

“Was that Matt?,” Isaac asks.

“They can't hear you. Gimme a moment. I need to stabilize this connection,” Stiles interrupts. He chants a bit more until all the blue disappears and aura left is pure white, all shrouded by the purple flame. Stiles motions for the two pairs to make the connection.

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DEREK POV

I thought the purple flames would burn. I thought the smoke would smell of char. I stepped away from fire as much as possible, since it reminded me of the family home.

But, all I felt of the purple flame was protection. The smoke smelled of my family home, and the open preserve. It smelled of pack scents and hot chocolate nights.

It smelled of Stiles.

The flames grow up my arms and soon cover me completely. They rush over to Isaac who starts to panic from they flames.

I look into his eyes. “It's okay.”

The moment the flames touch his skin, his eyes turn gold. Then, I knew my position in this: just to watch and protect.

“What was that?”
“Who's there?”
The two voices earlier call out.

“Matt? Jackson?,” Stiles calls out.

“Stilinski?,” I assume that it was Jackson speaking. “Where am I?”

“I know you have a lot of questions, both of you. Gimme a moment to explain.” Stiles mumbles something else, another language, more guttural than the prior. The last syllable holds out longer than the other. Stiles looks to the sky, and soon his throat and his eyes emit a beam of yellow light into the air. The same light can be seen under the eyelids of the two unconscious men.

“...I've been killing people?,” the other voice speaks out.
“I'm being used?,” Jackson speaks out. “How fucked up is that? I was supposed to be perfect, not some kind of... some kind of monster!”

“No, you're not a monster!,” Danny screams out.
“Danny?,” Jackson asks.
“I'm here too, Jacks,” Lydia answers.
“...Lydia?”

On my end, I hear what I assume is Matt's voice loud and clear. “Just do it.”

“Kill me then,” Matt answers. “I can't keep doing this. I'm just nobody. No one even remembers that I exist.”

“I don't matter,” another voice comes out. It was Matt's but more ragged like gravel. “You are wasting your time.”

Black bubbles start to form around Matt's unconscious body. A dark hand starts to breach Matt's chest. It reaches out, and rises up from Matt's form. A shadow-like anthropomorphic form climbs out slowly from his body, like a corpse climbing out of boggy waters.

“It's uselessssss. You ssssssshould have left me to die,” the shadow spoke as the form skin coalesced into scales; a Kanima borne of shadow slithers around Matt's body.

“Get him away from us!,” Stiles orders the room. Scott tackles the Matt's Kanima form, away from the connection.

I start to move towards the creature. But as soon as I lift a finger off of Stiles, he screams in immense pain.
Isaac grabs my arm. “Do not move, Derek! You could kill Stiles!”

“Isaac, talk to Matt!,” Stiles pleads, tears in eyes and grasping for air. “SAVE HIM!”

I should never have let go.

---

**DANNY POV**

I had to focus on just one thing: saving Jackson's life. There were many things Lydia and I were worried about, but tonight ends with all of us alive.

“Lydia, he needs to talk to you, not me,” I urge her. “He loves you. He will listen to you. Save him, please.”

“No,” Lydia answers. “He needs both of us, Danny.”
I was surprised that this was okay for her- everything I've said, everything we've done. She squeezes my hand in assurance once more. I guess we're in this together, no matter what.

We smile as we look toward Jackson. I am more determined than ever to save him.
“Welcome here for you, Jackson. We're all you need,” Lydia says.
“We can get through this. Together. All of us,” I support.

We heard a collective gasp beside us- a monster was coming out of Matt Daehler's body. The tension was rising and we needed to get him out safely. But still, the question is how?

“Lydia, how do we save Jackson?,” I ask frantically. “Any ideas?”

“Stiles said Jackson feels confused about his identity. Or at least, the magic is telling him he should be. We just need to reaffirm him that what matters is now, who he is, with us alone. No one else matters. “

“Danny? Lydia? Where are you?,” Jackson calls out. “Did you guys leave me too?”

“Everyone just leaves me,” a voice calls out from his body. And just like Matt Daehler, a shadow starts to appear above Jackson's body.
“Trouble at 10 o’clock!,” Stiles screams out. “I need backup over here!”
Gunshots were fired in the direction of Jackson's Shadow. The creature, I think it's called a Kanima, did not flinch. Mr. Argent starts to reload a normal clip into his handgun and offers suppression fire, cursing under his breath for wasting a clip.

“JACKSON! Can you hear us?!,” Lydia pleads. “We're still here! We've always been here!”

“And we'll never leave you!,” I add. “No matter what happens, no matter what you're going through we'll be here 'til the end!”

The dark form of the Kanima hisses out a reply. “You don't know that! You don't know what I'm going through!” It materializes and jumps toward us, claws gleaming.

Two thwips fling through the air as crossbow bolts hit the creature in its eyes. It yells out a shriek as Mr. Argent tackles the creature midflight. Allison reloads her crossbows with her last two bolts and aims for the other.

We were running out of time. We were outmatched and outgunned. It's time for my gamble.

“I told Lydia!,” I scream.

“What?,“ Jackson's normal voice speaks from his body.

“I told her everything!,“ I gasp out. “The diary, the calendar, the talks we were supposed to have, New Year's Eve- all of it!”

“Why would you do that?,“ Jackson asks.

“WHY WOULD YOU DO THAT?!,” Jackson's creature echoes angrily. It pushes off Mr. Argent and lunges at Stiles' connection.

The creature impales Stiles arm, and he screams. I couldn't see blood or a wound- the attack didn't seem to go through.
Then, I saw Stiles runes.

The white runes were starting to run red. It was bleeding up Stiles arms bit by bit as Stiles let out the worst screams I've heard in my life. I wanted to cover my ears. I couldn't imagine the pain.

And somehow I knew, when the red reaches my connection, I would feel that pain too.
And from what it sounds like, this pain could be the death of us all.
Chapter Summary

In a gamble to save the lives of Jackson Whittemore and Matt Daehler, our hero Stiles Stilinski has attempted a spell not documented since the beginning of time: a cure for the Kanima strain. Creating a connection to living hosts- anchors the two afflicted have to humanity, Stiles starts a spell that allows Danny, Lydia, and Isaac to reach out and save their souls.

But the darkness of doubt and depression have taken form: Shadow Kanima emerge from the two victims and attack the connection. And one of them has poisoned the connection, leaving the room to witness our hero's loud and shrill screams.

In this last chapter of the arc, will everyone live to tell the tale?
If our hero has anything to say about it, they all will.

T/W: Graphic descriptions of death and horror, gay bashing. Oh. I already put it in the notes when I wrote this before. Good job old me.

Chapter Notes

PLEASE READ: Warnings for graphic imagery, language, and scenes of gay bashing.
You have been warned.

BEACON HILLS HIGH SCHOOL, HALE VAULT, BREAK OF DAWN

The night started with an abundance of silence. It left an air of mystery and solemn acceptance of the truth.
But with the chaos of change, the scenery quickly adapted. Now the witnesses of this miracle wish they could trade back these inhuman screams for the silence they once had.

Stiles was inconsolable. His bare arms were covered in runes, grasping tight at the lifelines of two other teens. And, through his left arm, claws of darkness have impaled and infected the once healing connection.

“GET THAT THING AWAY FROM STILES!,” Scott screams. He's in a battle himself, unable to help his friend.

Shots and even more shots were fired at the Shadow Kanima, but it would not budge.

Chris Argent was standing back up from his previous tackle and tries to run over to the creature. But,
he could not move close; the Kanima was slinging its tail violently.

Tears run down Stiles cheeks as he continues to scream in agony. His head was writhing around wanting to let go.

You would want to cover your ears. You would want to run away. You would want to grant the peace of death. But, the torture was only beginning.

The red infection climbed up Stiles' arms and soon reached his shoulder. His electric yellow eyes blast open, and soon ran tears of blood. The red essence of life was gurgling in his mouth with his screams.

At the same time, Derek and Danny felt the red infect them as well. And all their screams, well, they were the stuff nightmares were made off.

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**DANNY POV**

I remembered the safety of those purple flames. I remembered it well. But the moment that red flame touch the purple glow on my skin, the safety vanished and all I saw was black.

It was raining. I was running. I passed the corner of Birch and 4th. My socks were wet and I was out of breath. And I kept on running.

“Jackson!,” I screamed out. “Mom! Dad! Anyone?!”

All I heard were the screams of those behind me.

“Get him!”

“Don't let him reach home!”

“Stupid faggot!”

“-die already!”

“Don't forget your faggot stick, sicko!”

Birch and 5th. Just 2 more blocks, and I’m free.

They had bikes, though.

---

I never stood a chance.

I felt a heavy thud on my back. And fell face first. I tried not to scream because mom told me I might bite my tongue off if I fell. My chin hit the pavement hard and I was kind of dizzy.

“The Other Danny” apparently jumped off his bike to tackle me. I looked up and I saw the signs for Birch and 6th. I was so close.

The punches and kicks were brutal. Their words were worse. But the fact that I was so close- that hurt the most. And when one of them kicked me right on the knee...

...that pain lasted for eternity.

“......aaaaaaaaAAAAAAAARRRGGHHH!!”
DEREK POV

I was in my family home. It was quiet. The sun was shining quaintly. The floors were clean, the couch was empty; the living room was pristine.

That never happens.

It even smells empty. I can't hear them or smell anyone.

But, it's the middle of the day? The sun is bright outside. The flowers on the windowsill are..

.. gray?
The curtains are.. torn?

Where did the couch go?
Why is it so dark?
No, wait..

… that orange light?

Stop, I hear something...

Is that crackling? Hissing?

“Derek?”

I turn around. It's Laura in her stupid leather jacket, smirking at me. “You missed it.”

Missed what?, I wanted to ask. But I couldn't speak.

“The way it felt.”
She started walking closer, and I started to lose my breath. It was harder to breathe.

“Can you feel it, Derek?”
Laura was walking closer. But her clothes looked different. Her hair was different, too.

I looked at my hand. It was starting to shift.
And as soon as it did, boils formed under my fur. It blistered, popped. It sizzled and hissed.

I looked around. The room was orange. Like her... hair?

I looked to my right. My Laura was there.

I looked in front of me. This woman is not Laura.

I looked at my right. Laura's blue eyes were sad. They soon fade to gray. Then I see her body split in two on the floor.
I looked to the woman in front of me. 
She was grinning a sickly grin. 

“Can you feel it, Derek? 
That fire? 
That knife? 
That betrayal of leaving your family alone to die?”

This wasn't Laura. 
This was Kate.

No, it isn't Kate. 
Kate doesn't have stubble. 
Or black hair. 
Or hazel eyes. 

I looked down and see a knife in my stomach. 
It was painful and I couldn't breathe. 
I felt something bubble in my throat. 
There was the taste of iron and char. 

I looked up and see a mirror. 
It was me. 
My knife, in my hand. 
The edges of the mirror were aflame. 
The fire was climbing up my arms burning me alive. 
The house was burning around me. 
And I was starting to laugh crazily like my Uncle Peter. 

I wanted to scream, as my eyes turn red in rage.

3RD POV

The purple aura surrounding the connection of teens was tinged in red. Stiles was still bleeding from his eyes, still inconsolable; the screams still gurgling creating a sickly sound that fills the room.

Then, a chorus of screaming joined Stiles as soon as the connection reached Danny and Derek. The creeping red was crawling down the two's shoulders slowly- painstakingly slow. Danny inherited Stiles' screaming. Derek was bleeding from every orifice, silent. And, Lydia and Isaac, seeing that ghastly sight, was screaming for help to anyone that would listen.

Victoria Argent, cold and calculating, aimed and shot four times at the Kanima infecting the connection: twice in the knees, one at the base of the tail, and once in the arm.

“You have to have more bullets!,” Lydia was screaming at her. “Use them!”

“I can't.” she answered. “I have to save them.”

“Save them for what?! It's now or never!,” Lydia pleaded. The red was now creeping down Danny's other arm, inches closer to her.
Erica and Boyd were in their corner, frozen in fear. Isaac was pulling hard, trying to get away. But Derek was frozen himself, unable to let go. Scott was still in battle with Matt's Shadow Kanima.

Was there no one else to help?

“Allison!,” Lydia begged. “Help us! Why is your mom not shooting?!”

Allison runs over, having used up all her crossbow bolts helping Scott to no avail. She brandishes a small dagger from her boot and tries to help her dad with the one creature close by.

“I think I know what she is saving those bullets for, Lydia,” she answers in between dodges from the skirmish. “You're not gonna like it. They're her last resort.”

“Last resort to what?!,”

“In case no one can get out alive,” Victoria starts. “I can at least save them from this misery.” Victoria lifts her pistol and aims at Stiles Stilinski.

“What?!,” Lydia screams. “You can't be serious?! What will happen to us after that?!”

“I do not know,” Victoria answers. “But, if it has any chance of saving you, it is a chance I am willing to take. If Mr. Stilinski were in my position, I believe he would make the same call.”

“NO!,” Scott screams from his corner. “You don't know him! He would find another way!”

The red flame was at Danny and Derek's elbows. Time was running out.

“ERICA! BOYD! HELP US!,” Scott was screaming with such authority. His eyes were tinging a hint of red.

The two teens were shaken from the stupor, but were still shaking from fear.

“W-we can't!,” Erica screams. “I didn't sign up for this! I don't know what to do!” She falls to her knees. “I-I'm so weak I can't help it! I'm sorry!” Boyd was beside her. His clenched fists were bleeding. His claws were impaling his palms in anger. He wanted to help, but...

Tensions were running high, and no one else can help.

A disembodied voice enters the room. “What happened? I'm dead for a couple of months, and all hell breaks loose?”

A man in tattered clothes enters from the stairwell, eyes shining blue. “Stiles took a HUGE gamble with me,” he said slowly stepping in. “And though I loathe an uncalculated risk, I knew I liked him for a reason.”

In walks Peter Hale, former crazed Alpha in the flesh.

Before any complaints began, he runs in and brandishes a plastic bag filled with a white powder. His gloved hand grabs a handful and flings it at the face of the creature battling Scott. The reptilian beast covers its eyes and starts to sizzle and pop.

Peter dumps the rest of the contents on the creature impaling the bleeding teen witch. Jackson's
Kanima screeches in pain. Unable to move with its broken knees, it continues to brandish its tail blindly.

“Go help Scott!,” Peter screams. “I got this one!” The once-dead wolf starts to partially shift and combat the creature. He slashes and stabs the disabled creature while Allison and Chris Argent follow the battle to Scott.

Victoria Argent, seeing her chance, discards her heels and runs toward Erica and Boyd and gives them a hard slap. “I may detest wolves with a passion. But, I know you children are strong enough to help your damned friends. Now, help them or I swear to God I will torture you with the pain of all eternal pain.”

Erica grabs her cheek in shock at the slap. Boyd just looks away still afraid.

Victoria grabs the two teens by their chins. “LOOK AT HIM!,” Victoria screams, pointing their faces at Isaac Lahey. She was uncharacteristically out of breath and out of cool. “That is your friend, scared for his life, unable to do a GODDAMN THING!”

Not missing a beat, Isaac screams at them, “Please help me!” He was heaving and huffing unable to break free.

Erica looks to Boyd, and he looks at her. They nod in unison. “For Isaac,” Boyd answers. “Y-yeah, the dolt owes me lunch a-anyway,” Erica stammers, trying to act brave.

Erica stands up and cartwheels into a drop heel kick into the skirmish. Boyd runs to gain momentum and tackles the creature into the wall while the creature is dazed. Scott takes this moment to punch the creatures face into the wall. Cracks start to form in the concrete. Erica steps on the creature's tail to immobilize the dangerous appendage.

(Erica wanted to say something snarky or witty. But, she was fighting down the bile that was threatening to empty onto the floor.)

Chris and Allison run back to Peter's battle only to find the creature knocked out on his knees, a claw still impaling Stiles Stilinski.

“Get that thing off of him!,” Allison screams at Peter. “I can't,” Peter replies. “The thing got me too.”

Small cuts are seen all over Peter's arms. He slumps to his side. “Ow.” The Kanima's paralytic venom has finally taken effect.

That small second of silence was stolen away by the screams of the two teens still connected. “NOOO!”

“It's too late!”

The flame reaches Lydia Martin and Isaac Lahey.

Blood starts to trickle out of Isaac Lahey. Bruises start to form on his face, neck and arms. A scratch from claws start to form on his cheek. Groans start to erupt into screams. His head whips left and right, beating the life out of his poor form.

And Lydia- she was silent. Quiet. Staring into oblivion. For seconds nothing happened.
Allison covers her mouth in fear. They don't know what else to do. Stiles was starting to pale. All his
blood must be leaving his body. The shadow creatures are still here, and they were at a magical
impasse. No one else knows how to end this connection.
No one, except Victoria Argent.
She walks closer to Stiles Stilinski, and once again brandishes her magically charged pistol.
“Mom, no!,” Allison screams.
“STILES!,” Scott pleads.
“You all know there's nothing else we can do,” she answers.
“I'm sorry, Mr Stilinski,” she says to no one. She aims.
“*gasp* iiiiiiaaaaaaaaAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAHHHHHHHHH!!”
Everyone drops everything and covers their ears. The Shadow Kanima fall to the floor and start to
bubble and evaporate into black flecks of ash. The blood red curse slowly lifts from the purple
flames. And soon, the creatures are gone; Stiles, Danny, and Isaac stop screaming.
The only sound left was the supernatural scream of Lydia Martin.
Seconds later, the purple aura flickers out of the connection. The scream ends and Lydia comes to,
pale and shaken.
The others uncover their ears and look at her. She looks to the room confused. The four other
connected come to and look to the room confused as well.
And barely another moment later, all of their eyes roll up into their skulls and they fall to the floor,
passed out or possibly dead.
The magic circle of flame disappears, as well as the cage of mountain ash. Jackson and Matt start to
cough and groan awake. They wake in a puddle of Stiles and Derek's blood, pale and ragged.
Jackson see Lydia and Danny on the floor, and start to crawl toward them. “Danny! Lydia!,” his
arms slip out from underneath him. They feel like jelly.
Matt tries to crawl towards Isaac, but his arms were the same. Soon they pass out as well.
The Argents, Erica, Boyd and Scott all see their friends (and Peter Hale) in a pile of pale faces and
blood.
And they wonder- what just happened? What will happen next?

Chapter End Notes

Epilogue coming up, then the next arc: The Arthur Archives. I hope you're excited for
this next Arc. I know I am.
Though if anyone can gimme a 5 sentence summary of everything Camelot related,
that'll be awesome. I'm too lazy for Wiki-research. And I can't watch a whole series by
the time I start my next arc.
Comments are love.


Chapter Summary

The battle to save Jackson Whittemore and Matt Daehler ended a bloody mess. The darkness of their hearts attacked the healing connection and caused pain and damage to the 5 tributes. When all hope is lost, an unlikely ally, Peter Hale, joins the fray to help the crew. Victoria Argent rallied Erica and Boyd to help the battle as well. But, when all their efforts seem to still fail, Victoria was prepared to pay the ultimate price. In the end, what saved them all was an unearthly scream from Lydia Martin. Now with 7 passed out, one paralyzed and recently-deceased, and a pool of blood to clean up, the year is just beginning for the wolf pack of Beacon Hills.

T/W: Descriptions of Blood and medical mumbo jumbo. aside from that... none i think.

Chapter Notes

Sorry this took a long while! Epilogues are surprisingly difficult to write.

Is there anyone willing to give me the shortest summary possible for Arthur and his Knights? I don't have the mind capacity to watch any series or read all the books. And I'd prefer a review from a person, than from Wikipedia :-p

I think it's better for a wannabe writer to talk with his audience anyways.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

JANUARY 1, DEATON'S VETERINARY CLINIC, 1 HOUR LATER.

Tires screech to a stop outside.
Sheriff Stilinski runs inside, fuming. “What the hell is going on?!? Where is my son?!”
Scott McCall stands up from his seat, tired and ragged. “Sheriff! Is Mom with you?”

“I'm right here, honey,” she walks in pulling on the last of her scrubs. Alan Deaton walks in from the back rooms, to meet the arrivals. Melissa McCall looks to Deaton. “Where do you need me?”

“I need you to run an IV into Isaac Lahey, and two bags into Derek Hale,” he answers immediately and quite monotonic. “Scott, if you can, I need you to warm up some towels, and prep some sutures for Mr Stilinski.”

“My SON?!,” Sheriff Stilinski speaks up. “What happened to them?!”

“Sheriff, I understand you are worried,” Deaton replies. “But we are strapped for time, and I believe that the Argents will have more time to fill you in. Though, do keep your blood pressure down if possible. Stiles will kill us by the time he comes back, if you develop a coronary. Now, if you'll
Allison Argent takes this short pause to walk up to Sheriff Stilinski and asks permission for a hug. The sheriff reluctantly accepts, still worried to the bone. When all was said and done, Sheriff Stilinski was 13 shades of red and pacing like a madman. He felt quite thirsty for a bottle of whiskey. The new year just started, and resolutions were already damned to hell.

Twenty minutes run by, and Scott walks back into the room. Everyone sits at attention, shaken from their thoughts.

“Everyone is still out like a light, except Peter,” Scott starts.

“Danny and Lydia are okay. Their vocal chords are shot, and they'll have to be silent for the next couple of days. They'll have to be on a strictly liquid diet.

Jackson and Matt look normal. Vitals are okay, too. They... … they smell different and I don't know what that means,” Scott sighs deeply.

“Peter is still paralyzed from the waist down. He borrowed Derek’s phone and is browsing the internet I think. It's creeping me out.

And Isaac is healing fine. The IV is just there to rehydrate or something.” he offers a smile at that.

Then his face crumples softly. “Then there's Derek... He needs a couple bags of blood. Blood Type O, preferably werewolf. I...

… I can't do it. Blood Type A. And Peter can't. Kanima venom still in there. It's gonna be more hurt than help. So, Dr Deaton asked me to ask you all.”

Absorbing that much information took a hot minute. They look to each other, seeing who would step up.

“I'll do it,” Boyd answers. “I froze up. That was wrong. I'll help if I can.” He stands up and starts to walk to the back room.

“And Stiles?,” the Sheriff asks, before the two can leave the room.

Scott winces hard at that question. He can't seem to find the words. Assuming the worst, Allison starts to cry and the Sheriff... he's not far from joining her.

“S-Stiles, he...

It's not looking good. He needs a lot more blood: at least 12 bags worth. Deaton said he should be dead or comatose right now. But, he thinks his hoodie is saving him. It's been vibrating this whole time. I-I swear it hissed at me the first time I reached to take it off of him....,” Scott provides.

The young teen clenches his fist in anger.

“Deaton says the blood has to be human,” he continues. “But, he won't take it all from one person.”

Erica, who was at the edge of her seat, starts to find the outside field more interesting at that point. Or perhaps, she just couldn't hold it to herself to take the fact that she can't help Stiles.
The fear in the room was palpable. And hard to swallow.

“How about Lydia and Danny? Or Matt and Jackson?,” Allison asks. “Can they give blood?”

Scott shakes his head no. “I asked that and Deaton said no. After I told him about what happened, he believes that whatever those four are, they definitely are not human.”

“So that leaves the four of us,” Victoria Argent answered. “My family and the Sheriff.” Everyone looks to her. With a metaphorical snap of her fingers, she commanded the room's attention.

Scott slowly nods yes.
Allison looks pleadingly to her mom immediately.

The Sheriff stands up at that news, “Whatever it takes. Bring me in now.”

“Deaton only feels comfortable taking up to 3 bags worth from anybody,” Scott answers, looking back to the Argents. “Any more, and most humans can go into shock.”

“So you really need all of us,” Victoria answers back.

The sheriff takes this moment to talk to them. “Please, he's my son! I'm not above to begging if it can save his life so please-”

Victoria raises a hand to stop the babbling. She looks to Chris. And as masterful as they were, they immediately have a full conversation entirely in stares. In the end, they stand up and start to walk toward the door.

“Please wait!,” the Sheriff pleads.
“Mom?! Dad?! No!,” Allison screams.

They reach the door and Erica blocks their way. “Where are you going?,” she asks. Traces of tears were in her eyes.

Victoria sighs and faces the room once more. “We have a stockpile of our blood in our basement. Tested, cleaned, and primed for infusions. Exactly 12 bags worth,” she explains. “We lead a dangerous lifestyle as hunters. And, things can get serious. So, if you please, give us 15 minutes, and we'll have the blood for you.”

Erica breathes deeply before stepping aside. The Argents give everyone a stern look as they depart the office. Allison stays behind to console the Sheriff, whose knees were shaking violently. His last hope was almost walking out the door, to be gone forever. It was a hard barrage to the widower's nerves.

Boyd, still in the room, couldn't help but sigh. “You better bring me in, Scott. And if you get the chance, make some tea and coffee. It's gonna be a long morning.”

Fast forward a few hours later, Peter is fully recovered and somewhat ignored by the waiting group. Uneasy with his presence (and he with their attentiveness), they ignore his announcement of leaving the building.

Jackson, Danny, and Lydia wake up at roughly the same time. Their heads are throbbing, can barely move. They lie in their stretchers and look to each other in silence. Apparently, debriefing will wait for another day.
Isaac wakes up next. He runs and dry heaves into a bucket. Scott was in the room to calm him down. Isaac starts scanning the room while latched onto Scott's arm for balance.

“We're in Deaton's,” Scott answers the unasked questions. “We're okay. Everyone's okay.”

“Di-,” Isaac breaks into a hacking cough.

Scott rubs his back and sits him back on his stretcher. He grabs a glass of water. “Your throat is still healing?,” he asks the curly haired teen.

Isaac nods yes in reply, downing the glass.

“You... you were asking about Derek?,” Scott tries.

Isaac shakes his head no.

“Stiles?”

Still a no.

“You were asking about Matt.”

Isaac visibly sighs.

Scott looks to the other room, likely where Matt is resting.

“We th-

...His vitals are normal. Heart rate steady, breathing and all that. He did take a lot of tranquilizer, enough to knock out a Kanima, so he might be out for a while longer...,” Scott muses.

Isaac shivers. The hospital gown Melissa McCall brought him doesn't protect much from the cold of the office. Normally werewolves run hot, but his energy is spent healing.

Scott offers him a blanket, and excuses himself to get a change of clothes. Two minutes and he is back. “I work here and pets can get messy. So I leave a few changes of clothes around. Hope they fit.”

They were half a size too large, but it will do.

Isaac motions button mashing in the air.

“Your phone?,” Scott asks. Isaac nods yes.

He receives the device, safe in its case. He starts typing madly and points the screen to Scott.

“Is he human?

Where are Erica and Boyd?

Where's my brother's medal?”

Scott answers that they don't know if Matt's human. He smells different, and that is all he can offer. He catches him up on Erica and Boyd, and asks if Isaac would like to see them.

Isaac types. “Not now. Maybe in a minute.”

To answer Isaac's last question, Scott goes to the table and picks up the folded flag. On it, the shiny emblem lies waiting, without the ribbon to pin it by.

“The actual ribbon part was covered in purple goop and some blood. It's in the washing machine along with everyone's clothes,” Scott explains. He flips the emblem over. “There were small scratches along the words on the back, but everything is still readable. Guess whatever changed Matt
and Jackson had to change this medal too.”

Isaac takes the flag and emblem and clutches it tightly. With his other hand he starts typing.
“Can I have a minute to myself?
...And maybe some water when you get back?”

Scott smiles. “Sure, I'll be back in about 15 minutes. With some breakfast too.”

Isaac lies back down and hugs the flag tight. It smells like home and safety. It anchors him to his past, and pushes him forward to the future. Moments later, he falls back to sleep.

In the next room, Matt wakes up from his slumber. His head was swimming, body sore. He felt like he'd been a human punching bag.
Then, last night's events came flooding in.
Then, last month's memories followed through.

A deluge of flashbacks haunted him and he grabbed his head in pain and agony. He wanted to die right then and there. And he still does.

“You're here and I'm here,” a voice says. It echoes in his mind loudly, deafeningly. Matt starts to remember... something.

FLASHBACK STARTS

“You're here and I'm here.
Sometimes that's all that matters, y'know?,” a little blond haired boy says, with a Lacrosse stick in his hand.

“But I wanted everyone to try it with us!,” another familiar voice whines.

“It's just practice anyway. Then, when we get older, we can be first line together!,” the curly haired boy promises.

“I'd rather play a video game now,” the other voice whines.

“We'll play after, okay? This will be fun!”

“With just the two of us?”

“With just the two of us! You and me, best friends forever! The bestest!,” the boy shouts with smiles aplenty. The boy runs into the field with his lacrosse stick.

Matt's cheek warms with a blush, as he tries to run after the boy.

FLASHBACK ENDS

“You always liked him,” another older voice enters his head.

“What?,” Matt thinks.

“I said, you always liked him, Matt,” the familiar voice repeats.

“Stilinski?”
“Yeah, it's me,” the voice replied.

“...Did you show me that?,” Matt thinks after a pause.

“No. You showed that to me.”

“Are... are we dead? Are you like my spiritual guide or something?”

Matt hears Stiles chuckle. “I'm, you can say, in between at the moment. Residual magic and hocus pocus stuff. Not important.”

“Then, why are you in my head?,” Matt asks.

“Ah, the moment where I get my Rafiki on... ...Can you tell me what we just saw?”

“It was two kids playing lacrosse. The blonde kid was getting annoyingly cheery.”

“Did you ever see the second kid?,” Stiles asks.

“...No.”

“I- I think the second kid was you, Matt.”

“What?”

There was silence in Matt's head. Clearly, Stiles was thinking.

“Last night, we tried to save both you and Jackson. It's a lot to process and your mind will be playing catch up with all the info I downloaded into your brains.

To do that, Lydia and Danny had to make a connection with Jackson. And Isaac, he chose to connect with you.”

“Me?,” Matt's cheeks start to blush. “Why me?”

“Because you two were connected from the start,” Stiles answers. “That memory, I believe was from that same day-

-that was what happened the morning you drowned. You were fighting feelings for Isaac, the moment he promised you'd be together forever. Then, he promised you'd play video games after. You spent every waking moment up until then realizing you fell for him.”

“What? No?!“

“Tsk tsk tsk. Can't lie to a voice in your head, Matt. I felt what you felt. It was the strongest love I've felt in years.”

Matt blushes once again. His body was sore. He couldn't move away from this awkwardness.

“No one will judge you,” Stiles answers.

A pause for dramatic silence.

“Most everyone in our group ranks high up in the Kinsey scale, believe me,” Stiles continues to encourage. “You're safe. You're better than safe actually.”
“What do you mean?,” Matt asks.

“I’ll let you find out by yourself. That’s the fun part, believe me.”

Matt sighs internally. “What’s next?”

“Talk to Isaac.

*You two made a connection last night. Memories might be shared, memories that were hidden. Uncharted territory here, man. You’ll know things about one another that defy words. How you act on those is up to you.*”

With that statement, Matt remembers screaming. The Coach was punching his face. Next, he was patching up the bruises on his arms. He winces when the next thing he remembers were cuts on his hands when he was picking up broken glass. He was hyperventilating, trapped and screaming in a box.

He shakes himself from that memory. But it wasn't his. “I remember.”

“Yes. Yes, you do,” you could hear Stiles smile. “And you'll heal...

...Because you're here, I'm here, and Isaac's here. And sometimes, that's all that really matters.”

Stiles is midway into his ninth transfusion of twelve, when a loud roar is heard through the office. Derek Hale has woken up, and in a blind rage out of confusion.

*Where was he? It smells like blood! How will he get out of here?*

Crashes and clangs were heard as Scott and Boyd tried and failed to calm him down. Everyone able was rushing trying to suppress him, when a red blur zips past them all and grabs the alpha's face. He hums a soft tune and caresses his cheek and seconds later, the red boils away from his eyes.

Stiles has soothed the savage beast.

Even in the midst of his own healing, he came back just to save the day.

As Derek comes to, Stiles' knees give way. Derek catches the teen, and notices what had happened: Scott and Boyd try to pick themselves up off the floor. The Argents have guns trained on him, head-on. Medical equipment were strewn against the floor.

And Stiles- he had a line of blood bleeding onto the floor, mid-transfusion. Derek apologizes for the mess. But, it falls on deaf ears as Stiles passes out once more. And just like that, the tenth transfusion is about to begin.

Stiles was out for another 18 hours.

Deaton said it was normal, since he did use up an exorbitant amount of magic and life force.

The Argents excused themselves some time in between. It was a long day, and the were still in torn dress clothes.

Erica and Boyd left as well, since they had families that would worry.

Jackson left with Lydia and Danny; they have some things to discuss, in private of course.

Isaac asked Derek if Matt can sleep over at their loft. Derek agreed since someone had to keep an
eye on Matt. Derek lent Isaac the keys to Stiles' jeep. (What? You thought Derek would let Isaac use
the Camaro? Are you crazy?!)  

Melissa desperately needed sleep, coming from basically a triple shift. Scott offered to drive her
home safely. Melissa dragged the Sheriff out of the office, saying that he needs his rest, too. He’ll
need it for the recovery stage later on. The Sheriff begrudgingly agrees and heads home.

And so, when Stiles finally woke up, he was all alone with Derek. Stiles just smiles groggily as he
breathes deep. “So many things I get tired of... I'll probably never get tired of waking up to you, like
this,” the teen exclaims to no one.

Derek raises an eyebrow at his remark.

“Way over your head,” Stiles brushes it off. “It'll make sense soon.” Stiles tries to sit up slowly.
“Hey, can you drop me off at home? I think I need a few more hours of sleep on an actual comfy
bed.”

Derek complies, because what can you do? It was Stiles.

The start of the drive was quiet; Stiles' face was pressed against the passenger window. The trees
were jittery thanks to a light breeze from the new year.

In an unusual gesture, Derek was the one to break the silence. “You said you talked to Laura and
Cora.”

Stiles mumbled a yes. “It's part of our first big adventure of the year. We should probably start
preparing in a week or so. We leave Spring Break. Because, you know, school n' stuff.”

“Hmmm. Okay,” Derek agrees. He's been trusting him since the start of the year. Why stop now?
Derek sneaks a look at Stiles. He's playing with his zipper to an unknown rhythm. A small smile
forms on the teen's lips as he starts to hum along.

Stiles looks to Derek and catches the driver looking him over. “Gotcha.”

Derek snaps back to watching the road. His cheeks start to warm up in a blush.

Stiles grabs Derek's right hand, the one firmly grasping the stick shift. “Hey Derek?,” he asks.

“Hmm?,” replies Derek.

“I know you're free on Tuesday evening. Want to grab dinner or something?,” Stiles asks with a
smile.

Derek gulps at the question. “Dinner?”

“Or something,” Stiles replies with a grin.

Derek feels his ears burning. He clears his throat before saying “S-sure.” He pulls up the Stilinski
driveway.

“Here we are,” Derek says. “Do you need help getting to your room?”

“No, I'll be fine.” Stiles says. “See you Tuesday, after your run?”

“See you Tuesday,” Derek confirms.
“It's a date,” Stiles replies, closing the door.

Chapter End Notes

A/N Yay! Sterek and Matt/Isaac finally gets somewhere!

I really am sorry this took a while. So many details. My longest chapter to date, methinks.

Comments (and grammar corrections) are love!
Nightmare Flashbacks 1: I Wanted To, But It Was Too Late

Chapter Summary

Sixteen years is a long time filled with memories of good and bad. And some of those memories haunt Stiles of Year 17. This is one of those nightmares.

T/W: Murder. By Gun/Knife.

Chapter Notes

Filler Chapter to gimme a break from the main storyline. Quick chapter. Sorry for the typos.

It's March of Year 17. School is tiring Stiles out. Learning the same lessons again and again is so frustratingly boring. Plus, the confrontation from the prior night has left him restless.

The keepers of the Arthur Archive always creeped him out. They were so close-minded and vigilant, so strict and confined.

And, Stiles was jealous of them. Because, Stiles remembers how it feels like- to have a defining purpose, to have your thoughts chosen for you. He remembers being confined to a suit and trained to kill for a cause. The rush of power he had floods him with pleasure, then makes his stomach squirm with guilt. The sights he had seen, the things he had done, the wrongs he had committed haunt him. And soon, his restless dreams start to fill and drown him with memories of Year 2.

FLASHBACK BEGINS

It was September 22nd. Stiles Stilinski had his earpiece in, and shades on. He was dressed to kill in his navy suit, black tie, and dress shoes. He has an assault rifle in hand and two handgun holsters in his jacket. And as equipped as he was, he was well brisk in his pursuit of his target through the woods.

“Target is headed east, 2 clicks from my position. Trigger the sonar pings in 4 seconds,” he orders.

“Copy that,” a man answers.

Stiles still runs in pursuit, the constraining clothes not bothering him one bit. Three seconds later, a loud grunt is heard and a body thuds a few feet ahead of him.

A teen writhes in pain on the ground, hands covering his ears. The young man was trying to use his elbows to stand back up to no avail.
Stiles walks up to the captive, pulls out a tazer, and shoots the target. As the teen is stunned, Stiles cuffs one ankle and shoves the other end through a spike he pierces into the ground. Stiles clicks a button and the sonar ping ends. The man stands up, and faces his pursuer.

“Stiles, please don’t do this,” the prey immediately huffs out.

“Just tell me where to find him, and I promise you'll die quickly and painlessly,” Stiles threatens.

“No, please Stiles. I can't let you find out where he is. I know what you'll do, and I can't let that happen.”

“There's no stopping me and you know it. If you remember, I can get pretty stubborn.” Stiles pauses and cocks his handgun, loaded with a silver bullet. “Now, tell me if you will be useful to me or not.”

“Stiles, please don't do this. Do you even remember me? What will your dad think? Just stop this. Please, it's not too late,” the teen pleads to deaf ears.

“Still no answer?,” Stiles lifts his gun to aim. The teen raises his arms in surrender.

“Stiles, people will look for me. I-I-I mean you can't have a trail now, can you? Just please, Stiles, let me g-”

*BLAM*

The teen’s body slumps to the floor, a bullet hole clean in the middle of the forehead. Stiles takes out a knife and removes the bullet with a silver tipped knife. As the hole begins to heal, Stiles removes the cuffs and slashes three parallel cuts along the neck and three more to the torso. The teen bleeds out to signs of an animal attack.

Stiles takes out a handkerchief and wipes the knife. “The target was eliminated and held no information,” he reports in. “Moving to next target. Stilinski, out.”

Stiles starts to walk away and apologizes to no one in particular.

“I'm sorry, Scott. I wanted to stop, but it was too late. You were already in my way.”

Stiles wakes up with a scream. He wipes his face in frustration and tries not to cry.

Year 2 was the worst. He hated Year 2 the most. He wishes he can forget, but he can't.

Heart pounding and unable to go back to sleep, Stiles sits up and gets back to research. Two hours of restless sleep is all he's getting tonight he guesses. Maybe baking brownies will make him feel better. He'll be extra nice to Scott today at school. His brownie portion will be larger than others that's for sure. Scott will never know and will never forgive him. And, maybe this is all Stiles can do to forgive himself.

Stiles lies to himself as he mixing the brownie batter. A few tears fall in the mixture and Stiles has to stop for a small panic attack.

The sun breaks in the distance, and he has Chemistry in 3 hours.
Chapter Summary

Three days into the new year, Stiles Stilinski has just recovered from the first ordeal of the new year. Having done what was not possible for 16 years of his life, he has hope for this brand new same old year. And with this new hope, he vanished without a trace, with a few notes left behind.
And the other teens of Beacon Hills, well...
They're preparing for a brand new semester of school.

T/W: none that I can find. Maybe loss of phone for us technology dependents.

Chapter Notes

A/N More pairings added and updated. Ugh. This story is getting more convoluted than I can handle.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

SILVER GYM, EASTERN BEACON HILLS, 6:45 AM

The gym was empty save for one sole occupant. This blonde teen's grunts can be heard echoing against the walls as he pushes himself harder and harder. His clothes were drenched with sweat, probably been there for 2 hours. He was benching 350, something that should not possible for his frame. On his twelfth set of 15, he plans to go for one more set before racking the weights.

In this moment of recovery, a Hawaiian teen walks in the door, red duffel bag under his arm. He glares at the not-so-exhausted teen. “You look like you've been here for hours,” he accuses harshly.

“I've only been here one hour, Danny,” the teen replies, restarting his set.

Danny Mahealani sighs, and pulls out his phone. A few taps later, he calls out the lie. “You've been here exactly 1 hour and 48 minutes according to your GPS. You can't keep lying to me, Jackson.”

The offender sighs in reply. “I'm sorry. Old habits die hard, you know.”

Danny strides toward Jackson, as the latter racks up his discarded weights. Danny grabs Jackson's hand with his left, and uses his right to turn Jackson's face toward him. He leans in close and stares him right in the eye.

“You don't have to do this alone.
EVER,” Danny emphasized.

Jackson tries to look away again, hiding a light blush. Danny pull Jackson back for a quick brusque kiss. And as ephemeral and electric as that moment was, Danny lets him go to do his own sets of exercises for the day.
Jackson readjusts and continues, not used to the intimacy and the vulnerability he now shares with his best friend. He grabs some dumbbells and starts a marathon of tricep extensions.

Minutes pass by before they resume their stunted conversation.
“Are you gonna tell me why you're here so early?,” Danny asks, finishing his rounds at the weight machines.

“I have so much pent-up energy, it's ridiculous,” Jackson huffs out.

“Is it because of the change?,” Danny inquires, starting some dynamic stretches.
The silence itself drags out the no.

“So, it's about this afternoon,” Danny answers for himself.

After a moment, Jackson reluctantly and minutely nods yes.

“Do you still want to go through with this?”

“Yes.... No. I don't know,” Jackson hesitates. He lowers himself down from his handstand pushups and grabs a towel to wipe the sweat. Two hundred of those in, and he's barely out of breath.

“... I can call Lydia and we can cancel,” Danny starts. “It's not too late to-”

“No! I-it's okay,” Jackson interrupts.
“I need to do this. I-
- I think I need to face this now, y'know?

But when I do, it's gonna be too real. Or unreal...”

Jackson drags out that thought with his own stretches. He uses the wall to stretch his hamstrings vertically, some thing he couldn't do the year before. Danny hides his smirk at the teens growth of flexibility.

“I think,” Jackson continues. “I think I should bring something. Or leave something,” he says to himself, mostly.

“Okay, I'll pick up some flowers on the way,” Danny answers as he packs up his things.

Jackson pulls out his phone and stares at the screen, vibrating at a reminder of an event.

At the door, Danny offers him one last glance. “It's too late for cold feet, I guess. It's time to meet your parents, Jacks. Your mom and dad won't mind.”

Door ajar, Danny just stares at Jackson wanting once again to be able to read minds. Resigned to moral support, he offers a quite “see you later” as a slight ring of a bell signals the gym door closing.

It's 8:45 am, and Jackson is staring at the phone screen. Some of his sweat is hiding one tear. “Yeah, I guess it's time.” He puts away his phone, and puts on some boxing tape. He has some energy to spend and a boxing bag to spend it on.

JANUARY 10, 7 DAYS AFTER STILES HAS HEALED
STILINSKI HOUSEHOLD

There's a knock on the door before the unknown guest just lets himself in.
“Sheriff? It's Scott! I brought some muffins to share!,” the teen announces.
“Scott?,” the Sheriff replies from the kitchen. He's halfway through a beer bottle, which he tries to hide.

“You don't have to hide that from me,” Scott points out. “Anyway, I can smell it a mile away. Plus, I can keep a secret from Stiles.”

The Sheriff just massages a headache away from his temple. It's the first alcohol he's touched since the Christmas. He was hoping no one would catch him. But with Stiles missing again, New Year's Resolutions be damned. “Have you heard from my son?,” he asks Scott.

“I got a text less than an hour ago saying he's on the way back, and he had some 'I'm Sorry' muffins delivered,” Scott answers.

“I got the same text you did. Any idea where he went?”

“Just as clueless as you are, sir. No offense.”

Sheriff Stilinski just answers with a swig of his beer and grabbing one of the muffins off the tray. He walks over to the kitchen window and knocks on it. “Come on down here and have some,” he shouts to nowhere in particular.

A hulking mass lands on the back porch. He enters the back door easily and greets the sheriff.

“Boyd?,” Scott asks, in surprise. “What are you doing here?”

Since the teen was mid chew, the sheriff answers for him. “He's on guard duty, I guess. Someone's been here every day since Stiles left. I keep inviting them in at night, since it can get cold out, but they insist on staying out. Only Mr. Boyd here has the common decency to use the back roof to keep watch, and he would come in once a while to chat. Mrs. Bernstein across the street once saw one of the other three hanging out on the roof like some vagrant. I had to convince her she was seeing things.”

“What he said,” Boyd confirms after he swallows. He reaches for the only pumpkin spice muffin to find a note underneath the wrapper. It says,

*I'm sorry I shot you in the shoulder. I'll make it up to you over the year. Will bake a fresh homemade batch when I get back. Please forgive me. - S.S.*

Boyd smirks and places it on the kitchen counter so the other two can read it, while he asks the Sheriff if he can have a soda.

“In the chiller, behind the cheese,” the Sheriff answers.

And as soon as Boyd grabs the drink, he excuses himself and returns back to his porch.

Scott just has a goofy look at this exchange. He shrugs it off to continue talking to the Sheriff. “Keep watch?”

“I really don't know if they're guarding me, or just waiting for Stiles to get back. I've been weirdly calm about not hearing from my son for over 4 days. Probably some sort of spell for all I know. Remind me to ground him for placing one on me, okay Scott?”

Scott grins, “Sure.”

The sheriff finishes his drink and muffin. He mulls over eating one more muffin. He really isn't in a hungry mood. He sighs and asks Scott if he can ask him some questions. Scott, with his mouth full, has a deer-in-headlights look as he reluctantly agrees.
“How long since-
since this whole mess started?,” the Sheriff asks.

Scott, feeling kinda sorry about the whole half-truth situation, decides to answer as much as he can.
“Right before Fall semester started. I was bitten the day you caught Stiles in the Hale preserve.
Everything just went downhill from there.”

“How,” the Sheriff was staring at his hands.

At a loss of words, Scott tries to catch himself. “It wasn't all bad! I mean, there were close calls here
and there, and I'm not gonna lie- it seems like we were in dicey situations every week. But me and
Stiles, I dunno...
...I feel like I got out of this stronger than expected. Stronger than if it didn't happen.”

The sheriff stands up and heads to the fridge. He reaches out for his second and last bottle of chilled
beer. He stops and grabs for a bottle of water instead. “I kind of understand that feeling- the stronger
thing you mentioned,” the Sheriff answers. “The things you kids are going through, the choices
you've had to make- These were supposed to be saved for adults. And it makes me feel like a bad
father for not being able to protect both of you from these decisions.”

“No, Mr Stilinski, you really shouldn't-,” Scott starts.

“No, Scott. I know I couldn't protect you from those. Because, both of you are growing up. And I
can never stop that. These adult choices- you kids have learned to face them head on. But, as a
parent, I feel like I failed. I know I didn't, because parenthood is not all black and white, but it still
doesn't stop me from feeling like I failed this town, and failed you kids.”

“Geez, Dad. It's not all on you, y'know.”

Scott and the Sheriff jumped from the voice. Stiles was leaning against the kitchen counter. He had a
busted lip, a black eye, and a few scratches along his cheek. He bites into the last muffin, enjoying it
like it was heaven in baked good form.

“JESUS! Stiles!,” the Sheriff yells, clutching his chest. “Where'de hell did you come from?”

“From the fern on the window sill,” Stiles answers, walking to the fridge. “Long story. I'll catch
everyone up after dinner. Ooooh beer!,” he exclaims, grabbing the last bottle.

“Uh no,” the Sheriff stops him. “You know my rules about underage drinking.”

“Come on, Dad. I'm 32 years old internally. We could be golf buddies if you played golf! I've been
legal for a while now, if time would let me,” Stiles negotiates.

“Still no,” the Sheriff insists, grabbing the bottle and placing it back in the fridge.

“Fine. See if I give you tomorrow's lottery numbers,” Stiles pouts, deciding to grab a not-so-hidden
soda instead.

“I don't care about the damn lottery; I want to know where the hell you've been,” his dad replies.

“Can I just show everyone after dinner? Please? I'm starving. Like I could literally pass out starving.”

This is when Boyd decides to land on the back porch and walk in. “I could go for pizza,” he says.

“Excellent! Pizza it is! Let's go!,” Stiles tugs on the Sheriff's arm towards the garage.
Scott, still quite shocked, finally notices when everyone has left the kitchen. “Wait for me!”

ONE HOUR LATER, BEACON HILLS HIGH SCHOOL, HALE VAULT

“Who knew there was a secret entrance to a hidden vault in our school basement? How freaking cool is that?,” Danny exclaimed, entering the vault. He was with Lydia and Jackson, all dressed up nice. Their shoes were tracking some mud from the cemetery.

The familiar room is not so creepy now. It should be sweltering hot, being late afternoon under the asphalt of the school parking lot. But, a cool feeling is surrounding them all. Danny has learned not to question things anymore.

The Hale pack was already there in one corner. Matt was with them, sticking out without a leather jacket of his own. He was slouching and staring at his camera, trying to detach himself from the room. Isaac was next to him, watching the boy play with the device settings.

The Argents were near the back, both on their phones screaming and barking orders left and right.

The Sheriff was talking with Melissa McCall and Dr Deaton in another corner of the room. An arm's reach away, Peter Hale was grinning and staring at the room, like a wild cat eyeing its prey.

Scott and Allison see Danny's group walk in, and approach them immediately.

“Finally! Somewhat friendlier faces,” Allison exclaims.

“Stiles has another show for us,” Scott adds. “I have popcorn and some sodas set aside. Stiles thought it was hilarious.”

“Yeah, I did.” Stiles confirms, right behind the three. They all jump in shock, and Stiles is grinning ear to ear. His red hoodie was tied on his waist. He was still banged up visibly, but it could not bring down his mood.

Sensing the mood, he acts more solemn and apologizes. “Sorry to interrupt the reunion. I would've understood a no-show. I could've caught you up another day.”

“It's okay, Stilinski,” Jackson answers, looking away. “I needed to get out of there any way.”

“Don't listen to him, Stiles,” Danny interrupts. “He was glad we went there, but he's also excited to see the vision thing. I told him words were not enough to describe it. He wanted to see it for himself.”

“So, you better make it a good show, Bilinski,” Jackson balks, heading over to the popcorn.

Lydia clears her throat. “Do you need to hold our hands again? I'm afraid an oak bracelet would clash with this ensemble.”

“No, I think I can handle it this time, Lydia. Thanks for asking,” Stiles answers.

It's at this point that Stiles claps loudly and calls for story time. This grabs everyone's attention. The little conversations end and everyone comes closer to the center.

“So! First of all, thank you guys for coming short notice. Great job so far this year! No one dead from our lot, and new lives spared. Can we get a round of applause for us?,” Stiles exclaims clapping loudly.

No one else claps at his impression of a motivational speaker. There were some snickers here and

To the parents in the room, the supernatural kiddies and I will be flying either to the lovely mountains of Colorado, or to Europe, on Spring Break. As for the teens, if your parents are not here, make up an excuse to your parents, because we all need to go. I'll fill you in with the details later.

Also, some time in February, all of us are going to LA for something, all expense paid. Boyd, I can get you some babysitters for that weekend. Erica, your dad will be highly against this, so start buttering him up now. Any questions so far?”

A short silence lingered, soon followed by a slew of questions and objections left and right.

“Who's paying for all that?”
“Will there be snowboarding? I need to learn ASAP.”
“Why would we let them go on a trip like this on such short notice?”

Stiles raises his hands in surrender until all the questions stopped.

“Does Stiles talking always end in chaos?,” Matt asks Isaac.
“Yeah, pretty much. You end up with more questions than answers half the time,” Isaac answers.

“Geez. Okay, uhm in order,” Stiles tries to answer.
“I guess
1. Derek and Peter's paying for it.
2. We need to do this. Life and Death yada yada.
3. Yeah, we'll be using snowboards and snowmobiles if we end up in Colorado.
And number 4. Again Life and Death yada yada. And please please please please let us go. Pretty please?

That answer everything so far? Can I move on to what happened this week? Please?,” Stiles pleads.

“Why are Peter and I paying for these trips?,” Derek asks.

“Because both of you are loaded, and you know it,” Stiles answers. “Plus, it's how we'll see Laura and Cora.” Derek perks up hearing those two names.

“Now, back to story time,” Stiles continues. He draws out a dagger from his left boot and awkwardly carves a triskelion on the floor. “Derek, Peter, you will feel a little tingly. No harm will come to you I promise,” Stiles announces.

Stiles takes out his phone and places it in the palm of his left hand. He stretches his arms in front of him, hip width and height, and breathes deep. As he exhales, a wind picks up in the room. The hanging lights start to flicker in and out.

The sigil on the floor crackles and pops. A spark flies out from its center. Another follows. Fireworks start to erupt from the floor and whiz everywhere.

The flashing lights bounce and spark and multiply.
Tens, no dozens- soon hundreds of sparks are bouncing off of every surface, encircling every occupant in the room. A tornado of lights are engulfing them all, with Stiles Stilinski at it's center.

Stiles' phone starts to vibrate and glow. It lifts off his hand and is soon enveloped by a airy white aura.
The pearly wisps grow into a sphere and start to pulsate in and out.
All the while, the sparks of light are moving faster and faster, until all one can see are lines of light instead of the once distinguishable orbs.

Stiles chants in a melancholic sound: airy, wispy, and full of twang. Song-like in its resonance, the gale in the room seem to echo each cry.
The wind is picking up, and it was enough to catch everyone's breath.
It started to howl and growl deafeningly at the caster below.

And with one last cry, Stiles claps his hands together.
A wave of sound erupts from his fingers and it extinguishes the wind around them.
The sparks are flung towards the light bulbs in the rooms, shattering them into shards of nonexistence.
Darkness engulfed the room. All that seemed to remain was the white glow of Stiles' phone and the triskelion emitting a blue light.

"Whoa," Jackson catches himself saying out loud.

Stiles smiles, as his eyes charge to its electric yellow state.

Everyone looks around in awe. Well, except for the Argents.
They know they are in a room, but see no walls, no ceiling- only darkness farther than the eyes can see.
Even below them, their feet seem to play tricks with their minds. Where they know there should be ground, their feet feel nothing.

"Where are we?,” Matt asks, snapping pictures left and right.

"In a spatial-temporal anomaly. More commonly known as a black hole,” Stiles answers.

"What?!,” Danny exclaims. “How are we not dead?”

"Fascinating,” Deaton exclaims. Danny's question was ignored. He forgot his past decision to stop asking questions.
"Mr Stilinski,” Deaton continues. “The ability to distort time and space is a dangerous task. Furthermore, making it habitable for 16 people should be impossible.”

“Alan- may I call you Alan at this point? You very well know that if a spark believes it enough, it can happen,” Stiles answers. “Sixteen years of magical practice and energy- I'm an anomaly in itself. This is like a ride in the park for me.”

“Fascinating indeed,” Peter agrees with Deaton.

Peter unfolds his arms and starts to walk around the space. He eyes Stiles in the process, waiting to see what happens next. A small blush tinge forms within the casters cheeks. And while walking around the group, Peter notes two more things were glowing- Derek's back and a similar image on Stiles' back. Peter reaches for his back and feels a familiar warmth. His own familial tattoo was aglow as well. “Very very fascinating indeed,” he remarks.
When everyone was done admiring their (lack of) surroundings, and after Matt continues to attempt to take pictures of nothing at all, Stiles calls back their attention.

“I apologize in advance,” Stiles starts. “This show is quite, I think the professional term is half-assed. And Dad, you're gonna have to buy me a new phone after this.”

“What?,” the Sheriff asks.

Stiles, formerly arms forward, pulls both his limbs to opposite sides. A loud crack is heard as the phone separated into its separate pieces. Layers of computer chips, metal screws and reinforced glass float apart. The teens, knowing how important and expensive phones are, wince in sympathy.

Stiles throws what would've been the front part of his phone to the left. The other half he throws to the right. The two orbs fly for miles and soon explode.

Like the birth of two stars, they expand to an enormous size and provide two viewing globes for the humans and not-so-humans to see.

“What is,” Stiles declares as the orb on his left. “-and what could have been,” he describes the orb to his right.

“For our story to move forward, I had to speed things up as it were. Battles we had fought, enemies we have faced, and yes, people we have killed- I have done all I can in this past 7 days.

I implore thee, you occupants outside time and space
Judge me as you see fit.
As I have stood your judge seven days prior, so shall you all be my judge in turn.

And I stand my case before you...
Starting with the attack and murder of Gerard Argent.”

Chapter End Notes

A/N: Sorry for taking so long. This prologue was rewritten so many times. It's so frustrating. This is the version that I approve of the most. Danny/Jackson was so difficult to write.

Action chapter coming up. Gimme a week. Sorry!!!
Chapter Summary

Stiles Stilinski, recently healed from a grueling New Year's Eve, disappeared for a week to locations unknown. A week later, he's contacted everyone from that fateful night to catch them up on his adventurous week. This story involved another vision- one taken outside time and space. Early on into the new year he has served as their judge; now he implores them to do the same and judge his own fate.

Will they accept Stiles' decisions, and what he has become?
What purpose is there for their travel outside time and space?
How will Jackson and Matt react to the sights they are about to behold?

T/W: Attempted murder, actual killing, descriptions of hitting groins, attacking a disabled person, and language.

Chapter Notes

A/N:
First of all, warnings for real descriptive bloody stuffs.
And jailbait stuff if you squint.
Also, werewolf Stiles, just cause.
Lastly, lots of references to numbers and stars.

What can I say, except writer's block?
Too many things happening, too many reactions. This took too long to write. Longest chapter yet. I'm not even at the big turning point yet!
Plus I'm losing my touch with the feels... sighs.

I AM SO SORRY!!! T-T
Hope the actions and the banter make up for it!!

SOMEWHERE OUTSIDE TIME AND SPACE

At the end of his declaration, Stiles eyes shone like flood lights- electric yellow light pouring out of his being. His voice echoed into the abyss:

“...move forward,...
...speed things up...
...judge me!... 
...I implore thee...
...starting with... 
...attack and murder...
...murder of Gerard...
And with a howling blast, all they could hear was a resounding: “JUDGE ME!!”

The two stars in the distance exploded once more, until all you can see were two scenes unfolding before them.

To Stiles' right, various screams were heard. Tears of clear and tears of black. Eyes empty and eyes drenched. Corpses left and right- wolf and human alike. Familiar faces- Jackson, Erica, Boyd, Allison, Matt, and Victoria Argent recur more frequently than others.
A hanging body of a complete stranger was cut in half before their eyes.
Again.
Again.
And again.

This poor soul's body torn in half in every universe by one geriatric killer, with a gleam of bloodlust in his eyes.

Everything happened too quick- the blood and gore was too much for everyone to handle. Matt Daehler, seeing his dead body multiple times, falls to his knees and dry heaves to nowhere. His death clearly does not sit well with him. His face pales and his arms shake beneath his fragile form. Isaac kneels beside Matt and massages the small of his back. This other beleaguered teenager however does not look away from the atrocities unfolding.

Stiles voice besiege the onlookers once more.

“Gerard Argent is, without a doubt, a bigger monster than ANY I have ever seen. In my 16 years of repeated existence, he has twisted the minds of his constituents into a heated frenzy, endangering thousands of lives.

There were bombings—
Explosions erupt to their right. The local mall, their high school, the supermarket on Main street- even the local daycare and playgrounds were not safe.

—and public mass executions—
Armed men marching down the street, day or night, shooting civilians left and right with heavy gunfire.

—and even biological genocide.
Masses of bodies falling left and right, boils on their face, black blood pouring from their eyes. Men in hazmat suits were burning bodies with flamethrowers. The emergency room of the local hospital were full of sickly and dying. With the lack of space, dead bodies were thrown out and piling by the door, to empty beds for those alive and barely hanging on. In every ward, Melissa McCall is seen running raggedly attending to the sick. And in some, she is attending to the sick while coughing blood and covered in blisters – infected herself.

“Biological warfare?!,” Chris Argent screams in disbelief. “He wouldn't stoop to that level!” Chris screams in Stiles' direction.

But Stiles’ is nowhere in sight. Where the young Mr. Stilinski once stood was only light.

“He did. Countless times,” Stiles answers from around them.
“And every year, I would hold those dear to me as they slowly died.”
The visions continued with Stiles voices.
“Scott?! SCOTT!”
“Dad! NO! YOU FUCKING PROMISED ME!”
“...no, no, no, no, NO, NO! NO! NO!”
“Don't LEAVE ME!!”
“I LOVED YOU!”
“BREATHE! GODDAMMIT, BREATHE!!”

Each scene, Stiles cradles the corpse of someone in the room. The anguish and pain heard in every tremble of his voice, seen in every shaking sob. That pain, that miserable unforgiving pain, year after year.

“And so that I would live at the year's end, unknown forces kept me alive,” Stiles explained. “I would escape that last sliver of death... while everyone else around me has died.”

Stiles is walking the streets of desolate town. No, an empty forest. No, it's the desert. Now, the burning remnants of a building..
His clothes were in various rates of disarray. Bullet holes, claw marks, black bile, caked blood. His eyes were empty, shining hues of hazel, brown, gold, yellow, and red.
In his clenched fist would be baseball bats, claws, knives, and guns.

“The sole instigator of this yearly anguish is Gerard Argent. And for 14 years, I always got to him too late.”

“What happened the other 2 years?,” Allison asked.

There was silence. All they can see was Stiles loading guns and clips. Cleaning and maintaining weapons.

“For two of my 16 years, I-
-I joined him.”

They see scenes of Stiles shooting a bullet between Derek's eyes. He shot volleys of arrows towards a retreating Erica and Boyd.
He was twisting a knife in Lydia's torso, a glint of evil in his eye.
With a katana, he cut Scott's body in half. His eyes were empty and uncaring.
He has Danny and Isaac tied to metal fence, with sparks flying and smoke sizzling from their binds.

The looks of horror and disbelief on their faces were indescribable.

“It's a living nightmare, remembering those years. I will never forgive myself for all the pain I've caused. All that hatred, I-,” Stiles paused. They hear him breathe deep.

“Gerard. Yeah, back to Gerard,” Stiles changes the subject.

The 'screen' to their left dimmed, and the screen to their right shone brighter.

Everything moved practically at ten speed. Stiles was packing duffel bags full of weapons of various sizes. Rifles, pistols, ammo by the dozens; grenades, flares, knives, and a broadsword stood at contrast with the rest of the miniature armory.

At the end of it all, Stiles picked up the bag and folded it into itself once, twice, three times into a suitcase. He drove his Jeep to a local park late at night. He walked behind a tree, to emerge behind another scenery at a different location. Stiles showed up in a forest thick in brush, leaves vastly different from before.
He walked a mile or two into the grove, only to arrive at a suburban neighborhood. License plates left and write show various numbers and letters, and the symbol of the homely state of “Kentucky.”


“Magic is such a ridiculous cheat code,” Stiles explains. “Space just collapses with enough power. And nature is connected even through thousands of miles. I can literally walk into a tree in California and traverse nature to a tree in Kentucky.”

Erica just raises her hands in disbelief. “Well isn’t that a “fuck me in the ass” advantage.”

Stiles checks in at a local motel and does some research. Time fast forwards past the boring mundane parts.

“The breakfast there sucked by the way,” Stiles offered, clicking his tongue. “I'm just gonna fast forward to 3 nights after. Research here, stakeouts there, and I FINALLY figured out Gerard’s hunt and sleep schedule. It was difficult to catch him alone. If he was not out on a hunt, he was escorted by two guards. I didn’t want any trace to me.

But these stakeouts got me to more information than I had before: his symptoms were getting worse. It seems like the cancerous noose around his neck was tightening and he had 3 months left to live. It was then that he heard the news about Kate, and soon resolved to visit Beacon Hills. He was leaving the next morning, and I knew I had to act that day.

His window was bulletproof but still see through. His home was a fortress. But, luck held me in accord today. I found my one shot to Gerard.”

The scene fast forwards to Stiles on some roof scoping out Gerard’s window. The binoculars move towards the entrance to see an electronic lock. Some guards were located by the side entrance. There was a patio to the east, but it was laced with what looked to be wolfsbane, mountain ash, and mistletoe a plenty. Stiles curses under his breath.

He looks onward until he sees Gerard's bedroom and shouts happily with his saving grace- a flower of wolfsbane was blooming from his windowsill.

“You entered through that??,” Danny exclaimed.

“Yeah, I did.”

Stiles stands up from his vantage point. He reaches his hand out to a dandelion growing on the abandoned building roof. The scene was a garbled mess of greens and browns, until they saw into Gerard's bedroom. The old man was sleeping in his pajamas, alone and unprotected. No alarms blared. No cameras to catch Stiles in the act.

The smile on Stiles face- it sent shivers down everyone’s spines. Yes, even the Argents’.

Stiles walks slowly to the old man. He unsheathes a knife and rolls it in his hand.

The screen starts to flicker and static. The silence was broken by a garbled scream and crackling.

*krk*
aaAA-
*krk krk psshh*
-AAAAAA-
-aaaAAA-
*sssshh krk krk ssshhh*
-AAAARRRGHHH!!

The scene's frenzied jumps could send you to an epileptic seizure. Stiles is standing there with his knife. It switches to him screaming. He's repeatedly stabbing Gerard, angrily-passionately.

No wait. He's feet away from the bed. No, he's on the man's torso, covered in his blood.

The screaming is clear and desperate. No, it's far away and distant.

“I wanted to do it,” Stiles speaks quietly. “I imagined it so many times in my head. I would have REVELED in his death...-but if I did, i-it would be-*sigh*

In the end, the knife was too much.”

Stiles sheathes the blade, and waves his hand. His fingers glow green and red, flowing towards the sleeping form before him. “But, he still had to die.”

“What did you do to him?,” Scott asks.

“I accelerated the healing of some his cells,” Stiles answers.

“What? That's stupid! Aren't you trying to kill him or something?,” Jackson said.

“No. It makes sense,” Boyd speaks up. Everyone looks to the teen. “Derek said the same thing on New Year's Eve. Healing isn't always a good thing.”

“The cancer!,” Lydia realizes. “You sped up the growth of the cancer cells!”

“Yes, I did,” Stiles confirms. “And no one will be able to trace it back to me. His body will be his own demise.”

The scene continues on, silent and unnervingly normal... Stiles leaves Gerard's home and heads back to his hotel. He packs up his stuff, pulls up his phone, invariably to check the time. The screen shows the time and the date- “January 8, 3:28 pm”

“Stiles, that's too soon,” Allison points out. “You were gone longer than that. What happened after you went to Gerard?”

“I think I may be able to answer that question.” Everyone looks to the source of the voice. Peter Hale smiles at his new found attention. “After this little trip, Stiles here set up a little rendezvous for me- one I've appreciated for the longest while.”

“Rendezvous?,” Derek asks, confused.

“A meeting, my dear nephew. A rendezvous is a meeting.” Peter insults.
"I damn well know what that means, you-"

"Oh please, Derek. I know that you know," Peter cuts him off, rolling his eyes. "Honestly, does anyone banter anymore?

As I was saying, I NEVER imagined I'd be a part of such a spectacle, let alone be personally chaperoned by Stiles, Stiles, Stiles. Don't you just love that name? It rolls off the tongue in such a riveting way," Peter continues.

"I would appreciate you not talking about my son like that," the Sheriff warns him.

"Just continue whatever the hell you are talking about, Peter," Derek scolds.

Peter just grins wide and enlightens them all to his little secret with just one gesture- his eyes slowly but undeniably bleed the brightest shade of red.

"What?!?!!," the group collectively reacts.
"How in hell are you an alpha?!?," Scott adds.

"Oh, this story is remarkably exquisite," Peter teases. "But believe me when I say it's much better in crystal clear 4-D, which is what I believe Stiles intends to give. Isn't that right, dear Stiles?"

"You just love to pretend like you're reading minds, don't you Peter?," Stiles replies, still nowhere to be found.

Stiles breathes deep as their surroundings rewind in full force. Their surroundings pull back into themselves and fold once more. And with one audible swoop, the two scenes collapse once again to two distant stars- glowing warmly and tersely.

"This next information requires a little more background. You don't have to take notes, but I hope it will teach you a thing or two," Stiles begins.

The stars start orbiting their lot. The distant orbs speed by, collecting stardust in their wake. The trails of ice and fire were swift and unrelenting. They sped up past their observers, closing in on a spiral. Their radiance was cool and bright. And then, when you would think they would crash and engulf them all, the orbs shoot upwards and explode into a breathtaking night sky.

Betelgeuse was shining teasingly. Orion was standing in its true dauntless form. Sirius was playing a soft melody in the sky. And the moon- it was center stage, majestic and awe-inspiring.

"Werewolves have been roaming the world for the longest time," Stiles narrates. "Their lives, like nature, had an order within the madness. Each pack had an Alpha- a leader in power and in spirit. The rest were called Betas. They constitute the bulk and strength of the pack. An Alpha has the instinct to bring Betas into the pack in times of need. Betas look to their Alpha for guidance in times of danger. The pack was one cohesive unit that endures time eternal.

Their lives were give and take, push and pull. It is a balance made of respect and instinct- as strong and permanent as the stars in the sky."
The star spangled sky above them was slowly spinning in a dance lightyears abreadth. Some of the stars led, while the others followed each step. It was a viennese waltz with Venus and Mars. Procyon led Sirius and Betelgeuse in a tango through the cosmos. The stars shone like sequins and pearls on an elegant tapestry of the night.

“But, just like nature, chaos comes in the form of man and it’s thirst for power,” Stiles continues. “Betas would challenge their Alpha and fight to the death in the name of bloodlust. Some Alphas would encroach another's territory and spill blood in the name of conquest. Innocents would be turned without consent, to bolster forces and create cannon fodder.”

The stars in the sky start to burst and dim. Orbs would clash and smash into a million pieces. Sparks died as soon as they were born. There was no beauty in this madness above. And the moon started to bleed yellow to orange… to red.

“And the greatest of crimes- when an Alpha's lust for power is so maddening that they take power from their own. An Alpha would cull its own pack to absorb their power. This force untapped is so rare and taboo that hardly anyone would dare drink from this cup. That is, until the arrival of the Alpha Deucalion.”

Distant howls and whines were heard in the cosmos. Screams were mixed in as people were fighting and begging for their lives. Children were screaming for their parents, and the parents screamed for mercy for their spawn. The wet squelch that answered them was a sickening stop to their pleas.

“Deucalion was mad for power, for reasons I cannot respectfully share with you yet. Time is funny in this manner. What I say to you could have changed the future, but there will always be a price paid. And this revelation is too... inconsequential for me to take the risk.”

With the backdrop of the blood red moon, a silhouette of a man in a trenchcoat rises and dusts off his clothes. He stands there unmovinmg, and staring on into the horizon as the story continues.

“This taboo power was not enough for Deucalion. He used his pack to gain such power, but soon wanted something more. And so, Deucalion sought out to make something not thought possible - a pack of Alphas with himself at the lead. But, these Alphas he chose had to be powerful as well. He’d force the chosen to cull their own pack and join him, or fall to the side and die. With cunning, intimidation and blackmail, he forces Kali, Ennis, and the twins, Aiden and Ethan to join.”

Four figures stand up next to Deucalion’s silhouette. All their eyes glow a burning red to match the moon.

“The Alpha Pack, hearing of the future battles we faced set their sights to the Alphas of Beacon Hills. They cause havoc and death in their pursuit of recruitment. To most of them, humans and Betas are toys to play with. And the two exceptions, well, they can’t find a way to escape the pack’s grasp.”

“Alphas?,” Scott asks.

“Right now, there is Derek, Peter, and Satomi Ito. Three Alphas present in Beacon Hills. Depending on how time reacts, we may see a fourth, fifth, or a sixth arrive,” Stiles answers.

“Why so many in such a small town?,” Allison asks.

“That, I cannot fully answer. Beacon Hills keeps on showing to be a magical conduit for the world, one of many irreplaceable. The Native Americans that inhabited this land saw this place as a magical
light in the dense fog of time.”

“So Beacon Hills is an actual magical beacon?,” Danny asks. “I don’t know if I should feel ashamed or offended.”

“You said there were two of the pack that wanted to leave? What will happen to them?,” Boyd asks.

Stiles sighs. “Again, it changes year per year. Some they survive, some they don’t. Some they choose to fight us, some they become an ally or a friend. In the end, I can only tell you what actually happened in these past few days, and not what could have been.”

“So let’s cut to the chase, shall we?,” Victoria Argent interrupts. “Why is this Alpha Pack so important to your absence? And what is their connection to Mr. Peter Hale?"

“Well, isn’t it obvious?,” Peter answers, bored with this exposition.

“Stiles and I killed them all.”

With all the unrealistic things to have happened to the group in just barely two weeks, one would think they would tire asking the collective “WHAT?!!?”

“How could you, back from the dead and barely living, and Bilinski, take on a five supercharged Alphas with the power of 5 packs?,” Jackson asks.

“Well, I guess I should be clearer about that. Stiles got them all to the brink of death and he let me sneak in a final blow.” Peter clears up. “Oh, I did hope that the banter would be much more substantial tonight. Stiles, dear, let’s just fast forward to the fight please.”

“I’ve always wanted to say this,” Stiles comments to no one but himself. He clears his throat and answers in a deeper movie voice. “I thought you’d never ask.”

The night sky above them shatters like glass, and everyone had to cover the eyes from the bright light that surrounded them. When their eyes adjusted, they were in the middle of a yellowed field. Everyone present actually felt the grass and dirt beneath their feet. The only thing missing would be the scent and feel of the breeze about them.

Near the center of the field stood four wolves, in a skirmish of sorts. The largest of them all was given the beat down of its life.

“HEY! IDIOTS!,” a voice calls from behind the observers. Stiles is there standing with his baseball bat and duffel bag. A couple of feet behind him stood Peter Hale, standing smug as can be. His hair was disheveled, and clothes slightly askew. The glow was unmistakeable.

“Stiles, what are you doing?,” Scott asks.

Stiles doesn’t seem to hear him.

“HEY! You filthy ass mangy mutts!,” Stiles screams once more.

“Who the fuck dares to call us mutts?!,” one of the four replies in a roar. The three combatants morph back to a more human form. The supposed victim stands up and soon finds an arm through his chest. A teenager, no older than the high schoolers in the group pulls himself out of the form, which shrinks to a clone of his own design.

“Ethan! Aiden! Lovely to see you twins alive after that beating!,” Stiles greets them sarcastically.
“Hey Kali, baby, I guess ‘mutt’ goes in the wrong direction for such a sweet lady.”

The shortest of them all walks forward and addresses Stiles. “I am sorry for Ennis’s haste reply. Toys such as yourself usually don’t even get a chance to be acknowledged.”

“Oh, toys! So we’re the ones you play with when you’re tired of playing with yourself? Or is Hide the Bone with the same five people not freaky enough for you, Deucalion?,” Stiles insults.

The short man smirks. “So you know who I am?"

“Oh I do. Everyone’s heard of the mighty Deucalion,” Stiles answers sarcastically and mockingly.

“And what brings a sickly Beta and a teenage druid to insult my pack? Trying to join our ranks? I am quite sorry; I do not think you qualify,” Deucalion mocks.

“Oh no, thank you. I’m here for serious business actually. Let’s just say, in a few weeks you’ll be killing a lot my friends. And frankly, I’ve decided to kill you before that happens,” Stiles replies.

Kali, Ennis and Deucalion laugh at the absurdity of the notion. “You two?,” Ennis mocks. “Against the five of us?”

“Oh, I’m sorry,” Stiles answers. “I didn’t mean to confuse you, though I know that happens to you a LOT, numbnuts. Peter is just here to watch. And maybe insult you guys when I can’t think of something quick enough.

I’ll be more than enough to take you all on.”

“STILES! What are you doing?!,” the Sheriff whispers loudly. “You’ll get us all killed!”

“Stiles, stop this!,” Lydia begs him.

“He really didn’t mean that!,” Matt implores the Alphas. “Don’t hurt us!”

“Guys, this isn’t real, remember?,” Danny explains. “This isn’t happening now.”

“But, Stiles just challenged five alphas!,” Scott said. “How will he handle that?”

“He already did, Scott,” Derek answers. “This is a memory. Stiles is here now, so he had to get out alive.”

“I still can’t watch this,” Scott answers.

“That’s too bad, because we can’t leave in the middle of the fight,” Erica replies. “And Patrick or whatever his name is is right- banter is kinda fun.”

“The name’s Peter, little girl,” he corrects Erica. “And if you want to see an actual skilled fight, take notes.”

“Five against one? I am loving these odds,” Ennis answers, stretching for the fight as the scene continues.

“More like five against seventeen.”

Stiles’ eyes glow their yellow hue. Soon other colors start to show.

“Oh, I never introduced myself. My name is Stiles. And let’s just say, I’m pretty much a one-man
army."

Stiles throws his duffel into the air and it soon unfolds. Weapons roll out by the dozen in the air. But if you didn’t pay too much attention below, you would’ve missed the more impressive sight. Sixteen Stiles emerged from within the original, all in various states of armor and clothes. Two of them practically bare it all, save for some running shorts and a red cloth armband.

“Ready?,” seventeen asks.
“READY!,” the rest reply. Many pick up weapons, and a few pull out potions from a satchel. And the two barechested Stiles- their eyes glowed blue and red as they roll their arms into a stretch.

“It’s Morphin Tim-,” seventeen starts.
“Stiles! No! Copyright!,” one of the other scolds. “And not all of us shift.”

“Guys! We talked about this!,” seventeen pleads. “I even set up fake explosions behind us!”

“We can’t all be red rangers!,” one screams.
“I call pink!”
“I’ll be orange!”
“GUYS, STOP!,” the only seemingly sane one replies. “Fight going on. We can discuss this before the next fight.”
“You guys sicken me,” said one of them.
“We’re all you!,” they all reply.
“I hate myself even more because of that,” he replies.

Deucalion goes on into a slow clap (of evil, presumably.) “You are planning to kill me with comedy?,” he mocks, laughing. “Oh, I am quite sorry at the state of this charade. Ventriloquism doesn’t quite work on the blind.”

“Let’s just kill them already,” whiner Stiles replies.
“Okay, same formation as before. Eight leads, got it?,” seventeen replies.
“Got it,” everyone agrees.

“Then let’s get to it,” eight stands up. “On my mark, attack.”

“And what? No funny catchline?,” Deucalion remarks. “No rousing speech? I sure hope your screams would satisfy me more than your jokes.”

“That’s it,” eight resolves. “No one makes fun of our comedy. ATTACK!”

Thirteen teenagers run towards the fray. Three different Stiles open fire with bows and arrows.

The invisible observers from Beacon Hills flinch and duck. But, the projectiles and bodies pass through them easily like smoke. The fight is thick around them, the electricity is in their air. But, they are safe to watch what follows.

Ennis was the first one to charge. Three combatants race toward his overwhelming bulk. The large Alpha lunges at the middle one’s neck. In that last second, that Stiles baseball slides underneath his flying form and whacks Ennis right where it matters most with his baseball bat. Ennis crumples to a heap. Practically everyone who saw that had gave a little flinch.
“Oh, Ennis. You had to attack me, 6, and 2,” said another one of them. This attacker, which we soon learn is number 9, grabs one of Ennis’s arms and puts him into a hold until -CRACK- that poor arm was dislocated. “I’m pretty much the martial artist of the group.”

“And I-,” said number 6, the wielder of the bat. ”-well, I’m the desperate one.” Number 6 repeatedly aims for Ennis’s groin with each swing. All the poor man can do is block with his other free arm.

The last combatant, number 2, pulls out his knife and swiftly stabs Ennis in the neck through the trachea and the jugular. “Let’s just say, I’m the CRAZY ONE, shall we?,” said number 2.

As Ennis is bleeding into his own windpipe, one of the barechested Stiles walks confidently to the dying victim. “Just in time, number ten,” number 9 replies. “Ready when you are.”

Ten starts to shift. His arms bulge and brow furrows. Fur grows along his form as his mass grows. With a few snaps of his jaws, this Stiles is no longer recognizable due to his unmatched power- Stiles as an Alpha werewolf.

With a snarl and snap, 10 grabs Ennis’s neck and squeezes tight.

“You guys might want to close your eyes,” an unbodied voice narrates to the observers. Those uneasy had to look away.

Ennis’s head was yanked from his torso and blood spurted out in time with his heart beat. The hulking mass of 10 was breathing heavily with this simple motion. An obvious change starts to run through his physique. He seemed larger, faster, and stronger.

Number 9, who was in the spray zone, had time to wipe his face clear of blood. “Well, that one was disappointingly quick,” he remarked.

“It’s because he was stupid,” 2 replied.

“Watch out!,” 6 screamed as Kali finally barreled into that fray.

Elsewhere on the field, Deucalion was walking slowly toward the battle. Confident and observing, he barely flinched when Ennis turned up dead. Shots and arrows were fired in his direction and he would take each and every hit he got. Every bullet wound healed in milliseconds. Every arrow would stay lodged in his torso, clearly not affecting him. Deucalion smiled at the battle before him. “So this is your battle, Stiles? Quite fascinating. You were right; this is no charade. Your Alpha does seem quite interesting. I can’t wait to taste his power in the flesh,” Deucalion taunts.

Further along in the battlefield, Ethan and Aiden were running side by side. Bruises from their earlier "training" were still healing.

“This can’t keep happening to us, Aiden,” Ethan pants out. “I can’t keep this up every week.”

“It’s them or us, baby bro,” Aiden replies. “And you know, if it isn’t them, it’ll be Deucalion who’ll be after our necks.”

To their left, they witness the carnage that happens upon Ennis. Aiden and Ethan snarl in anger. They look to each other and nod, as they reach out their arms.

“Oh no, no, no, no. We can’t have that,” a voice replies. With a pop, two Stiles appears between them and block out their arms. With a wave of their arms, vines shoot out from the ground and yank the twins far apart.

“Excellent work, three.”
“Couldn’t have done it better, thirteen.”
The two Stiles high five and walk towards the separated twins.

Ethan and Aiden are tied to the ground by vines. Each arm and leg was secured by magical brush. “I think I saw some yaoi porn that started like this,” 13 remarked. “Except there were less clothes.”

“Watch out!,” another Stiles tackled 13 to the side. Aiden’s left leg broke free and swung towards 13 and his savior, but the two rolled clear out of range. “Thanks for the save, 5.”
With some grunts and pulls, Aiden soon broke free of his vines. While the two Stiles were regaining their wits, Aiden started to run towards Ethan.

Five pulled out a tranq gun and started to shoot towards Aiden. Out of all his shots, less than half successfully hit. It seemed like the darts themselves had no effect.

“Are those normal tranquilizers?! Where the hell’s the Kanima venom?!,” 13 frantically asked.
“We were saving those up for Deucalion! Seven and twelve have them,” he answers.

Thirteen curses under his breath and reaches out for some grass.
He pops out right under Aiden which causes the twin to trip and roll.
Thirteen grabs onto Aiden and jumps through nature once more to show up on the other side of the field. Aiden starts coughing and retching at the sudden jump through space.

This momentary confusion was enough. Thirteen opens a satchel of mountain ash and traps Aiden within. With the twins half a field apart, it seemed like Stiles 3, 5, and 13 can catch their breath as the battle unfolds.

“You can’t do this! Don’t kill my brother!,” Aiden screams. “We’ve been through enough, please!”

“It’s not for me to decide, Aiden,” thirteen replies. “It’s all up to 8 right now.”

With 3 of the Alpha pack out for the battle, Deucalion roars loud at the challenge before him. Kali takes on the Ennis’s killers in a frenzy of their own. And while it seemed that Stiles was winning this battle, and that all their troubles were about to end, 8 definitely knew better.

And as if on cue, the winds of victory shift swiftly as 2 new players entered the field.

Gunfire started pouring out from the north, aimed at everyone in the field. Four attackers walk out into the field with rifles and ammo aplenty. A geriatric man leads the four and opens fire. With anger like no other, Gerard Argent shows up and orders for everyone to be killed, and that no man be left behind.

And from the south, birds fly off quick and scared, and a strong wind screeched from above. A loud voice echoes out into the field:
“How DARE YOU TRY TO TAKE DEUCALION AWAY FROM ME?!?”
A single cloaked being strides out in confidence, while snakes and spiders start crawling from the trees before her.

The feeling of dread pours out into the field as Stiles now has a fight on three flanks. Eight clenches his fist and with head held high. He sends out this one command. “Everyone: TROJAN FORMATION!”

And with a roar and a battle cry, the fight continues on.
A/N
Quick poll: Do you want Ethan and Aiden alive? Any must have pairings?
I’m pretty much torn between DEthan and Janny/Daxon. But this many characters is killing me.
Arthur Archives Part 3: The Trojan Formation

Chapter Summary

Stiles Stilinski, using his ability to recreate visions outside time and space, shows his friends and cohorts his attempt at the murder of Gerard Argent. But, after Allison notices a discrepancy in Stiles’ timeline, they press on for more information. Aided by the teen’s magical visions, Peter Hale informs the group of his newly gained Alpha status and Stiles’ run in with the Alpha Pack.

In an unnamed yellowed field, all of Stiles’ past and present lives take physical form and attack the Alpha Pack. With Ennis dead and the twins separated, Stiles’ victory was almost imminent. That is, until attacks from two other opposing parties arrive from the north with guns, and from the south with magic.

“And with a roar and a battle cry, the fight continues on.”

What will happen in the midst of this action-packed confrontation?
What does the future hold for the lives of the Alpha twins?
Will the plot ever finally move on?

T/W: Character death, gunshots, mutilation. Geriatric murder.

Chapter Notes

A/N:
short version: medical stuff, plus school stuff.
I heavily apologize for the hiatus.

Still have to decide what to use from this current season, if any. This Dread Doctors Storyline gives me a headache. And Steo.. Ugh. the choices.

And yes, I know I’m supposed to start sentences with words instead of numbers. I’m a member of the grammar police too. But it’s too confusing using words. T-T

Warning of plot holes and jumps, language and fantasy, and possibly blood.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

LOCATION: UNKNOWN, INSIDE A VISION

“Tsk, those idiots,” Stiles #14 grumbles, reloading his gun.
He’s roughly forty feet in front of Stiles #8, hidden in brush and offering suppressive fire when he hears the order to switch formations.

14 reloads his gun, still prone and hidden in the yellow brush. His suppressive fire will no longer be
effective in a 3 flanked fight. He starts to fall back to the barrier, when a bullet from the northern attackers catches him in the leg. He falls to his knees, cursing up a storm.

"8, you better have our magicians throw up some barricades!," he yells into his earpiece. "While you're at it, get somebody- anybody to blink me into position."

"I got the barricades," someone said.

"Who was that?"
"Was that 13?"
"Guys," someone else replies warily. "Brace yourselves... that was 11."

The Stiles’ held a collective gasp as they knew, oh yes they knew- things would take a turn for the fantastical.

Dark gray clouds started to form above and around the field. The trees started to sway with a frightful gale. In the south, malicious orange wisps started to swirl in the sky. And in the north, you can see Stiles #11, arms open wide and chanting up a storm, literally it seems.

With a punch to the ground, the field starts to shake. Barricades of dirt and rock rise and scar the field, perfect for cover. The wooden grove creaked and moaned as the forest floor shattered to the will of Stiles#11. And once all was said and done, a flurry of fiery tornadoes has finally formed in the south, devastating the glade below.

The observers of Beacon Hills could not believe their eyes.
"Bilinski can control the weather?," Jackson exclaims in disbelief.

Stiles’ narrative and disembodied voice explains. "That's all on number 11. Weather control is too advanced for everyone else. Add earthbending to that, and he's too OP."

"OP?," Isaac asks.

"Overpowered," Matt answers.

"Shouldn't there be a feedback mechanism to this magic? Or a limited magic reserve?," Victoria Argent asks.

"Normally, yes. But, for some reason it isn't the case for 11," Stiles explains. “I- to be honest, year 11 is an enigma."

"So, if he wanted, he can just break the city into two," Danny said.

"As far as I know… Yeah, and- well, that's not the only weird thing about year 11," Stiles adds.

"Now what?," Jackson bites.

"Every year I have lived, I can pretty much remember all that has happened," Stiles starts. "I can classify myself as either human, werewolf, hunter, or magic. 11 is the only exception. I know I had magic, but there's something more. Something I cannot explain. It's like 11 is blocking my memories of that year."

"What more? There's more to this madness?," Matt asks.

"You'll see," Stiles promises.
The shift in nature seems to alarm all the combatants on the field. Kali and her foes (the crazy 2, the desperate 6, the martial artist 9, and the alpha 10) were trying to use the atmospheric change to gain an advantage. The wind and earth seemed to disorient Deucalion, and it minutely slowed his advance. The gunmen to the north were still relentless in their barrage of bullets. And in the south, the snakes and spiders called forth by the unknown creature were dispersing by the hundreds.

Aiden and Stiles #13 were too close to Gerard and his henchmen. They would be dead, if not for the conjured barricade before them. Trying to avoid an unnecessary death, 13 approaches Aiden’s ring of mountain ash.

"Okay look, this is clearly not going as planned," 13 starts. “I know you and Ethan just want to get out alive. Our beef is with Deucalion; and me and my, erm, friends are gonna deal with him today. But if you want to get out of here alive, I need you to promise me- PROMISE ME- that you will not attack me and will follow what I say to the tee. To the TEE, Aiden."

Aiden stares at 13 in disbelief. They had earlier declared to end them all. Why should he take this stranger’s word?

"I swear to god, I can put you back in here if you try to attack me. But, I’d rather we get out of here alive. PLEASE. For Ethan," 13 begs, ignoring Aiden’s confused stare.

Aiden looks across the field, where 3 and 5 were raising an unconscious Ethan on their shoulders.

"You hurt one hair on his head and I-," Aiden threats.

"-tear me, maim me, kill me. I get it," 13 interrupts, not waiting for a response. There’s literally no time. "Hold your breath on the count of three. One. Two-"

13 grabs two potions from his satchel and hurls it over the barricade. One bottle bursts into flames that corral the gunmen together. The other creates a mist of acrid smoke. In this moment of reprieve, 13 breaks the circle of ash and grabs Aiden. They jump through the grass once more and soon land behind 8 and the archers. After this jump, Aiden could not hold his lunch and soon retches all his contents on the ground below. 13 takes this time to create a larger circle of ash to hold the twin within.

"That's the last of my mana and my potions. I'm tapped out," 13 reports. "Gerard and his cronies are in a Circle of Adrammalech, and are encumbered by tear gas. But 11’s wind will soon dissipate that."

"Grab a gun. Suppressive fire to Deucalion," 8 orders 13. The strategist soon addresses Aiden in captivity. "Here, drink this." He conjures up a mug of a yellow liquid.

"What is it?," Aiden asks, a hue of yellow and green tinting his face.

"Tea, mostly ginger. It will help with the nausea after your jump," 8 says, as he thrusts the flagon into Aiden’s hands.

It's around this time that 3, 5, and Ethan pop up nearby. They lay the unconscious Alpha and start checking vitals. Bruises were forming and healing across his torso. Blood was trickling out of his ears and nose.

"What happened?!," Aiden and 8 both asked.

"Jennifer shot some curse at us!," 5 explained. "It barely affected us since we're barely, you know, physically in this universe. But, Ethan is struggling just to heal."

8 curses once more.
"5, circle of ash. Focus on a kanima aspect. Maybe reptilian healing can address the blood loss."
3, I need you to get 14 off the field and set him into a sniper's position. Bring first aid; he's hit. Then help 4 and 16 take out Jennifer. We need to end her onslaught fast."

5 and 3 set about to do their jobs when Aiden starts asking questions. "Will he be alright? Who's Jennifer? Why did she attack my brother?"

"Jennifer is a Darach: a dark druid," 8 starts to explain, urging Aiden to continue drinking his tea. He’s continuing to administer first aid to Ethan as the circle of ash is being built by 5. "Jennifer lost her humanity thanks to Deucalion and she has vowed to destroy him and the Alpha pack at all cost. Normally, I would be okay with that outcome, had it not be for her penchant for human sacrifice."

Ethan is coughing up blood. Aiden could not help but wince at this sight. "Bring me to him," Aiden pleads. "Maybe I can siphon some of the pain so-"

"No," 8 says stubbornly. "Until we figure out what curse it is, I can't let you touch him. The curse might infect you too. And I don't have enough manpower or resources to heal two Alphas."

Two before unseen Stiles’ pop up into view. "Charges are armed and ready to go. Did I hear Trojan Formation?," one of them asks.

"Yes, 7 and 12. Head to position. Make those Kanima shots count," 8 replies. He is still wiping up blood from Ethan’s unconscious form. The poor Alpha is on his side, allowing the blood to pour out and prevent suffocation.

"I really wanted to see his face for the kill," one of the two complained.

"We didn't expect Jennifer so early, and Gerard to still be alive, 12," 8 explains. "I can let you be in charge of the next attack sortie."

12 pumps his fist in the air. “Yes! Leading the fire with the biggest flamer out there! Get me to that battlefield!”

The other Stiles shakes his head in disgust. "Next time, don't pair me up with the pyromaniac, please?," Stiles #7 pleads before they disappear from view.

Having done all that he can, and having 5 continue life support, Stiles #8 grabs another sub machine gun and helps offer suppressive fire to Deucalion. Mana and ammo low, things are not looking good. "I need someone to take out Jennifer now!"

Peter walks up to Stiles #8. "Can I just say how much I love the command in your voice right now?"

Stiles visibly gulps. Beads of sweat cover an undeniable blush forming on his cheeks. "Not now, Peter. Kinda busy."

"At least help me steady your aim," he said. Peter grabs the slightly shaking arms of the teen and pulls the trigger with him. "Don't forget to breathe, Stiles." The teen is ensconced in Peter's embrace as they keep on the attack. His heart rate stops racing and his arms shake less. And if there ever was a 'zone', Stiles would be in it right now. Yet, overwhelming and unforgiving, the battle raged on.

Stiles #3 popped right next to two more near the southern end of the field. Stiles #4 was morphed into his Beta form, covered in snake bites. The other Stiles, number 16, was alternating between throwing potions of fire onto the field around Jennifer, and applying a salve on the Beta's envenomed wounds.
"How's it going over here?," 3 asks.

"Not good," the beta 4 replies. "We've been trying to stop the waves of snakes and spiders with walls of fire. Anything poisonous that passes through, I slice up with my claws. Jennifer keeps throwing curses at us to damage, or at the flames to extinguish them. We're at an impasse without a firearm."

"Good thing I just came from 14," 3 replies. In his bloodied hands, he reloads a pistol and readies a hand grenade. "Have enough strength to aim a grenade?"

"Nice! Hell yeah, I am," 4 replies, his wolf fangs bared in a smile.

"I'll cover you both with my flash potion," 16 adds in.
They nod in unison and set out to attack.

16 throws a flash potion by Jennifer's feet, immediately followed by a fire potion. All of them cover their eyes as bright light blinds Jennifer and the ensuing conflagration chars some critters that surround them. In that blinded moment, Stiles #3 starts unloading his only clip into the darach's form.

Sufficiently distracted, 4 takes his shot and throws the grenade directly into Jennifer's face. "This is for Derek, you fugly bitch!," he screams in anger. The strength of the throw comically knocks Jennifer dazed as it hits her on the head. The dangerous projectile lands at her feet, Jennifer none the wiser.

"Take cover!," the three of them shout into the field.

The loudest screech is heard across the battlefield. Jennifer's cloaked form is caught in a blaze and soon crumples to a heap. The spiders and snakes she had conjured slither and crawl back into the woods. And the tornado to the south climbs violently and abruptly back into the sky. Soon, all that's left of the southern field was char and burnt carcasses of reptiles and arachnids. And the wind- it died down to a murmur.

Coughing loudly, 3 slowly gets up. "Everyone okay?"
"Yeah, the bites are healing better," 4 replies, groaning. He tries to push himself up, to no avail. "I'm out of potions over here," 16 reports.

"Im out of juice too. Guess we have to walk back to 8," 3 declares.

"Yeah, well, ain't that a good ole kick in the head."
They nod in agreement as the painfully army crawl back to the line.

And at their destination, Ethan is coughing up considerably less blood than the moment before. Less restless than ever, the poor teen wolf unwillingly drifted off into quiet slumber. Moments later, the bruises fade and the blood dried. And Aiden, he was finally able to let go of the breath he held tight in his chest.

The camera pans to the middle of the field, a sight to behold in itself. Kali is defending and attacking 4 incarnations of Stiles Stilinski. This supernatural feat looked like a brutal ballet, like a terrifying tango of claws and fists. And the action never seemed to end.

After 6 had warned the lot of Kali's arrival, he had to roll out of the way as the clawed beast lunged for the poor teen’s throat. As the weakest and most human of the group, he had nothing else to provide aside from a distraction and an extra pair of eyes. "Field monitor!," he claims his role as he
drags Ennis's body and moves it away from the fray.

Because well, the less obstacles the better. And a dead corpse, while also a tripping hazard, can be quite distracting.

Do not be misled to think that 6 no longer had part in this grand scheme. As an observer midfield, it was him who informed the group that 14 was hit by a bullet. It was him who informed the combatants of 11’s choice to make his magic. And it was him who kept them informed on Ethan and Aidan’s departure, of Jennifer’s demise, of Gerard’s encumbrance and of how far until Deucalion joins their battle.

With 6 taking the role of field monitor, the 3 were able to focus solely on their combat. And with a foe like Kali, a slip of concentration was the thin line between victory and defeat.

Her combatants were down to three; Kali thought she had the battle. Her cunning, strength and speed were previously unmatched. Up until now, that is. Because, this hubris unwittingly became her downfall.

Despite what everyone thought, Kali would have been able to stop Ennis’s demise. It was more like she didn’t want to. Her combatants were unknowns and she wanted to see their abilities. They couldn’t possibly defeat a taboo Alpha, could they? But, in his death she saw her opening: their rigidity, their lack of strength and speed. And the one human tied into this fray.

She ran and dove for the weak putrid pest. But the stupid brat saw it, and rolled away. After gaining back her stance, the one with a knife decided to take aim for a few quick swipes. Dodging the attacks was easy in such close combat. One quick swipe would end this poor bastard’s life.

Ducking under a stab aimed for her face, Kali started a swing to 2’s torso only to have her arm deflected towards the ground by a drop kick. “Uh uh, no you are not spilling intestines on my watch,” 9 taunts.

Right hand on the ground, Kali flips forward for a kick at her opponents- a one hand somersault in the air. 9 cartwheels back, and 2 dashes forward past her; none of Kali’s kicks connect. Immediately as she lands, a furred arm punches her squarely in the gut, and Kali is pushed back a couple of feet. 10 joins the fray after his small power boost finally takes effect.

Grabbing her torso, Kali takes a moment to reassess her options. Not once in her life has a strong but slow hit landed on her. And within 3 seconds, these lowly insects decide to lay a finger on her?!?

Kali breaks into the shortest sprint and baseball slides past the three teens. Gone through their legs, she decides to strike au aberto, capoeira style. Her stylish kick lands directly on 10’s crown and lands him prone to the ground. 9 takes this chance to sweep low at Kali’s feet to make her lose balance, but she follows her momentum forward with a somersault of her own. And as quickly as she was in range, she left striking distance to safety.

10 picks himself off the ground and roars a taunt of his own. His claws sharpen and glisten, as if to say that “it’s on now.” 9 breaks himself into an kickboxing stance and readies himself. And 2, smiling widely as can be, takes out another knife and clasps both together like a prayer. “This is gonna be fun now,” he licks his lips in anticipation.

Their fight continued on like this, each clash an evolution of the one before. It was a mess of limbs and claws. It was tangle of grapples and a flurry of swipes. At one point, 2 linked both of his knives with a metal wire and made use of his weapon as a chained sickle. Each time Kali would be caught in the wired restraint, her skin will sizzle. Each time the blade cut, black boils would form along the
wound.

Bit by bit, Kali was losing her strength and stamina, while the three before her did not show one sign of fatigue. Her only hope was backup, but Deucalion was nowhere in sight. Even as the ground shook, or as the darach shrieked her final breath, Kali could not gain her ground back in this fight. Her eyes widen in disbelief- is she...

...is she about to lose?

That split second of disbelief soon loosens her concentration. Kali is caught between two kicks- one to her spine, and one to her sternum. The pincered blow causes her to fall to her knees in agony and loss of breath. Stiles #10 follows with a hammer fist to her crown, and she falls face first deep into the ground, indenting the soil below.

Unmoving for moments, the three teens flip her body face upward to see a pained and bloodied face. Frothing in anger and trapped in her beaten up form, she screams at her opponents.”HOW?! How are you fucking doing this?! How did I lose to- to such inconsequential vermin!”

“’We may not have all your stamina-,” said 9.
“-or your speed-,” growled 10.
“-or your strength,” said 2.

“But with all of us together,” continued 6 nearby. “-we patch up each other’s holes and make up for each other’s weaknesses.”

9 lands a strong drop kick square in her chest. Her loss of breath gave 9 a chance to dislocate her shoulders in two quick strikes. “That’s what makes us better.”

2 uses his wires to quickly restrain her wrists and stabs the knives into her thighs. He grabs a pistol off a holster and shoots her right in the kneecaps with wolfsbane. “That’s what ends this battle.”

Down on the ground, battered, bruised and unable to move, Kali stares at 10 looming over her defeated form. She can’t help but remember the screams of her pack. How they begged her to spare their own. Her pulse roars in her throat as she saw the most terrifying gleam in 10’s eyes. This inevitable retribution left a sickening taste unfathomable to her before.

How could she have been so wrong?

“’That’s what makes us pack.”

Stiles #10 ends Kali’s life in one last strike. Her eyes held no sorrow, only fear and surprise. And as the red faded from her irises, her battle came to an end. And this once proud skilled warrior was no more.

“I can’t believe that’s over,” 6 said from afar.

“All that’s left is Deucalion,” 2 replied looking in the Alpha’s direction. The four of them were exhausted. Kali took too much energy. They were practically dehydrated, and two of them were losing blood from multiple claw marks.


“9?,” 6 asked. “9, what happened?!"

6 approached his future self. Number 9, the drained martial artist reached for his chest and felt
abnormally damp. His shirt was pooling red and was finding it harder to breathe. “Ge-Gerar-,” 9 said collapsing.

All across the field screams were heard, as eight other Stiles clutched at their chests in pain.

Back to the observers, there were murmurs of confusion.
“What happened?,” Erica asked.

“Stiles was hit by a bullet. Likely from Gerard and his gunman,” Boyd answered.

“I-is he dead?,” Lydia asked.

“More than likely. It was shot through the heart. No modern medicine could repair that damage, especially in a fatigued body,” Victoria Argent answered.

The grim fact sent a hush across the room. And no one felt that slap harder than Sheriff Stilinski. John’s knees buckled; his face paled. When his legs finally gave way, Scott was nearby and caught him hard in the shoulder.

The father of our hero was gasping for air, and reaching out arms for consolation. Scott took the man’s hand in his own and squeezed tight. Despite the lack of sobs, everyone else in the room knew one thing- the Sheriff, too, had just died on the inside.

“W-why would you show me this?,” John asked. The man clasped onto Scott’s arm, unbecoming of a man revered by the group. Sheriff Stilinski was a mess. He could never see this part of the story ever again.

Seeing his dad’s reaction, it took quite a while for Stiles to answer. “Because those were the facts. Part of me died that day. And you needed to know the truth. Or at least see more evidence of it,” Stiles answered as medically as possible.

“The truth about what?,” John continued.

The scene continued on, giving all the observers the answers they needed.

The image of Deucalion smiled before them. “There’s the chink in your armor, the weak link in your chain. With the death of one, others are affected. That makes things easy.”

That very realization kicked the battle into overdrive. The blind Alpha broke off into a sprint past 2, 6, and 10- ignoring them completely. The other Stiles kept offering suppressive fire to no avail. Each and every shot was ignored by Deucalion. Nothing seemed to slow him down.

“Defend the perimeter! He must not get to Stiles number one!,” 8 ordered the team.

A lot of Stiles started to make concentric mountain ash barriers. Others more skilled at guns started aiming for Deucalion’s head or his legs to slow him down. Vines would emerge along Deucalion’s path to try to catch him, but he was too strong for the vegetation. Thirty seconds in, Deucalion is already pounding through the outermost magical barrier.

“What can we do!?"
“We’re sitting ducks!!”
“We need to teleport 1 out of here!”
“We can’t! If he gets out of range, we’ll all disappear!”
“What’ll we do?!”
“8! Tell us!”
“8! The walls are breaking!”
“8!”
“8!!”

“STOP! QUIET!,” 8 screamed. “Gimme a second to think!”

2, 6, and 10 were hobbling back to the perimeter, trying to catch up to Deucalion. They were halfway across the field and practically out of steam. Not even a moment later, 6 was hit by a bullet in the shoulder.

6 falls to the ground for cover, trying to keep his screams muffled and ignored.
“Go on without me,” 6 tells the other two. “You need to stop Deucalion!”

“We can’t keep doing this!,” 2 orders back. “The more people we have injured, the less chance we have at winning.”
“Someone has to take out Gerard,” 10 realizes. “His rain of bullets is starting to cost us.”
“We don’t have anybody else to spare!,” 6 explains.

“You’re forgetting that we still have our wild card,” said 2. “The one who started the attack of Gerard will be the one who ends it.”
6 eyes widen as he realizes what 2 meant. “11. Gerard is still dealing with 11.”

“How hilarious is this??,” Stiles #11 jeers to no one in particular. “The mighty Gerard, on the brink of death, and beaten to a corner by a high school kid.”

The man in question was still surrounded by a circle of flame. He and his gunners are emptying their cartridges, trying to kill the teen. But with a wave of his hands, 11 deflects each hail of bullets in all directions.

Stiles yawns in boredom. “Is there anything else you can entertain me with?”

“You filthy piece of shit!,” one of the gunmen scream. “You should die, along with the worthless whore that birthed you!”

11’s eyes burn red with rage. With an outstretched arm, he magically pulled that naive gunmen forward to burn into the Circle of Adrammalech. “How STUPID must you be to taunt someone on the winning side?,” Stiles spits out in a scowl. Within seconds, all that’s left of the poor soul is ash.

11 puts on his winning smile as soon as the deed is done. It’s as if nothing fazed the teen. “Now where were we?”

Before the taunting continued, a ringing pain soon echoes in 11’s chest and he falls to his knees. His eyes change a rainbow of colors in response. “One of the others just died,” he realizes.

Gerard, having realized what has happened shouts an order to the two pawns still alive. “Kill the other monsters on the field! Their barriers cannot hold against us!”

11, after spitting in disgust for what just happened, stands to his feet once more. “You idjits just never learn,” he says. In the distance, one of his past lives is hit by a stray bullet. 11 flinches in recoil.
And that, was the end of the tame fun they were having. “You want a monster?,“ Stiles asks. “I’ll give you a motherfucking monster."

11 tears off his shirt and screams out in rage. Claws burst from his fingertips and narrow tipped protrusions form on his back. Cracks of bone and the ripping of flesh resound in the air as red scales form on 11’s skin. The creepiest smiles forms on his face as fangs form from his jaw and wisps of smoke billow out. “Say hello to the most iconic monster ever born, dumbass.”

Growing to 40 times his own size, Stiles transformed into a giant red dragon.

“Is this-is this real? Is this even real?,“ Matt asks. “I mean, dragons? Real fire breathing dragons. Those don’t exist, right?"

Matt looks to Isaac, who holds his hands up in surrender. “Don’t ask me. I wouldn’t know."

“Well, apparently dragons do exist. And Stiles can turn into one,” says Derek. “I don’t know if I should be impressed or scared for the world.”

“Thanks, Sourwolf,” Stiles replies sarcastically. “Needed that vote of confidence.”

Derek shrugs in reply.

“So, are you like a were-dragon now?,“ Scott asks. “Is that- that even a thing?"

“No, Scott. I am not a were-dragon,” Stiles answers. “You can’t just put ‘were’ before any magical creature. I mean, next thing you’ll be looking for were-ducks, or were-squirrels. Or were-platypus? Were-platypuses? Just call them shapeshifters.

And I told you all- only 11 has all this masterful magic mumbo jumbo. Now hush up and watch. This is the best part!”

Dragon Stiles stretched his wings and blew his fiery breath into the air. The gunmen in the circle were mesmerized, no, frozen by the sheer size of the creature.

“Keep shooting, you stupid idiots!,” Gerard screamed at them, to no avail.

With a quick swipe of the dragon’s claw, one of the gunmen was flung and impaled on a tree branch. The other gunner was slammed into the ground with the dragon’s tail. Again, and again, and again.

Gerard fell backwards; his legs finally gave way to fear. The reality of death caught up to him.

Stiles's draconic form loomed over the crumpled man. A cloud of smoke burst from the creature’s nostrils, clouding Gerard’s vision. Next, the ground shakes once more from an unearthly roar.

Soon, it was too much, even for Gerard, to handle. A sharp pain catches his chest, making it hard to breathe. He searches through the smoke, looking for a sign, any sign of his attacker. It’s too late, though. Death is calling him. These breaths are his last. And maybe with this last shot, he’ll take the sorry bastard to hell with him.

“Where are you, you son of a bitch? Come get me!!,“ Gerard points to no one.

“It won’t work,” a voice replies.
“Why the fuck not?!?,” Gerard screams.

“Because your gun just melted out of your hands,” Stiles answers.

Gerard looks to his palms. The smoke still covering them both. It makes it difficult to see the sad truth- the voice was right. The rifle is starting to melt in his palms.

“No,” Gerard shakes his head in disbelief.

He looks up and sees a shadow in the distance.

“How are you doing this? HOW ARE YOU DOING THIS???,,” Gerard asks.

“It’s all on you, Pops,” Stiles answers. “It’s all in your-”

Stiles’ human face pops in front of him. “-head.”

Gerard looks around. His gunmen were beside him- bleeding, bruised and not breathing. No branch impaled them. No cracks on the ground from the whip of a dragon’s tail. The embers from the circle of flame that surrounded them, they were ebbing before his eyes. His rifle lays at his feet, solid and cold as the steel it was forged in. Was the dragon real? Were the flames real? Was any of it real?

… Well, the fear was still real. His lost breath was still real. The pain in his chest was still real. And as his vision blurred and arms tingled, he looked up to see a pale smile forming on the face of this human boy.

“In the end, you were still trapped in your body,” Stiles answered in pity. “And I guess, that’s the saddest death you will ever receive. Isn’t that right, Gerard?”

Stiles #11 did not get an answer. He was just happy to get to watch the light fade from the eyes of the once mighty Gerard Argent.

Without a break for the observers, the scene switches to the clashing of Deucalion and the magical barriers protecting the injured. Three barriers were broken, three were left. And the blind Alpha was not losing any steam.

“I’m getting close, aren’t I?,,” Deucalion taunts between blows. “I may not see it, but I hear it in your heartbeats, the parsing of your breaths. Yes, I lost two pawns, but more will come in their place. And once I get to you and your sad little corpses, I will burn everything you have ever loved. I will crush everything you hold dear. And the people closest to your hearts? I will make them bleed slowly, painfully- knowing it was you that caused them this pain worse than death.”

Another barrier breaks, and curses run amok. The clicking of empty guns sang like the cackles of the Fates. No more potions to throw, knives were out of the question, and their best attackers were either dead, injured, or far out of range.

“What’s your status, 12?,,” 8 begs his earpiece.

“I need 5 more minutes,” he replies.

“You have three,” 8 replies. As luck would have it, the second to last barrier breaks thereafter. “No, make that two.”
Deucalion is laughing like a madman. “Oh, how fun it is to be part of such a massacre! I had hoped that this would last more than it had. Such a pity that I won’t even remember your name.”

With one last roar, Deucalion breaks through the last barrier with a punch.

After that blow, Deucalion stands erect and straightens his jacket. “Now which one of you is the source of this magic?,” Deucalion muses.

All of Stiles just stares him down.

Deucalion just breathes in the air. “Ah, the scent of magic permeates the air. It’s intoxicating. And yet, not a waft of fear. Do you not fear death?”

“I’ve seen it far too many times to care,” one of the Stiles replies.
Deucalion quickly slashes that one’s throat, and blood rains over him.
Most of those that remain clutch their throats in pain.

Deucalion is cackling in reply. “Oh, how joyous. Let me guess: he’s the 3rd- no, the 4th, wasn’t he? Who’s next?”

Three Stiles start rushing at him with knives, all dead within seconds. More and more succumb to pain.

Stiles #8’s nose starts to bleed from the barrage of feedback. “Had enough killing, Deucalion?,” he spits out to buy time.

“Ah, the leader, I presume. Definitely not the source of the magic, but definitely the most amusing,” Deucalion mocks. He walks toward number 8 slowly. “If you really must know, I am pretty damn sure this will barely quench my thirst for blood, fake and magical as it is. Maybe that pithy beta you are protecting will provide a nice little beverage. And the twins- tsk, tsk, tsk- I had hoped so much more for them. But, they have seen me almost lose. No one alive should be a witness to such a rare occasion. They will have to go as well.”

“No!,” Aiden pleaded. “Let us live! W-we will never say a word to anyone!”

“It’s been decided,” Deucalion snaps. ”Now, as for you-,“ he looks towards number 8. “-would you like to tell me how it feels to lose? It has been forever since I have felt such bitter pittance.”

“Why don’t you feel it for yourself, bitch?,” number 8 says with a smirk.
He pulls out a remote and presses the top button, covering his ears.

Explosions demolish the grove’s perimeter. The bombs cascade into a sonic barrage, soon followed by a loud whine from sonic emitters. The onslaught forces Deucalion to cover his ears in pain; his enhanced hearing is now his folly.

From 3 different directions, darts fly towards Deucalion. Snipers shot the handicapped Alpha with over a dozen Kanima venom tranquilizers. Not even his enhanced healing could keep up the barrage. Within seconds, Deucalion falls to the ground unable to move, and barely able to breathe.

Stiles #8 stoops over Deucalion, smirking. “Do you know the story of the Trojan Horse, Duke? What am I talking about? I’m sure you know it.

The Trojans let in a wooden horse to their impenetrable fortress, supposedly a trophy- a sign of surrender from the Greeks. At night, when everyone is asleep, soldiers hidden inside the wooden horse come out, open the gates, and decisively end the war. The lesson of the story is simple: never take a gift from fate for granted. There is always a catch.”
8 takes out a syringe full of a dark liquid. He bends down and looks deeply into Deucalion’s unseeing eyes. “I knowingly put all of my weakest forms in this spot for you Deucalion. I placed this gift for you: a strategic no-brainer. Just head for the target as soon as all of us were taken or tired out. Pretty simple, am I right? But, you underestimated my gift. You should have seen that it was too easy. You let your guard down.

You thought we were unarmed, unable to kill you in your mighty stronghold.” Stiles injects Deucalion with the concoction.

“This is a 50/50 mixture of Kanima venom and fae-enhanced wolfsbane. Your Alpha healing should be next to none in mere seconds,” Stiles explains.

Deucalion’s clear eyes turn the brightest shade of red. Black bile starts pouring out of his mouth, nose, and ears. All you can hear is the painful gurgle from the once scary foe.

“How does it feel to remember defeat, Deucalion? Bitter as the smokes of the hell where you belong?,” Stiles mocks. “The sweetest thing with defeat is how much you grow from it- the most bitter of antidotes tend to be the strongest. Now is the time to reap the benefits of this defeat. Wouldn’t you agree, Peter?”

The beta behind him is surprised to be called. “Me? Well, I thought I just get to watch!,” he says, pleasantly surprised.

“Yes, you,” Stiles chuckles. “I think it’s high time you get the one thing you most desire: power beyond your wildest dreams.”

Peter saunters forward with a smile. “Well, what did I ever do to deserve such an honor?”

“Eh, you can make it up to me in the future,” Stiles says, walking away.

Peter lets out the beast and stalks forward. He snaps his jaw at excitement.

“Oh, and one thing dear,” Stiles interrupts. “When you pay me back, I do hope you get creative.”

As Peter lands the final strike, all but one Stiles disappear into wisps of smoke. And the vision fades to non-existence.

John Stilinski was on his knees, eyes closed in frustration. “Is it over?,” he asks, shaking. Still in the nothingness of space the group waits a reply.

“Almost,” Stiles answers. His form finally appears behind the group, back lit by a blinding supernova. No more disembodied voices and freaky visions. “One last thing I have to do: introduce you to two new inhabitants of Beacon Hills.”

Limping behind him, two shirtless men entered from the light, covered in scratches and bruises. “Ladies and gentlemen, may I present the twin alphas, Aiden and Ethan. I already got them an apartment here and signed them up for school. I hope you all play nice.”

Chapter End Notes

A/N: Anyone willing to teach me stuff about Arthur Mythology/Storyline? I need it to
complete this arc.

Happy Holidays! Give me time to write the next chapter! And as always, thanks for liking my work.
Nightmare Flashbacks 2: Was It Real? Any of It?

Chapter Summary

It's practically midnight and Stiles needs some sleep. But instead, he gets an unwarranted visit.

I guess it's up to Stiles to decide if any of it was real.

T/W: Graphic depictions of horrifying stuff. very monstrous stuff.

Chapter Notes

A/N: Next chapter in Arthur Archives arc is filler, fluff. This plot bunny came in for the New Year, so here’s an interlude.
Hope you enjoy!

a.k.a. I had a line and an idea that I can't squeeze into my story so I forced this scene.

WARNING: Spoiler alerts hidden in between this chapter.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

It was mid-April. Or, it should have been. Stiles remembers baking cookies, setting down a rub on the steaks for the party, wrapping the presents, and all that’s left is to ice the cake. Four birthdays in April is tough to celebrate with all this drama, but putting it all into one was a grand idea, indeed.

(Plus, a little magical aphrodisiac will make the birthday sex awesome for a special someone. Well, for a few ‘someone’s. But, more importantly for good ole Stiles.) I mean, three and a half months of dancing around and flirting- neither Peter nor Derek had staked their claim. Stiles is getting too old for this. He’s mentally like, what, 33 years old and…

Sleep. Stiles should be sleeping. I mean it’s almost midnight, and he has all the non-magical cooking to do tomorrow. So he puts away all the utensils, changes into his PJs, and goes to lay down on his bed.

The wind is whistling outside. It feels so tranquil and serene. He stares at the wall clock as it ticks closer to midnight. Maybe like counting sheep, this will bring him back to rest.

11:59:53
11:59:54
11:59:55

The clock freezes at 55 seconds. Stiles blinks in confusion. Could the battery be dead?, he muses.

11:59:55
Stiles sits up with a start and looks outside his window. The stars start to race outside. Soon, a bright light shines from the west as the sun rises back into the sky. He looks back at the clock and catches 4:22 pm whiz on by.

“What the hell is going on?!,” Stiles screams.

Stiles jumps out of bed and runs for his hoodie. Whatever is happening- it’s nowhere near good. He grabs his journal from deep within and starts writing like mad.

“April 21st, year 17. We found an important clue at the Arthur Archives and are about on our way to the Nazca lines at the end of the semester. Killed Nogitsune last week. Two of the pack are dead. Seeds have not yet been harvested. One rune used up. Time loop has started. Everything else is the same.”

With that last word, Stiles just screams out loud:
“why why Why Why WHY WHY WHY YYYY?!?!?!?”

Outside his window, he hears the Browns next door screaming “HAPPY NEW YEAR!!”

He looks down and sees a brown sweater. Pulling back his sleeve, his runes are gone and his scars are only a memory. Before him was his laptop, staring mockingly at him. He’s on that familiar website doing research on creatures that can inflict paralysis on werewolves.

It’s January 1st, of his 18th year.

Stiles found it hard to breathe, no impossible. His hands were shaking. He started to clasp them tight. His vision was blurring from the tears. He used his arms to wipe them away. (Year 17 will be the second year he doesn’t end up with either Peter or Derek. And he’s this close to emptying the contents of his stomach.)

He was wracking in sobs, unprepared for this sorrow- a blubbering mess. How can he pull up that impossible façade for the umpteeneth time? He was promised a year of the same misery, yes- but another of hope. And two-thirds of it is gone.

“Why?,” he asked an empty room.

“Because that was fun,” a female voice answered from behind him.

Standing in a flowing hospital gown, Claudia Stilinski answered a bewildered Stiles. Her face shimmered between angry, sad, and an evil grin.
Stiles looked around and he was no longer in his room. He was on the roof of Beacon Hills Hospital, unarmed physically and emotionally.

“Wh-what do you mean it was fun? Who are you?,” Stiles asked.

“Why- don’t you recognize your own mother, dear ------!-------?,” the woman answered.

Stiles shook his head. He thought he heard his name, but it was garbled. A whining noise took his name’s stead. “I know my mother. I know her voice. And you are DEFINITELY not her. You can’t even say my real name.”

“That piece of filth is not your real name!,” she screamed at Stiles. The creature loomed darker and more violent than the past second. Stiles must have touched a nerve. “You don’t even know your real name! Your name and everyone else’s was decided since the beginning of time! And this bitch of a woman took yours away for some, some gibberish!”

Stiles just stared at the creature with her mother’s body, a mouth frothing with anger and eyes like daggers. “Whoa, whoa, whoa. Okay, I hear you. You still didn’t answer me though. What are you? Why are you doing this?,” he asks warily.

The creature, bipolar as it is, turns her face back to a smile. “Oh, dear, I told you. This is so MUCH fun. I’ve watched you over the years, your little adventures with your friends all over the world. It was fun to watch while it lasted.

So I figured, shake things up a bit, y’ know. Make it memorable.”

(Stiles was flitting through his pockets for anything, any weapon of sorts. The pen he had earlier would suffice.)

Looking up, he finds the creature right up in his face. He stifles a surprised scream.

“You are my favorite one out of all of them, y’ know?,” she quips. “Always inquisitive. Always had a heart. Memories and emotions are a powerful thing. But for you- they’re all you have left.”

“I still have my family, my pack,” Stiles spits out. His pockets are deep. Too deep perhaps. There’s nothing there.

“Oh yes, your pack, your purpose, your anchor,” she answers.

Stiles pockets aren’t supposed to be this empty or hollow. It’s as if there is nothing there but the fabric crawling up his skin. He looks down in panic and finds that unfortunately he is right. The pockets are closing up his arms, making him unable to move. He struggles to break free of the cloth prison.

The creature tuts at Stiles. “See, my dear, anchors keep you in place. You always know where you are. But, they also keep you from moving on.

And, when nothing else keeps you afloat-;“

The creature combusts into a cloud of smoke.

Stiles breaks into a cough as his vision is encumbered. Next thing he knows is that he is in the bottom of the Beacon Hills High School pool. His legs are chained to the floor and the water is rising quickly. He looks up to see the Kanima behind whatever creature brought him here.

“Anchors keep you in place…;,” she repeats.

The water is knee deep.
“But, they also keep you from moving on…”
His waist is completely submerged.

“And when nothing else keeps you afloat…”
Stiles stretches his neck above the water’s surface.

“Anchors drag you down to drown…”
Stiles drags his last possible breath of air.

Stiles looks around and see other drowned bodies: Scott, Derek, Sheriff Stilinski…
Their eyes were empty and dead. Their skin all pale from submersion. He is lying a underwater
graveyard, chained to the floor and doomed to die.

The bodies around him start to move and face him. They swim and soon arrive at his waist. The arms
become a tangling mess as they drag him down deeper and deeper into the dark.

His lungs start to ache, and the light of surface is growing dim. Soon he lets go of his last breath as a
scream of bubbles that rise away from him.

A watery voice speaks to him from far away.
“Anchors drag you down to drown
in a darkness that you have wrought yourself.”

Stiles sits up with a gasp and a scream. He is breathing in the air like a starved babe, drenched in
sweat. He pulls up his sleeves and sees the runes. He checks his phone for the date and time: April
22. 4:47 am.

On wobbly legs, he runs to the bathroom and heaves into the toilet. He just sits there, shaking, head
hobbled over a filthy toilet.

_Was it real? Any of it?, he wonders. He’s too scared to ask out loud. Maybe that creature is real and
behind him lurking with that faded smile he can’t shake from his memory._

It had to be nightmare, a figment of his imagination. A creation of his subconscious telling him some
 messed up thing that he needs to figure out.

On that train of thought, he remembers the last thing that voice said: “Anchors drag you down to
drown in a darkness you have wrought yourself.”

Stiles feels shivers up his spine and decides to take a sleeping pill and hope for the best. He actually
needs some sleep, nightmares be damned.

Wiping up his sweat, he changes shirts (and grabs a dry blanket from the hallway closet). Just to be
on the safe side, he takes down the wall clock and closes the blinds. He sends a wishful thought out
to the universe for a decent night’s sleep, just for the rest of the night.

Minutes run by, Stiles’ eyes flutter and off to dreamland he goes.

While Stiles is out, his journal falls out of his red hoodie. By itself, it opens to the last page.

His last entry:
April 21st, year 17. We found an important clue at the Arthur Archives and are about on our way to
the Nazca lines at the end of the semester. Killed Nogitsune last week. Two of the pack are dead. Seeds
have not yet been harvested. One rune used up. Time loop has started. Everything else is the same.”

-it slowly starts to fade away, letter by letter. It soon ends on one last message before it’s gone on
black smoke.

“A l l, y. ou c A re a bo u t
a nd. K No w. a re dea d. S h e
n e v e . r. lo s. E s.”

And just like that, the night is over. Stiles’ 17th year continues on.

Chapter End Notes

A/N: Yikes. Tall order to fill.

Thanks for the likes and comments! TW continues tomorrow! Hope my faves will still
be alive.
Arthur Archives Interlude: First Day, SURPRISE!

Chapter Summary

Gerard Argent is dead, along with a pack of Alphas and a dark druid known as a Darach. There are three new Alphas in town: Ethan and Aiden, twin Alphas that can merge into a strong beast, and Peter Hale, heir to the power of the once mighty Deucalion. Now that all the loose ends are tied, the new school year is about to start. The teen wolves (banshee, druid, kanima, and whatever Danny is supposed to be) barely get to readjust as the school-year begins.

What’s next in line for our favorite supernatural teenagers? How much will John Stilinski pay for therapy after seeing his son not really die for so many times? Will there finally be any sense of normalcy in this story?

T/W: no trigger warnings seen. maybe the rhubarb.

Chapter Notes

A/N:
Sorry I took a while. I just graduated from college!! I walked the stage two weeks ago, with my hard-earned Bachelor’s in Mathematics. Hence, the lack of updates this past semester.

Any likenesses to actual places are completely coincidental, etc. But the business plan I present is MINE! I will own such a business or my name isn’t-whoops. Almost slipped right there.

Warning for ficlets and lack of plot… kinda.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

I. THE NEW RULE IN THE MCCALL HOUSEHOLD

Scott McCall is slowly waking up from a sprinkling of rain. Funny, he thought. He doesn’t remember camping out last night.

“Come on, Scott,” a familiar voice chimes. “First day of school and you’re already sleeping in?”

“Ugh, shut up, Stiles,” Scott replies. “And stop spraying me with a water gun.”

“Who said anything about a water gun?”

Scott begrudgingly opens his sleep heavy eyes to see an actual rain cloud above his bed. “What the
actual hell, Stiles?,” he snaps. “Ugh. Five more minutes.”

“Oh, no, Scotty. You might wanna wake up if you want to see a little present I got for you.”

“Shut up. Five more minutes,” the sleepy teen replies.

“You asked for it,” Stiles warned. With a flourish of his hands, the cloud shimmers to a darker shade. Soon the sprinkling of rain quickly changes to a small flurry of snow, all concentrated on Scott’s bed.

The poor teen screams awake from the cold and rolls off his bed. Snow just piles on the bed, as Stiles cackles in the background. “Oh if only you were there on year one, you would be dying of laughter right now. I mean there’s this precious moment where I told Matt I was an abominable snowman and he didn’t believe me.”

Scott was shivering; he definitely did not find it funny. Stomping can be heard through the house as Melissa McCall barges in, still wearing her scrubs. “Guys, I just got home from a double so please keep the noise do- OH MY GOD!,” she screams. ”WHAT IS GOING ON HERE?!”

Without a blip of hesitation, Scott shouts “Stiles did it! It’s his fault! Not me!”

“STILES! Snow?! Really??,” Melissa exclaims. “This will take forever to clean!”

Stiles wizens up and apologizes. “I’m sorry, Mama McCall. I’ll fix it.” With a snap of his fingers, the cloud sucks up the snow into itself and disappears. The once damp bed is now dry and still disheveled. “Back to as it was.”

Melissa just sighs from exhaustion. “I give up. I can’t believe I’m saying this, but new house rule: no more weather magic in the house. Am I clear?”

“Well, technically, I didn’t change the weather,” Stiles starts to explain. “I just conjured a small clo-“

“I said: Am I clear, Stiles?,” Melissa said, power stance and mom voice on.

“Yes, ma’am,” Stiles answers with a salute.

“At ease,” Melissa answers with a smile. “Now as I said, I came from a double so just let me sleep a couple of hours before you start burning down the house I haven’t finished paying for.”

“Sleep is a beautiful thing,” Scott agrees, looking at his bed.

“Gotcha, Mama McCall,” Stiles said. “I’ll just get Scott ready for school.”

“But,” Scott complains. “SLEEP.”

“Just go, Scott,” Stiles says, pushing the teen to his dresser.

Melissa shakes her head, as she goes on her own quest for sleep.

II. THE THEME IS PURPLE AND NEON EVERYTHING

Three days ago, Stiles texts Derek to meet him at the corner of 12th and Grambling by 5 pm. “Bring a pen and wear loose fitting clothes,” Stiles adds.

Fashionably late at 5:05 pm, Derek shows up in his plain white tee and gray jogging pants. Stiles is on his phone, texting like a maniac outside some freshly painted building. “Hey there! You made it!
Let me just finish this one thing…”

“What am I doing here, Stiles?,” Derek asks.

“Proving a bet. That, and being an overprotective Alpha,” Stiles answers.

Derek raises an eyebrow at the teen.

Stiles smiles in reply. “Every single year, you amaze me with how amazing your eyebrows can say everything and nothing at the same time. I’ll explain as soon as- oh look they made it!”

Derek turns around to see Matt Daehler parking his car, Isaac in tow. Walking from the other direction, Ethan and Aiden approach the building as well.

“Is this the right place?,” Matt asks.

“That’s what Siri said,” Isaac answers.

“Look, Stiles is there. We’re at the right place.”

The two teens exit the car and jog over. Stiles gives each an awkward bro hug as they ask what’s going on. The Alpha twins just stare at the group, confused and highly perplexed, reluctant in joining in.

They push away all attempts for Stiles to hug them as well.

“Stiles, what are doing here?,” Ethan asks.

“Market research and paper signing,” Stiles answers. “Does your Alpha know you’re here?”

The twins shrug in reply.

(Derek mouths to Stiles, “What Alpha?” Stiles just ignores it.)

“Market research for what?,” Isaac asks nervously. I mean, research with Stilinski is never a safe thing.

“For the future, my friends!,” Stiles answers. He ambles to the front door, licking his lips in anticipation. “You are now looking at the future biggest teen hangout in Beacon Hills: Ledge&Dairy!”

The five just looked at Stiles all confused. “Ledge&Dairy?,” Isaac bites.

“Part rock climbing gym, part frozen yogurt chain. There’s a trampoline park as well, and a small coffee shop with Wifi,” Stiles fiddles with his phone as he ushers them into the building. Soon they hear the song Pure Imagination from the original Willy Wonka movie.

True enough, the inside was larger than expected. As you walk in, a large padded trampoline fun house greets you. Along the walls, holds and out cropped ledges are speckled in neon colors. Marquees and televisions hang around the ceiling, in between the web of safety harnesses and scaffolding. Everything was a mismatch of dark purple, neon yellow, orange, and green. It was equally horrifying yet mesmerizing.

To the right of this athletic jungle, a group of handymen were still setting up counter tops of marble and display shelves. If you peeked, you could see a couple of them installing stainless state-of-the-art ovens and vents- a visual fetish for any wanton baker. And along the rightmost wall, around a dozen frozen yogurt dispensers are waiting. And probably the most unnerving item in the area, a small nook in the back has a modest bookcase full of different YA novels.
To say the least, it definitely took them all a moment to absorb this insanity.

“You’re starting… a business?...,” Matt asks in disbelief.

“Yeah,” Stiles replies.

“Why?,” Matt responds. (Derek and Isaac internally face palm. Nobody should ever ask why when it comes to Stiles.)

“Why not?,” he replies.

Matt just babbles incoherently in disbelief. Isaac decides to rescue his, erm… his Matt by changing the subject. “So, we are here for market research?”

“Yeah, we’ll spend the next couple of hours climbing the holds, playing with the marquees, brainstorming events, and hashing out a menu. We’ll look through shift schedules, requirements for employment, branding opportunities, and legal blindsides. The color scheme stays though- purple and neon EVERYTHING. It’s gonna be amazing!”

“And why would we help you with all that?,” Aiden asks.

“Didn’t I tell you?,” Stiles answers as he runs toward the padded area. “All 6 of us will be co-owners. Now, Derek, where’s the pen?”

III. THE NEW SEMESTER

High school. Every 80’s movie seems to get it right- the anxiety, the energy, the need to belong or the lust to stand out. BFF’s hug in the parking lot after missing each other over winter break. Bro hugs were shared by the grassy areas. Peals of laughter peppered the morning drone of gossip and catch-up. Everyone ranged from “so bored of being at home” to “why does this break have to end?” And of course, the pranksters started early, defacing the BHHS sign to a more colorful word for female dogs.

Sputtering in the distance, a familiar Jeep was pulling into the lot. Stiles was inside, ordering minions on his phone. “No, we want Raspberry Mint for February, and Hazelnut Mocha for this month!”

“Yes to the scones, no to the rhubarb.”

“Oh for the love of all that is ponies, do NOT insult the bronies by putting the theme song on the kiddie playlist. Leave the music to me please.”

“Yes, you can add your gallery to the ceiling. Heck, if you can find a wall space, open it to the public. Wait, aren’t you supposed to be here for first period?”

“Nope, I got lucky this semester. My first period is free on alternating days.”

“Yeah. Go on and rub it in my face, Matt. I’ll see you at lunch,” Stiles replies as he hangs up. A large sigh escapes him as he checks his passenger seat for his backpack. His little journal peeks out the front pocket. “I really am getting too old for this noisy school,” he said to no one. “Speaking of noise, where the hell is Scott?”

Right on cue, a loud thrum of an engine greets the lot as a green motorcycle enters the scene. Eyes latch on to the offending vehicle as it pulls into the spot next to Stiles’ Jeep. Scott McCall removes his helmet with the widest grin in the world.
He dismounts and starts rapping on Stiles window. “Dude! Coolest gift ever! How did you know I wanted to save up for a bike?!”

“Mother’s intuition,” Stiles jokes.

“No seriously, man. Thanks!” Scott chimes. Soon enough, a small clutter of people waltzes by the new motorcycle to admire it. His new vehicle garnered so many nods from his peers.

“Yeah, Stiles got it for me.”

“I dunno. I’m supposed to say the legal speed limit, right?”

“This morning. Didn’t know about it beforehand.”

Stiles is leaning on his Jeep, beaming. He’s happy that Scott is getting all this attention.

“A bike? Really Stiles?” Boyd asks. A normal person would freak out that a hulking man suddenly shows up next to him.

“I felt like I owed him,” he shrugged in response. “Normally, Mama McCall wouldn’t find out about werewolves by March or April. Sometimes even July. I couldn’t stand putting him through all that heartbreak. So I was like, first day of school- surprise!”

“And you get popular by association.”

“That too.” Stiles smiles.

“Well, that’s about to end soon.”

“Why?”

“Cause guess who just got matching luxury cars over the break?,” Boyd answers.

Scott’s fifteen seconds of fame ended as soon as it started. Jackson and Lydia drive in one after another in the most luxurious of red vehicles, practically fresh from the lot. (Danny was right behind them in his gleaming Toyota Camry.) They parked, grabbed their stuff and strolled right in. ‘Twas just another day in the life of the rich and famous.

“Bet you want to key those cars now, don’t you?,” Boyd teases.

Stiles just shrugs. “It’s called fifteen seconds of fame for a reason. Plus, I don’t think Scott minds.”

He points to the teen wolf still ogling his new bike. “Oh, get a room!” Stiles jests.

Scott just flips a bird in response.

Boyd shakes his head as he walks away.

Back in the world of perfection, Jackson and Lydia powerwalk through the hallways, Danny two steps behind. “What are you doing, Danny?” Lydia asks.

“I’m walking to class,” he replies.

“I mean, what are you doing walking behind us?,” she asks.

“Yeah, man. You should be standing right next to me,” Jackson says, winking to a couple of passing sophomores, who start squealing.

“I really shouldn’t,” Danny replies.

Lydia rolls her eyes, slows Jackson down to face the awkward teen. “Look, Danny, this-” Lydia replies, pointing to all three of them. “This is us. This is real. And I will never care what anyone
thinks of this. We are the 3 hottest teens on campus. We have a connection. So whatever this is,” she
grabs and connects Jackson and Danny’s hands, whilst grabbing the other in hers. “-we are never
leaving you behind.”

“What she said, Danny.” Jackson agrees with his signature smirk. He squeezes both of their hands a
little bit tighter. “You’re my top two. That will never change.”

Danny tries to hide his blush. “Thanks.”

They just keep on walking. Danny laughs to himself. “What a first day surprise.”

“Yeah, well, it’s only beginning,” Jackson replies.

“You know your hands feel a lot scalier than last year,” Danny chides.
“I know, right?,” Lydia agrees.

Jackson just laughs out loud in response.

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IV. A CAST CHANGE-UP?

And all throughout the city, puzzle pieces are starting to fall into place.

Near a hidden den by Route 17, Brett Talbot, Satomi Ito, and Peter Hale are roaming the area, at the
behest of Stiles Stilinski. “What are we supposed to be looking for?” Brett asks the two alphas.

“A coyote,” Satomi answers.

“Coyotes? Here in Beacon Hills?,” he responds.

“My dear child. Stranger things have happened here over the years,” Peter answers. “Besides, aren’t
you curious as to why Stiles asked 2 alphas to do this?”

“So why am I being tagged along?,” he asks.

Before an answer could be heard, a howl is heard in the distance.

Earlier that day, Sheriff Stilinski is in his final set of interviews for the police force.

“Come in, Miss… Argent?,” he calls out in confusion.

Victoria Argent saunters in, confidence abound in a stately power suit and resume in hand. “Sheriff
Stilinski, a pleasure as always.”

John Stilinski starts to massage his temples in disbelief. “And to what do I owe this… this
interview?”

“I would like to help the police force. I have years of certifications and training under my belt, both
formal and informal. I have an eye for detail and a meticulous hand in paperwork and red tape. I
believe I can… bring some class back into this station,” she says walking around the office and
eyeing the layer of dust throughout the desks.

“And as a hunter, you would have a hold into the local enforcement- a proverbial thumb in the pie,”
Sheriff Stilinski fills in the blanks tersely.
“Now that you know of the things that go bump in the night, wouldn’t you say that this force needs all that help that it can get?,” Victoria muses.

John just glares at the woman, mulling it over for only a moment. He stands up walks over to Victoria Argent and reaches out a hand in response. “Thank you very much for coming in to interview.”

“So, shall I be starting Monday?,” Victoria asks, returning his handshake.

“Oh, you seem to misunderstand,” John clarifies, letting go of her hand. “I simply said thank you for coming. I have no intention of hiring you to our station.”

“And why not?,” Victoria returns with a glare.

“Because first and foremost, while your experience would be helpful, the Argents are hunters- not policemen or policewomen. We cops are here to protect the laws of man, to keep the peace. We hold guns as a last resort, and breathe easy when issues do not require us to unholster them.

And as far as I know, the Argents are very matriarchal. If I had hired you, I would be your boss- an issue I’m sure would be chafing to no end. I see how strong you are Victoria- as a woman, as a leader, and as a hunter. But I am sorry- there is no position here for you at the precinct,” John explains.

Victoria’s eyes narrow at that response. “Well,” she collects. “That was quite humbling and honest of you, John. I believe I shall let you go now.”

“Oh, Victoria,” John calls out. “Please take your bugs with you. I don’t want to have to arrest you for something within 5 seconds of your interview.”

Victoria freezes at the door and hurriedly collects the 3 devices she has hid throughout the office. Her neck has hued red in indignation, as she saunters out of the precinct.

“Deputy Clark? Could you let our next interviewer in?” John requests. “I believe it’s a Mr. Parrish?”

Later that evening, Christopher Argent was at the local cemetery after a request from Stiles.

“I know it’s a lot to ask, but trust me on this. I really need you to dig up your sister’s grave and double check on the body. Let me know what you find.-Stiles,” the message read.

In all honesty, he was worried mostly about ghouls or some witches bothering her sister’s remains. For something so ominous to come from Stiles, Chris was armed to the teeth. The lining of mistletoe and mountain ash seemed intact around the grave as he dug in. This calmed him down a bit as he continued digging. Soon, with a loud thunk, he reaches the coffin that lay beneath him. A heave and a ho later, he covers his nose and mouth as he opens the coffin.

Inside, he sees his sister’s dead form. Chris’s stomach turns in disgust. Everything still lay tranquil on her corpse. Her hair is still silky. Her clothes are still pristine. And her skin, still smooth and unblemished-

What?!

Chris checks the corpse’s neck. It was unharmed and perfect. It was soft and cold, but whole. No claw marks cutting off her jugular. No discoloration from blood loss. No signs of skin drying or early decay.
He examines the corpse as a whole. Her arms were locked and disproportionate, as were her legs and torso. Chris curses into the night to see a lifelike mannequin buried where her sister should be. What the hell is going on?

Chris starts to lock up the remains and cover the coffin once more. His sister’s body is gone, and only one Stiles Stilinski knows possibly why. He packs up his shovel, and drives over. This was not a surprise he had welcomed.

Chapter End Notes

A/N
Give me time to write the next chapter! And as always, thanks for liking my work.

ERMAHGERD I graduated!!!!! OMG!!!
Chapter Summary

It’s the first day of school, and everyone in the pack is starting to get their groove back into things. Homework assigned, teachers introduced, and soon- lacrosse tryouts are beginning. Not to mention, a new hangout just exploded into the scene in Beacon Hills.

Will this normality go on forever?
How much money is Stiles’ new business making?
And what does he have against rhubarb?

T/W: None I could immediately find. Squint you can see abuse.

Chapter Notes

A/N:
H-what? Another update?! It's nice to have time to write.

More crack/fluff stuff, if you even saw any last chapter. Would you have wanted Victoria working for the precinct? That’d be too weird in my books.

Also, I put Liam, Hayden, Cody, and Mason as freshmen at this point cause I cannot for the life of me remember Season 5. Like it’s perma-blocked in my brain.

So many characters to add and remove, so little time!

LEDGE&DAIRY-MAIN TRAMPOLINE AREA, ROUGHLY 4:45 PM

It’s been 4 days of normal school so far and the wolves of Beacon Hills are getting wary. Most of them are just going through their schoolwork, worrying about their social lives and such. (Allison and Scott are still doing this dating/not dating thing. It’s starting to get sickening. And don’t get me started with Matt and Isaac.)

The lack of action is getting to them. So, having free passes to a trampoline park/rock climbing gym is starting to pay out. Say what you want about wolves being land animals, but some of them still need to know how to climb. This free workout is keeping half their hackles down as they wait for tryouts tomorrow.

“So, who’s planning to sign up?,” Allison asks.

“Danny, Jackson, Scott and me are pretty much the first signatures on the sign up sheet,” Stiles
answers. He’s watching the (unnecessary) harnesses for a 5-way race to the top of Mount Kale-
manjaro. “Isaac and Matt are on the fence about signing up at all. Same for Boyd.”

Scott is right behind Jackson, with Matt, Isaac, and Danny not far behind. “Go Danny!,” Lydia
screams. “Keep up with those furballs!”

Stiles shoots a side-glance to Lydia, biting his lower lip. Allison and Boyd, of course, catches him.
“What’s going on?” Allison asks.

“Huh? Oh nothing,” Stiles deflects. “I’m just wondering where Erica and the twins are.”
Boyd just raises a disbelieving eyebrow at him.

Before snark could be shed, Allison screams. “Scott!”

The teen wolf’s left hand slipped off a hold and is now dangling with his right. “Aaaargh! I can’t
move my entire left arm!,” Scott exclaims.

Stiles curses under his breath and surveys the area. Too many mundane eyes for magic. “Matt, Isaac!
I need you to check if his harness is good! Once it is- Scott, let go so I can drag you down. This race
is over!”

(Suffice to say, Mount Kale-manjaro is closed for the day for “maintenance” reasons.)

As soon as all of them are on the ground, Stiles is starting to seethe. “All of you, follow me,” he says
with finality.

They walk to the dairy portion of the store and head to the bookcase in the back. A shimmer of
Stiles’ hand, and push of a secret button later, the bookcase opens up to reveal a hidden room.

“Is this… is this a secret lair?,” Matt gasps.

“Yes, it is,” Stiles answers with a snip. “Jackson, Matt, and Scott- front and center. NOW.”

The power behind those words- no one had the audacity to argue. Stiles examines Scott’s gloves,
and sees a clear liquid on his left. A sniff later, he identifies it as Kanima venom.

“Kanima venom?!,” Scott exclaimed. He glares at Jackson immediately. “You cheated!!”

Jackson just looks shocked at the revelation. “B-but how?,,” Jackson stammered. “I haven’t even
changed or anything since that night! I never even lost moments of time like before!”

Scott’s eyes were gold in fury. Stiles had to shake him out of his anger. “Scott! It might not be his
fault.”

“What do you mean?,” Danny asks.

Stiles goes on to explains the subtleties of being a teen wolf. “Anger, fear, lust- any surge of
adrenaline can trigger a partial or full transformation. Unlike the movies, no full moon is needed.

If we extend that logic to other shapeshifters, Kanima could work the same way,” Stiles resolves
looking to Matt and Jackson. “And we have something unprecedented here- two teen Kanima
without masters of their own.”

“You think I’m a Kanima, too?” Matt asks.

“There’s only one way to find out,” Stiles answers, his staff extending from his robe. “Isaac, Danny,
Lydia, and Allison- you might want to not watch this part.”
Stiles runes glow gold, and blue fire extends from his staff. “This will last maybe ten minutes tops.”

ELSEWHERE IN BEACON HILLS

Deputy Jordan Parrish just started a few days ago, as a member of Beacon Hills PD. He was supposed to stake out Kingsman Point for any road racing or teens out for a not-so-safe time. A dead GPS battery and a couple of wrong turns later, he’s lost in the wilderness and cursing himself out.

“Where the hell am I?,” Jordan complains. “This has got to be the worst luck of all. Three days in and I’m lost already!” Daringly close to calling for backup on the police radio, he was soon interrupted by 4 large figures dashing across the road before him.

“Whoa!,” he screams, steering the vehicle to a halt. “What was that?”

He exits his vehicle and walks toward the path left behind by the creatures. Four set of tracks lay before him. The smallest looked canine, of no particular worry to the deputy. Though rare, wild canines can be found in the California wilderness. But a set of human boots were in that path, along with 2 more canine imprints that are quite larger than normal. Its size would fit a bear more than any wolf located in the area.

Swallowing his pride, Jordan calls for backup. “This is Deputy Parrish, calling for whatever code means I got lost in the woods. I’m still by a road with a few sharp turns when I saw two large, err… animals scramble across the path. It looked like wolves but were large enough to be bears. Please advise.”

“Deputy Parrish, this is Sheriff Stilinski,” a voice replies. “GPS shows I’m roughly 12 clicks from your location. Standby, and wait for me to guide you out of there.”

“Copy that. Over and out,” said the lost deputy. Parrish just stares at the tracks of unimaginable size, wondering if he should take out his gun.

“Oh crap, that was my boss picking me up,” he realizes. “Great first impression, Parrish.”

He rests his head again the steering wheel in embarrassment. “At least in a small town like Beacon Hills, it won’t get weirder than this.”

BACK AT LEDGE&DAIRY- FROYO SHOP

“Hey, can I get some service here?,” Greenberg asked from the main counter. The coffee clerk in the back asked for a moment, rushing back out with boxes of condiments to restock the bar.

Fixing her apron, she greets the customer. “Hi, my name is Hayden. What can I get you today?”

Taken aback by her smile, Greenberg switches to his lame attempt at flirting. “You can get me a large coffee, black, and maybe a date Friday night,” he says with a wink.

With a winning smile, Hayden replies. “I’m sorry, sir. I would be working that day.” (“and any other day you’d ask me out, dirtbag,” she adds in a whisper.)

“Would you like to try our scones? These are fresh from the oven- I just baked them.”

“Coming from your hands, they’re bound to be sweet, sweet cheeks,” he quips. “Do you have pies? Rhubarb?”
Hayden tries to stifle her laugh. “I’m sorry, sir. Our owners express the sentiment that we will never have rhubarb on our menu. But, I will definitely get started on that coffee for you,” she answers with a forced fake wink.

Hayden goes to the back room to prepare the coffee and heaves a sigh. “Oh God, why do I get all the flirts?” she complains. “You’re taking the next one, Cody.”

“You get all the flirts? Do I need to remind you of Mrs. Baumstein, the cat-lady?,” he replies. “I offer her some leftover cherry Danishes. Soon, she talks about adopting me and how much she reminds me of her first love.” A shudder runs up and down his spine. He wipes a beat of sweat of his brow as he continues to knead the dough.

Hayden starts up the brew, and pulls out her phone to check her social media feeds. “Speaking of Danishes, we’re low on the cream cheese ones,” she reminds him.

“They’ll be out of the oven in 7 minutes. We really shouldn’t have let our boss write down his “recommended section.” Who’d have thunk that the cream cheese Danish topped with raspberry mint fro-yo would sell so quickly? Food challengers are going crazy for his recommendations.”

“My stomach turns when I think of that combo,” she replies. “I really don’t think they’d go together.”

“You should see what he has lined up for next month,” he chides. “Ginger tea, and mango fro-yo.”

Hayden nearly drops her phone in response. “Are you serious?? Who would try that?”

“Maybe your date outside waiting for his macho coffee,” he teases.

“Oh sh-.“ Hayden fills the cup and runs for a lid. ”There goes my tip.”

Cody just chuckles to himself as he starts separating the dough into rolls. “Never a dull day in Beacon Hills, I suppose.”

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**LEDGE&DAIRY- THE LAIR**

At the end of the ten minutes, Matt, Scott, and Jackson are sweaty and out of breath. Their eyes all glow different shades of gold. They were engulfed head to toe by blue flames, clutching their chests in pain.

“What just happened?!,” Danny exclaimed.

“They transformed, didn’t they? All three for them,” Stiles answered vaguely.

“But, what did you do?” Boyd clarified.

“Like I said, transformations can be triggered by a few things: lust, anger, and… fear.” Stiles looks toward the 3 teens before him. “I… I tried to get a reaction by showing them their biggest fears.”

“It was so real,” Scott gasped out. “I… I saw my dad. He was… he was hitting me and my mom again and I couldn’t do a thing.”

“I ki-killed everyone in this room,” Jackson said, shaking. “Even Danny and Lydia… And I couldn’t st-stop myself. I felt my own lips smiling. And I couldn’t do anyth-” He bites his lip, prematurely ending his sentence.
And Matt- he was quiet. Shaking, but quiet.
“Can we leave now? Please?” he pleads.

“Huh?,” Stiles said, surprised and guiltily. “Uh, s-sure. Don’t use the front entrance since it’s the
dinner hour. Someone might see you. That door right there leads to a hallway to the parking lot.”

“I’m gonna go, too,” Isaac offers. “He’s my ride.”

They watch as the 2 quietly leave. (Boyd follows suit, though not really riding with them.) This
conversational slump allows Allison to charge Stiles. “Why’d you have to drag him along??” she
asked angrily. “We already knew he was a werewolf. He really didn’t need to shift!!”

Stiles was packing away his staff, a small frown on his face. “It’s the fastest way to flush the venom
from his system. It was either that, or cracking one of his bones to trigger the healing.

I…” Stiles clenched his fists in frustration. “I was impulsive and angry and stupid. I really didn’t
know how to react fast enough.”

He offers an awkward smile and tries to excuse himself. “Heh, it must be the teenage hormones,
right? I mean…

I mean…”

“I’m sorry…” Stiles looks away from them all. “I- I’m sorry.”

A few feet away, Danny and Lydia whispered sweet nothings into Jackson’s ears.
“We’re here.”
“You’re here.”
“It’s okay.”
“shhhh…”

BEACON HILLS PRESERVE

Sheriff Stilinski pulls up to the worn police cruiser housing his newest deputy. The poor kid didn’t
grow up in Beacon Hills but somehow moved to the middle of nowhere, applying to their precinct.
His experience from his 2 tours in Iraq didn’t seem to faze him. And frankly, that’s what worries him
the most.

“Hey there, kiddo,” he hollers to the deputy, who was staring at a map of the area. “What are you
doing all the way right over here?”

Parrish hides a blush of embarrassment and offers a salute. “Sir, I lost my way somewhere in the
woods, sir.”

The sheriff indubitably laughs out loud. “At ease, Parrish. At ease… Jeez, no need for the military
formalities.”

Parrish’s blush deepens. “I-I’m sorry, sir. Still kinda getting used to uhh, things.”

“Don’t need to explain, kiddo. It happens. It’ll happen again. Multiple times. It’s fine.”
There’s a rusting of the leaves nearby, and Jordan flinches. His eyes zoom in on the path where he saw those figures earlier. John Stilinski follows his gaze to the broken foliage before him. Taking off his sunglasses, he starts to take stock of the scene.

“You said you saw something over here earlier? Sure it wasn’t a trick of the light?”

“No, si- I mean, Sheriff. Those were fast but I still counted four… things run across from there to there. Not to mention-“
Jordan walks to the opening in the greenery.

“-there are 4 sets of tracks. One definitely human, the other canine, while these two… I would like to say it’s a bear due to the size, but it’s still canine form. Are there animals in the area that have those types of prints? Or something escaped from the zoo?”

John Stilinski, completely out of his breadth, pulls out his phone for a call.

“Who are you calling, sir? The local veterinarian? A wildlife specialist?,” Jordan asks.

“With all these questions and tracking, you’re on your way to becoming a detective, son. Did you join the scouts when you were younger? Anyway, I’m actually calling the one person who might know what’s going on over here.

Hello, Stiles? Yeah, you wouldn’t happen to know why there’d be weird animal sightings by the old sawmill, would you?”

(“What’s a Stiles?” Jordan asks, to no response.) The Sheriff just replies throughout the conversation with a bunch of uh-huh’s, and other vague phrases, before ending the call.

Massaging his temples, he resolves to just getting the deputy out of the area. “So, Jordan, welcome again to Beacon Hills. Specifically, to the Hale Preserve. We’re actually inside an 8 click loop of road, with only one road for both entry and exit. Whenever some outsider calls 911 and gets lost, they usually end up here for some weird reason. Let me show you how we find the way out…”

The Sheriff rides shotgun, leaving his own cruiser behind. (He told Jordan he’ll have another deputy pick it up later.) And soon, off both of them go.

As soon as the vehicle is far from sight, 4 humans in various states of disarray (a female completely nude even) enter the vehicle, using the keys conveniently left behind. Shaking off mud and leaves, they start the vehicle and turn off the radio. Off to the city, they drove.

Chapter End Notes

A/N
Would you try the food combos I listed? Never tried them- just randomness in my head.

One to two more chapters of normal stuff, then out of Beacon Hills they go.
Arthur Archives Interlude: A New Kid and Old Habits

Chapter Summary

Matt, Jackson, and Scott, numbed by the effects of Kanima venom, were purged of its numbing effects through the use of magic. Stiles Stilinski triggered their transformations using visions of fear, deep inside their urban lair. But, not everyone took to this method lightly.

Was it wrong for Stiles to intervene like that?
Will we find out what Matt saw in his visions of fear?
And who would name a mountain after something like kale???

T/W: Short mention of bone breaking.

Chapter Notes

A/N:
I’m back, and I’m sorry this took forever! I scrapped this chapter no less than 4 times and started from scratch cause it just never seemed right! Real life got in the way, then I got into a car accident, then I lost my job, then yada yada yada… so many excuses.
Huffs. I swear I'm not a writer.

This is the best version out of the 5 I wrote, imo. Back to action packed chapters after this one! Yay!

Please comment if you liked my Stiles rambles, or my fluff scenes. Because I really don’t know if I did well. *cries*

And thumbs up for Greenberg? Maybe a thumbs down?

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

After the events we have last seen with our heroes, Stiles conjures up something magical: validated coupons for free fro-yo redeemable at any moment. (Which technically Matt didn’t need since he is part owner, but screw semantics.)

Stiles excuses himself and heads out for the night. At school over the next few days, they saw him at lunch, in class, and lacrosse practice. He was… cordial, kept to himself. All the other free time he had, he used perusing the library bookshelves, muttering about finding “that book” before anyone else does. It was quite unnerving.

Allison actively avoided him. So did Matt and Isaac, but not as aggressively. Scott and Jackson would look to Stiles from afar, then somehow find their shoes or phone a lot more interesting. In complete contrast however, the twins and Erica still hung out with Stiles; I mean they weren’t there for the whole incident.
“I would do the same thing if I could,” Erica explains to the pack during one lunch period. “With my, uhh history, it pays to be sure. If there was a movie that I really want to watch, I’d still go even if it might trigger a… y’know.” She refers to her previous propensity for seizures, a touchy subject after her turn.

“He also had our business to protect,” Ethan switches gears for Erica’s sake. “I bet the venom cleanup after was horrible.”

“No, it was kind of amazing to watch. He went all Peter Pan and flew to each foot hold to clean each one magically,” Danny describes.

“He flew??” Ethan replied, eyes wide. “Man, that must’ve been cool to watch.”

Aiden hits his twin on the shoulder (“Dork.”), before offering his own reasons. “I’d rather know than not know, y’know? And also, I’d rather fear than anger or lust, cause at least with fear you can still control the beast.

And as for Scott, I actually envy him. If it were Deucalion pulling the strings on us, he’d break an arm to trigger the healing, then break both our legs for being so careless. Now I know it isn’t my fault, or Scott’s in this case, but Duke would make us feel that way.” He stops as Ethan rubs his elbow against him for comfort.

“Stiles kind of saved our lives,” Aiden continues. “Gave us a chance for something normal, y’know? Kinda hard for us to see him as a villain. The good outweigh the bad from my point of view, but then again we’re biased so, y’know…”

“The three of you say ‘y’know’ a lot,” Lydia points out. Aiden just shrugs in response.

THE NEXT DAY

The entire school is buzzing. The new kids Ethan and Aiden came when the semester started, but they pretty much stuck with the cool kids, and the weirdo rejects. They were hot, athletic, and had the most amazing smiles. Women swooned over their propensity to be half naked. And of course, some of the men secretly whooped when they found out one of them batted for the other team. But, the proverbial wall of popularity kept them out of reach for everyone.

Now, however, they heard there’s a *new* new kid coming tomorrow. The story is that she grew up in another country (read: exotic), practically raised in the wild (read: wild, gullible), and no news yet for what team she plays (read: hope for both teams).

Malia Tate busted through the front doors with her jean shorts and camo cardigan, strutting down the hall like a woman on a mission. All eyes were on the new girl, wondering where is she going, where is her locker, and who is the lucky bastard that gets to meet her first. Oh and what a day when it seemed that the lucky bastard just happened to be Greenberg.

“Hey, sweet cheeks,” he said with a smug grin. “You must be tired, cause those long fiiiiine legs have been running through my mind all day.”

Malia looked to the awkward member of the lacrosse team with a furrowed brow, confused to his statement. She just bunches the poor man’s shirt and utters three simple words.


“Stilinski?,” he replies. “Why are you looking for that dweeb when you can have the whole package right here? I’m all the man you will *ever* need. Unh!” He emphasizes that last word with a hip thrust. Gross.

Malia’s nostrils flare in response; she lets go of the poor boy’s shirt. Before anything else could
happen, Jackson and Danny walk by.
“Whoa, Greenberg,” Jackson starts. “Pissing off the new girl already?”

“She’s goin’ around looking for Bilinski for some weird reason,” Greenberg explains. “I told her she could do a lot better than his bag of bones.”

“Not a lot better if she ends up with you,” the lacrosse co-captain quips. “What do you want with Stilinski?,” he asks Malia.

The teen in question’s nostrils flare up once more, before her eyes widen to a state of shock. “Not. Human.”

Malia starts walking backward, warily and carefully. After a small distance away, she turns tail quickly and starts running down the halls until she trips over her own feet in front of the teacher’s lounge. Bobby Finstock comes out after hearing the ruckus, to see her trying to pick herself up off the floor. “What in the blue-eyed hell happen to you?,” Coach asks.

“Need… Stiles…,” she pants, grasping onto the coach.

“Bilinski?,” he replies, confused. Not really caring why, he just shouts into the hallway. “HEY, IF ANYONE SEES BILINSKI, SEND HIM TO THE TEACHER’S LOUNGE!”

Sighing, he helps the new girl up and ushers her into the teacher’s lounge. “Are you new? You look new. I haven’t yelled at you before. It smells like cigarette smoke in here but it’s damn better than running in the damn …”

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**BHHS CAFETERIA, LUNCH TIME**

Scott and the rest of the pack were sitting down and partaking of the “food” offered to them when Stiles and the new girl sits down to join them. With the biggest of smiles, he introduces her to the group. “Hey everyone! This is Malia Tate, junior by age because of whatever construct the American educational system decrees as just and right. Make sure she is welcome and safe, et cetera, et cetera because reasons I cannot disclose in a public setting.

Oh, and she is a part of Ethan and Aiden’s pack,” he adds lastly in a whisper.

Half the group continues on like this is normal drabble for Stiles. (“Oh, cool.”
“So, nothing new about the new girl.”)

There were 2 cases of righteous indignation from Scott and Allison respectively.
(“You BIT someone?”
“What do you mean pack? When did both of you get a new pack?”)

And Lydia and Erica just saddled up to the new girl like new BFF’s.
(“We need to buff those nails at a spa I know. Today. No backing out.”
“I would KILL to rock those shorts like you do. And I mean, literally.”)

Stiles was starting to push a couple back as Malia was starting to shrink into herself, nostrils flaring like crazy. “Whoa, whoa, whoa people. Mind the bubble and nix the ‘talk’ talk. I’ve done this like what, 12 times this month? I’ll explain later, again, like always. Just keep it cool. After practice, at the lair? Okay? Okay.”

Stiles offers Malia a charm bracelet to calm her down. Surprise, it works. Ethan and Aiden stay by her side, Erica and Lydia one seat over wanting to talk more, as Stiles motions to leave for the
library. Malia motions to follow him too.

“No, stay,” Stiles requests of her. “My friends, your friends. Pack. You are safe.” Malia’s shoulders relax a bit as she stays behind, absorbing everything around her. Jackson regales the story of how Greenberg was trying to hit on her earlier this morning. So, yeah, a normal lunch for the group.

Oh, and everyone else in the lunch hall inwardly groans for the fact that the hot new kid is part of that weird clique within a couple of hours. None of the normal kids could catch a break.

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**BHHS LIBRARY, 10 MINS LATER**

Stiles is busy scurrying through the second floor shelves, looking and flitting through pages and pages of books. His brow is in a furrow as he mumbles the words to himself.

“What are you doing?,” a voice asks behind him.

“Hey, Derek,” Stiles answers without looking. “It’s called reading. These symbols make sounds that impart meaning to whoever sees the symbols. It’s lain on this thing called paper and-”

“I know what reading is,” Derek interrupts, with a little scowl. “I meant what are you looking for?”

“What if I said I was looking for a way into your heart?,” the lanky teen replies with in a cutesy voice.

Derek just glares at him, biting his lip, a faint little color coming to his cheeks.

“A-ha!,” Stiles whisper-screamed. “You can’t hide that blush from me! That’s your trying-not-to-laugh blush! I’m getting to you and you know it.”

Derek rubs his cheeks with his sleeve, hoping it will wipe off the embarrassment. “You still haven’t told me what you’re looking for.”

“It’s a book, Derek. A very important book,” Stiles answers. “And it’s important- IMPORTANT! necessary even that no one reads it when it pops up. Or deaths will be in the dozens. Sometimes hundreds. So I-,” he mumbles, shelving more books.”I need to look for it. Today. Tomorrow. Day after, if I have to.”

“Wouldn’t the librarian know where this book is? Or maybe use the catalog? You know, the Dewey Decimal System?,” Derek offers.

“The Dewey Decima- oh for the love of all that is furry and sexy, this is a supernatural book, Derek. Pops up outta nowhere, with deadly intent. INTENT, Derek! Not out-tent, not around-tent, but deadly INTENT! And I am the only- … Are you trying not to laugh again?”

The broody Hale had his neck red in restraint. All it took was one tilt of Stiles’ head and Derek breaks out a small chuff of laughter. He then tries to recompose himself to no avail; the corners of his lip keep trying to curl up in a smile.

And Stiles just melts into his own smiles in response.

“You deserve that, you know,” Stiles adds warmly, as it is his turn to blush. The hooded teen reshelves his book and continues on his search in partial silence. “You deserve all the joy the world has to offer.”

“Hm?,” Derek responds.
“I-, ahem, I lived for quite a long time, fought a lot of monsters, kicked a whole lot of ass. And as often as I’d like to think I saved the day, you save my butt like 200 times more often. I mean, I’d brain myself on the pavement just walking.

And you do it all without asking for anything in return. No return-favors. No I-got-your-back-too-bro’s. No thank-you’s required.

You give so much of yourself for all of us, then try to push us away- no, run away when we try to help you back.” Stiles taps the spine of a book on his chin, thinking. “You have this whole Superman complex, no Batman, no I mean… ugh, I dunno which superhero you are anymore! You have to save everyone else, while no else saves you.

You’re the ultimate giver, when the world has already taken too much.

So, yeah. You deserve all the joy the world has to offer, and then some.” Stiles looks at Derek, eyes twinkling.

Their eyes catch for a moment, a long moment. The older wolf was taken aback by that declaration. How can someone who talks so much, write sonnets and odes about him?

Derek turns away, breaking the stare.

A few minutes pass by, and Derek tries to ask again about the book. Stiles regales of a monster-no a group of monsters- that take stronger root in existence once people know about them. So it is a strict Voldemort They-Whom-Should-Not-Be-Talked-About scenario. So even talking about the idea of them is dangerous. These “creatures” are difficult to defeat since they can take out an Alpha easy.

“But now, we have 5 alphas in Beacon Hills so it should be easier. Six, if I can summon myself from my past lives. Seven or eight, if certain things line up accordingly,” he conjectures.

At this point, Stiles has read or skimmed 2 aisles worth of books and lunchtime was about to be over. Stiles was packing up his book sack, and about to lug it over his shoulder. He pauses a moment before walking over to give Derek a quick but meaningful hug. His leather jacket squeaked in surprise.

“I know it was unintentional, but thanks for a wonderful date. Do you consider it a date? ‘Cause I do. It was you, me, saving people, or trying to at least. It’s what our other dates were like. You’d be painting, or reading, or fixing up your car. You had a bike in one of the years we dated, too. I’d be in the room talking my mouth off or asking questions. You’d answer with one or two word sentences. I tell you about my theories on food pairings and what would go well with chocolate. You’d tell me stories about New York, about how your family was like before the fire. We’d argue over music and movies and books, then make up, cuddle and watch sports. We’d live it up between all the monster mayhem and final exams, because that’s who we were. We lived as an us, despite the world throwing ninjas, ghosts, evil buildings, and creepy creatures of the night.

And I know it’s not fair because you might not be there yet, at that level of being… possibly maybe an ‘us’. But, I am ready for you to be. Or, I guess, umm, where was I going with this? Did that make sense?”

Stiles apologizes a little and lets go. “Thank you for staying with me throughout lunch. It was starting to get lonely being the hermit in the library.”

“Erica told me to see you,” Derek explains, straightening his leather jacket. “She tried explaining what happened at our lair.”

Stiles’ eyes twinkle a smidge. “You said ‘our lair’,” he teases. Shaking his head, he resolves to thank
Erica later with a batch of bacon bit stuffed chocolate cupcakes before running off to class. (“She loved them in previous years; she’s bound to love them this year as well,” he explains.)

Derek stays leaning against the bookshelves, still processing the enigma that is Stiles. He breathes deep and wonders why he’s so at ease with his scent mixed with Stiles. Maybe the fluttery pit in his stomach is a sign of things to come. With a grimace, he mutters to himself. “I’m in trouble.”

The American education system has its flaws. Curriculum changes, budget misallocation (or non-allocation), and standardized tests that fail more kids than they pass. And a couple of weeks into the Spring semester, their first 3 day weekend breaks the learning momentum with Martin Luther King Day.

“So what are you doing for MLK?,” Erica asks the group one lunch.

“I have work,” Boyd answers. Isaac and Matt say the same.

“The 3 of us might fly out to Colorado for a quick snowboarding trip,” Lydia says of Jackson and Danny. “Change of scenery might be nice.”

“My dad has training sessions in the reserve: tracking, survival, the works,” Allison offers.

“Wrong,” Stiles interrupts “All wrong. Wrong, the whole lot of you. All of us are going to a concert, front row seats, backstage passes, VIP Hotel room, and a 1-on-1 dinner party shindig with the biggest group of the year: MCRC.”

If a pin would drop, it’d have shattered. Erica squeals; Matt gasps, and Isaac spits out his food in surprise.


“Eeep! Agh! Unf! Oh God, I could just eat Paul’s face and ride his-,” Erica starts.

“I’d love to see the master songwriters at work,” Isaac interjects. “Their second album got me through last year.”

“-bet it would last all night long.” Erica continues her fantasy. “The treasure at the end of *that* trail would just-”

“You’re a Rom-Comedian, too?,” Matt asks Isaac in surprise. The blond teen blushes and starts fangirling.

“- just take it, unf, take it from both sides and use every surface in their hotel rooms. I bet Pete would have a whip ready to-”

“If I may interrupt your colorful PWP fanfic,” Stiles smiles. “This trip is highly recommended for everyone, but still optional. I’d understand if you can’t make it. BUT, we also have the honor of being on their World Tour concert in England conveniently on Spring Break.”

“World tour?,” Danny asks. “Nothing like that’s been announced yet. How would you even have-”

“I know a guy,” Stiles answers with a wink. “Which normally would mean I know you, and you
could digitally get us tickets. But this time I actually know a guy so we can all go.”

“So,” Stiles continues with a clap. “Get permission from family and workplaces. Let me know if you need passports. The humans in the group should look into travel vaccinations just in case. Because if you thought this past month has been amazing, well you haven’t seen NOTHING yet.” Erica squealed even louder than before, and started jumping up and down in excitement. Matt and Isaac started discussing songs at light speed. And Malia, overwhelmed by the increased activity, scooched closer to Ethan and Aiden.

With the end of his announcement, and before the barrage of questions from the likes of Scott and Allison, Stiles excuses himself back to the library.

And Erica, well, she kept making vulgar motions in the cafeteria that would be more suited for xHamster than AO3.

Chapter End Notes

A/N:
Next chapter is being cleaned up as we speak so yay! Two chapters will be posted within 2 days!

I’m excited to say that it will be mostly action for the next few chapters because this arc has to end sometime.

Please comment on where my fluff can grow. I *really* struggled with this chapter. Reading it is fun, but writing it is just so… ugh. I really hope you like it. Don’t give up on me yet!!
Chapter Summary

It's the first long weekend of the semester and the gang drive down to Los Angeles for a concert that Stiles laid out for them. It was for the biggest group of the time: My Chemical Romantic Comedy, and the Rom-Comedians of the group could hardly contain themselves. It was supposed to be fun. It was supposed to be a blast.

Haven’t they learned that with Stiles around, you better expect the unexpected?

What is in store for our teens from Beacon Hills?
Why does Greenberg call everyone sweet cheeks?
Why do I have to have questions in groups of 3 in ascending length???

“…if you thought this past month has been amazing, well you haven’t seen NOTHING yet.”- BAMF! Stiles

T/W: technically underage flirting with an old man. But Stiles is like 33 in his head but his body is like 17. So take it as you will. Also, language.

Chapter Notes

A/N:
OMG, 2 chapters in 2 days posted. I guess this ended up with more fluff than expected. But I made it more PG with the small flirting and cursing here and there.

And yay Sterek and Steter snips! Well, paragraphs.

Warning for cursing, and touching with no permission. Kind of.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

It’s roughly a 7-hour drive to LA. It’d be a whole lot faster just flying there (just an hour and a half flight plus boarding) but at least 3 people are not okay with that option.
Derek hates airports. (“Believe me: werewolf senses plus airports don’t mix… well.”)
And Stiles thinks it would be too much for Malia to handle. (“All the cramped people. The TSA lines and the social cues… Probably shouldn’t bring her there this early in the year.”)
Allison would not be able to bring her hunting equipment if needed. (“What? You can never be too prepared.”)

So they rented 3 vehicles. Jackson is bringing his own car because he wouldn’t be caught dead in a lame rental.

Derek and Stiles are in the lead car with Erica, Matt and Isaac. Peter was in the second car with
Malia, Ethan and Aiden. Allison was driving the third car with Scott and half the group’s luggage. And Jackson, Danny and Lydia keep switching from back of the group to the front of the group, to show off the car’s horsepower.

Five hours into this drive, Derek was growling and clenching the steering wheel in frustration. They left Beacon Hills on Friday around 9 pm, so it is reaching 2 am. The four cars are barely the only vehicles on the I-5 highway.

“What’s got you primed, Sourwolf?,” Stiles asks loudly from the passenger seat. He had a bag of Red Vines and M&M’s, and two bags of chips open. “Need to pee? Need to stretch? Need me to drive?”

Derek huffs in response. Not that Stiles would hear it normally, because the three in the back have commandeered the radio to play MCRC albums non-stop ‘til Los Angeles. Erica, Matt, and Isaac have been fidgety and loudly singing at the top of their lungs through MCRC’s entire discography. They are screaming about teen angst from songs of the group’s less critiqued third album.

“Do you need me to force the music down? I have this little magical thing that can lower the volume for you,” Stiles offers.

“NO!!,” the three in the back screams in unison, booing Stiles and throwing popcorn at him.

“I was gonna offer him earplugs, you dolts!,” Stiles screams to the back, throwing his own chips at them. A mini-food fight erupted and Derek is starting to grumble louder.

“Will you four quit it!!,” Derek finally bellows, after a kernel of popcorn falls into the back of his shirt from the crossfire. “Do I need to remind you that this is a rental, and that we will have to clean all of this crap up before we return it???”

“Sorry, daddy/pops…,” the three in the back reply sarcastically, and practically in unison.

Derek’s ears burn red in response. Stiles starts cackling at the three teens' sarcastic response so hard, he couldn’t breathe. The music just continues on in the background.

To switch up the subject, Isaac starts asking Stiles questions. “So, Boyd couldn’t make it?”

“No, it was too late to catch off his work. Which is stupid since MLK is a NATIONAL holiday.”

“Where does he work again?,” Matt asks.

“At the local ice skating rink,” Erica answers. “He mans the Zamboni. You know, the thing that smooths out the ice?”

“I know what a Zamboni is,” Matt pouts.

“Apparently, MLK is a big discount day, so they’ll need extra hands all day,” Stiles explains, more licorice hanging from his mouth.

“Oooh, here’s a juicier question,” Erica interrupts, now bored on the topic of Boyd. “Why are you in this car and not Scott’s?,” she asks Stiles. Derek’s ears start turning red, while Stiles mulls it over, not noticing.
“Oh, I dunno. It makes sense I guess.” Stiles shrugs as he plops more M&Ms in his mouth. “Derek here would take the lead, and I would man directions. Especially since the hotel stuff is under my name.

Allison wouldn’t part with her weapons in the backseat of her car. And Scott would never pass up alone time with Allison. So, that’s that.

And well, Peter is driving the second car, because, well, we can’t lose track of him on the way there. That, and Malia has to come with and she’ll be more grounded with her pack.” Isaac interrupts Stiles right there. “I mean, it makes sense for her to be with Ethan and Aiden, but why Peter?”

“Well, most car rental companies require a driver over 25 to rent a car, more so three vehicles. So Peter fits that category. Second, there’s a reason that I have no right to disclose, yet. It involves Malia’s… erm, family history. Last and most important, all four of them make their pack, so they’ll be grounded the whole drive there- Ethan, Aiden, Peter, and Malia.”


“She’s a were-coyote,” Stiles reminds him. “A born beta, if we need to more specific. Her beta-ness should ground the other 3 alphas down some. Yeah, the 3 alphas are extra fucked up with their backgrounds, and Malia was stuck in coyote form for years, but they all have something in common: All 4 of them are more in tune with their animal side than all of us. Plagued by it, even. They are working themselves into society bit by bit, together.

I mean, Malia has been using whole sentences more frequently. Ethan and Aiden are joking around us more. And Peter, well… I think I heard him say please the other day at the meeting.”

“He said ‘Please shut up’,“ Derek corrects him.

Stiles shrugs. “I take it as a win.”

“Still, why aren’t you in Scott’s car?,” Erica asks, still adamant.

After an awkward pause, Stiles answers more somberly. “It’s been shaky since the whole Kanima venom incident.”

“It’s been a whole freaking week!,” Erica replies. “Are you kidding me??”

It is right then and there that Jackson revs up his vehicle to pass up the group again and take the lead.

“That is FUCKING IT!!,” Derek screams, signaling right. They were far in between civilization, but Derek just swerves to the shoulder, puts the car in park, and storms out. “Fucking stupid TEENS with their god damn shit loud fucking CARS and stupid angst and there is a FUCKING GODDAMN POPCORN KERNEL in my GODDAMN FUCKING SHIRT!!!”

Derek takes of his shirt and runs to a nearby tree to start punching it, pounding it like crazy. Stiles tries to hide a smile (and fails) while a few yards away, Peter and Allison’s cars stop over.

Stiles waves his hand and jogs over. “Stretch break out in the California wilderness, everyone?,” he offers.

Everyone gets out of their vehicles and take a moment to run around in the cool desert. Five hours without a stop would run anyone else mad. (Jackson’s car was nowhere to be found.)
Peter walks toward Stiles and leans against the warm hood. “What’s got my nephew bothered enough to take it out on living lumber?,” he asks the smiling teen.

“Oh, loud music, teenage angst, the usual,” he answers. “Plus, a popcorn kernel somehow landed inside the back of his shirt for the last 10 miles. Then, Jackson kept rubbing the power of his muscle car in our face the entire drive here.”

“Ah, boys, trees, and their muscle cars,” Peter comments.

“Amen to that,” Stiles confirms.

Then, Peter leans into Stiles ear and growls. “I’d show you what a *real* man would do with their hard wood and muscles.”

A shudder runs down Stiles spine, before he falls into a silent fit of giggles. Fanning himself with his hand he just leans into Peter for strength. “Oh you’re such a flirt. And a creep. And oh so corny,” Stiles says in between his wheezes. “Everything you say gives people the pedophile vibe, but I know better. Your humor is just so dry, it’s probably causing this Californian drought.”

Peter has the wildest and widest smirk as Stiles wipes a tear from his eye. “Oh, and Peter?” Stiles climbs to his toes to whisper into Peter’s ear for his turn. “If you think you’re a tease, wait and see what 16 years of flirting has taught me…”

Stiles licks the earlobe he was talking into, before doing a quick grab of Peter’s junk.

It was Peter’s turn to shudder, as he ultimately has his ‘oh’ face on. Stiles smugly disengages and continues leaning against the car, watching the pups ramble and run around. Derek, it seems, is done punishing wood and is putting on his shirt again.

“Will anyone call Jackson’s car and see where they are?” Derek grumbles.

“On it,” Allison answers. It seems they are around 12 miles ahead and are turning back to meet with the group. There were no legal places to take a U-turn, but it’s the wilderness. Who will find out?

Stretching his arms way above his head (and showing his little treasure trail to both Derek and Peter’s watchful gaze), Stiles jumps up and down to do his little stretch. “Do we need to swap drivers?” he asks the group.

“I’m good for the last 2 hours,” Allison answers while staring at her phone. “I don’t think anyone else in my vehicle is legal to drive,” Peter offers, shaking his head.

“I’m good,” Derek replies. His face and arms were covered with a small sheen of sweat. “The exercise woke me up.”

Stiles snickers, before continuing. “We are nearing the grapevine, you guys. Steep mountain climb and decline. Lots of trucks this time of night. Cars tend to overheat and crash in these mountains. So be extra careful. No need to speed.”

“To be honest, the car you should warn against speeding is not here at the moment,” Erica remarks.

“I know, I know. But still. Safety first.” Stiles ends the conversation. “Once Jackson and them come back, we continue to LA as a group.”

“Aye-aye, captain!,” Matt jokes with a salute.
“I can’t hear youuuu,” Isaac replies, grinning.
“AYE-AYE, CAPTAIN!!,” Matt screams louder.

The two start singing the Spongebob Squarepants theme, to which Erica starts to sexy dance hilariously. Stiles starts beatboxing along with them as they finish through the song.

Outside their little bubble, Scott had to explain to Allison who Spongebob is. The twins were doing the same for Malia. And Peter and Derek are shaking their heads, trying to be brooding, but failing with their wide smiles.

The drive up the mountains was a lot better for Derek. Jackson got tired of “driving slow” (cue air quotes) so he just asked if they could drive ahead. Stiles was hesitant since he wanted everyone together, but Jackson was starting to get on everyone’s nerves.

“I’ll call the hotel to let you have one of the keys once you get there,” Stiles concedes, pulling out his phone to make the call.

To add more to Derek’s delight, the three teens in the back were tired out and dozing off. Instead of the loud electric guitars and drums of their main albums, the radio just hummed to acoustic covers that MCRC fans have made over the years. The strumming of the guitars was much softer to sensitive wolf ears, and to everyone’s nerves. Minutes run, and silent snores start to rumble in the back seat.

Derek lets out a small yawn, which Stiles catches of course. “Are you sure you don’t need to swap?,” the worried teen asks.

“No, it’s just acoustic versions of songs are practically lullabies to me,” Derek answers. “I’d rather switch to my music but our guest band in the back seat would object.”

“I think they’d be okay with silence and the sound of their own snoring, Derek.” Stiles turns off the radio entirely, leaving the thrum of the car as their melody for the drive.

Minutes pass and Derek sneaks a look over to Stiles. “What’s up, Buttercup?,” the teen says, catching the look.

“I’d imagine you’d be drumming everywhere, and humming some tune in your head. You’re unnaturally quiet,” Derek supplies.

Stiles smiles. He points to his head, “It’s crazier and louder in here.”

The quiet teen starts to look out the window, resting his face on the cool glass.

“I wish we could stop here for a while,” Derek says, after a moment.

“Hm?”

“We’re near the top of the mountains. It’s the highest point of the drive,” Derek tries to explain. “The air is crisper but wilder. You’re touching the ground but so close to the sky.”

Stiles nods in agreement. “There’s a rest stop nearby, right by Pyramid Lake. We can swing by and look at the stars. You could tell me those goofy stories Cora had as a child.”

Derek laughs to himself. “That kid did love the stars. That’s why she loved Shrek and Hercules.
They looked to the stars in their movies.”


“No. The whale gave her nightmares. That, and the donkeys.”

“But, she can literally turn into a wolf.”

“Yeah, but wolves are predators,” Derek explains. “Donkeys are prey, and weak.”

“Have you ever been *kicked* by a horse??,” Stiles responds.

“Have you?,” Derek returns, with one eyebrow raised.

“No…”

“She also hated to have a donkey nose,” Derek answers after a pause.

“Now that I understand.” Stiles grabs more chips and shove them into his mouth. Derek blatantly a.k.a. not-so-discretely steal a couple of Red Vines from Stiles’ bags.

“Sweet tooth,” Stiles insults.

“Shut up,” Derek replies.

“At least Peter said please,” Stiles pouts. Derek just grins.

Their moment is not quite over when Stiles sees a figure in the middle of the road. “LOOK OUT!!”

Derek tries to turn but the car just swerves and spins. The screeching of the brakes tore through the air. The two up front brace themselves for impact, hands also spread out trying to reach the 3 teens dozing in the back seat.

The creature just stood there, arms like bars of steel, tackling the side of the car and thrusting it into the air. The momentum of their poor vehicle cause them to turn 2, no, 3 times in the air before falling onto its side on the main road. The poor vehicle had parts strewn everywhere, glass shattered and liquid seeping.

Peter and Allison’s vehicles screech to a stop yards away. On the other side of the road, incoming, a familiar red vehicle screeches to a stop as well. It was Jackson’s car.

Everyone rushed to get out of their vehicles. “Jackson, Danny, Lydia?,” Allison screamed. “What are you guys doing back here??”

Lydia ran out sobbing. The distressed redhead had her makeup running all over her face. “I-I-I told Jackson to drive back. We had to!! We made a mi-mistake!!

We shouldn’t- we shouldn’t have left! We shouldn't have, we shouldn’t haaaaAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA-“

As Lydia’s scream pierced the night, clicks were heard from Derek’s car. The small clicks were buzzing, fizzing, hissing.

Seconds later, as the scent of motor oil and smoke teased the air, the car exploded in a flurry of flames.
Chapter End Notes

A/N:
I am evil. Truly.
I sowwy!!

Next chapter is going to take a while. Soooo much fighting. So much to do. Plus, there’s a flashback. And world building! Gaah!!

I hope you liked it!! Comments are love! <3
Arthur Archives Part 5: I Can Spell

Chapter Summary

Driving to Los Angeles in four vehicles, the teens of Beacon Hills (plus Derek and Peter) were supposed to go have a refreshing long weekend of fun. Well, supposed to. But atop the mountains of California, a dark figure rammed the lead vehicle, causing it to crash. Lydia Martin, witnessing the crash, let out a ghastly wail before the car holding Derek, Stiles, Matt, Isaac and Erica, explodes into a million pieces.

What tales of horror await the group?
What secrets does Lydia’s scream hold?
And what happened to the occupants of the first car?

T/W: Descriptions of horror, gore, and character death.

Chapter Notes

Warnings for gore in like a couple of paragraphs. Hopefully no nightmares are triggered.

Also, the opening scene might not make sense unless you’ve watched the first Shrek movie. (Not spoilery:) In that movie, there is a small scene where Shrek describes Ogre constellations; one of them is Bloodnut the Flatulent. Pretty self-explanatory.

And yay! Another chapter within one week!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

It’s a quiet night and the stars are shining. Out in a clearing, two kids lay on the grass to watch the stars.

“That’s Bluh-butt the Fla-two-lent,” Cora attempts to explain to Derek. It’s hard to say these big words when you’re barely 5 years old. “He likes to fart! Hihihiihihi” She squeals in laughter.

“That’s Bloodnut the Flatulent,” Derek corrects her. “Think chew, like chewing your food. Not the number two.”

“No, Dewek.”

“Yuh-huh, Cora.”

“Nuh-uh.”

“Yuh-huh.”

This continues for a while before Derek traps Cora in a tickle cage. Peals of laughter fill the crisp, night air.
“Derek, let Cora breathe.” Laura walks into the clearing bringing a couple of blankets for the lot of them. “Mom will kill us if Cora gets hurt in any way.”

“She can’t get hurt, Laura. Werewolves, remember,” Derek admonishes her.

“Derek, don’t be such a d-u-m-b-a-s-s,” Laura replies.

“I can spell, Laura!,” Cora reprimands her.

“Yeah…. Lau…. ra….,” a voice creeps behind them all. It’s such a creepy voice. Creepy, and familiar. It sends a chill up Derek’s spine because that voice—...it really shouldn’t be here.

Derek turns around and Laura is no longer there. He reaches behind him to find just the grass where Cora is supposed to be.

“Cora? Laura?,” he asks hesitantly. No one answers. Soon, even the wind dies down and doesn’t howl.

Derek runs into the clearing, looking frantically. He is screaming their names, but even his voice sounds too distant, garbled. His calls sound like they are coming from miles away, instead of where his mouth should be. Silence overpowers everything.

And then...

He is alone, oh so alone. His breath does not even make a peep or hiss.

Derek starts clawing at his ears, sans claws, of course. What is going on? His heart pounds in his chest, threatening to break free of his rib cage. Derek needed to hear them; he needed to find them. He needed to escape this maddening silence.

Out in the clearing, Cora and Laura’s voices start echoing frantically.

“Dewek!”
“Cora, breathe!”
“I can-”
“-get hurt-”
“No!”
“-will kill us-”
“Dewek!”
“Derek!”
“DEWEK!”
“DEREEEKK!!”

The clearing drowns in deafening screams for Derek to save Cora and Laura. But everywhere he turns, he can’t find them. He screams out their names but no voice comes out. He can’t. He can’t do anything!

The voices are overwhelming. He tries to cover his ears but it does not help. That voice from earlier… That creepy voice did it. Where does he know it from? So familiar and haunting, he knows
it. It’s at the tip of his tongue.

He can’t breathe.
It’s too much, too much.
What can he do?

A loud shrill scream comes off from behind him, washing out the other voices to a silence. Not even the air whispers to him. He was almost too terrified to look.
...Almost.

A slow turn of his head causes him to pale.
Laura’s corpse is torn in two. Her organs are cast about on the grassy knoll between her remains.
And Cora- she slowly spells Laura’s name in the dirt, using all the spilt blood.

Is it Cora? Her back was to Derek, hunched down and focused on the writing. But that has to be Cora, without a doubt. All he could see was her dirt-strewn torn clothes.

“Cora?,” Derek cautiously asks. His voice surprised him. He can’t believe it’s back. “Cora?”

‘Cora’ stands up slowly and wipes the sweat from her brow with her writing hand. Blood definitely would be on her face. She looks over her shoulder to greet Derek.

Her lips were torn off- only bloody teeth were in it’s place. Across her forehead, a smear of dirt and caked blood lies messily. And her eye sockets were hollowed and... wriggling? Maggots filled its space, spilling a few ever so often.

“I can thk-ell Laura, De-lek,” she says without her lips.

In the distance behind both of them, a pair of purple eyes shine. The familiar voice agrees with Cora.
“Yeah, she’s right. She can spell, Derek.”

That voice…
“Kate?”

“Derek…,” she sounds like she’s smiling
“De-lek…,” Cora whines.
“Derek…” Laura’s torso wakes up and pleads.

Derek finds himself unable to breathe. Everything starts to smell like smoke. His vision is blacking out. His heart is banging out of his chest. It hurts. It hurts sooo much.

“Derek…”
“Derek…”
“De-lek…”

“DEREK!”

Derek snaps out of his nightmare with a gasp. He is coughing, swallowing air, starved. The room is still spinning as he remembers the vision that he just saw. Shaking his head, he tries to get a grasp of reality once again.

“Stiles?,” he asks groggily.
“Oh, thank God you’re awake! I’m bleeding a lot, and I really can’t wake everyone up here by myself.”

“You’re… bleeding?”

“Yeah, human here. Bleeding is what I do. Look, just help me wake everyone else up,” Stiles orders him. The teen then tries to stand on wobbly legs. He falls midway and just decides to crawl instead.

Derek massages his temple. His vision is not quite fully back yet. “What happened?”

“There was this creature in the middle of the road. We ran into him and I think he threw our car into the air.” Stiles was shaking Erica awake. “Derek, please, no time to explain. We need to get all of us out of here before something else happens.”

Derek turns over and tries to get on his knees; that was definitely a bad idea. There is barely any feeling from his waist down. He decides he is paralyzed, cursing his luck. He decides to copy Stiles and crawl over to the two other teens. His whole upper body hurts. It’s too warm. His body warms up while it heals, but he normally doesn’t sweat bullets like this.

“Stiles, where are we? Why does it feel like the sun is inches from us?,” Derek asks as he reaches Isaac. The curly haired teen is in a crumpled mess, a couple of shards of glass in his torso and large slice of metal in his leg. Derek starts slapping the teen’s face like mad.

“It’s a long story and I’m running out of time, Derek,” Stiles pleads. He’s out of breath and paling fast. Erica is starting to come to. Bits of glass speckle her once-perfect face. “Basically, I stopped time before the car exploded in flames. But I’m running out of magic, Derek. I’m running out fast. So time is actually slowly coming back.”

Stiles gestures to the scene behind Derek. And Derek really shouldn’t have looked.

The car, originally on its side, is in the actual *middle* of its explosion. Shells of metal and glass are bursting from the epicenter by the fuel tank, which is now cracking into six pieces. A bent wheel just hit the ground where Derek earlier laid. It is still slowly spinning at a snail’s pace. And most horrifyingly, a large orange cloud was inching closer to all of them. The red and yellow flames were being chased by the white and blue hues. It was a menacing monster waiting to be set free by time.

“Is that-,” Derek starts.

“Yeah,” Stiles answers. “And we have to get as far away as- oh hey, Erica, we need to wake up now.” Stiles is pulling Erica to sit up. She is stirring slowly. “We need to get away from here. Can you stay up? Try to stand up if you can. I need to go wake up Matt.”

Erica groans in response, but she does what she was told.

By Derek, Isaac is barely coming to. A lot of blood is trickling out of the teen. Derek was getting desperate, shaking the poor kid.

“Isaac, wake up, dammit. You’re my first real Beta. I need you alive!”

It takes a hot minute, but Isaac was starting to come to. (Which was good, because Derek was about to administer CPR very much incorrectly.)

Derek lets go of the breath he was holding in. He was trying to keep Isaac awake, seeing if he could stand up. They needed to move. It was getting warm. So sickeningly warm. So yeah, they needed to move. Fast.
BACK IN THE MOUNTAINS

Everyone’s ears were ringing from Lydia’s screams, and from the car’s explosion. (The creature that stood in the road barely cringed.)

After realizing what had happened, Scott screamed his bestfriend’s name, before running to the burning wreckage.

“Wait!” Allison shot her arm in front of him to make him stop. “We can’t get to the car with this thing in the way.”

“What is that thing??,” one of the twins spat out.

“It’s a berserker,” Peter answers. His eyes start to glow blue, before they start bleed to his newly earned red. “And they never attack alone. Look out!”

By Jackson’s car, another dark figure lands on the road from a nearby outcrop of rock. Realizing another attacker is in their vicinity, Danny and Lydia scurry out of the way.

“Oh no, you are not chipping the paint on my new car,” Jackson says, guarding his beloved vehicle. He rushes to the creature, throwing a punch aimed at his head. The creature coolly catches his fist and squeezes tight.

Up close, Jackson smells the fetid flesh on the creature. Definitely humanoid and obviously supernatural, its skin tone seems to take a darker hue. It’s like light tries to run away from the creature itself. Unlike his cohort adorned by a chestplate make of human bones, tribal tattoos and necklaces adorn his torso, amidst the scars of battles that speckle its skin. His legs bore a cloth pants caked in blood and gore dripping down to its furred boots. Aside from his fingertips, an extra claw, better described as a protruding bone, extends from each wrist. Most menacingly, they both wore what could be a bear skull as a helmet; sinews of meat and muscle were still rotting within the cracks.

The hulking monster stood tall from his crouch before punching Jackson in the shoulder. The protruding claw hooks into Jackson’s flesh, unwilling to let go.

“Jackson!,” Danny and Lydia scream, helpless.

From across the interstate divide, Ethan and Aiden roar and jump across to engage the beast. They punch, kick and claw to Jackson’s aid. But, it took a combined kick from all three teens to tear the hulking creature away from Jackson.

On the other side of the highway, Peter, Scott, and Malia engage the berserker that killed Derek’s rental car. Peter and Malia scratch and claw at every swatch of bare skin. Peter tries to kick and push the creature off balance, attempting to grapple limbs into a hold at every opportunity. And Scott, poor inexperienced Scott, was throwing punches and kicks at every moment he can get.

“Scott, you idiot! You have claws! Use them!,” Peter screams in between his swipes. His most recent attempt at breaking the berserker’s arm causes him to be literally thrown a few feet away. Peter picks himself off he ground and runs back into the fray.

The besieged creature was throwing punches of his own. And kicks, headbutts even. His claws and skull horns catch their clothes and cut open wounds left and right. But for each of its blows, Peter, Malia, and Scott would send back with a hard hit of their own. It was a battle of attrition. So whoever would run out of steam first would lose.
And with how the berserker just brushes off each blow, it seems like the berserker might win soon. “We’re not getting anywhere with this!,” Scott screams.

“Got! Plan!,” Malia grunts out. Malia went from scratches to punches and kicks, but they were aimed down below. It was dirty and low, but they had to win.

“Ha! Chivalry is dead!” Peter cheers with glee at the thought of fighting dirtier. The Alpha takes his turn to attack the berserker from behind. Scott, with his inexperience, just keeps aiming blows full force up front.

Alas, despite the dirty tricks and actually flanking the creature, no headway was won.

“Why. Won’t. This. Work??” Scott grunts with each punch.

“Berserkers are battle-hardened warriors of myth,” Peter answers between his breaths. “Their kind have seen more battles than the whole American military combined. Two Betas and a new Alpha won’t even stand a chance!”

“Then I suggest you duck.” Allison orders the three from afar. Following orders, all three attackers crouch low as Allison unloads shot after shot from a shotgun into the creature’s chest, pushing it back ever so slightly.

“Keep going!,” Scott screams, covering his ears from the sound. Malia’s eyes glow blue as she sends Scott a small nod towards the creature’s knees. Scott takes the hint; his eyes glow gold. Peter catches this exchange and prepares for his chance as well.

After another well aimed shot hits the berserker in the chest, Malia and Scott kick each of the berserker’s knees. Peter grabs the skull helmet from behind and pulls down hard. With a loud thunk and grunt, the berserker falls onto the concrete.

Their prey has finally fallen to the ground.

The berserker, unable to gain momentum from its prone nature, uses its arms to cover its vulnerable face from beneath the helmet. Malia keeps stomping down on right where it hurts most. The berserker can do nothing but attempt to kick her away. While it is distracted, Peter grabs one of its shielding arms and tries to pin it to the ground; Scott follows suit with the other.

The berserker is grunting loudly, desperately trying to break free. This is when Allison finally arrives into the fray, a gleaming dagger in her hand. She quickly slits the creature’s throat and its brachial arteries. Blood pools out as its scream start to gurgle. It was an animalistic scream that lasted for barely a minute. Finally, the creature, and all the blood it spilled, dissolve into a pile of sand.

Peter and Scott jerk back in surprise; grits of sand were stuck to their hands, damp with sweat. “What. The actual fuck?,” Scott curses, immensely out of breath.

“No time to explain, err, understand; we gotta help Jackson and them,” Allison exclaims, offering her hand to help him up. Scott gladly accepts.

“STOP!!,” a couple of familiar voices scream from behind them. “Don’t forget to help us!”
The four victors turn around and see Isaac and Erica huddled over the bodies of Matt, Stiles and Derek, all pale and unmoving.

SECONDS EARLIER

Stiles’ group are all barely conscious. Out of the five of them, only Erica and Isaac can barely stand up. Stiles constantly tries to get on his own legs but collapses each time like a young babe. He is coughing every chance he gets. And his clothes were damp from sweat and blood from his wide gash. Derek’s legs were still not working. Maybe from fatigue, paralysis, or something torn, they were unsure. Matt’s left shin was definitely broken; they had to cut off his pant leg to relieve the pressure.

And, everyone was overheating.
The flame from their vehicle’s explosion was inching faster behind them.

“We need to get away from here,” Matt says.

“No shit, Sherlock,” Erica gripes. “Question is how far should we go?”

“Behind the other vehicles if we can,” Derek answers weakly. He dug his claw into his leg, supposing pain would trigger faster healing. “You’d have to make 2 or 3 trips if needed.”

“No, you won’t have time,” Stiles answers, before coughing some more. “By the time you bring someone there, the flame would have engulfed the people left behind. They would be burning extremely slow because of the time. It’s a very painful way to die.”

“Well, we won’t leave anyone behind,” Isaac decides. “We’ll carry everyone. We’ll make sure of it.”

Stiles shakes his head. “We all know you and Erica can carry one person each, tops. Someone has to die.

And that someone will have to—”

“I volunteer,” Matt interrupts.

“What?,“ Isaac asks. “Say that again?”

“I said I volunteer. I was supposed to die anyway, that day.” Matt tries to gulp but instead he choked on his dry throat. The heat was getting to all of them.

He wipes more sweat out of his eye as he looks toward Stiles.

“Do you wanna know what I saw when you made me transform?
I thought it would be me drowning. Or maybe it would be like Jackson- killing everyone in the room.
I thought it be everyone’s angry faces as they inflict their revenge on me. It would be the dead faces of everyone that died by my hand.

But no, it was worse than I thought. Instead of angry faces, I saw everyone smiling and laughing, without me in the picture. If I never did all those things, if I never existed, everyone would just be so happy. And I was afraid of that. That I was just useless, a dead weight. An insignificant useless piece of shit in the fabric of time. I was that crushed fly on the windshield that everyone just washed off.
And it *sickened* me.
Because it’s true. I’d always be more trouble than I’m worth.”

“You don’t KNOW THAT!,” Isaac screams, shaking.
“You don’t even-
you can’t just-
And i- but you- you don’t know ANY OF THAT!”

“Sixteen years of HIS LIFE proves it!” Matt screams to Isaac, and pointing to Stiles. “For 16 fucking years, I have been a cold-blooded killer. I die and everyone’s lives improve immediately, some happily ever after!”

Matt looks toward Stiles again.
“You saved me this year, the first time ever-
even after the countless times I cause the death of people I now care about. You gave me more days and weeks than ever possible.

So, let me return the favor...
...let me choose to die, so I can save you all.”

The fire was basically 5 feet away. Time was running out and a decision need to be made. Matt was looking down his lap, shaking; everyone else was looking to each other. Isaac had tears running down his eyes. But once they drop off his skin, they stood frozen in the air of time.

And as per usual, Stiles breaks the silence. “Hey, Matt. I’d throw a rock at your dumb head right now if I could, but it’d take an hour to reach you,” he says somberly. He raises his right hand and points toward him. “So since I really can’t do that. SLEEP.”

Stiles’ hands glow blue a moment. Matt’s eyes roll into the back of his head as he slumps over; Isaac catches his head. Time drove faster by fraction of a second during that spell. The flame is now barely 4 feet away.

“Welp, now that THAT has been settled, we can move on,” Stiles decides. “So as I was saying, I will stay behind, while Erica and Isaac save Derek and Matt. Capiche?”

“Oh my God!,” Erica groans. “Not another self-sacrificing speech. I can’t take another one.”

“No, it’s all good! I promise. See these?” Stiles points to some circular runes on his arm. “They can bring me back to life if I die. I only have a limited amount of these though. So if I die, we all live. Yaaaay!”

“But what about the excruciating pain part?,” Derek asks.

“Yeah, that’s not gonna be nice,” Stiles concedes with a shrug.

“If we die, can you bring us back?,” Isaac asks.

Stiles mulls over this question. “That’s a maybe. But if the remains are charred, that’s a solid no.”

“And if you are charred? Can you be brought back to life.” Derek asks, a serious look on his face.

“Yes,” Stiles answers after an infinitesimal pause.
“...YOU LIED,” Derek answered with finality, his eyes growing red with anger. Erica and Isaac were hardly taken aback by the accusation.

“shit,” Stiles cursed under his breath. He starts to eat his own shit quick. “Look, I-I- I’m not sure. I mean, it’s fifty-fifty right now, since my magic is being used up by slowing down time, so maybe it will work, and maybe.”

“But, you *LIED* about-”

“LOOK, I KNOW I LIED AND I’M SORRY!” Stiles was shaking from his screamed response. “I can’t lose anyone anymore, okay?? So I am so fucking sorry that I don’t know if this will work!”

Stiles takes a quick deep breath after his short outburst. “*phew* I lost my cool for a moment there, not that I ever was cool, am i right? Hehehe…” He was shooting finger guns at everyone, reeeeaally trying to play that outburst off. With the heat racking up, it was not working. “Anyway, I’m staying and that’s final.” His fists were clenched at his side as he wills everyone to agree.

A moment passes by before Erica asks him a question. “If you lose consciousness, say from the pain, would time go back to usual immediately?”

“What? Oh no, it should take about a minute,” Stiles answers. “Why are you asking?”

“Oh, nothing,” Erica lies. She saunters over to Stiles before throwing a right hook right at his face.

“Hey! OW! Cut that out!,” Stiles complains, rubbing his jaw.

Understanding what Erica is doing, Derek decides to give her a few pointers. “You’re not doing it right. Punch a little bit harder, and aim for his temple. You won’t kill him. And even if you do, he’ll live.”

“What?,” Stiles asks, looking to Derek for his incredulous corrections. As he looks back to Erica, she knocks him out with one more solid punch. His nose starts to bleed, adding to the blood he is already losing from the gash in his torso. His right jaw is swelling fast and it might very well bruise.

“Okay, so we have 60 seconds,” Erica takes lead. “I’m taking Stiles; Isaac, you take Matt. And Derek- army crawl as fast as you can. Isaac and I will try to get you if we get the chance.”

The two betas drag their two unconscious friends as fast as possible. Derek is cursing feverishly as he uses his elbows to drag his bulk of a body far from the wreckage.

Forty seconds in, a whining starts up in the distance. A reprieve from the heat is felt as the cool mountain wind is starting to pick up. It should have been a nice feeling, but it only added to the pit in everyone’s stomachs.

“DEREK, MOVE FASTER!!!!” Erica screams pleading. The two betas are almost behind the two vehicles. Their friends surrounded them, seemingly screaming at the scene. But, Derek was still a few feet away.

Isaac plops Matt down and tries to hobble over as fast as possible to Derek. The paralyzed Alpha was about to pass up Peter when time suddenly kicks back in on the flip of a switch. For some odd reason, time ripples out from the explosion, sending the five of them flying. As luck would have it, a
large chunk of metal hits Derek in the noggin HARD mid-air, knocking him out in the process.

All five passengers got the wind knocked out of them, but they were intact more or less; that’s all that mattered. And as the last bit of Stiles’ temporal magic disappears, his heart pumps it’s last beat.

Stiles Stilinski is dead. And a couple of yards away, his friends were fighting the creature that caused all this damage.


“Allison and Scott, you should help them out.” Peter takes this opportunity to take control of the situation. “Malia and I will help the others against the last berserker.”

Not having time to argue, everyone rushes to their stations.

On the other side of the interstate, the last living berserker runs into a loud burning rage. It screams out loud before it jumps into the air to throw a strong punch into the ground. While it does not push its attackers back like in does in movies, it does cause the road to crack and crumble.

Jackson, Ethan and Aiden are not used to fighting on uneven ground. That is all that the creature needed. It sends strong aimed kicks at all three of its combatants before it jumps and runs away from the scene. The berserker flees before reinforcements had a chance to arrive.

Peter and Malia help their pack members up, instead of chasing after the creature; Danny and Lydia tend to Jackson. All three were in coughing fits. Bruises were forming along their chests, likely obstructing breathing.

“Well, that was anticlimactic,” Jackson squeezes out once he finally got enough air.

“Speak for yourself. That will be the highlight of my semester so far,” Aiden said. He wipes some blood smeared from his busted lip.

“I can’t take all this action if this keeps happening every week,” Danny complains. “My heart can only take so much.”

“Well, we don’t have time to recuperate emotionally right now,” Peter gripes, picking something off the ground. “We have three injured back over by our other vehicles. And, we need to get out of here before police arrive and connect us with all this damage. Danny, are you okay to drive?”


“You are in no shape to drive right now,” Peter scolds him. “So, Danny is driving. You can take shotgun if you like; I don’t care. But I do ask that Ethan, Aiden, and Malia squeeze in the back with Lydia before you drive off.”

“I can’t squeeze four people back there!,” Jackson complains.

“You can and you have to,” Peter orders. “In case you haven’t noticed, we lost a vehicle and we need a quick getaway. I think we can suffer some creative yoga for one measly hour. Plus, Malia will be able to help out if you get attacked again.”
Not waiting for a response from Jackson, Peter looks to the twins. “Ethan, Aiden- your little magic trick, if that’s okay?”

“You do understand we get taller, right?,” Aiden complains.

“Width is our problem right now, not height. Deal with it, if you please,” Peter orders them as he walks away to check on the other group.

Ethan and Aiden sigh loudly. The two Alphas left over from the Alpha pack clasp arms as their eyes glow red. If you blinked, you would have missed how their flesh melded and reformed. Their bodies combined and clothes magically merge to form one giant hulk of a werewolf- evident in its grown fangs, fur chops, and distended brow. And in total comedic superposition, the large Alpha quietly opens the back door of the vehicle and crouches trying to squeeze into the middle of the backseat. Lydia takes the seat behind Jackson, Malia takes the area behind the driver’s seat. They close the door and drive off, trying to find a way to make a U-turn halfway into the grapevine.

Peter jumps across the divide, now that the issues on the northbound portion of the highway is resolved. (Well, aside from the large pothole in the middle of the road.) He approaches the group as Scott and Allison administer first aid, and Isaac and Erica try to regale the story of how they survived.

“Stiles literally stopped time,” Isaac explained. “Near the end, it was slowing down and not stopped and it was crazy.”

Erica was gulping down half a bottle of water, before passing the rest to Isaac. “Other cheesy stuff happened. Long story short: Matt has a spell that put him to sleep I don’t know what the hell happened to Derek; ask Isaac. And Stiles is dead, but he said he had something that should bring him back to life.”

“STILES IS DEAD???,” Scott screams.

“Oh, God, can we stop with the overdramatics, please?,” Erica begs. “He said he’s coming back, and you should trust him. Now, everyone is bleeding. A large truck is coming up soon; I hear it coming. I’m starved and dehydrated. I say we all squeeze into the two vehicles left and head to LA, shall we?”

At this point, Erica tries to stand up but her legs give way; Allison catches her. Erica’s hands were shaking, and her mascara was running. She wipes her eyes, claiming it was sweat from the fire. Allison knows better and chooses not to comment.

The vehicle fire behind them crackles in the night. The mountain wind blows away the remnants of the first berserker.

And as the eight of them squeeze in their vehicles and drive off, purple eyes watch them from afar. “Next time, you won’t be so lucky,” the observer promises into the night.

Chapter End Notes

Emotions ran high, and magic stuff was all wibbly wobbly. I thank ALL the people who send me kudos, and all the comments. The hits keep piling on, even though I’m not sure I am writing well.
Next chapter, we’ll get to LA where we meet more people that will be important to my story. I really don’t know how to write them as people, but we’ll see.

Please comment on my magic scenes and my fight scenes. How do I improve? Halp!
Arthur Archives Part 6: My Chemical Romantic-Comedy

Chapter Summary

On the road to Los Angeles, a berserker rams the lead vehicle containing Stiles Stilinski and his friends. But thanks to some of Stiles' time(ly) magic, Erica and Isaac were able to drag themselves out of that mess. Meanwhile, the rest of the group traded fists and claws with their attackers. Thanks to a concerted attack, one berserker was reduced to a pile of dust and the other was sent running.

It wasn’t all honey and roses, however. Matt and Derek were knocked out. A large vehicle fire was left atop the California mountains. And most importantly, Stiles’ heart has stopped beating. Our dear magician used the last of his strength to save his friends, while promising them that magical runes could possibly bring him back to life.

Was Stiles telling the truth?
Could he really truly come back to life?
And what is so important about meeting the members of MCRC?

T/W: Nothing graphic I could find. Maybe Malia, with her struggle with English may be slightly in poor taste.

Chapter Notes

A/N: 10 days for this chapter to write itself. I actually don’t know how concerts…
work? Or after parties? So forgive my lack of knowledge on that concept.

I own none of the companies listed. duh.

UPDATE/TYPO: For the few hundred people that read this earlier I am sorry! I meant year 11. No one could not remember Year 11, not 12.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

There are more glamorous places to recuperate than the far corner of a 24-hour WalMart parking lot. But with it being almost 4 am, the people traffic would be a lot less when compared to gas stations. They just wished that the Starbucks beside the supermarket was open.

Those that had clothes intact switched out of their bloody and torn scraps. Jackson and Lydia, along with Allison and Scott, then ran inside the store for some refreshments and a change of clothes for the others whose luggage burned in the attack. Matt woke up sometime on the drive down from the grapevine; so did Derek. Both were caught up with the battle proceedings by Allison and Scott, since they were in their vehicle.

Isaac and Erica were nodding off on the drive down, Once Peter parked, they finally gave up and slept on the roof of the vehicle. The cool air was such a relief that they were conked out in two seconds flat.
And Stiles’ body- it was still lying in the backseat of Peter’s car, unmoving. His heart wasn’t beating. A large gash on his stomach was still open and bare, but not bleeding much more. It was just. There.

“What do we do now?,” Matt asks. All his wounds were healed, but his left leg was still swollen badly. “I mean, we really can’t stay here until morning comes. Thirteen people and a dead body in a parking lot- that’s asking for trouble.”

“We need to rest- properly, all of us. I say we head to the hotel after everyone gets clothes,” Ethan offers.

“I really don’t think any of us would have a good night’s sleep after this,” Danny offered.

“At the very least, a good hot shower to remove all this grime would be nice,” Ethan answers. “After that, the people who can sleep will get it. The rest of us can eat breakfast and try to enjoy LA for our long weekend.”

Matt meekly raises his hand, as if he was in class. “Not to sound selfish, but I’d still like to go to the concert tonight, if possible,” he says, barely audibly. “Stiles got us these tickets and I’d hate to waste the trip.”

Aiden agrees with Matt. “He did say we have to go to this concert and meet the band. I don’t know why but it must be important.”

“Well, you can count me out of the concert itself, but I’ll join the after party,” Peter says. Everyone got shivers down their spines. Peter? At an after party? Not likely a good combination.

“I’m bowing out too,” Derek offers. “That large arena and all the screaming- sensitive ears here.”

“I stay too,” Malia says. “People loud, not good.”

“Uh-uh, Malia,” Peter scolds her. “Try to use a proper sentence. You can do it.”

She sighs before repeating herself. “I am stay too. People are loud. Not good for ears mine.” She huffs at the end of it. Her ears were starting to burn red with embarrassment.

“Close, but good job,” Peter applauded her. “Your grammar needs work, but at least your english is now better than some of my old interns.”

Malia’s brow was furrowed from all the words in that sentence. She fakes a forced smile as a response thinking it was, overall, a compliment.

Everyone was just staring at this exchange. The conversation definitely hit a dead end. Everything was decided, they guess.

“This would be soo much easier if we knew what we were walking into,” Aiden complains. “But the only one who knows is de- out of commission.”

“Way to bring up Stiles again, you idiot.” Ethan hits his brother on the shoulder, before trying to change the course of the conversation. “How about someone call people in Beacon Hills to catch them up? All the old people will kill us if they are left out.”
“Oooh dibs on Christopher Argent,” Peter volunteers with glee. “I’d love to rile him up at 4 in the morning.”

“I think I have the Sheriff’s number saved on my phone,” Danny says with a grimace. “... I really don’t want to give him the news, though.”

“I’ll do it,” Derek offers. “Can I borrow your phone?”

Danny lets Derek make the call on his phone. The two Alphas move to the side to start their calls. Malia excuses herself to sit next to Stiles.

Matt and Danny were stuck sitting with the twins. They were all kinda dazed after everything, from fatigue likely. A million things, or nothing, were going through their minds thanks to the adrenaline crashing down.

Danny chuckles before breaking the silence. “So, what do you all think about all the sad pining Derek and Peter are going through over Stiles?”

“What?,” Aiden asks, confused by the question. “What do you mean they’re pining after Stiles?”

“Please,” Ethan scoffs. “Peter’s attitude improves twelve times whenever Stiles is mentioned. And he flirts more when Stiles is around.”

“Derek actually blushes. Badly. I feel bad for Malia, too,” Matt adds. “She’s kinda stuck on Stiles as well.”

“Yeah, she is,” Danny agrees with a small nod. “He did do everything he can to save her. Apparently he sought her out on New Year’s eve in the woods, too. Took her paw out of a bear trap. Likely a savior complex. I’m surprised the three of you aren’t jumping over hoops for Stiles’ affections, too.”

“Yeah, no,” Aiden shoots that idea down. “Unlike a lot of our group, I don’t want to get into Stilinski’s pants. No offense.”

“You do know people say ‘no offense’ after saying something very offensive, right?,” Ethan informs his brother. “So what was so offensive about what you said, huh, brother?” Ethan grabs Aiden head for a hard noogie, which turned into play wrestling. I guess the two Alphas still had nervous energy to burn.

On the other hand, Matt was quiet. Which meant he had Danny’s full attention. “Well?,” Danny asked Matt.

“I... kinda have eyes for someone else...,” he answers with a blush.

“And have you asked him out yet?,” Danny pushes.

“Not officially,” Matt explains. “I mean, we hang out. A lot. But, we never brought it up.”

“Well, you should,” Danny tells Matt. “Because Isaac can be very dense sometimes.”

Matt turns the deepest shade of red. “I never said it was Isaac.”

“Matt, honey, everyone in our group knows it’s you and Isaac. We’re just all waiting for it to be official,” Danny flicks him on the knee. “And you didn’t hear it from me, but there’s a pool going around of when. By the way, I win if you make it official by the end of the weekend. If you do, I’ll
cut you in 20% of my winnings.”

Matt wasn’t fazed by the pool. He knew his friends would do that if it were really a topic of discussion. A smirk forms; why not capitalize on that opportunity? “Forty percent,” Matt haggles.

“Thirty percent, but it has to be semi-public,” Danny counters.

“Deal, but you have to help me with the cheesy surprise I’ll plan.”

“As long as it’s not obvious, I’m in. I don’t want to be disqualified,” Danny explains.

Ethan and Aiden were back from their quick wrestle. They were slightly out of breathe but obviously in better spirits than before. “What’d we miss?,” they say in unison.

“Nothing much,” Danny says. “We were just making plans for this weekend.”

“Why are Scott and them taking so long?,” Matt says, changing the subject.

“You have Lydia shopping,” Danny explains. “Even in WalMart, she has to make everything match perfectly for each of us. Despite what people think, she’s a quick shopper. She should be done soon.”

True enough, they see two carts rolling up right after that. Both were filled to the brim with clothes and snacks.

Aiden lets out a whistle. “Did she buy a closet for each of us?,” he asks confused.

Lydia walks beside the carts, texting madly on her phone. As she arrives, she goes into full queen bee mode, explaining the contents of each cart.

“I have casual clothes, sleep clothes, concert clothes, matching shoes, accessories, and various other stuff for everyone who lost their luggage. This includes toiletries, underwear, and first aid, just in case. I also got a sewing kit so we can patch up Stiles’ wound before he gets back. I volunteer anyone else to do that job.

I got those stain removing wipes for the cars. Someone else has to start scrubbing the blood and dirt off the rentals. Again, not my job.

I suppose all of you finally figured out that we are going to the hotel after this, right? Good. Anyone called the parents yet?”

“Derek and Peter are on it,” Danny answers.

“Well, someone should tell Boyd, too. Poor kid will have a broken heart if no one thought to tell him,” Lydia says as she finishes another text on her phone. “I pulled up the directions to the hotel. I think Jackson should carry Stiles in over his shoulder, tell the front desk people he’s passed out drunk. If that doesn’t work- Jackson you’re slipping the guy a $100 bill.

Everyone got the plan? Good. Go on and change people, and put the groceries in the trunks. I am dying for a hot shower.”

She walks away from the group, saying she’s looking up Boyd’s phone number since everyone is taking forever to act.

“Yeesh,” Matt exclaims. “You deal with that everyday?,” he asks Danny and Jackson.
“She’s worse before her morning coffee,” Jackson answers, starting to load stuff into vehicles. “She’s efficient at least. I just want to get to a bed.”

Everyone just silently (and begrudgingly) agrees with Jackson, since fatigue has finally set in.

THE NEXT(?) MORNING

Peter, Derek, and Malia stayed up and got breakfast. The three of them are driving to the airport to pick up the Argents. (Yeah, that was awkward from both ends.) After some shady dealings with the local hunter family the Gutierrezes, Peter Hale had to shelf out a lot of money to the rental car company for losing a vehicle, but it was all set up as the car was stolen. A burnt body was lying next to the vehicle that belonged to Arnold Schmidt, known for 7 acts of grand theft auto. The news brushed it off as a open and shut case and moved on to more news about the Kardashians.

Once the legality of everything was covered, Peter and the Argents decided to follow their leads and try to track the berserker that escaped.

“You’re sure they’re berserkers?,” Victoria questioned the three wolves.

“I’ve run into them before during my time in South America, after my short stint with a Werecoyote in the area. Feisty creatures, but they throw a wild hunt,” Peter rambles.

“Berserkers are not known to migrate or hunt outside their territory,” Victoria posits with a raised eyebrow.

“So either they were forced to move from their hunting grounds, or are hunting a specific target in the area,” Christopher Argent theorizes. “I should check with the Gutierrezes if they have contacts monitoring the berserkers in the continent.”

Victoria stops her dear husband right there. “That wouldn’t be necessary; it will just be a waste of resources. If the berserkers were kicked out of their hunting grounds, then they would attack cattle, sources of meat, random passersby.

But in this case, they targeted the first car in a convoy holding our kids, all on their way to Los Angeles. This is a targeted attack- one that required intel, motive, and efficiency. Also, a way to coerce these supposed powerhouses to attack some teenagers and motivate to kill.

So we now have these questions without answers:
Who do they want dead?
Who wanted them dead?
Who knows about the trip?
And what type of powers can control berserkers?”

“Well, there’s bound to be a line of people a mile long wanting kill my uncle,” Derek offers. “That search could take forever.”

“But it wasn’t my car that got attacked,” Peter corrects him. “If the mastermind had intel on the trip, they’d also know about which car held which passengers. So the targets boil down to Erica, Matt, Isaac, Derek and… Stiles.”

“The three kids don’t have much on their hands that someone would want to kill them,” Christopher says. “Stiles, well we can’t ask the kid now. So, Derek, who would want to kill you?”
“Aside from my uncle? I wouldn’t know,” Derek admits. “Random hunters maybe, or-”

Derek freezes, then pales. Everyone watches the Alpha as the realization hit him. “It- It wouldn’t really mean anything,” Derek stutters. “But as soon as I passed out, I had a- I was out of it, but I had a dream or vision of something.”

He gulps and can’t quite get the words out.

Peter cuffs him on the shoulder. “Well, spit it out, Derek.”

“I saw three people: my older sister Laura, my younger sister Cora, and- and I saw Kate.” He looks all of them in the eye. “I saw Kate Argent. And she had purple eyes.”

The taste of the conversation turned sour thereafter. The Argents would not entertain the idea that Kate would be the source of the attack since they physically buried the body. BUT, they did concede purple eyes could help narrow down supernatural suspects and that the creature may be connected to the late huntress.

The discussion lasted another 20 minutes, surprisingly with few arguments. Chris was headed back to Beacon Hills to check on his sister’s grave, and to pull up the Argent bestiary to look for purple eyed creatures. Victoria is staying in LA to mobilize some of the men lent by the Gutierrez hunters. Berserkers are big and bulky creatures; they can’t really blend into crowds easily. Peter excuses himself to follow his supernatural leads, Well, that’s what he says he’s doing. He could just as easily be on his way to snort coke and chase hookers. And Derek, he’s in charge of the kids, and finding out who could know about their trip.

Turns out Derek’s job was easy, because anyone on the internet could know about the trip. Almost all of them posted about the trip in every form of social media. There were videos of Isaac, Matt, and Erica singing on Instagram. Scott posted pics on Facebook of Allison driving, tagging the location at every moment he can. Jackson tweeted about the trip two days in advance, along with shirtless pics on his fitness progress. It was scary how much information anyone could have about the members of the pack, thanks to a quick Google search.

A mild headache later, Derek checks up on Stiles. There’s still nothing going on with the dead teen’s body, and Derek was losing hope. He redresses the bandages and puts Stiles in a fresh change of clothes. He takes a moment to massage his temples before quickly departing; he has to get ready to bring the teens to the concert venue.

Too bad Derek left so quickly. Because if Derek checked a little more closely or lingered a moment longer, he would have caught one of the runes on Stiles starting to glow.

Malia and Derek dropped off the group at a large dive bar, The PheNicks. Half the group assumed that MCRC would book a large stadium and fill it to the brim. But apparently, this was one of those secret mini-concerts that edgy artists like to pull off. Instead of major publicity stunts and packed stadiums, the concert was all off of word of mouth. This was gonna be a testing ground for their new singles, and the media and record labels were not in the know.

Suffice to say, the twitterverse went batshit crazy over this. Everyone was posting possible venues and their hoped setlist. No one was selling tickets online. The band’s manager held mini contests online for signed tickets barely a month ago. It was the modern golden ticket to Willy Wonka’s chocolate factory. And none of the tickets had the venue listed on them: just the time and the city.

Each ticket holder got a text or call an hour before admission. And now, PheNicks was standing
room only, with security tenfold at the door for non-ticketed fans wanting a chance to listen and see their favorite group.

The night was crazy, the atmosphere insane. Phones were recording left and right. People sang along with their favorites, and screamed once their new songs came on. The entire set lasted two whole hours, no intermission, no opening acts. By the end of it, the band was tired, the fans were tired, and everyone was in a happy haze.

Paul Blaze, Peter Simmons, Everett Johnson, and Mike Thompson promised the fans they’d be drinking with them the next 2 hours, as long they moderately behaved, before they had to go to their promised VIP after party. The 300 or so fans in the room went ballistic. (There were only 2 fans that had to detained for trying to kiss/grope the band members.) Everyone, including MCRC, were dancing the night away and just having an awesome time.

Elsewhere in the city, Derek found a little hole-in-the-wall cafe which specialized in teas more than coffees. They had a plethora of books offered for the patrons. Malia and Derek took the time to relax and unwind: Derek was chapters in a sci-fi book that interested him. Malia was listening to the soft music, half listening to the lyrics and half people-watching. Every once in a while, Malia would shyly ask Derek what some words meant. Derek would try to explain as Malia would nod along. Three and a half hours later, Lydia texts Derek saying that they should head over soon since the VIP party would start soon.

Unsurprisingly, as Malia and Derek walk to their vehicle, they find Peter leaning on it. He was waiting for them to offer him a ride. On the drive over, Derek asks Peter what he found out, if anything.

“The underworld is like a moving river, Derek,” Peter starts. Derek just shakes his head. He should have expected a cryptic answer. “You can’t find each fish, each bug, each pebble. But, you can find the ripples they leave behind.”

“Uh-huh. Please skip the rest of the metaphor and go directly to the information.”

Peter sighs. “Banter is part of cultured conversations, Derek. But since that concept is lost to you-

My sources don’t know exact locations, but provided me with two important pieces of information. There are not one, but two relatively new entities in Los Angeles that are leaving bodies in their wake. The former is a large group, likely our berserker army. It’s moving with a purpose, more methodical than the latter group. This second creature is acting alone, and apparently looking for something or someone. It kills any witnesses, and leaves barely any trace. All the bodies were found at least 2 days later.”

“And why would the second group be a bother to us?,’” Derek asks.

“It’s attacking any shapeshifters that are remotely lupine. That means dog or wolf-like, my insipid nephew.”

“Thanks for the insult,” Derek replies sarcastically.

“Why you’re very welcome, Derek!,” Peter responds.

Derek remotely ignores the smell of cigarette smoke and blood off of Peter. Wherever he went, it was not remotely safe. He doesn’t know if he feels worry or anxiety over that fact.

Minutes later, the three arrive and park by the concert venue. Patrons with varying levels of sobriety were laughing it out by the door. A large portion of them should definitely not be driving. Malia,
Peter, and Derek offer the bouncers their ID’s and tickets. They were escorted inside and to the backstage. A medium sized room was stuffed with 3 couches, racks of costumes, and two makeup stations. Inside the teens were talking amongst themselves. Isaac, Matt, and Erica were practically tripping over themselves wasted. Though impossible due to their supernatural nature, a musical high was more likely the cause of their inebriety.

A sweaty lanky man in a white V-neck and grey vest approached them, with hand outstretched. “Hey! You guys must be the rest of the VIPs! I’m Paul, nice to meet you.”

Peter returns the excited handshake, while Malia and Derek just raise an eyebrow in response. “Hi, Paul, I’m Peter, this is my nephew Derek and this is Malia.”

Paul just returns the handshake with a smile undeterred. “From your reactions, you must not be fans. But hey, thanks for coming anyway!”

Paul takes this time to introduce everyone in the band.
“I’m Paul, the pianist and backup vocals. Everett right there, is our bassist and graphic designer. Makes a mean website. Pete Simmons, lead guitar and vocals. *HE* makes a mean low-carb low-sodium meatloaf. He’s practically the physical trainer/stylist of the group. You can call him Peter to shut him up quick. He *hates* being called Peter. And Mike is right there next to- I think her name is Erica?. Anyway, Mike is our drummer and songwriter. Anything he writes is gold. Practically Midas that one.”

“Shut up, Paul! You fix the melodies too,” Mike screams between his conversation with Erica.

“Yeah, well we can’t all be pretty faces like Peter, right?,” Paul replies.

Pete chuffs in the corner, as he is doing some crunches shirtless. “Stop. Calling me. Peter.”

“Well, this is gonna be awkward quick,” Peter Hale offers. “Since we both have the same name.”

Pete stands up and wipes off his sweat with a towel. “I am actually okay with that. Now everyone will HAVE to call me Pete, and call you Peter. Done.”

Peter Hale just shakes his head, walking over to take a seat next to Ethan and Aiden.

Derek scans the room and finds the VIPs only consist of his group: the 13 residents of Beacon Hills. “Are we all the VIPs coming?,” he asks Paul since he was close by.

“I mean, I thought so,” Paul answers. “Stiles said expect 14 people in total. I just never saw him in the mosh pit tonight.”

“Wait, you know Stiles?,” Derek asks. The other teens quiet down, hearing the name.

“Yeah, I mean this was his idea,” Paul admits. “Where is he anyway? Not like him to be late. Actually, he never misses a good concert.”

Derek stiffens and the room ran a little somber. Someone coughed, another person’s drinking and it kinda echoed through the room. The silence made everything sound louder than it did. Derek started to answer. “I don’t think Stiles is gonna come tonight.”

“-without bringing some DONUTS!!,” Stiles screams as he walks in the door with two dozen donuts in tow.
A chorus of “Stiles!” erupted from the group as a large portion of them tackled the recently dead teen into a group hug. (Jackson ran to him first, just to save the donuts from toppling over. Lydia waved hi from a distance away. Allison was drunk crying in joy, since she was the only human that could get sloshed.)

“Ow! Ow! Hey guys! Ow! Stop! I’m still sore from- HEY PAUL!!!” Stiles screams from within the crowd. “Sorry I missed the party!”

“No, it just got started now that you’re here!!,” Paul cheers. He walked over to Jackson to help himself with some donuts. After taking two bites, Pete swats the pastry out of the pianist’s hand warning him of his diet.

After all the hugs (which was actually scent-marking for the wolves of the group), Stiles approached Paul and the band offering them bro hugs and secret handshakes like they have been friends for years. Everyone else was watching the interaction as all five share a couch.

“Dude, how’s your year going so far?,” Stiles asks.

“Oh, training has been horrible,” Pete starts. “Starting over from scratch sucks.”

“I hear ya. Growing the perfect beard takes too much time,” Everett adds. “They don’t have my favorite beard oils out yet.”

“I tried starting to write a book,” Mike offers. “Thought about rewriting certain ones that I know would sell, but that’s kinda cheating someone else out of fame and fortune. It don’t sit right by me.”

“He just doesn’t remember how John Green writes The Fault in Our Stars. You just can’t copy future perfection,” Paul jests. “Oh, we have our future tours booked for England, Japan, and Peru, and some other random countries in between. Anywhere else we should look at?”

“Can you swing Australia in the mix?,” Stiles asks. “So we can snag Ayer’s Rock?”

“Sure, I’ll check with my manager in the morning,” Paul promises. “And how did your year go so far?”

“Oh, you know, killed a dark druid, an old fart, and some Alphas. Still looking for that book. I’m trying to get everyone that’s supposed to be in Beacon Hills transferred over,” Stiles starts.

“That one right there-” Stiles points to Malia. “That’s Malia, remember? Saved her ‘bout 3 months earlier this time. A lot easier now that I know where her den was.

And those two-” Stiles points to Aiden and Ethan. “Ethan and Aiden. You guys never met them but they can transformed into this giant were-dude. So awesome.

As you can see, Jackson’s alive this time. The guy next to Isaac is Matt, his old owner. He’s alive, too. They’re both Kanimas now.”

“Kanima?,” Mike asks.

“Were-lizard with paralytic venom in their claws,” Stiles answers.
“Cooooool. Gotta see that some time,” Mike exclaims.

“Also, you owe me a hundred bucks, Pete,” Stiles badgers the guitarist. “Ledge and Dairy is up and running, with a 4.8 star rating on Yelp! I TOLD you people will love the idea.”

Pete just curses as he pulls out his wallet to hand Stiles the cash. “Did you at least put in a secret hideout at your new business?,’’ the loser asks.

“Behind the bookcase, cause why not,” Stiles replies with a grin. The band members just laugh out loud.

As soon as the laughter died and the shock has dissipated, a chorus of “Hey!”’s and “WTF!”’s fill the room. The 13 other VIPs were surprised as Stiles just spills a lot of supernatural baggage on the four strangers.

“We don’t even KNOW them!,” Scott stage whispers. “How could you??”

Stiles raises his hands in meek surrender.

“Guys, guys, guys- CHILL. Please.
It’s story time again, I guess?
I mean, meet the members of MCRC. They’re kinda stuck in this time loop, too. We met like, what, four cycles ago?”

“A little over that,” Paul admits. “We knew you December about six years ago, face-to-face met around March 4 years ago. And, oh God, what a crazy few years this time loop has been.”

The members of MCRC start talking about a bit of the time travel hoodoo they have been stuck in. “Sixteen years. We’ve been stuck in 2012 for sixteen whole years,” Paul starts.

“We toured the world, switched up song lists and albums, we evolved so much in this same year,” Mike adds. “Like my writing the first year around is a lot crappier than it is now.”

“We shoot up the charts faster each year. It’s the rock star’s dream,” Everett says. “Dude, I know the trends before they happen. We were always on the pulse of pop culture. Our websites had memes from the hour before and it just makes traffic unbelievable.”

“By year 7, it got boring though,” Pete counters. “We were winning all the awards, from Teen’s Choice to the Grammys like clockwork. There was no more challenge. Nothing was new. Every year, we’d regrow our brand and guarantee the rich life on easy street. We could’ve bet on every lottery and know the numbers like the back of our hands. Because practically nothing changed.”

“Well, almost practically,” Paul corrects him. “We lived on social media. As rock stars, we tended to just look only at pop culture and music- how the media shaped the arts. But sometime in between, we started noticing the news, the crimes, the natural disasters. We noticed in year 8 that the numbers of dead were considerably less.

Bridges in Peru that collapsed the year before were repaired before the catastrophe happens. Vaccines for different diseases were released earlier, sometimes by weeks. Detroit’s crime dropped 2% below projections and the media went crazy with that statistic. This guy from the Philippines got the world record for newest species discovered and won a Nobel Prize in Botany AND Zoology.

The internet was showing signs of changing, too. This guy, Zeddie Little, knew EXACTLY where
This camera person would be. He fixed his hair, his clothes and smile. He became a meme as the most photogenic guy in the world. Two YouTube channels were making predictions about movie plots, and Easter eggs, the day before each release. Youtube sensations overnight.

“It didn’t take a genius to put two and two together. People all over the world were in this loop with us,” Everett concluded. “We didn’t know how or why. Or how many. So we slowly started trying to contact people.”

“Some ran, some laughed, some lied,” Mike conceded. “But the rest, we just formed a secret network. We tried to find clues as to why this was happening. Half of them wanted to capitalize, half just wanted out. But we knew the one thing that we all had to do is find out WHY.”

“So our group has been collecting information on the side,” Pete finished. “The scientists were looking to science. The ones considered kooky looked to fate and magic. And for three years, Years 8 through 10, we had no leads.

And then, pretty much, here came along Stiles.” (The red hooded teen just shrugs in response.)

“This little douchebag, from this little town in Nowhere, California, started spewing crap about magic and werewolves and fantastical creatures.” Paul rubs his face. “Craziest bollocks you heard the first time round.”

“So, what did this little shit do?,” Mike points. “New York City, midnight countdown. We were performing of course. He promised he’d be there and that we’d all believe.

It’s 11:45 p.m.; our set just finished. Cheers from fans filling the block. Then screams everywhere as people were pointing in the air. A glowing boy in a red hoodie was flying and doing loop de loops.

Stiles flies into camera view, winks at the screen, then shoots two beams in the air that explode into fireworks. The sparks then transform to freaking butterflies- actual GODDAMN butterflies. It was the most ridiculous thing I have ever seen.”

“The announcer was speechless,” Everett continues. “Stiles floats down, does a little curtsy, then explains to the audience that all of that was pure magic, and that magic was real. And for people that will remember, to contact him via his email as the old year starts. Dumbass lists and spells his actual email on live television. And then…”

The band members and Stiles just looks at each other then shrugs. “That’s it,” Everett says with finality.

The other people in the room just look at the five storytellers, all with dumb looks on.

Finally, Matt bites. “That’s… it?
Do you mind elaborating on that?”

“That’s the problem,” Paul admits. “Not one person remembers everything about Year 11. Not how it started, not how it ended. No one remembers a lot of it.
...Not even Stiles.”

Chapter End Notes

A/N: Eep. Is that considered a cliffhanger?

not a lot of action. Will make up for it this next chapter with more magical exposition and action, cause big baddies are coming. Comments help a lot!!

Also, I’m back in school, so I’ll be back to my sporadic updates. At least once a month, or at most, every two weeks. I’m a graduate student now. So gulp.
(Update 11/21/18: We have confirmed that this promise of posting frequently is also a lie. I apologize.)
Chapter Summary

After an attack in the mountains of California, the residents of Beacon Hills were left dazed and in various levels in disarray- especially with the passing of Stiles Stilinski. They resolve to meet the members of My Chemical Romantic Comedy in hopes of finding the real reason for their trip. It is there that Stiles joins the group, back from the dead, as they discuss the connection of MCRC with their group.

“We’ve been stuck in 2012 for sixteen whole years (too),” the pianist of the group admits before discussing the first time they met Stiles. “Craziest bollocks I’ve ever heard… and then that’s it.”

“That’s it?,” Matt asks.

“Not one person remembers everything about Year 11… Not even, Stiles.”

What happened in that fateful year?
How many time can Stiles cheat death?
Will we finally learn why the group came to Los Angeles?

T/W: None come to mind. Though a LOT of the natural disasters actually happened IRL and I added it in for realism.

Chapter Notes

A/N: OMG. had a typo on an earlier version of Part 6.
Again: TYPO/ERRATA: If you read an earlier version of the previous chapter, I meant that no one could remember Year 11, not 12.
This is important for the overlying mystery of this arc/story.

And for all my readers- thank you soooo much for sticking with me 23 chapters later. Wow. I never thought I’d write this much.

SPOILER ALERT: If you have no clue who Malia is, pertaining to her relationship with Peter and consequently Derek, then wow, you really stopped watching the show recently.

So if the wikis didn’t spoil it for you, then the post- elevator scene may.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

“Yeah, we knew Stiles doesn’t remember, but what do you mean no one else remembers? Did you have like, collective amnesia?,” Isaac asks, intrigued. “How did you know that the year even
The members of the band chuckled in response. “The first hint is that Stiles can summon someone from that year,” Everett answers. “Which, by the way, have you guys seen him summon himself?”

“Yeah, twice,” Erica answers like it was a normal day in the park.

“We technically fought Stiles as he summoned himself,” Ethan answers, raising his hand meekly. “Wasn’t really a good day for us.”

Everett whistles in response. “And both of you are still alive?”

“You must really like them,” Pete says, addressing Stiles. The boy in question just bites into a donut, winking at the twins.

“Anyway-,” Everett continues. “It’s not like we all forgot about that year. Everyone has little bits and pieces.”

“And those memories are not that nice. So I’d reeeaaally rather not talk about what happened that year if we can help it,” Mike notes. A small tinge of sickly green forms on his face. “Can we just talk about plans and move on?”

“YES!,” Paul shouts with a clap. “The ACTUAL reason we’re here. So, uhh, where is the, uh-” Paul stands up and runs to a knapsack by the make-up mirrors. He keeps mumbling to himself, looking for some odd thing or another.

“Dude, the banner is in the guitar case,” Everett reminds him.

“Oh yeah.” Paul runs to the case and pulls out a large tarpaulin banner emblazoned with blue and gold. As it unfolds, the excited pianist fumbles and drops the object.

Pete chuckles. “Classic Paul.”

As soon as he recovers the banner, he clears his throat before addressing the room. “I would like to formally announce My Chemical Romantic Comedy’s 2012 World Tour: End of the Li(n)es! We’ll be having concerts headlining in Italy, Peru, Egypt, South Korea, Brazil, Japan, and England. We-”

“Don’t forget Australia!,” Stiles chimes.

“Yes, Australia, got it,” Paul corrects himself. “We’ll be meeting tons of fans, having tons of parties, experiencing tons of culture, and, of course- you are ALL invited as our VVIP’s.”

Erica, Matt, and Isaac jump out of their seats in sheer excitement, all screaming unintelligibly. Scott sat shocked with the news- he has never left the country before. Neither have most of the others in the group.

“All expense paid, mind you,” Pete adds. “This could be the only year we do this, if things go well. That means these memories need to count!”

The rest of the group just start chatting about the places they want to see. Isaac wants to hug an actual koala. Matt is starting a small nature travel vlog if possible. Allison wants to visit her actual roots in France.

Everyone is going crazy about these plans and having a blast.

Of course, Peter and Derek have to be the ones to ruin the mood. “How are they going to be doing
“Though normally I’d advocate a reckless adventure, I’d have to side with my nephew on this one,” Peter remarks. “A lot of angry parents would have our hides. And while that is a fun idea for me, I doubt the teenagers would feel the same.”

The members of the band look to each other then to Stiles, who was downing a soda. After a loud belch, Stiles starts his plans. “Well, dear Peter, we actually have to go to most of these places. Some are end of the world scenarios that we have to nip in the bud. Others, well, we’re making it up as we go. And if our parents would rather us go to another day of sweaty gym lockers and fake cafeteria food, rather than us saving the ACTUAL world, then they can go suck a big fat c-”

Paul decides to take over the rest. “What Stiles is saying is, world ending destinations, all the important places: we’ve scheduled over Spring break, summer vacation, yada-yada. The rest are completely optional.

I doubt dropping out of school is an option, but we can apply for homeschooling options, or test out of GED’s. Stiles told me a couple of you already have college credits in the bag. And if parents and adults are going to give you the third degree, call it a prolonged internship. We can get legal to write up the papers easy.”

Everett adds his own two cents. “All we’re saying is that everyone has options. Think about it, and the rest is paid. This could be the best year of your life. Why not take advantage of it?”

“But, the trip to England this Spring Break is practically mandatory,” Stiles emphasizes. “I really need everyone there if possible.”

“Why is that?,” Allison asks.

“We’re going somewhere important,” Stiles answers.

“Well, duh,” Erica snips. “But where are we going, and why is it important?”

“I was gonna do this at a later time and-” Stiles was interrupted by a lot of strong glares.

Stiles chews on his lip, before resolving to answer the question. “Well, since you all HAVE to know…

*sighs* Well, I guess I have to start with the fact that most of us have been stuck in time for twelve years.”

“Oh god, quit restating the facts and move on,” Jackson remarks. This earns him a slap on the wrist from Danny and Lydia.

“Thank you, Danny and Lydia. As I was trying to segue- We really don’t know why this is happening. If this phenomenon was scientific, then why do so few humans remember this time loop? Do other animals remember the time loop? Is it location-based, or something in our DNA that causes only a few members of the human population to remember it?

A group in Fermilab, Mayo Clinic, and CERN are slowly and secretly looking into that possibility while pursuing their own scientific research, but that probably doesn’t interest you, so...

Any-who- on the supernatural sides of things, well... I’ve been finding more and more things are changing with each loop.”
“Things? Be more specific, if you could,” Lydia asks curiously.

“I really don’t know where to start.

Magical wells, ley lines, and nodes of power have been ebbing and flowing with energy. At the start, it was too small of a change to notice. But after a couple of years, things were getting unstable. Some wells are being, I’d call it cleansed, while others are doing the opposite.

It’s not a light-fighting-dark thing, but more of a shift in balance. This is usually normal. But as science would tell you, all this increases entropy. And when all that chaotic energies of order-and-disorder tips over, things tend to go out of hand.”

“We started noticing stronger storms, and more frequent natural disasters,” Pete explains. “Have you seen a fire-nado? Last year, 4 twisters formed over a brushfire in Colorado. Those carried the flames well around the dust bowl, ruining acres of townships and crops. The local authorities couldn’t stop the miles of damage it wrought. Especially since this North American drought has been getting worse each loop.”

“What started as a normal rainy day in West Virginia, ended up as the strongest thunderstorm recorded in history.” Mike adds. “This thunderstorm Derecho killed 34 people last year and caused power to go out during the worst heat wave in the state’s history.

And along the East Coast, the worst flooding in decades is gonna be caused by Hurricane Sandy. And no matter what we try to do, we can’t remove the flooding entirely. So much infrastructure damage and red tape makes it near impossible to fix. So thousands of people will have their lives ruined by what started as a small thunderstorm on the first years.”

“We are fighting a losing battle with nature. And that’s one reason we are trying to end this curse,” Stiles continues his story. “Halfway in this loop, around my 7th year, I found a hint that brought us to England, to a place where magical tomes line the walls. And the books that were available changed EVERY LOOP.

Historical accounts of Egyptian mythology. Mayan calendars that list natural and biological disasters. All the books in the Game of Thrones storyline, even the ones not written yet. The diary of Anne Frank. The first versions of the Old Testament. Martha Stewart cookbooks.

You could lose forever in that place.
But, the place exists for only a day. Then it vanishes out of existence for who knows how long.”

People were mouthing and whispering various questions that Stiles ignores as he continues.

“The hardest part about this place is that- to enter you have to pass trials that change every year. Some physical, some mental, some magical, but plenty deadly. And once you get in the library, plenty of stuff are booby trapped.

Don’t trust every book or every nook. Walls can close behind you. You know those monsters in video games the pretend they’re treasure chests? Yeah, very real and very dangerous.

But most importantly, if you see a floating sword try to run away.
And never, ever EVER call out its name.”

“And what, pray tell, is the name of this magic sword?,” Peter asks with a smirk.
“It’s the most well-known, most powerful magical sword of legend—**Excalibur**.”


“He did say we were going to the Arthur Archives on New Year’s Eve,” Danny whispered.

“Well, we were knocked out,” Jackson answers.

(“Excalibur?,” Matt just repeats. Isaac just tries to soothe the shock from him.)

“Oh, this is gonna be very interesting…,” Peter muses.

“So are you saying what we think you’re saying?,” Ethan tries to ask. “Are we trying to loot the library of King Arthur’s court.”

“Technically, we’re not looting,” Danny corrects them. “We’re breaking, entering, and reading private property. Looting would be taking stuff home.”

“Yeah, no looting, please,” Stiles adds. “Magical library here. These items can release monsters, trigger curses, can change you to stone. Anything in your imagination? Could be ten times worse.”

“Why would Arthur’s library have Martha Stewart cookbooks?,” Jackson asks incredulously.

“Did you watch that Disney movie, the Sword in the Stone?,” Peter replies. “Merlin could travel through time in that movie. I’m not saying that Disney movies are a font of Arthurian myth, but if magic is real, why not time travel?”

“Way to creep up the paedophile meter, Peter,” Aiden quips. Peter just flips him the bird in response.

“I have a better question,” Lydia starts. “Well, two. Is there like a Dewey Decimal System to this place? And two, if this is a library, where are the librarians?”

Stiles just stares at Lydia, then looks to Derek before cracking up madly. “De-Dewey… ha! ..system.. *wheeze* Oh God. No, this was not an insult on you, Lydia. I promise. Oh God, my sides hurt.

*Phew* Sorry, inside joke. Uhhh ummm…”

While Stiles tries to regain his composure, everyone is looking to Derek. The rugged Alpha has his ears burning red in embarrassment. The band members of MCRC are snickering like little boys are wanton to do.

“Librarians!” Stiles screams, finding his train of thought. “Yes, librarians. Every year, you and then me, which I guess means we, ask that every year. Is there a system? Who stocks it? Who rearranges it?

Answer: we don’t know! We run in and around the place; we try to map the place and then we come back next year and it moves around! Danny tried making an algorithm to diagram it but there’s not enough data to make it- we’ve visited the place maybe only 5 times successfully.

So we have to brute force it. The more readers the better.”

“Are you guys coming with?,” Jackson asked the band members.
“Ah no, we’re lovers, not fighters,” Pete explained. “Plus, we’re fragile humans over here. This face is not made for danger.”

“Some of us are humans here,” Danny replied.

Stiles made a bunch of faces rescinding that fact. “Ehhh uhm… not that human? Remember? New Year’s Eve?

The only full human here is Allison and the band members. But Allison is from a family of hunters so….yeeeeeaa… ahh….” Stiles ends that last sentence meekly, with accompanying jazz hands.

Danny and Lydia look to each other, then to Stiles. “We keep pushing that talk off. You, me, Lydia, on the drive home.” Danny says, straight faced.

Stiles offers a thumbs up and mouths a ‘thank you’ before moving on. “So, we’re going to this library as our first big mission over Spring Break. Any questions?”

It took every bit of self restraint for Matt to stop himself. But, the self-constraint fails. Matt just blurts out, “Do we get codenames?”

“No, next question,” Derek answers with finality.

“Why not?,” Matt asks the group.

“Code names are silly and can get confusing,” Derek explains. “Just call everyone by their names.”

“But what about secret identities? Our enemies could find out who we are or where we live!”

Half of the group shakes their head in response. The other half actually is starting to agree with Matt.

“Are you giving your enemy your social security number, your address, or your date of birth?,”

Danny asks Matt.

“Well, no but-”

“As someone who has experience tracking people online, there’s hundreds of Matt Daehler’s in the world. It’s too much of a hassle without enough info. So, don’t worry your pretty little head about it, okay?,” Danny finishes.

Matt pouts a tiny bit before conceding. “Can the mission have a name, then? To make it sound official?,” he bargains.

Not a lot of people protest. “Sure, why not,” Danny agrees. “I can’t take all the fun out of it.”

‘The Crusades of Camelot’ was thrown out; it had too much of a religious undertone. Erica recommended ‘Mission One’ because why not. ‘Arthur’s Library’ kept coming up as a common theme, but it still sounded wrong. Soon the recommendations spiraled into mundane topics and stupider names as teenagers are wanton to do.

“Arthur Archives,” Derek finally offers after minutes of silence. The name hangs in the air for a while. People slowly smile because it sounds cool enough.

“Arthur Archives!,” Stiles repeats, with a smile. “You remembered what I called it on New Year’s Eve! We’ve been calling it that for years. We okay with that?” Everyone nods in agreement.

After the mission briefing, everyone agreed to actually roam the city to dance and drink the night away. (Paul and the rest of MCRC couldn’t join them since they have a flight in 5 hours for their next gig.) Sunday’s early evening involved shopping and eating out, before going to more bars since there were events for the long weekend.

Sunday night was extra special since Stiles (and Peter) disclosed the ways for the wolves of the group to get a healthy buzz. Matt and Jackson were happy to learn that this ‘secret method’ worked for Kanimas too. And because he secretly cares about everybody, Derek was in charge of making sure no one drank themselves to death or wolfsbane poisoning.

Monday morning, everyone was fighting a massive hangover and settled for a somewhat fancy (read: greasy) brunch in the city. But now that the drive home was eminent and imminent, questions of safety arose - could they be attacked on the drive back?

“We can’t avoid all these fights forever,” Jackson said while shadow punching in the parking lot. “We just gotta toughen up and pull through.”

“Well, I’m low on magic for the weekend,” Stiles admitted. “I can’t really help if something happens.”

“I’m surprised you run out of magic, Stiles,” Isaac says from Matt’s lap. The two are in a tight cuddle and have been inseparable from the night before. They are both beaming and shaded in pink, coming from a heavy public make-out session. “I mean, I guess it makes sense. I really don’t think time magic and coming back from the dead is easy. But, it kinda makes me a bit scared that we don’t have your magic to back us up this time.”

“Then, we just have to be extra vigilant,” Derek answers. “No mountains, no driving at night or along quiet back roads. We pair up everyone that works together on the drive back.”

“I suggest making decoys,” Peter adds. “We really don’t know how they found out our route to L.A. But I say, we try to confuse all possible sources.”

“How do we do that exactly?,” Aiden asks.

“Social media,” Danny answers. He is kinda weirded out that he’s on the same wavelength as Peter, but he just tries to brush it off. “We make it look like all of us are taking different trips home.”

Danny pulls out his laptop and types while he’s talking. “There are literally 7 ways for us to get home. If we send mixed messages online of how we’re getting home, then whoever might try to attack us will have to scatter their forces.”

“We can either take a plane home, or drive, right? Doesn’t that make it only 2 ways?,” Ethan asks.

“There’s two flights that have space for us,” Danny answers. “One in an hour, and one later in the evening. There’s also a train that leaves around 7 pm.

As for driving, we can go through the mountains or around them. But if we make it look like we either leave in the afternoon or at night then we have 4 extra routes to choose from.” Danny finishes his explanation, turning his laptop around for everyone to see the 4 routes and tickets for the planes and train.

“Which one do we actually take?,” Erica asks.
“The earliest drive, around the mountains,” Allison answers, as everyone looks to her. “It removes all terrain obstacles and leaves little time for our enemies to prepare to mobilize.”

“Then, it’s settled,” Derek takes command. “You kids start fake posting about ways going home. We leave in ten minutes by car.”

“And everyone should lend me their phones so I can rig up their GPS to put fake locations with their story,” Danny adds.

“Twenty minutes then?” Peter asks. Danny nods in response. “Good. Derek, Malia and I are gonna load the cars.”

As everyone starts to go about their tasks, Stiles runs over to the Hales and Malia and asks if they could talk out of earshot. “Sure. You can help with the bags,” Derek answers as they walk to their hotel rooms.

As they hop on their elevators, Stiles tries to breach a very touchy subject. “Are you guys… okay… with each other?”

Both Hales raise an eyebrow in confusion. (And oh they look so related at the moment.)

Stiles continues. “I mean, there was a lot of, y’know-” Stiles starts overtly miming claw swiping and stabbing and basically killing. “-happening in this family. I really wish you two could get along.”

Peter and Derek look at each other, then look away a bit. Peter is the first to speak. “I’m never gonna apologize, if that’s what you expect. I was and never will be that type of person. Part of me still regrets that it had to be Laura, because family IS family.”

“You don’t have to try to explain yourself to me,” Derek interrupts. “You were like that before the fire anyway…”

Derek sighs before continuing. “You killed Laura, yes. But it was my mistake that killed the rest of our family so-”

“It was NOT YOUR FAULT, Derek,” Stiles interrupts. “It was Kate and her-”

Derek covers Stiles’ mouth with his hand to continue. “What I am saying is: we both have blood on our hands. One time, your blood was on my hands too. We don’t have to say yes or no or whatever right now. We’re all the family we got right now.”

Stiles licks Derek’s palm in hopes that he would let go. It succeeds and garners him a red-eyed glare from Derek (and a chuckle from Peter).

“Well, if there’s anything we will be fighting over, it is Stiles,” Peter concedes. “There are times I’d think I may share him… But, he is too much of a scrumptious morsel to share.”

This time, Derek glares at his uncle before wiping his hand on his pant sleeve. (Stiles makes gagging faces over the nasty dirt on Derek’s hand now coating his tongue.) The elevator dings, signaling their floor, and they exit down the hallway. Stiles is a few steps behind, kinda dragging his feet with the mood.

As they enter their rooms to pick up their bags, Stiles finally decides to speak what’s on his mind.
“So, I have another weird question for you?”

“Is that a question?,” Peter says, grabbing 3 bags in one swoop.

“Yes? No. I mean, let me just skip to the question,” Stiles stumbles through. “How do you feel about Malia?”

Peter and Derek share a stare before looking to Malia who is packing up her own stuff in a bag. Hearing her name, she perks up and tries to join the conversation.

“She’s okay. Quiet,” Derek answers. “Definitely quieter than the rest of the bunch. So she’s much less of a headache.”

“Why do you ask?,” Peter muses, avoiding the question.

“Well, Malia is 16 years old. She’s a were-coyote. Her dad, Mr. Tate, does not know about her supernatural abilities. Because, well, he is not her biological dad,” Stiles explains, trying to sound like he’s stating the obvious.

It takes a moment for Derek to goad him on. “And?”

“Well, 17 years ago, Peter here was scouring the world, being wild and free. And in South America, he was partaking in hunts with berserkers and a were-coyote… And one thing lead to another, they parted ways…” Stiles was skirting the topic, side glancing at Malia frequently.

It takes Derek a bit longer to piece these pieces of information together. Peter just ends up dropping the bags in his grasp.

“Meet Malia Hale.”

Peter audibly gulps and stares at Malia. Her signature bitch face, her penchant for raised brows, her reliance on her senses over logic- could this be genetic, not instinct?

“How did you?…,” Derek tries to ask.

“Can’t disclose that yet,” Stiles answers then apologizes. “But if what my sources say are true (and by sources i mean Peter), you guys need to stick together on this drive home.”

“Why?,” Derek asks.

“Because she’s being hunted down,” the teen replies.

“Hunted down by who?,” Derek continues.

“It’s her mother,” Peter answers, breaking his uncharacteristic silence. His face is rigid as he addresses both Stiles and Derek. “Her mother- she- I- *ahem*

Were-coyotes are different from wolves. Any born children take their strength from their birth mothers. So if the mother wants her strength back…”

Malia is still confused in this whole conversation. She wishes she could just be better at english immediately. She imitates Stiles and brandishes a thumbs up in response. (To this, Derek is tempted to hug her and never let go.)

“So, Malia is my cousin?,” Derek asks to deflect.
“Yes,” Stiles answers.

“Peter is her birth dad?,” Derek continues.

“Yes.”

“Her mother is trying to kill her?”

“Birth mother, yes.”

“Malia and I are related?”

“Genetically, yes.”

“I need a minute,” Derek declares, walking out into the hallway.

“I would like the same,” Peter adds excusing himself to the bathroom.

“You have fifteen!,” Stiles shouts after them, as both doors close.

Malia was left alone with the bags with Stiles. With a deep breath, and a forced smile, Stiles asks Malia to sit next to him and talk. He repeats the conversation slowly, encouragingly.

They bring the bags down to the cars ten minutes late. They leave for Beacon Hills soon after.

Chapter End Notes

A/N: I know it’s all exposition-y. I tried to fast forward what I can.

So yeah, this chapter may feel choppy or closed off, but there’s a reason for it, I promise!! There should be two interludes that I’ll add this point at a later time, titled How They Met and Why they Met, that would fill in a bunch of gaps I intentionally left. But the next chapter I post will have action again so… watch out for that!

Do you think that the Hale reveal should’ve gone a different way? Let me know in the comments! You are all amazing!
The group discussed their plans for Spring Break: an expense-free trip to what was once Londinium to raid the magical archives of King Arthur’s court. (There’s a caveat though; people tend to die just trying to get into the Arthur Archives.) Once all the planning has settled, the teens of Beacon Hills try to enjoy the rest of their weekend before heading home. During travel prep however, Stiles drops a bombshell on Derek and Peter Hale. (CANON SPOILER ALERT!) Malia is actually Peter’s biological daughter, and therefore Derek’s biological cousin. Yikes.

Weeks later, the entire group are boarding the plane for their trans-Atlantic flight to their next adventure. Unbeknownst to no one else but Stiles and the members of MCRC, the plane they are boarding also has two other passengers of utmost importance.

Who are the new players on this chessboard?
How are the Hales dealing with the family news?
Will everyone get through this trip unscathed and unharmed?
(Answer: Unlikely.)

T/W: None in this chapter that I can find. Again Malia’s poor English may be poor taste.

Chapter Notes

A/N:
Time Jump warning. It’s a solution for all the filler chapters. Too much for readers, too much for the writer, amirite?

Happy holidays to all. I am back for the Winter break. Grad school in mathematics is hell on earth. I sincerely apologize for the extremely long wait.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

When Derek said that he dislikes airports, he definitely meant it. For anyone with an enhanced sense of smell, the anger and anxiety was just rolling off of the poor Alpha in waves.

“It’s just a short flight, Derek,” Peter says softly.

“Don’t mock me, Peter. It’s 10 hours long,” Derek snips. Both of them were leaning against the wall near the boarding gate. Pre-boarding is about to start, and Derek just wants to get it over with.

“It’s actually 10 hours, and 25 minutes of flight,” Aiden corrects him.
“Tack on another hour for taxi time to and from the runway,” Ethan adds. The twin alphas were playing some stupid game on their phone, biding the time.
“Shut. Up,” Derek grunts. Even without enhanced vision, you could see the small tinge of green off of Derek’s cheeks. “Not helping.”

Malia strolls on by, then leans right next to Derek, rubbing shoulders. “Can’t Stiles magic you there?,“ she asks.

“No, he needs to have been there previously,” Derek answers.

“Pre-vees-ly?,“ Malia asks.

“Pre-vee-us-ly. Means before now,” Derek corrects her. Malia scrunches her forehead as she tries to mouth the word again and again under her breath. The other three alphas smile. That was a healthy momentary distraction for Derek.

“Do you need me to spell it?,“ Derek offers.
Malia nods, offering her phone for Derek to type it in. Once she reads it, she calls the word stupid for having too many vowels. Or as she calls them, ‘ah sounds’.

Their conversations were interrupted by loud squealing from down the hallway. Teenage girls and boys have surrounded the members of MCRC, who were almost late to the flight. Selfies were taken a plenty as the band was apologetically trying to reach their destination.

“I do not envy them one bit,” Stiles says as he walks towards the group.

“All this screaming is giving me a larger headache,” Derek complains.

“Good news is we’re flying first class. Less loud people to deal with,” Stiles responds.

“This will be so much more different than our usual,” Ethan adds. “When we were traveling before with Deucalion, it was always road trips or flying coach. I can only imagine what first class is like.”

“Deucalion drove?,” Stiles asked. “How can he drive if he’s legally blind?”

“He didn’t drive, you dolt,” Aiden replied with a chuckle. “It was usually me and my brother behind the wheel for hours at a time. No music or nothing. It was stupid boring.”

“I drive?,“ Malia asks.

“Maybe I’ll teach you when we get back,” Derek answers.
Malia nods in response. “Maybe.”

The next 30 minutes was uneventful and emotionally taxing, as plane boarding commenced. First and “business” class was filled by everyone in the group, saved for 7 spots. There were a couple of businessmen, a photojournalist, the band manager, and an Asian family of 3 taking up the other spots.

Everyone is chatting up a storm, except Derek, of course. Matt, having been seated next to the photojournalist, traded photo jargon nonstop. Isaac was just smiling next to him. The excitement of the trip was getting to everybody. (Pretty much forgetting about their mission, they discussed plans of shopping and sightseeing.) And Stiles, being the chatterbox that he is, starts chatting up the other people in the cabin.

“Hi, how are you? My name is Stiles!,” he offers up a smile to the businessmen and family nearby.
The men in the stuffy business suits make an exaggerated show of putting on earplugs before continuing work on their stupid ledgers and laptops. Danny and Erica snicker at that exchange.

The daughter of the Asian family rolled her eyes at the old fogies before extending her arm out for a handshake. “Hi, Stiles. I’m Kira. Nice to meet you.”

“So, Kira, where are you from?,” Erica asks.

“We’re from New York.”

“New York?,” Danny asks. Erica shifts herself out of the conversation, no longer interested. “Then, why are you flying to England from the other side of the country?”

“My dad had a job interview at a high school here in California,” she answered. “My mom grew up in this small little town, so we took a family trip to California. Then this large trip to England just fell onto our lap, so here we are.”

“How does a trans-Atlantic trip for three fall onto your lap?,” Danny asks skeptically.

“Radio contest,” she explains with the hugest smile. “I have the craziest luck sometimes. I just heard there was a concert for some huge band and I signed up. Then, whoops, it’s in another country. And, whoops, we’re in another state. So we called the event people and they kind of fixed things for us.”

“Which band?,” Stiles asks.

“I actually don’t know. I just wanted to go to any concert before having to move across the country.”

“Well, I hope you have fun!,” Danny asks, before turning around and elbowing Stiles in the ribs.

“Thanks!,” Kira replies before her family scolds her for talking to strangers.

“Ow! What was that for??,” Stiles exclaims.

“That didn’t hurt, and you know it,” Danny whispers. “Did you set that whole mess up with Kira and her family?,” Danny says, with a point of his thumb.

“What? No! I haven’t met her before,” Stiles answers, before starting a tapping game on his phone.

“How come I don’t believe you?,” Danny replies.

“I swear,” Stiles promises, with a cross over his heart. “I have never met Kira before.”

“Uh-huh,” Danny says, unbelieving. He pulls out his laptop and starts typing like crazy.
Stiles, seeing Danny with a mischievous look, pauses his mobile game to see what he was doing. “What are you up to?”

“Oh, some light revenge. I’m gonna mess with those businessmen’s laptops. Nobody shushes my friends and gets away with it.” Stiles laughs out loud, shaking his head. Those poor dolts won’t know what hit them.

HOURS LATER

The residents of Beacon Hills landed in Heathrow airport and were immediately dragged to a ‘quick’ 2 hour photoshoot for the band’s concert. After all the rushed changes and posing was done, they were finally allowed to crash and fight jet lag at their complimentary hotel rooms.

A few hours later, they were cordoned off to one of the largest concert venues in the city. Thousands of screaming fans were filling the streets as they were waiting for the biggest show of the century. Two long exciting hours later, hearts were broken, merch was purchased, and memories were made. The group as a whole was tired physically and emotionally. So what could go wrong with more clubbing?

There were a lot of bad decisions made that night. First of all, the group decided to ditch Derek, Stiles, and Malia for some heavier fun. The band ditched their disguises halfway through the night. Then Peter, as the wisest of the group, dragged them to a supernatural club nearby where they serve drinks that would knock the fur or scales off of any supernatural creature that entered its doors.

For the supernatural healers of the group, they were lucky enough to not gain a hangover the next day. On the other hand, they ingested more than healthy amounts of wolfsbane-laced alcoholic drinks than recommended. They were partying it up like it was the last night of their lives.

And it might as well be.

Fast forward to 10:00 am the next day, most of the group were hungover and Stiles was livid. His fists were clenched and his eyes were losing to the electric yellow hue it holds back.

“Guys, the one FUCKING time I needed all of you sober and at peak condition, and all of you are cringing over too much sunlight??,” Stiles scolds as he paces the room.

“Stiles… screaming.. Sensitive ears…,” Scott pleads.

“Oh really??,” Stiles scoffs. “How about this?” Stiles relinquishes two metal batons from his red hoodie sleeve, then clangs them together. Most of the group cover their ears as the high-pitched ting of metal on metal scrapes the inside of their ear drums.

“Jeez, can’t you just magic us better?,” Jackson replies as he covers his ears. A chorus of ‘yeah’s followed suit.

“No,” Boyd intervened. “Don’t use up your magic before we even start the stupid mission.” Boyd, being the most level-headed of the group, knew his limits and stopped early on.

“I wasn’t planning to,” Stiles said before opening his satchel. Murmuring to himself, he shoves his whole arm into the notebook sized parcel. “Now where are the stupid… no, no, maybe, ew… aha!”
Stiles pulls out a small set of vials on a string and variously labeled with unintelligible scriblings.

“This will squeeze the hangover out of the three of you in thirty seconds,” Stiles says, offering vials to Danny, Lydia and Allison. “The rest of you, trigger healing in whatever manner you wish. I am done inciting fear from the lot of you then getting ignored over the next two weeks. Fucking babies, the lot of you.”

Stiles shoves the bottles back into the satchel. “Peter, Derek, please help me settle the car rentals downstairs. I am done with this stupidity for the foreseeable hour. We leave in twenty minutes. Prepare for a two hour ride.” Stiles storms down the hallway as Peter, Derek, and Malia follow suit. With a shrug, the three humans drink the vial without hesitation.

A few moments later, they grasp their heads and scream in pain. They are inconsolable for the ten seconds of their lives. Lydia, Danny, and Allison start screaming and whimpering in pain. Danny starting flailing onto a bed, while Lydia and Allison fall to their knees cursing their innocent little mouths off. And as quickly as it starts, the pain also ends. Everyone in the room rushed to one or the other trying to console them.

Well, except Erica. “What the FUCK WAS THAT?!” she screamed.

Ethan, Aiden, and Scott were trying to siphon pain from them but...

“Nothing is happening!,” Scott screamed.

“How come I can’t take away their pain??,” Aiden screamed.

“Because the pain is over,” Boyd explains. “Stiles said it’ll be over in 30 seconds.”

“So he squeezed all the pain from the entire hangover into 30 seconds?” Jackson asked.

“.Y-yeah,” Lydia gasps out. “...Just... tired..” She was pale, shaking, and covered in sweat. It was a sobering moment for the lot of them.

Down the hallway, Derek and Malia were catching up to Stiles when they heard the screaming. “What the hell is going on back there??,” Derek asks Stiles.

“Stiles just cured the whole lot without using magic,” Peter answered.

“What did he give the three kids?,” Derek continued. His questions fall on deaf ears as Stiles is still marching on.

“My guess? Crushed dittany,” Peter replied.”Squeezes healing and pain into a shortened period of time, when diluted properly. Too pure, and they could have died.

Also, the screaming and pain would have triggered an adrenaline response from the other teenagers. That much fear and anger in one room- they’ll be sober by the time we get back.”

Hearing this, Derek rushes to grab Stiles shoulder and stop him. As soon as his hand touches, Stiles
turns around and slams Derek against the wall. His forearm was flush against the Alpha’s throat, almost choking the offender.

There were so many emotions fighting on Stiles face. His brow furrowed in anger. The corner of his mouth was quivering in fear. His eyes told the story the most. Tears were threatening to spill, but the glare they pronounced was powerful and intimidating. And the electric yellow from within those fragile orbs were speckled with red.

“Wha-at is it, Derek? Huh? You gonna tell m-me off too?,” Stiles voice cracked in anger. He dug his arm into Derek’s neck some more.

Derek had his hands up in surrender. “You can’t keep doing this, Stiles,” he whispered. “You can’t keep pushing everyone away without talking to them.”

“Pretty rich coming from you,” Stiles spat out. “All you ever do is act and push away!”

“Yeah, I’m not a model Alpha; I get it,” Derek concedes. “But they’re kids so you have to-”

“Yeah, they’re fucking KIDS, Derek!,” Stiles agrees, finally letting go to storm off and pace. “I would think, with all the training you do to them, cracking arms when they make mistakes, that you would get it. They could get themselves KILLED, Derek! And so you’d think that-”

“So you’d rather distance yourself from them, in case they die again,” Peter interrupts from the hallway.

“What?” Stiles stopped. “No, I just want them to-”

“To get in line, to obey, be perfect little soldiers that think and act like you do because you know better,” Peter finishes his sentence. “They’re not like you, Stiles. You’ve lived longer than a whole lot of them. Knowing so much sucks when you’re surrounded by idiots. So, do what you must.”

“No, don’t listen to Peter,” Derek steps in. “You can’t keep pushing your friends away. It’s not healthy.”

“But, at least they’ll live,” Peter rebuts.

“And what about after, if we get through this year?,” Derek replies. “How can their friendship survive if they don’t trust him anymore?”

“GUYS, STOP!,” Malia shouts. She is standing over a hunched Stiles. He’s grabbing his head in pain.

The two Alphas run to the red-hooded teen who is whispering to himself so feverishly.

“I just need to-
No, but the ammo-
We need the potions first-
Kill the whole lot and leave-
Known we should have gotten the chainmail-”
“Stiles! STILES!,” Derek and Peter were shaking him out of his... whatever the hell is goin on. Was it a panic attack? No, it wasn’t that.

Seconds later, Stiles quiets down and puts down his hand. He doesn’t seem to be in anymore pain. Breathing deep, he counts back from ten.

10.
9.
8.
*breathe*
7.
6.
5.
*breathe*
4.
3.
2.
*breathe*
1.

He shakes himself off before trying to stand up for himself. There was a moment of confusion on his face, before seeing Derek, Peter, and Malia holding him up. His eyes were back to a normal hue, but his stern look remained.

With another quick breath, he stands himself up and stares down the two Alphas.

“Thanks for trying, you two. But you were just saying out loud things I’ve been thinking all along. You forget that I’m connected to 15 other versions of me. And when emotions get high, they all start screaming in my head with opinions of their own. Well, I’m done with opinions for the moment. Let’s just get the goddamn cars and go deal with the end of the world.”

Stiles walks away briskly yet not as heatedly as before. Though if you looked closely, his hands were shaking vehemently. Peter and Derek look to each other, then to Malia, before finally following Stiles down the hallway.

“Remember to drive on the left side of the road.”

That was the last thing that Stiles said to Derek before they drove 3 separate vehicles again. It would have been helpful to get phones for everyone, but Danny said that might be useless wherever they’re going. Burner phones can only do so much. They settle for walkie talkies and hope for the best.

Two hours later, they arrive at the Morrison’s grocery store near Glastonbury Abbey.

Everyone exits their vehicles and start stretching their legs. Everyone was quiet and not talking whatsoever. Stiles motions everyone closer. The teens drag their feet behind them.

“You are all expecting some big speech, some pep talk before the game,” Stiles starts. “But, this isn’t Finstock quoting Independence Day. This is end-of-the-world life-or-death bullshit.

If anyone needs to stay with the cars, with their tails between their legs, let me know now. Or else,
stock up on ammo and get your heads in line. A couple of you follow me to buy food, water and first aid supplies. When we get back, eat what you can stomach, then we’re headed to the basement of Glastonbury Abbey.”

Stiles walks off, shoving his hands in the front pockets of his red hoodie. Boyd and Malia soon follow him to grab the supplies.

Everyone kept staring at one another. “What crawled up Stilinski’s ass and made him so prissy?,” Jackson asked.

“It’s gotta be this mission,” Scott guesses.

“It is,” Derek answers for them. “Remember that this is very important to him, to all of us. End of the world stuff. But the thing bothering Stiles the most is that you kids don’t seem to get it.

We are going to make life or death decisions in a foreign territory. We cannot afford any mistakes. Some of us might not make it out of this mess. And Stiles, he- *sighs* -he warned you about this, so decide soon. Are you in, or are you out? Time to get your heads in the game.”

“That’s the most I’ve heard you talk, nephew. Don’t strain yourself. You might run out of oxygen with all that talk,” Peter chides.

No one laughs or smiles through the banter. Maybe it is starting to sink in. Before anything else is discussed, Stiles, Boyd, and Malia are walking back with a large cart of food and water. Appetites were low all around.

After everyone tries to scarf down what sandwiches and fruits they can stomach, Stiles takes stock of the group again. “Anyone staying behind?”

No one bats a sound.


“Okay, let’s review what we know-”

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TEN MINUTES LATER

“To your left, you see the surviving architecture brought up by the original architect in-,” the tour guide drones on. The group from Beacon Hills was mixed among the tour group. Matt fits in the most taking all the pictures, getting real close to the frescoes. He starts to use the flash on his camera.

“Sir, SIR- Sir,” the tour guide starts. “No flash photography, sir. It’s part of the rules of the tour.”

“How can I capture this without proper lighting?,” Matt rebuts, continuing his flashy pictures.

“Sir, it is not allowed,” the tour guide walks toward Matt with his arms out. “I’m afraid you’re going to hand over your-”

“I am not handing over anything. I paid for the full experience, and I am sure as hell- Hey, hey HEY! This is my camera! You do not touch it!” Matt starts flashing his camera into the tour guide’s eyes, as well as the rest of the group.
Stiles takes this time to shoot a gun into the air, while the rest of the group is blinded. “SOMEONE HAS A GUN! TAKE COVER!!,” he screams. The tour guide and group scatter in multiple directions.

The teens from Beacon Hills walk with a purpose down hallways to the left and right. Isaac is wondering how they got into this mess-

**ISAAC POV EARLIER**

“Going once? Twice?,” Stiles asks us. I try to swallow but my mouth is Sahara dry. “Okay, let’s review what we know-”

We are entering the archives through a secret passageway by King Arthur’s tomb. Once we’re in, it’ll be a whole different place or dimension. Time and space won’t make a lot of sense.

I say we stick to 3 groups.

Derek, Matt, Isaac- you’re sticking with me.

Peter, you’re taking Malia, Ethan, and Aiden.

Lydia, you’re in charge of Danny, Jackson, Boyd, Erica, Scott and Allison.

We’ll be coming in the next tour group. And once I give the signal, Matt and I are running distractions. During all the commotion, all of us will go to King Arthur’s gravesite. We will be looking for a symbol resembling a tunnel. Only Danny, Lydia, Malia, or I will be able to find it.

Once we’re in, DO NOT TOUCH ANYTHING that’s not obviously a part of the tunnel. Rocks and cavern walls are good; bookcases and books bad. Am I clear? The four of us have to give you a thumbs up before you touch ANYTHING.

Once we walk a good part of the tunnel, we will end up at a door. This will be a trial, one of many. There will be Roman numerals on this door- that’s how we know many should go in. Once we pass each trial, the rooms will disappear, and the tunnel will just continue. Sometimes there won’t be numbers, but there are ALWAYS hints. So eyes open.

We don’t know what the trials are, or how many we will have to face. But once we clear the first room, we will have exactly 12 hours to find the exit and get out.

Read what you can. Take pictures and notes. Be thorough, be quick.

Now what are the three rules I gave you before this trip?”

I raise my hand before I answer the question.

“Number 1: Stay alive. At any cost. Number 2: Don’t take anything home. Once we leave, drop everything that belongs to the library. And number 3 uhh…”

It’s at the tip of my tongue. I stare at Matt and hope he’ll help me remember.

“Number 3: Don’t ever say the magic sword’s name,” Matt mutters on my behalf.

“Good job, Matt and Isaac,” Stiles responds. “Peter, Lydia and I are team leaders. We’re the ones that know most about the lore and that should keep us safe. But be prepared to be flexible. Never hesitate.

We stick together in the tunnel, until I say so. Am I clear?”
I nod in response since I don’t think my voice can handle anymore. I grab Matt’s hand as clasp it tight. He squeezes back in encouragement.

We pop open another bag of chips and eat quietly while everyone else takes their moments as well.

“Can we talk?,” Matt whispers to me. I wince. Talking is never a good thing.

“Sure, uh, let me ask Stiles if he can make a silent circle for us,” I respond.

Once we were all as audibly private as possible, Matt begins to speak. “Are you nervous?”

“What?,” I ask

“I’m nervous,” he repeats. “I’m supposed to act all bad boy photographer as a distraction, and then we’re supposed to run in a gauntlet. I have nothing much to offer in power or smarts. I’d be useless in there.”

“Hey, I’m no Einstein or Hercules, either. And whatever they throw at us, we’ll heal. Yeah, we’ll be in pain, but we’ll heal.”

“We can’t heal everything. And the pain— that’s not what scares me the most. Wh-what if- What if there’s water down there? You know I can’t swim. And with us being underground, the chances of us hitting an underground lake or river is pretty much—”

“Hey, hey, hey, shhhhh. You can turn into a half reptile now. I’m pretty sure aquatic mobility comes with the package. And if not, I have a plan for how we can breathe a little longer if we’re underwater.”

“A plan?,” Matt asks me.

“Yeah. Close your eyes.”

With a deep sigh, Matt’s eyes draw closed. I closed my hands around his and I pull him in for a kiss. First, a quick peck to ask permission. Then, a second slightly knocking to come on in. And soon after, Matt grabs my blond curly hair and draws me in for a deeper kiss than before.

I feel his fear and anxiety through this kiss. I feel his pulse racing across his lips. He’s scared, maybe as scared as I am. But at least, we’re scared together. And after all the emotions we shared are through, we break our kiss and gasp for more air than before.

Matt’s skin was burning red and his eyes were slightly dilated. My hands were slightly shaking in response. He takes my hands into his cold sweaty palms.

“I don’t think your plan will work. We’re already out of breath,” he tries to joke with a smile.

“We won’t be actually kissing, you dolt. You’ll breathe my air; I’ll breathe yours. It won’t be supreme, but it’ll last us at least another 30 seconds of air. My dad told me about it once.”

Matt blocks his left eye in reflex. His eyes flash with my memory of my dad. “I still can’t believe you have fond memories of your dad.”

“It’s harder to find. But I guess I’m starting to realize that the cold darkness just makes the light feel a whole lot warmer. I’ll never forgive my dad for what I’ve been through. But, I’ll never forget the good times that we shared. At least those with Camden in my life.”

“I wish I can be as strong as you are,” Matt sighs.

“Matt, I’m only strong because you’re here with me. With you, I feel like I can take on the world’s
end any day.”

NOW
ISAAC POV STILL

We reach the corner of the graveyard where a tunnel is supposed to be. It’s been a few minutes and we hear police sirens a few blocks away, likely responding to the gunshots Stiles fired earlier. I grab Matt’s hand while we wait for our path to be revealed. His hand is shaking and clammy. His other hand is clasping his expensive camera. I really wish he didn’t bring such a delicate thing to a scary mission.

“Here; let’s put this away while we still can,” I offer. I help him dismantle and upholster each lens and part as quickly and delicately as possible, before putting them into his satchel. He then takes out a smaller, more disposable camera for use in the tunnel.

“Stiles said take notes or pictures,” he explains.

“See- this is why he brought you along. You say photography is your strong suit. Well, your photography might be the one to save the day.”

Matt offers me a nervous smile. And before he could say anything else, Danny shouts about finding something etched on a tombstone. “It’s a lemniscate within an arch! This has to be it!”

Malia and Lydia rush to the tombstone; they don’t really see anything that they could verify that this is true. Stiles walks by, and grins at Danny’s discovery. “Danny, you hot smoking genius; we found it!”

Stiles draws on the concrete slab, and soon the grave plot slides open to reveal some stairs. Stiles runs in with a loud whoop, murmuring about finding the entrance faster than expected.

Horribly confused and utterly terrified, the rest of us start pouring down the stairwell down the tunnel and the mysteries that await us.

3RD POV

A lot of the group sees well in hindered light. But in this case, flashlights and lanterns were well needed. Flaming torches would have been bad; we’d be surrounded by books and the flame would use up oxygen. With 15 people underground, oxygen will be a scarce commodity.

A considerable distance of crag and rubble later, they see luminous mushrooms and moss in the distance.

“We’re here,” Stiles said. “Hydrate and break up into groups. Once we start the first door, start your watches for the 12 hours.”

Lydia, Peter, and Stiles sneak aside to talk. “I’m pretty sure the groups are in good hands and heads with the two of you leading.” Stiles lets go off a breath he didn’t know he was holding. “Be ready for anything. Here are some potions that might be helpful, as well as walkies for communication. Blue for glue, red for fire, green will melt metal. The powder is a mash of mistletoe, wolfsbane, and mountain ash for any creature you might face. Have someone howl if danger comes in for ALL of us.

Peter, your group is in charge of finding the exit. It’s always some sort of stairs spiraling up, or behind a fake wall. Fresh air will be a dead giveaway. Once you find the exit, read up on magical
Lydia, you have the most eyes in your group. Unfortunately, that means your group is in charge of finding and triggering traps in place of us. You have the most potions out of all of us for this very reason. Use Allison, Danny, and Boyd as extra thinkers. Once Peter finds the exits, clear traps that will help us get out. Then read like crazy on magical seasons or events. Twelve hours is a lot to get the non-readers antsy so you may have to split up your group after the exit is found. But STAY ARMED.”

“What will you be looking for?,” Lydia asks.

“An amulet, a compass, and a special scroll. I saw them behind a glass case last time I was here. It might be important, it might not. I have to check it out because I’m out of clues.”

“Okay, we have twelve hours I guess.”

The team leaders join the main group, who were strapping themselves in. Danny was offered a gun by Allison, who nervously accepted it. The huntress herself had a mini crossbow in stock, a full length bow in hand, and probably daggers stashed on her person.

Matt and Isaac had stood by, their foreheads touching. Boyd was examining the door ahead of them.

“The door is watching us,” he says.

“What?,” a number of the group chime.

The wooden door was nothing to behold. It was a medieval door, with a ring as a handle and no latch to lock it tight. But if you look closely at the grain, the knots within are moving slowly… Wait, did the door blink?

“Oh, I guess I never noticed that before,” Stiles mused. “I always wondered how it picked the number of people to enter…”

Well, we don’t have time to analyze the door. Everyone ready?"

A murmur of agreement goes round the tunnel. And with that, the knot in the first door blinks and swirls- the letters IV etch into the door.

Chapter End Notes

A/N: Gimme two weeks or so for the next chapter. I miss you all so much. Happy holidays once again.  
(Update 11/21/18: we have determined that this promise of posting was NOT a lie this time.)
Arthur Archives Part 9: Out of The Frying Pan

Chapter Summary

The first door is before them, asking for four entrants. The group of Stiles, Isaac, Derek and Matt will volunteer for the task. Too bad they don’t know that the number of people entering the first room now won’t be the same number of people leaving.

Action filled chapter ahead.

T/W: Bone breaking, and language.

Chapter Notes

A/N:
Yay. 2 weeks on the dot. Happy New Year and etc. Thanks again for liking my work.

I really wanted this to be shorter. But I write long things. So I’m sorry for that.

Warning for cursing. In English and British maybe?

“Alright, once we open the doors, start your timers,” Stiles reminds the group.
“I guess we should go first- me, Derek, Isaac, Matt.

You all will still hear what’s going on. DO NOT try to break in here for whatever reason. If we are not out in an hour, it would be pointless to wait. Head back up the tunnel.”

Stiles shook the nerves from his body before grabbing the door handle and pulling hard. With a loud creak, the door opens to reveal an art gallery. The others in the group peek inside as Stiles, Matt, Isaac, and Derek walk in. The door slams shut behind them.

“Now what?,” Isaac asks.


The room itself is moderately lit. Torches and candle chandeliers lit the room in a flickering orange hue, so everyone put away their flashlights for the time being. The room was larger than they all expected. Famous statues and sculptures made impromptu hallways for the men to walk through. Dozens of paintings lined the walls, from various eras and styles.

Stiles and Derek walked through the center of the room, while Matt and Isaac hugged the Southern wall around.

“That’s weird,” Isaac noted.

“What?,” Stiles shouted out from the distance. “What’s weird?”
“The painting Matt and I are staring at— I saw a similar one maybe 6 paintings back,” he answered, his voice louder to compensate for distance.

“There’s some motif to everything, too,” Matt adds. “The paintings, they’re either all either abstract or full of knights.”

“Do you know what the knights are doing?,” Derek asks.

“Give us a sec to figure it out,” Isaac replies.

Through the middle of the room, Stiles and Derek are starting to sense something of their own.

“That’s the 7th statue of The Thinker we’ve seen, Derek,” Stiles whispers. “Some of the podiums— they have vases and old cups; What the hell are we missing?”

“Maybe there will be something different against that back wall?,” Derek asks no one. Stiles and Derek walk back some more until they visibly see an outcrop. Between two Doric columns, a circular podium lays empty. A faint inscription is on a scroll on the wall.

“The darkest night may leave you grim
But with the light, that path is masked
The treasure you seek lies within
Behold the beauty of the past,” Stiles reads aloud.

“Treasure?,” Isaac asks out loud. “Which treasure? There’s a bajillion precious things in this room!”

“Stiles, didn’t you say that these rooms are after Arthurian legends and knights?” Matt thought aloud. “What if this room is about one of the largest Arthurian legends known to man? The one treasure that is most vase-like out of all of them?”

Stiles and Derek look to each other, eyes wider open in realization, as they say in unison. “The Holy Grail!”

Suddenly, a loud crash of ceramic is heard across the room. “What was that?!,” someone exclaimed. All four of them run to the scene and find that an expensive vase was felled from a podium and shattered on the floor by the southwestern corner of the room.

“We’re not alone,” Stiles whispers, as he whips out metal batons from his sleeves. Derek, Isaac, and Matt partially shift to have their claws and fangs out.

“I don’t smell or hear anyone or anything,” Derek exclaims. Two other crashes are heard from different places in the room.

“Whatever they are, they’re destroying the vases!,” Isaac yells. “One of them HAS to be the holy grail!"

Matt pauses for a moment, and points to the statue podium next door. “Isn’t that the podium for a Thinker? Where’s the actual statue?"

As if on cue, a large naked concrete hulk of a man stomps forward from the next aisle, and smashes another vase. “The statues are alive! Destroy them before they destroy the vases!,” Stiles screams.

The group disperses in three directions; Derek to the left, Stiles diagonally down the middle, Matt and Isaac to the right, tackling the Thinker along the way.

Augmented by the magic of his hoodie, Stiles runs across the diagonal of the room to the
northeastern corner where three concrete golems await him. “Hey jackasses!,” Stiles screams. “You’re destroying priceless artifacts!” The golems notice the teen and lurch forward to attack.

As the nearest statue raises a fist, Stiles whacks both of his batons across its chest. With a loud thwack, metal collides with the stone and batons are bounced back. Stiles drops his left baton in pain from the recoil. The concrete golem is barely pushed back; the slightest of cracks form against the marble pectorals.

“Oh no,” Stiles bites out as the golem lets out its punch right against Stiles chest. Stiles is sent flying back through three aisles of vases, as he screams out in pain.

On the south side of the room, Matt and Isaac are not faring any better. Facing only one of the golems, Matt and Isaac start swiping at the creature with their claws. For each slow punch and kick the golem sends, the two would deftly avoid the attack and claw the heck out of the creature. While they are making gouges in the stone surface, they soon have to pause from the pain.

“My claws can’t take any more of this!,” Isaac pants. “I don’t even want to try to take a bite out of it!,” Matt adds. “It’d be a lot easier if my venom could affect it!”

To make matters worse, three more golems start to approach the couple, walking from a few aisles over.

At the northwest corner of the room, Derek is starting to get pushed into a wall. Learning early on that claws are useless, the burly Alpha has resorted to punches and kicks. But with each strike, his hand is starting to show more purple welts from the bruising. And after one particularly strong punch rends a full crack onto one of the statues, an audible snap is heard in the area.

Derek hugs his right forearm tight; one of his bones must have snapped. Derek roars at the statue he just punched. With his attention focused on his target, he completely does not see the statue on his left. The offender successfully lands an upward kick to Derek’s torso, sending him another foot into the air before he comes crashing the ground- HARD. Suffice to say, Derek has the wind knocked out of him.

With two of our heroes down, and the other two shaken and in trouble, nothing is looking good for the entrants of the first door.

MEANWHILE, A FEW MINUTES EARLIER

Outside the door, Boyd, Ethan, and Scott were by the door, trying to listen in. Jackson, Erica, and Danny have taken out a pack of cards. Allison is in a corner with Danny and Lydia, doing some last minute lessons in proper gun safety and use. Peter, Aiden, and Malia are leaning against the wall, just waiting.

“Are they okay?,” Malia asks. “How long time in there?”

“It’s been ten minutes or so,” Ethan answers, while pressing his ear back against the door. “Apparently there’s a bunch of statues and art in there.”

A faint crash of ceramic is heard from within the room, and a lot of the group perk up.

“What was that?,” Danny asks. “Welp, looks like our game is over,” Jackson complains as he starts packing up the cards. Scott and Ethan shush the group as they try to desperately listen in.

Seconds later, a couple more crashes are heard. Most of the teens huddle closer to the door.
“What the hell is going on in there?,” Jackson asks.  
The group shushes Jackson together.  
Danny whispers caringly, in addition. “We know as much as you do.”

Not a moment sooner, they hear Stiles shout. “The statues are alive! Destroy them before they destroy the vases!” The sounds of battle start to fill the room.

“Shit! We have to get in there and help!,” Scott exclaims.
As he reaches for the door handle, Boyd stops him. “No, we can’t break in. Stiles said so.”

Grunts, snarls, and yelps of pain are heard through the door. The rest of the group steps back; a lot of them start pacing, unable to do anything else.
A loud set of crashes are heard in the room a few moments later.

“We have to do something!,” Scott pleads.
“No, we can’t,” Allison answers.
“There has got to be something we can do!,” he begs back.
“We don’t know how to break in! Or even if we should!,” Erica replies.

While the teens were arguing, Peter, Danny, Lydia and Boyd are staring at the door. The giant letters ‘IV’ glare at them mockingly.

“It’s a little pocket dimension. Or a magic doorway,” Lydia tries to reason.
“And if we damage the door?,” Danny asks.
“If we break the door, it will be like breaking the chains off of an anchor. This could literally be the only thing tethering them to our reality,” Lydia answers.
“Are you sure?,” Boyd chimes.
“We can never really know for sure,” Peter answers for Lydia.
“Maybe there’s another entrance or-, or a spell that will let us in without the door,” Danny guesses.

“We should just break it!,” Scott yells from the other group. This causes the four to stare at the group arguing behind them.

“No. Stiles said do NOT try to break in,” Boyd replies calmly yet sternly.

With this, an idea struck Peter like a jolt of lightning. “Yes. YES! That’s it!,” he exclaims before running to his knapsack.

Seeing this, the group stare at Peter’s outburst. “What go on?,” Malia asks him after a moment.
Finding what he needed, Peter stands up, then walks to Allison. “Give me something metal and useless. Maybe an arrowhead or a throwaway knife.”
Allison raises an eyebrow before handing him an arrow.

“Peter, do you mind filling us in?,” Aiden asks.

Peter, after murmuring to himself, finally decides to answer in a hushed tone, so as the door might not hear. “Stiles warned us against breaking in. He didn’t say anything about bargaining or threatening our way in.”

“That’s ludicrous,” Erica snipes.
“How do you know it will even work?,” Lydia asks in a whisper.

“I don’t. But the door is alive, and this is all I can try on my end,” Peter snaps the arrow head
halfway by the stem. He takes a deep breath, then approaches and addresses the door.

“Hello there, you flat piece of tree carcass.

We have met maybe, what 20 minutes ago? You don’t know us very well, so I’d like to offer you one small simple sweet fact-

If you do not open up in the next 60 seconds, all of us here will not hesitate to BREAK YOU into a billion splinters.”

Peter accentuates the threat with a glow of his red eyes and a flourish of his claws.

If you looked closely, you can see the grain blinking and watching the Alpha. Peter stalks forward and starts to lightly scratch the door with his claws, slowly chasing the knotted eye around the surface.

“It will be quick and painful, a small luxury for your timely death.

You see, the people inside there are very important to us. One of them is a stupid nephew that can’t fight long battles to save his life. There’s two pups that are not too far from bed wetting age. Then of course, there’s an interesting loud-mouthed scrumptious morsel of a teen that could be the key to save the world and our behinds. And we would do **ANYTHING** to save them.”

Peter had successfully chased the wooden knotted eye into a corner. He starts digging into the wood around it, impaling the grain with his right hand. The eye starts to blink faster and the door begins to shake.

“Oh yes, if the 4 in your room come out broken, you will DIE by these very claws.” Dust starts to unsettle upon the hinges. The eye is trying to frantically search for escape. But before he digs in completely and tears out the grain, Peter stops and yanks out his claws.

“But breaking you would be too easy. Well, for you.”

The wooden eye is still shaking in its corner before it zips madly across the surface of the door. A moving target, it seems to think, is a safer stance for its sight.

“See this metal-tipped arrow?” Peter directs the door. In one hand, he holds the half of the projectile. “Watch what happens when I pour this fascinating liquid on it.”

Peter uncorks the tiny vial and slowly pours the green liquid on the tip. The metal sizzles and smokes as the liquid melts portions of it away. (The eye on the door slows down a bit, and blinks shakily.)

Soon, some of the potion touches wooden stem of the arrow, and sparks ignite as a small blue and yellow flame starts to burn the shaft. “Imagine what would happen if we poured this whole bottle on your fascinating door knob, or the rest of your fragile little face?

I bet the pain would be blissfully exquisite. I could be persuaded to not use this on you if, IF- you let some of us in to help our friends. And if not, well…” Peter drops the rest of the arrow into the wide mouth vial. Large sparks jump from the bubbling frothing potion. A blue and green flame engulfs the wooden shaft. Dark acrid smoke sizzles from the char and rust.

The knotted eye blinks crazily as the door begins to shake crazily. The letters ‘IV’ on the door glow gold in response. The ‘I’ disappears from the left, and soon reappears to the right. Another notch soon joins it.

The tunnel shakes and dust falls from the ceiling. A small crevice is forming to the left of the door. More letters form on the door while the teens hug the walls, preparing for the cavern’s collapse. A few seconds later, the shaking stops. A purse sized alcove is on the left wall, and the door reads something new in readable aged calligraphy:
Once the room has settled, the eye has disappeared; All that is left is parallel grain. The group has barely a second to take stock as they immediately hear a loud roar inside the room.

“That must be Derek!,” Ethan whispered.

“Where do we get a hand?,” Scott asks out loud.
“A smarter question would be why?,” Allison offers.

“Sir Bedivere, knight of the Round Table, skilled warrior. Wrote a paper on it once,” Danny explains. “Tasked to throw Excalbur back to the lake. Also, has only hand. I guess it was his left.”

“I’m guessing that’s what the hole in the wall is for?,” Erica points. “But who is stupid enough to—” Before anyone can stop him, Boyd walks over and inserts his right hand in the hole. The rock lining immediately collapses and caves onto his hand, breaking all of his bones.

“BOYD!,” Erica screamed, running to the man. Boyd pulls on his arm to no avail. “We can’t get his hand out!” To his credit, the hulk of a man is not screaming in pain. All that escapes are a some whimpers and a steady flow of tears in agony. Erica is whispering nothings to him, siphoning some of the pain but it isn’t enough.

The rest of the group were frozen for a moment. How would anyone else react to this outcome? “We have to send people in the room,” Lydia decides out loud. “Also, Jackson, slice a nick on his arm.”

“What?,” Jackson asks.

“The venom may help a bit of the pain. And once we send people in, the wall might let up,” Lydia explains. “I cannot believe I said that sentence out loud.”

“Who’s going in?,” Allison asks, while Jackson shifts partially to comply. “I won’t be much help against living concrete.”

“It’s me and the twins,” Peter answers. “Three alphas can pack a punch.”

There was another unnatural pause. Again, Lydia shakes everyone out of their shocked stupor. “GO!,” she screams. Peter, Aiden and Ethan run inside the room as the door shuts tight.

As soon as the door closes, the clamp of rock dissolves to salty earth and Boyd is able to pull his hand free. The hole on the wall slowly disappears. Boyd’s hand is too gruesome to describe, with it being in a tattered flattened state. Scott and Malia joins Erica in pulling the pain out of Boyd. And Danny, Allison, and Lydia try to re-set the bones properly, while attempting to dress basically one giant wound. The normally stoic teen is fighting whimpers and trying to stay awake from the venom and the pain. Truly the pain was not from the rock crushing his hand, but from every pulse of pressurized blood and healing forcing itself on the broken appendage.

As Boyd is starting to bleed away on the cavern floor, the rest of the teens outside the room can only send a silent prayer that everything turns out for the better.

BACK INSIDE

In the Northwest corner of the room, Derek has his back against the wall. With his arm in such a horrid state, he can only growl at his attackers. Before the three golems arrive in striking distance, a loud growl is heard behind them. As the middle statue turns around, a strong kick greets him in the face, tipping him over onto the statue beside it. The momentum causes both statues to fall onto the
wall and ground, cracking their limbs into various pieces.

“I leave you alone for less than 20 minutes, and you’re already backed into a corner?,” Peter taunts his nephew. “Tsk tsk tsk dear boy, what ever will I do with you?”

The third golem attempts to grab Peter from behind. Peter ducks and dodges the slow grab. “Don’t punch it!” Derek warns. “If you do it too much, it’ll hurt you faster than you can heal.”

“Oh my goodness, nephew,” Peter starts to admonish. “With creatures like these, you use their own strength against them. A lesson that I’m sure our little red riding hood will be doing soon wherever he is. Let me show you what I mean.”

The golem soon again goes for a grab. Instead of fully evading, Peter ducks, sidesteps, and using one arm on the creature’s small of his back, slams down hard to the ground. The statue shatters with the blow. And with rubble in ruin, the attacker is no more.

Meanwhile, at the southern tip of the room, Matt and Isaac have wizened up at their own pace. They learned to use punches and kicks instead of their claws. Their aims have trained to concrete biceps and shins to disarm and hobble their foes. But despite all the lessons learned, it seems they were too late. Over two dozen more statues surround the two teens and they only have less than 8 yards of maneuverable space.

“Use that podium!,” Matt shouts to Isaac, pointing to the pedestal once holding a vase. “Like a bat if needed!”

“Are you crazy?,” he replied. The curly blonde kicks a nearby golem square in the shin. A sour wince shadows Isaac’s face from the impact of granite on bone. The stone leg cracks slowly. As soon as the creature takes another step, it leaves its left foot behind, causing it to fall prone. The statue lifts itself up and continues to crawl forward.

“Weapons increase range and leverage. Plus the pedestal will break before your bones take too much damage. And the fewer times we break our bones, the higher chances we survive!,” Matt explains, while dealing with his own battle.

Five golems have Matt surrounded. One particular golem is squeezing the teen into a wall with its forearm. Running out of ideas, Matt takes this time to fully transform into a Kanima. He pushes against the floor with his tail as leverage to plant both feet against the wall binding him. With a loud shriek, Matt shoves back full force his attacker. This golem topples back and falls onto two more statues behind it. Like 3 dominoes, they fall over until the top one is pinning the others to the ground.

Matt did not have time to celebrate, as another statue beside him landed a strong kick to the right side of his torso. Matt was sent flying but did not fly very far, as he used his tail to latch onto another golem’s neck, as an anchor. With the speed Matt was thrown, he was able to yank the golem backwards, allowing Matt to land safely while his anchor shattered into pieces.

Matt was able to take out 4 golems. Isaac took down 3 with his granite hammer. But if you check the distance, another dozen statues are joining their fray, increasing their numbers to 16:1. The two teens were losing ground bit by bit; they are only betas and cannot last in long battles. They were running out of options quickly.

Before all was lost, a loud roar was heard as a large hulk of a beast over 8 feet tall was mowing through the crowd of statues.
“Ethan! Aiden!,” Isaac screamed in both surprise and gratitude. “Thank god you’re both here!”

The giant warrior nodded in response; talking is near impossible in that form. With a loud roar, Ethan and Aiden lifts up a golem and throws them into a pile of others. The twins’ giant combined form added the extra muscle they needed. With renewed vim and vigor, Isaac and Matt resolved to switch the flow of battle.

Meanwhile, at the northeastern corner of the room, Stiles groans as he lifts himself off the ground. Clutching his chest, he lets out a string of coughs, some blood present near the end. His hoodie was glowing, accelerating his healing. More and more, he feels lucky to have had the foresight to wear padded armor underneath his clothes.

“Shit, fuck, fuck, shit, goddammit,” he curses in between his wheezes and coughs. The room was spinning and he couldn't quite think straight. “Oh wait, we’re in England right now. Bollocks, wanker, fookin hell, bloody arse. Well, I think I offended enough Brits for one century.”

Stiles’ eyes had barely enough time to adjust to see a concrete foot raised ready to stomp on his knees. He immediately splits his legs to avoid to damage. The golem raises its foot one more time, now aiming for groin.

“Oh hell no!,” Stiles exclaims. The red hooded teen crab walks back as far and quickly as possible. Once he was a couple of feet away, he uses a nearby podium to help him up. A small audible crack is heard from his back as he straightens up. A strong wince and gasp jumps out of his month from the pain. This is definitely bad. His hoodie is doing its best, but any broken bones will take time to heal. And a dislocated spinal disk- definitely a no-no. But, Stiles has to bite through the pain.

Stiles has one baton left on him but he has definitely learned his mistake. With a strong shrug, a metal-link whip unfurls from his right sleeve. With an overhead spinning flourish, Stiles lets his long whip fly and latch onto an approaching golem’s leg. With a strong heave, the creature loses balance and falls onto its knees. Stiles sends a quick swish through his weapon, causing the end to flick wildly around. The metal tip lashes about and cracks at various joint on the golem’s body. Soon, it tips over from loss of structural integrity.

Bit by bit, the three groups whittle down their foes and the danger tapers down. The battle slows down to a mental tug of war. The actual physical pain compares less to the fatigue of fighting so many creatures. It’s at this point that Matt points out something changing with the room.

“Guys! The room is getting bigger!,” he shouts so everyone can hear.

And he was not lying. Isaac, Matt, Ethan and Aiden were fighting along the Southern wall. Emphasis on were. The walls kept sliding backwards bit by bit. More columns and podiums holding statues and vases would slowly emerge from the walls. What was once a room with roughly 20 x 20 aisles expanded to now hold a 28 foot square.

“Stiles, is this ever going to stop?,” Isaac screams.

“I don’t know!,” Stiles replies. The teen can barely think, moreso analyze the room they are in. “This room is supposed to mimic the knights’ quests. Someone please just figure this out. Peter?”

“I’m sorry, Stiles. I can answer magic questions. Not exactly a wealth of Arthurian myth,” Peter says.
from his corner of the room.

“How many statues have you guys defeated?,” Derek asks the room.

“Maybe 60,” Matt answers from their end. “We didn’t exactly count. Stiles?”

“Twenty-seven!,” Stiles answers. A loud crash comes after. “Make that 29!”

“Matt, when did the room start opening up?,” Derek adds.

“I don’t know! Maybe a little after reinforcements arrived!!”

“That doesn’t make sense,” Derek spouts. “Reinforcements come in, but more enemies show up. And the rules of the room don’t change. We’re still trying to find a stupid vase in this giant room.”

“And the paintings are starting to move!,” Isaac interrupts.

“The what?!,” Stiles exclaims. Everyone stares at the paintings and sees that Isaac was right. The abstract paintings were starting to swirl. The portraits and landscapes holding knights were starting to shimmer. “Oh holy fuck, what the hell is going on?!?!?,” Stiles screams.

The knights in the pictures squirm and move. With what seemed like a push, the painted warriors peel themselves from the canvas. Sounds of tearing filled the room as fabric and paper warriors WITH PAPER SWORDS start walking around the room. Faster than the living statues, they start attacking vase and intruder alike.

“They’re just paper! Use your claws and shred them to pieces!,” Peter screams.

“WELL I DON’T HAVE CLAWS!,” Stiles shouts back.

“Just hit back!”

“They’re too thin! They’re just taking my blows and bending right through them!,” Stiles shouts back.


“SOMEONE FIND THAT Fookin bloody Grail!,” Stiles screams to deaf ears.

No one had time to search for a real grail; everyone is getting overwhelmed by the numbers. Everywhere you would turn, rock or paper golems would flank the lot. Ethan and Aiden were next to useless with the painted knights, as was Stiles. If they could just get one moment to think they would be able to figure this out.

“Guys! We’re losing here!,” Isaac pleads.

“Fuck, fuck fuck fuck, FUCK!,” Stiles swears. He avoids another swish from a paper sword, only to find himself backed against a wall. A rocky fist comes flying at his face, which he avoids by ducking. “Retreat to the northern wall! Run and dodge if you have to!”

Stiles runs and slides under a few more golems as he runs to position. He ruffles through his man purse and pulls out a large vial with a maroon liquid. Starting flush against a wall, he runs down an
aisle, pouring the substance on the floor. After a distance, he sharply turns right and makes a beeline for the northern wall on the other side of the alcove. From his periphery, he sees Derek, Peter, and Matt’s group run to the their stations.

Covering enough ground with his potion, Stiles flings his whip to a chandelier and tugs it down hard. Candles start rolling on the floor and ignite the fuel the teen had spread on the floor. A wall of flame now blocks the alcove and maybe a 3 aisle radius from any outside attackers.

Around a dozen or so creatures were left within that wall; those were quickly disposed of. A moment’s reprieve were all they have to figure out how they can get out of this mess.

“The fire will last 10 minutes, maybe fifteen,” Stiles explains to them. He was desperately out of breath like the rest. He pulls out bottles of water from his satchel and hands it to everyone to rehydrate. “The rock golems can still get through, but at least we lessen the type of foes for a while.”

“Something is better than nothing,” Matt concedes. His clothes were in different sorts of disarray. Tears in his clothes show bleeding amidst his scaly skin. The other 5 were all in the same physical state.

“Ethan, Aiden, we need numbers right now, so you two can separate,” Stiles orders. “Peter, take Isaac and the twins and take out any rock golems that come through. Matt, Derek, and I will try to figure this riddle out and end this.”

The twins pull themselves apart and start stretching their limbs. Everyone takes a moment to breathe as a couple or more statues cross the flames.

Aiden makes the largest stretches of the lot. If you listen closely, you hear him cracking his joints with each stretch. More than anything he is glad that he could talk now that him and his brother are separated. “This is probably the most action we’re gonna see all night,” he concedes with the biggest shit eating grin. “I mean, after all this, how can things get any worse?”

Stiles, Matt, and Isaac jerk up and stare at Aiden. Stiles’ skin actually visibly pales. “Why the actual fuck would you say that?,” Matt spits out.

On cue, a dozen unearthly shrieks fill the room. Never ever jinx yourself during a magical battle.

Chapter End Notes

A/N:
And I’m sorry for the cliffhanger.

Are my battles descriptive again? Is there enough action here for you? Please leave me a comment if you’re up for it. It’s how I know if I’m doing okay as the new year starts.

You are all awesome! Two more weeks for the next chapter. Sorry!
Stiles, Derek, Isaac and Matt entered the first obstacle on their way into the Arthur Archives. They are surprised to find themselves in a large art gallery where they are to find what is likely the Holy Grail. But before their search could begin, the statues come alive and start attacking our heroes.

Hearing the commotion, the others threaten and bargain with the magical doorway to let reinforcements in. Thanks to a well crafted threat from Peter, and the sacrifice of Boyd’s right hand, Ethan, Aiden and Peter were able to run inside to try and save the day.

But things did not quite improve. The room was becoming larger, adding more vases and statues in the room. Knights from the paintings in the walls have come to life. The group retreats to the northern alcove where Stiles has set up a wall of fire as a last resort. And Aiden, poor Aiden, had to tempt fate by saying the magic words: “...how can things get any worse?”

Battered, bruised, and bleeding, our heroes hear a dozen unearthly shrieks in the air.

What new danger awaits our heroes?
How many will escape the first room alive?
And what fresh hell will our heroes meet in the rooms ahead?

T/W: Graphic description of hand damage.

Chapter Notes

A/N:

Two weeks became two months. I apologize. I did warn y’all in the first chapter that I am an irregular writer.
Summer school in grad school just started. I have some extra time but I can now promise that the *longest* it will take me to update is a month. (at least til mid September when classes will go full swing again) That is a promise!

(Update (11/21/18): All lies. I take forever. I apologize.)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

TUNNEL BENEATH GLASTONBURY ABBEY, TRIAL ROOM 1

If you squinted over the flame, you could see them emerge from the abstract paintings. Shrieking bloody murder, reptilian maws pierce from the canvas. Each creature had scales ranging from a dark brown to a murky green. Spanning over 8 feet long, these creatures had claws at the hinges of their wings and two strong hind legs. The ends of the tails held bony and blood spattered spikes. They
snap their mouths and shriek, as they pull themselves slowly but confidently into the room.

These reptiles eye one another and hiss, likely communicating with one another. They visibly sniff the air, catching a scent. And before any of them took flight, some of these beasts were attacked by the paper and rock golems that filled the room.

Stiles and the group were lucky that these creatures have not noticed them so far. But everyone knew, that luck was soon to run out.

“What the hell are those?” Ethan said in an angry whisper.

“Dragons?” Isaac asked.

“No, wyverns,” Peter answered. “Dragons have 4 legs. These have two.”

“So how do we deal with them?” Aiden asked.

“You try not to,” Derek answered. “If I remember the old books, it’d take armies to take down a nest of wyverns. We don’t even make a dozen people.”

“Special abilities?” Matt asked.

“Sharp claws, teeth, and tails,” Stiles answers. “Hard scales. Some have venom, some spew fire, according to lore. We don’t know what these are, so avoid at all costs.”

“Well, they’re attacking the knights and statues so they have to be on our side,” Aiden convinces himself.

“They’re wild animals in a foreign place with fire,” Peter replies. “At the very least, they’re lashing out. At the worst. ...they are hunting.”

“Shit, okay, new plan,” Stiles takes over. “Derek and Matt, you figure out the riddle. I’m joining defense since I have a whip and some guns in case we need long range damage.”

“No, I can fight,” Derek snaps back.

“You still have a broken arm,” Stiles replies.

“Peter will be better at figuring this out than me,” Derek argues.

“And I’m part reptile, I might be able to help fight. Or I dunno, talk to them,” Matt adds.

“They’re deadly creatures, Matt. They won’t talk,” Stiles reasons. “And I’m not saying you guys are benched. But your first and foremost job is that riddle. Peter and I are your backup. Just figure out this room, quick.”

“Guys, we got company,” Isaac interrupts.
Four granite golems walk through the fire from different directions.

“Talk it out. I believe in you,” Stiles says softly to Matt and Derek. “Let’s go!,” Stiles shouts to the
rest of them.

MATT POV

Holy shit, wyverns and golems and the holy grail. I still can’t believe this is all real. But, I really don’t have time to process this—this fantasy. Derek and I have to figure this room out quick.

“We have to figure out this room quick,” I repeat to myself. We need to start from the beginning. “Let’s start from the beginning.” (I need to stop doing that.)

“We are searching for the Holy Grail,” Derek points out. “The room is a giant art room with vases and statues. The statues are now alive and are destroying the vases. Same as the knights from the paintings.”

“But why would they do that?”

“To stop us from getting the grail,” Derek reasons.

“But if they knew which one is the real grail, they would just gun for that,” I reason.

“So they’re a distraction?,” Derek asks.

“Yes! They have to be!,” I agree out loud. “They’ll attack anything they see or hear, no rhyme or reason whatsoever.”

“But, they can still attack the grail if it’s too close to them,” Derek speculates.

“No, they have to actively avoid it. If they break the grail, then the room will never end.”

“What if that is the point?”

“What?” I was confused. “What do you mean?”

“What if the purpose of this room is for it to never end?”

“Huh?” I think I threw up a little bit in my mouth. I felt sick to my stomach. Was this room a death trap with no way out? I call Stiles out to make sure it couldn’t be true. “STILES!”

“Yeah?,” Stiles replies as he lassoes a rock golem headed for Peter’s behind.

“Do these rooms always have an exit? Always?”

“Huh? What do you mean?,” he asks confused.

“I mean, could this room be never ending?,” I asked nervously.
“What? No! These rooms are based on stories. And as we all know, stories have a beginning, a middle, and an end.”

“But that doesn’t mean we get out alive,” I stammer out.

“Someone has to, duh,” Stiles replies. “Someone has to live to tell the tale, to witness it. So there is a way through this. You just have to find it. Which reminds me: you have roughly 7 more minutes of fire to figure this out. Now if you’ll excuse me.” Stiles sends his whip towards a golem’s neck and snapping it off. Now the statue is lumbering about grabbing at air.

That talk wasn’t really much help. My mind is racing at miles a minute and it takes a moment for me to circle back. Derek grabs my shoulder with his good arm. “Hey, still here?,” he asks me.

“Yeah. Okay.” I take a deep breath. “Let’s try figure out whose story this is then. Sirs Galahad, Bors, and Percival were credited to finding the Holy Grail. It’s supposed to have caught Christ’s blood at the Crucifixion. But his story didn’t have statues coming to life or knights and wyverns.”

“No, but the knights and wyverns came later, after Peter and the twins came in,” Derek added. “And that’s when the room started changing too,” Matt adds. “The number of players changed so the number of enemies had to catch up with it.”

“So if we count the fact that Peter and I ended about 2 dozen giants, and you guys got maybe 50 or 60. Stiles got 29 earlier...” Derek is starting to count aloud.

“Yeah, but that’s after the room was opening up! Before reinforcements came in, the room couldn’t hold that many statues and vases.”

“So how many golems are we saying were in here? A hundred?,” Derek asks.

“No. One hundred twenty. That’s 30 for each of us to beat,” Matt realizes.

“Thirty? Why thirty?,” Derek is confused. “That number is important, right?”

“Yes! Sir Lamorak! Known to fight off 30 knights at least on two occasions. That’s where the enemies are coming from. Not from the Holy Grail myth.”

“So now we know that our enemies cap off at 210,” Derek shrugs. “How does that help us find the grail?”

“It doesn’t,” I remind myself. I look to the wall of fire as it is slowly but surely dying out. “But, it makes us sure that the fight definitely ends.”

I try to swallow but my mouth is too dry. The fire protecting us is dying down to now maybe 3 feet of height. I curse myself for not being able to solve the full riddle of the room before time ran out.

What do we do now?

3RD POV

“Any luck?,” Stiles asks Matt and Derek.

“No, sorry,” Matt apologizes. “All we got is the enemy caps out at 210 total. The creatures don’t
have an attack pattern, so they’re likely just a distraction. And trying to figure out the knights involved got us into a dead end. But we never got the chance to dice up the riddle itself.”

“Well, I guess swap out for now.” Stiles calls over Peter.

“Peter, you and me are taking over the riddle, while Derek and Matt go to defense.” Stiles hands Derek a baton, before sending the Alpha on his way. “A weapon might be better off than a claw at the moment. Let us know if the wyverns join the fight. Or when.” Derek nods in response. He and Matt try to handle a Venus di Milo hobbling and kicking at the teens.

Peter has a gash across his forehead, and his collarbone is peeking through his shirt. He has this crazy look in his eyes, like he revels being in the battle itself. “Benching me, Stiles?,” he tuts. “Surely not the best strategy for a battle.”

“No, I need your out of the box thinking. This riddle is kicking our butts.”

“Well, if our best thinkers are stumped, maybe we should try to dumb things down a notch.” Peter analyzes the riddle, stroking his chin in thought. “If everything else is a distraction, then just focus on the riddle itself.”

“The darkest night may leave you grim
But with the light, that path is masked
The treasure you seek lies within
Behold the beauty of the past,” Stiles repeats.

“With the light, the path is masked?” Peter notices. “So turn off all the lights.”

“No, we’ll be sitting ducks.” Stiles chews his bottom lip in worry. “There’s gotta be another way.”

Peter continues to mull it over. “This overthinking is what got us here. Worst case scenario, we turn the lights back on.”

“Are you sure this is the only thing we can do?”

“Stiles, we are all in over our heads. I am as sure as the next person. All we can do now-is try.”

Stiles takes a moment to scan the room. The fire once guarding them is down to embers. Some of the paper golems are starting to test the paths through the ash. “We’ve got no choice, do we?,” Stiles asks.

“The only good news is the room is thinner of golems. The bad news is we still have the wyverns to worry about,” Peter notes.

Stiles smirks, casting Peter a side glance. “Ready to huff and puff, and blow these torches away, Mr. Big Bad Wolf?”

“We can take the wall torches, Little Red,” Peter plays along. “But, those chandeliers are a little out of range.”

“Well, good thing we are a team. Call the others; I’ve got a plan. We might get out of here all alive yet.”
Outside the room, the rest of the teens are still doing what they can while waiting. Well, except Jackson who was fidgeting since he doesn’t know any way to help. Danny, Allison, and Lydia have stymied most of Boyd’s bleeding. (The poor teen is fighting unconsciousness.) Meanwhile, Erica, Scott, and Malia have less and less black streaks of pain climbing up their arm.

“It’s been 54 minutes,” Danny says. “Six minutes left before Stiles said we should leave.”

“Well, maybe we should head back now,” Erica offers. “We could get Boyd some actual medical help.”

Before anyone can say anything else, the tunnel starts to shake and quiver. “What now?,” Jackson complains.

The entire wall housing the door is starting to crack and crumble, descending slowly into the ground. Through the dust, you can see the silhouettes of everyone that was in the room walking towards the group.

“Guys! You’re alive!,” Scott screams. Allison and Scott run in for a hug; Malia strides in for a snuggle.

“Duh, it’s cause we’re awesome,” Stiles replies with a forced smirk. (If you looked closely enough, you’d see him wince with each step.)

“What the hell happened to you, Bilinski?,” Jackson blurts out.

“Would you believe me if I said that I had the twins throw me into a bunch of chandeliers?”

“The fuck? Why?”

“We had to turn out the lights. Long story,” he said with a shrug. And it was a long story indeed. Ethan and Aiden were helping Stiles walk, while his arms were clutching his sides in pain. (Ribs were definitely broken.) Derek’s arm is more bruised than before, but Peter was siphoning some of the pain. Isaac was guiding Matt with his shoulders, as the poor teen was blinded. His forehead was bleeding and swelling immensely, impairing vision.

Erica, though surprised at their state, approached Stiles with a mission. “Do you have more healing potions?”

“Why? What happened???” Stiles straightens up in a hurry. This causes him to yelp in pain and bowl over again.

Danny regales the story of Peter’s deception and Boyd’s sacrifice, showing Stiles the now unconscious teen bleeding into a cloth. Stiles bites his lip at the sight wondering what to do.

On one hand- no pun intended, he needed Boyd’s help, but-

“I wouldn’t recommend a healing potion.” Peter interrupts the two.

Stiles goes on to explain the problem with advancing the healing. “Forcing the healing too quick might cause formation of too many bones, or if the muscles are in between bone fragments you’d get wonky parts where bones form in muscles.

We need to make sure each bone is set in it’s proper place during the healing process- something we can’t do in here.”

“So what now?,” Erica complains.
Stiles looks to Peter and Lydia for help to decide.

“Here.” Peter hands Erica a phone, and the keys to a car. “Be glad I don’t follow rules and still bought a burner phone.
I saved an emergency contact that can pick you up. She’s a local druid that can set bones if needed. Remember: drive on the left.”

“Take Matt with you,” Lydia adds.

“What? No!,” he resists.

“You’re in no shape to help right now,” Peter explains.

“What he means is,“ Stiles takes over. “-is that not being able to see is too dangerous. Remember my rule? Do anything to stay alive. If that means saying no, then it’s a no, right?”

“B-b-but, I might heal if you just-”

“Matt, you got us through a VERY difficult first task,” Stiles consoles him. “You put your life on the line. So did Boyd. Don’t think both of you didn’t earn your keep.” Stiles looks to Erica. “You sure you can get them there safely?”

“Y-yeah. Never drove before but I’ll do what I can.”

“You’ll be fine. All three of you. Now, go.”
Erica carries Boyd bridal style back to the cave entrance, with Matt following close behind him.

“Okay, we’re down to twelve. We’re alive; so that’s a plus. Ready to move on?,” Stiles asks the group.

“Are you gonna tell us what happened in there?,” Lydia inquires.

“If we have enough time,” Stiles promises.
The rest of the group were apprehensive moving forward, after finding out that the first take was so difficult. Half of them were expecting it to start easy and ramp up the difficulty from there.

But it didn’t. Everything else was just as difficult, if not more obvious.
The second wooden door had two symbols: a bow and a shield.
Scott and Allison went in for that task. Standing at the bottom of a deep basin, wooden barrels would
roll towards the two. Taking stock of the room, Allison finds an old school bow and a quiver of arrows by their feet. She found various targets about the room and took them down one by one, whilst Scott would stop the barrels rolling in en masse.

This took only five minutes. Allison came out unscathed; Scott had splinters and bruised knuckles.

The third door had six footprints along a metallic door. Taking it as a sign to send their fastest 3 runners, Jackson, Malia, and Ethan came into a dark room.

It was pitch dark and spacious; difficult to believe that such a large place existed underground. Before the 3 teens, they found a path forward, a set of stairs up, and a set of stairs down. Common sense listed that they each took one, so Jackson went up, Ethan went down, and Malia pushed forward. At the end of each of their paths was an unlit beacon, and a lone handheld torch. As soon as all three beacons were lit, the room lights up and the paths each of them took to their podiums crumbled to dust.

In front of Malia, multiple beams, walls with scaffolding, spikes and swinging axes encumbered a new path to the entrance. A loud crash was heard behind her as a giant boulder fell for the ceiling. As cliche’ as it was, it started rolling towards her, spelling a painful way to die.

Ethan also heard a crash behind him. The deafening sound of water pouring in by the metric ton filled the room. Glass vials with perforations and dark contents surrounded him. Accidentally kicking one off his platform, it falls to the flowing water below. The vial explodes violently and catches a green flame. “Witch’s Fire,” Ethan whispered beneath his breath. In front of him he sees walls and scaffolding cascading up to his exit. At each footing, dozens of vials of Witch’s Fire laid bare and primed to explode. Ethan scrambles to climb up the exit as quick as possible.

Jackson had a different battle with gravity. As the stairs leading him up crumbled, the platform started to follow suit. Peering over the edge, all Jackson could see below were jagged rocks far beneath a webway of ropes. The entrance lay yards away and way too far to jump. Some wooden scaffolding lay here and there along the way. Without much time to decipher his task, the ground breaks beneath him and Jackson had to catch a bare wall of netting or fall to his doom. He wasn’t out of danger yet. Above him, the thin rope was catching on fire and starting to tear. Climbing down, he jumps over to the next net before the previous one falls to the abyss below. But now, the next net he is on just caught flame. His race was against fire and gravity, and he was cutting it close.

All three of them barely made it to the end in time. As the metallic door closed behind them, explosions and a loud crash was heard as this room started to collapse into itself like the ones before it.

The three teens were heaving and out of breath, guzzling water in between gulps of breath. “Fuck fuck fuck, that was close,” Jackson complains. “This place doesn’t kid with the death traps, huh?”

Fast forward to 3 tasks later. It’s hour 3 and a half of their 12 hour trek for the library. A team of Lydia, Allison, Danny, and Peter (in wolf form) walk out of a wooden door marked with a spring, an abacus, a wolf, and a bullsseye. All four have been in the room for over 45 minutes. No crashes were heard, no explosions, just shouts of ordering each other around.

“These hieroglyphs are getting weirder,” Isaac mulls. “If I see a cat, a spider, and a ladder next, I’m giving up.”

“You’re telling me,” Danny spat. “We thought the spring meant mechanics and blueprints. It actually meant flexibility. Allison, Lydia and I had to switch roles.”
We’re just lucky that Lydia was a good shot at bow, and Allison was in gymnastics. Or else, we’d have been stuck there for a good hour or so.”

Peter spat down his clothes before shifting back into his human form. After fixing his modesty, he grabs a bottle of water from Stiles and wipes his brow of sweat. “We have good news though,” Peter regales, slightly out of breath. “One of the notes we had deciphered said something about the next task being the last.”

The other teens perked up in response. Not only were they running low on bandages, water, and snacks, but morale has been draining with each death defying trap they had to pass. Stiles has been trying to improve the mood by saying that no one is dead yet. But the word ‘yet’ has been hanging like a noose around their necks.

“Well, if it’s the last task, I say we break down for a quick light lunch before we walk further down the tunnel,” Stiles decides out loud. Derek is propping him up with his good arm. (His other arm is in a splint, looking better by the minute.)

Stiles reaches arm deep in his satchel and slowly pull out salads, fruits, and trays of rotisserie and fried chicken, some store mashed potatoes and steak fries (labeled chips of course), and a white handle that he struggles to pull out. “Little help, Derek?,” he asks. Derek grabs the handle and with a heave, the satchel stretches open to let out an ice chest with canned and bottled drinks inside. The 12 did not realized how starved they were.

“Even though we’re starved, don’t get yourself too full. You might throw up from overexertion on the last task,” Stiles reminds the group.

“If swimming is involved, are you gonna make us wait the hour before diving in, Bilinski?,” Jackson jokes.

“Well, if swimming is involved then I gue-,” Stiles starts then stops mid sentence. “I mean, if it is swimming then I’ll just be mad I didn’t pack trunks.” Stiles bites his bottom lip. He almost made a joke slighting Jackson’s weight and something being dragged down with his hair. But tact won, and Jackson was none the wiser.

“Just skinny dip,” Peter adds with a smirk and a wink, licking his lips before slowly peeling a banana from the bunch. A chorus of groans, chuckles, and snorts erupted from the group.

“Peter!”

“Gross!”

Pieces of lettuce were chucked at the older Alpha’s face, one landing on his perfectly coiffed hair. This is when everyone broke down into a healthy bout of laughter at the ridiculousness of the flirty remark.

Malia looked confused at it all and just scooted closer to Isaac. Once Matt, Erica, and Boyd left, the were-coyote took it upon herself to accompany Isaac the rest of the way. During the meal, Ethan and Aiden sat with the two as well, just quietly eating their food.

Isaac was half-heartedly chasing some grapes around his plate with a claw. Every few seconds, he’d grab a drumstick on the same plate and take a small bite. Appetite was definitely low for the curly haired blond.

“Penny for your thoughts?,” Ethan offered.

“Hmm?,” Isaac replied. “Oh I’m just blanking out is all.”
“We can tell when you lie, y’know,” Aiden pointed out.

Ethan smacked his brother’s shoulder. “Except we don’t have to rub it in friend’s faces!”

“Well, he’s obviously thinking about Matt, Erica, and Boyd. It ain’t rocket science!,” Aiden replies. Ethan gives him another good smack. “Stop hitting me! Look, Isaac-,” Aiden levels with him, pointing his bitten drumstick at him for emphasis. “I’m not good at this whole comforting thing. Ethan and I, we never really had a good experience with that. Actually, now that I think about it, a lot in our group never got that. So life sucks. I mean- where was I going with this?” Aiden looks to his brother who replies with a shrug.

“*sigh* Everyone cares for one another here (Again: so weird for me.) and you care more for Matt and them. So just be glad that the 3 of them don’t have to face these traps anymore. AND, since Jackson and them brought it up, if the next task involves swimming, then wouldn’t it be better that Matt doesn’t have to be here?”

Isaac just chews his food and nods along to reply. With a noncommittal grunt, he takes another bite of his chicken. Jackson and Danny laugh out loud over in their little bubble on the other side of the room, grabbing the attention of everyone. When the moment ends, the twins, Malia and Isaac continue to eat in silence.

Malia takes a turn at talking. “You wanted to went with them?”

Isaac freezes, before shyly nodding yes. Malia scrunches her brow trying to think of how to respond. “Is because you scared they get hurt out there? Or want be with to comfort them?”

Isaac takes a second to analyze what Malia was asking. “Both, I guess.”

Malia thinks of a response. Her nostrils flare and she stares at Isaac. “You angry?”

Isaac freezes before nodding yes again.

“Why?”

Isaac pokes the grape with his claw, before continue the chase around the plate. “Stiles told Erica to go with them. I had to stay behind. All 3 of them are strong, but I worry. I really wish I could be there to help protect them, and take care of them. Maybe while Erica drives, I coulda stay with Boyd and Matt and siphoned some pain or something. And so far, the other tasks, I have been no help. No one has asked me to go in. It would make no sense for me to go in. I’m not the strongest, fastest, or smartest. So why did I have to stay behind? Why couldn’t I go with them??”

At this point, Isaac impales the grape with his claw, before taking a quick bite off it.

Malia takes a moment before grabbing Isaac’s free hand. “You strong, smart, fast. We need you. Stiles need you.”

“Yeah, dude,” Ethan and Aiden add, with their creepy twin timing. “You and Matt fought with us side by side in the first trial. You do what you can to survive.” “And remember, we need the numbers later in the Archives. You have excellent eyes so that’s a plus.”

“I’m just feeling useless right now,” Isaac admits.
“I don’t speak good,” Malia offers.
“We’re emotionally stunted,” Aiden adds.
“And my brother doesn’t have a filter. Literally. Does not. No processing before speaking,” Ethan tacks on as well.
“We all feel useless at different times in our lives.”

“And that’s okay,” Aiden concludes. “Because we’re friends- no, we’re more than that. We’re all pack, a good one.”

“We cover each other’s weaknesses and magnify each other’s strengths,” Ethan proffers. “It’s okay to feel down, but understand we will never let you stay there sad forever.”

“Because we’re pack?,” Isaac asks.

“No. Because we steal your food when you distracted,” Malia says before taking Isaac’s plate with a smirk.

“Hey! I was saving that!” Isaac jumps up and chases Malia, who keeps weaving around the other teens, keeping Isaac’s food away. Isaac was laughing trying to get his plate back, ignoring the spread of food still up for grabs.

The teens hoot and holler at the sight of the chase, cheering Malia and Isaac on. Ethan and Aiden just shake their heads in their corner of the hallway.

“He’ll be just fine, I guess,” Aiden comments.
Ethan half-heartedly punches his brother’s shoulder in agreement.

Chapter End Notes

A/N:

The final fight scene for room 1, and some of the other rooms, will be saved for a flashback later on.
The next chapter is the last trial before entering the Arthur Archives. It’s short and to the point.

For those still subscribed and reading, thank you for sticking with me. I promise this story is not abandoned. Real life just doesn’t like me writing non-math related stuff atm.

I read comments! <3 <3 <3
Six trials into the library, the group receives a hint that the next task is the last before entry to the main library. The twelve residents of Beacon Hills take a break to lunch and take stock of everything so far- Matt and Boyd had been taken out of the tunnel by Erica because of their injuries. Stiles has either back or rib injuries (or both). One of Derek’s arms is healing some bruising in a splint. And everyone- EVERYONE’s spirits are low. Taking a quick light lunch, the packs unwind, rest up, and strategize for whatever comes next.

T/W: Language, and bad puns.

Chapter Notes

A/N:
Wow, sorry.
No excuses. Hey it was Spring break so I finally have time.

I survived a couple of suicide attempts too. So that got me back to writing.
Also, I may graduate with my Masters in Mathematics in May. So yay. Please enjoy.

TUNNEL BENEATH GLASTONBURY ABBEY, 8 HOURS LEFT

While the teens were resting up and refueling with a filling lunch, Stiles, Peter, and Lydia discuss and strategize for their last trial. Derek hangs around the three as they tick facts off their list.

“The first trial was the story of the Holy Grail; that takes care of Sirs Bors, Percival, and Galahad,” Lydia recounts.

“We also said that Sir Lamorak was used, by the amount of foes we had,” Stiles adds. “And- and with Boyd’s injury, that would be Sir Bedivere as well.”

“You said that knight’s stories are not usually repeated?,” Peter recounts.

Stiles shakes his head no. He explains. “It’s less probable, but still possible. They mix and match these stories; and with some knights being present in multiple stories, we can see their elements back in play.”

“I don’t think any of us can last a fight with 30 foes each,” Derek chimes in.

“The last ones are usually the deadliest,” Stiles restates. “So keep those potions handy, as well as the mistletoe pouch.”
“Back to the matter at hand,” Lydia redirects. “The second trial, the one with the archery, is likely Sir Tristan. The third one, with all the running, is escaping me.”

“Most likely, it will be Gareth, Gawain, and Gaheris,” Peter posits. “If I remember correctly, the three are related—brothers or cousins I think. And the green flame, well, that could be close to his story with the Green Giant.”

“That’s probably as close as we can get to that,” Stiles concludes. “The fourth one is clearly the Lady of the Lake, the fifth is Morgan Le Fay, and this last one?”

“I think it’s Sir Geraint,” Lydia explains. “There were so many convoluted rules. It tested our patience against frustrating rules. Do this, without doing that. Finding out what is hearsay and what wasn’t. Having complete silence at different portions.”

“Like his tests for Enid, gotcha,” Stiles accepts. “So that just leaves Sir Lancelot.”

“Do not forget Arthur, Guinevere, and Merlin,” Peter reminds him. “We should not count out the central characters.”

Stiles bites his bottom lip, drumming his fingers on his lap. “I don’t like these floating factors.”

“Well,” Peter chimes, as he stands up. “The only thing we can do at an impasse is move forward. Not ideal, but we do what we must.” Peter offers Stiles a hand up, which the teen thankfully accepts. Small black tendrils grace Peter’s arm as he siphons some pain from Stiles. The teen, caught off guard, hiccuped and moaned quite loudly. This catches the attention off the rest of the teens.

Stiles start to burn bright red as the teens chuckle at his embarrassment. (Derek was far from laughter. He had the sour face of a kid whose toy was taken away.)

Once everyone settled down from laughter, they catch on that the leaders are packing up to go and they follow suit. Leftovers were covered; and handed to Stiles to stow away to God knows where. Disposable utensils and scraps of leftovers were placed in a trash bag and was loaded last in Stiles magical messenger bag. The gun toting teens check their ammo. Everyone takes a moment to stretch. And barely a minute later, they continue walking down the tunnel.

MEANWHILE, OUTSIDE THE TUNNEL

Kira Yukimura was dragged out of bed in a rush and now her parents are arguing in the front seats as they are all speeding off to god knows where. They were arguing in Japanese so it’s either secretive, or heated. Kira should be interested, but she just spends the rest of her time scrolling through her mp3 player.

Fifteen minutes in, her mom starts gesturing angrily.
‘Guess it’s something heated,’ Kira thinks.

Her dad is telling her mom to talk quieter, as he checks Kira out in the rearview mirror.

Kira raises her eyebrow. ‘I guess it’s both,’ she concludes. She clears her throat as she takes out an earbud.

“I know we’re rushing somewhere, but can we drive thru a McDonald’s or something? We skipped breakfast and I’m hungry..”

“Sorry dear,” her dad said, looking at her in the mirror again. “We’re kind of in a hurry and-”

“LOOK OUT!!,” Kira screams, pointing to the side of the road.
From out of the brush, a blue sedan speeds out careening into a spin, before hitting a tree past the median. The surprise exit causes the Yukimuras to skid to a screeching stop. The driver of the other car, a blonde haired teen in a tight leather jacket, crawls out the driver seat, cursing in an accent far different from the locals. “God fuCKING DAMMIT, YOU SON OF FUckING BITCH OF A CAR!! WHY WON’T YOU DO WHAT I FUckING WANT YOU TO DO??!!? FUCK FUck FUUUUUCCKKKK!!!”

One of the other passengers was telling her to calm down and get back in the car. The blonde haired teen flips him off before continuing to kick the car’s front right wheel.

“I’m going to see if they’re okay,” Kira says.
“No, honey, don’t-” her mom says to deaf ears as her daughter is already out of the vehicle.

Kira runs across the median to meet with the driver, now hunched over the curb seemingly crying. “Are you okay?,” she asks meekly.

The girl’s shoulders clench before looking up to meet the passer by. Kira notices her eyes were golden for a moment, but passes it off as a trick of the light. “Hey, so we were driving by before we saw you drive out of the brush. Are you okay? Can we call you like whatever 911 is over here?"

“Oh sorry, ‘bout scaring you all” she apologizes. “I’m just in a big rush and I’m lost, and this car is a stupid stick shift, and just, I-
No police or ambulance necessary. I just-"

“Kira?,” her mom interrupts from the car. She had gotten out but is standing behind the car door, making a faux barrier between the scene. “Kira, we have to go now.”

“Mom, gimme a minute,” Kira replied before turning back to the girl. “Are you sure? You have passengers; they may need some medical attention after that spin.”

“They’ll be fine,” she replies. “They can take more than this car can handle.”

“Kira!,” her mom admonishes. “Kira, we need. To go.”

“I’ll be right there!,” Kira replied, before turning back. She offers the girl a hand up. “I gotta go. As you heard, my name is Kira. And your name is?”

“Erica.” She takes Kira’s hand and stands up with her help.

“Erica, nice to meet you. I can’t help with the stick shift and the car troubles, but we have some extra bottles of water and maybe some chips if you want some.”

“I don’t think your mom will like it if you offer strangers your food and water,” Erica says with a chuckle.

“Yeah well, my mom will always have a stick up her butt, so she can just deal with it.”

“KIRA YUKIMURA, YOU GET YOUR BUTT OVER HERE RIGHT NOW!!,” her mom yells.

“Speaking of…,” Kira laughs. “I hope you can continue to drive safe. Or try to. I’ll be right back with some bottles of water.”

As Kira walks back to the car to grab the supplies, a loud roar was heard from the nearby trees. Birds
start flying about like crazy.

Before she even notices, Erica tackles Kira to ground covering her head. “What the hell??,” Kira screams, as she hears a loud whoosh fly above her head.

Hitting a tree by Erica’s car, a large club made of what looks like bone cracks the trunk, sending splinters in the air.

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**BACK IN THE TUNNEL, 7 HOURS 43 MINS LEFT**

“What did the triangle say to the circle?,” Scott asks Allison as they continue walking down the tunnel.

“Oh God, why?,” Jackson groans, which earns him a small smack from Danny and Lydia.

“You’re so pointless!,” Scott answers, which Allison answers with a small chuckle.

“Okay,” Allison replies. “Then what did the circle say back?”

“What?”

“You’re so edge-y!”

Scott laughs at her quick comeback, and at Jackson who quickly face palms.

Before any other person makes other jokes, Stiles announces that they reached the last room.

The wall has 11 slate inlays in a wall of marble. In the middle, an open hallway shows a set of stairs down. Hanging from the ceiling, a wooden sign shows a chess symbol of a rotund crown in a shade of red paint.

“Well, that is glaringly obvious,” Aiden declares. “Racist even.” Ethan hits his brother on the shoulder again.

Lydia breathes deep, before squaring herself and striding in. Jackson grabs her elbow to stop her.

“Wait!”

“I will be fine, Jackson,” Lydia answers.

“How do you know?”

“I just do.” Lydia offers him a small kiss on the cheek. She grabs Danny’s hand nearby too. “YOU guys need to prepare. Something bad is gonna happen. And it won’t be happening to me. I feel it.”

With that last declaration, she walks in the door by herself.

Everybody lets go of the breath they didn’t realize they were holding in. Stiles and Allison leads everyone in a stretch of Yoga, hoping to relax and center the people waiting. They felt it will be a while waiting for Lydia to finish her task by herself.

On their 3rd run of downward dog, a scraping of what sounds like chalk on blackboard can be heard in the tunnel.

Doorknobs appear on the 11 slate inlays, as each of the eleven’s names appear above the doors.

From left to right, the names “Derek allisOn eTHan Isaac stiliNsKi Peter malIa jaCKson AideN
Danny’s stenography were etched in Lydia’s handwriting.

“Doth ink pick an dact?,” Derek reads aloud.

“I think she means ‘do think before you pick and act’ so keep your wits, the lot of you,” Peter explains. “Smart of her to use our names for a hint.”

“I’m surprised the tunnel let her give us a hint,” Stiles says before heading to his door.

**SECONDS LATER**

Isaac was walking down a long set of stairs spiraling down. Being in such a narrow walkway was starting to trigger his claustrophobia. Luckily, he soon reached a wide room with two pedestals in the middle, before a large door.

On the pedestal to the left, a set of scuba gear lays out with a full tank of oxygen. On his right, lay an army medal that looks too much like his brother’s.

“If you are hearing my voice, this is Lydia speaking.”

Isaac jumps from his startle.

“Know that I can only say the instructions and explanations and NOTHING MORE,” Lydia continues, reverberating about the room. “I was tasked to pick a door for each of you, leading to the room you are currently in. On the two pedestals before you, there are two different items that must be helpful. You may only choose one to bring forward. Past the door is a maze with various obstacles, some deadly, some time consuming. After 60 minutes, all the walls will sink to the floor. The door that remains will lead back to the tunnel you came in from, and you will NOT be granted entry into the Library. Your task is to reach the end of the maze to the one TRUE DOOR INTO the Library before the time limit ends, located at the center of the maze. Good luck. Your 60 minutes starts now.”

Isaac pauses and looks at his options. The scuba gear is obviously a hint about treading water. This is confirmed with his brother’s medal, having been the captain of his high school swimming team. However, running with the scuba gear on his back will be tiring. Lydia would have known this.

Trusting his instincts, Isaac grabs the medal and books it through the door.

Meanwhile, in a room above the maze, Lydia is watching the events unfold below. In her hand, a piece of chalk is being choked by her grip.

Three doors behind her open, showing Danny, Allison, and Malia entering the room.

“Lydia!,” Danny screams, before running to give her a hug. “I’m glad you’re safe! What’s going on?”

Lydia graciously accepts the hug a little longer before explaining the task at hand.

“So they just have to get out?,” Allison asks.

Lydia nods in response, before looking out the window before her. “I had to solve each maze for them, to pick out the right items as hints. I just hope they pick the better of the two.”

“And if they no pick right?,” Malia asks nervous.

“Some of these things are deadly, so it may be bad,” she explains to Malia. “Even if they don’t finish in 60 minutes but still live, they can get out for free. But then it will just be the four of us in the
Archives, since we get free entry.”

“Why did you pick us?,” Danny asks.

“Because the three of us are more human, while Malia, well… some of the obstacles requires some thinking. It would be too dangerous for her compared to the others.” Lydia offers Malia an apology for her unintentional insult. Malia just takes it in stride, and continues to watch her friends and family try to escape the maze.

“So we can go into the maze right now?,” Allison asks for clarification.

“Yeah, it’s that door right there. Surprisingly, the Library feels quite air conditioned. Must be to magically protect the books.”

Allison looks at the door, before she joins her friends watching from the window. “It’s stupid to think we’re offering them moral support, but I will regret it if I don’t watch our friends fight for their entry, or their lives.” Allison slips her hand in Lydia’s and Malia’s, as they continue to pray to the heavens that their friends make it through.

BACK OUTSIDE THE TUNNEL

Boyd exits the car, clutching his hand, before grabbing Matt blinded in the backseat. They run to the brush, ducking among the bushes. “What the HELL is going on??,” Matt loudly whispers.

“Berserkers,” Boyd explains.

“HERE?!?? How many??”

“At least 2. One just threw a giant club at Erica and some family that passed by to help us.”

Matt stops. “We need to help, then!”

“You’re blind. I only have one working hand,” Boyd explains. “Erica told us to leave so she can focus on the fight and not worry about us. Right now we are a hindrance, so let’s get out of their way.” Boyd uses his good arm to lift Matt in the air into a fireman’s carry before moving a ways away more from the car.

Meanwhile, Erica was trying to pick herself up with Kira in tow. “Why the fuck are berserkers trying to kill us now?”

“Berserkers?,” Kira asks.

“Long story. Get to your car and DRIVE AWAY,” Erica orders.

“What? I can’t leave you here to fight a monster alone!”

“Well, baby cakes, to fight a monster-” Erica lets her claws and fangs grow, and her eyes shine. “-you have to already be one.”

Erica pushes both of them apart. Right where they stood, a sharp axe flew through the air before impaling the splintered tree trunk before them.

Erica cartwheels back, landing a kick square on one if the berserkers heads. “Like that? I learned that move from watching an Alpha fight my-”

Before she can finish her quip, Erica had to duck as the second Berserker throws a strong right hook.
Erica does a split, before sending a roundhouse kick from the floor to the standing berserker’s knee. As the warrior falls, Erica raises her left foot high in the air, raises her hips, and drives the heel of her boots straight down on the fallen foe. The heel strike hits the creatures square in the groin, and some dust shifts in the air.

The berserker behind Erica starts to groan and shift awake. The blow to the head did not end the fight. And, as if she wasn’t outnumbered enough, a third and fourth berserker walks out from the woods.

Kira runs back to her mom and dad, begging them for help. “You saw that, didn’t you?,” she asks. “I know that this is all crazy, but can’t we do anything to help???”

Kira’s dad offers Kira’s mom a look. They exchange glances of conversation before her mother offers a sigh. “Kira get in the car.”

“But mom, we-“
With unnatural speed, Kira’s mom ends up behind her, opens the door, and shoves her in. Her dad locks the door almost immediately.

Kira’s mom bends over to talk to her through the window.
“...You will have a lot of questions, my little Kira. But for right now, mommy has to go.”

Mrs. Yukimura’s eyes glow, as she stands up and pulls two knives from within her jacket. These old ornamental traditional knives were the darkest shade of black. With a deep breath, Mrs. Yukimura snaps the blades in two, and the metal crumbles to dust.

The metal debris soon reform into shadowy creatures. Mrs. Yukimura orders them to help the blonde teen as she prepares herself for the fight. The old warrior raises her right arm and grabs a handle in thin air. A metal katana forms from nowhere, the metal shining brightly. With a loud shout, Kira’s mom runs into the battlefield, sword in tow.

**INSIDE THE MAZE**

Scott runs down the corner scratching the walls with his claws. In his free hand was some rope with a grappling hook. Under his breath, he mutters “Left left right… left left right..” repeatedly.

As he reaches another four way intersection, he stops. The hallway in front of him was a wall of smoke. To his left a hallway, that was pitch dark. A literal unnatural wall of darkness shoots straight up to the ceiling a couple feet down the hall. To his right, comically large saw blades swing back and forth, sometimes popping from the walls and the floor at some intervals.

“Oh, COME ON!,” he screams to no one in particular. “Don’t tell me I have to go through the spinning saws of death??”

As if on cue, he hears fast footsteps in front of him. Jackson and Isaac run through the smoke covering their mouths with their arms. As soon as they get out, they start hacking coughs and removing soot from their clothes. “Jackson, Isaac!,” Scott greets them, relieved for seeing familiar faces.

“No time to talk,” Jackson explains between coughs. “Big wolves are following us. Lots of them.”

“Which way do we go?,” Isaac asks.
“I just came from back here.” Scott points to the corridor behind him. “So our two choices are the saw blades of death over there, or the magically pitch dark hallway over here.”

“Did you say dark hallway?,” Jackson asks.

“Yeah, it’s over-”

Jackson starts rummaging his pockets for something. He pulls out a small pair of goggles with a yellowish green tint.

“I was wondering why Lydia gave me night vision goggles as a choice. Come on- form a chain and follow me.”

The three run through the dark hallway, around large concrete blocks and wooden logs and nets. There was a veritable military obstacle course in the dark. Yips, howls, and snaps of teeth were heard barely a few yards behind them.

Once they reach through the darkness, all three needed a minute for their eyes to adjust back to normal brightness. The hallway curved again and again through the maze until they reach a fork in the road.

On the left, a tall wall over 30 feet high stood with footholds and ledges dotting the facade. On the right, a large concrete face blinks before them. The sound of the wolves, albeit softer, still hounds their heels.

“Look! The ledge!,” Scott points out. “Lydia gave me grappling hook and some rope. We might need to go there.”

“No wait,” Isaac stops him. “With the three of us that may take too much time. What’s over here?”

“We can’t waste time,” Jackson rushes him.

“It will take 30-45 seconds to find out if this is a bad choice. It’s better to make an informed decision, than just running blindly.” Isaac jogs to the giant concrete face to their right.

Upon closer inspection, the concrete moves and watches the boy. The face is taller than Isaac by a foot or two. It resembles a tired old man with a furrowed brow and pointed nose. Its eyes were smooth and polished, with no irises to be seen. Crow’s feet decorate the corners of each eyelid, slowly leading to edges of ears embedding the wall. A healthy beard covers his cheeks, barely letting a peek if his mouth through.


“English!,” Isaac blurts. “English please.”

“Ah well, a young lad that speaks English. You from ‘round ‘ere or from across the ole’ pond?”

“Pond?,“ Isaac asks confused.

“Well that answers my question then,” the face muses. “The Americas likely. Got it. No cockney slang from me.”

Isaac shakes himself from the confusion and addresses the face before him. “Excuse me sir, I assume
that you are part of this maze. Would you be able to tell us the fastest way out to the exit?"

“Well, you know what they say about assumptions, boy. But yes, I know what goes on this maze. The saying goes something like ‘the hills have eyes, the walls have ears’ but then again all these sayings become jumbled up over time."

Jackson and Scott finally jog up to Isaac begging him to come back to the wall with them. “The wolves have gotta be close behind us,” Scott explains. “At least if we’re halfway up the wall, they can’t get to us,” Jackson explains.

“Ah but some species of wolves can climb,” the concrete face explains. “And the wolves are around 3 minutes away from here.

Either way, if you take the wall, you’ll have to make 3 more correct choices to get to the end. But behind me, you’ll only have to make one or two more.”

“Behind you?,” Isaac asks.

“Ah, I forget to introduce myself. I am Bjorn Gustafssonamellisen the door, at your service. Answer a riddle, save some time.”

“Is your name part of the riddle?,” Jackson asks, earning a cuff from Scott.

“Can we hear the riddle and then decide?,” Isaac asks.

“Of course!” Bjorn Gustafssonamellisen asks. “Listening is always free. But, remember that the wolves are roughly 3 minutes behind you.”

“Then give me the riddle, Bjorn,” Isaac requests.

The wall to their right opens up, revealing a desk with a concrete bowl, some twigs, a torch, a knife, a key, a safe, something vaguely resembling tar, various flowers, a piece of charcoal and a scroll.

“
A fee ‘bove gold must be paid 
From a broken heart engraved 
A token to pass 
Burned to white ash 
To plant a future it saved 
”

Isaac and Jackson pounce on the table and start going through the items on the table. It takes a second for Scott to reluctantly join. “For the record, I don’t like this. This might take too long,” Scott voices out.

“I’ll write down what I remember from the riddle,” Isaac declares. “Someone try to open the safe, or find out what that black gunk is.”

“I mean there’s a key; it can’t be that hard,” Jackson says, picking up the key.

“Uhh Jackson...,” Scott points to the safe. “There’s like a million keyholes.”

Scott was right. The front, sides and top of the safe has dozens of keyholes of different shapes and sizes. Jackson curses to himself and starts on the safe, tracking down which hole is which.

Meanwhile, Scott extends a claw and dips it into the black gunk. He pulls out the claw and some of
the substance lays there. “It has a dull shine and doesn’t smell like oil. It’s thick, not very sticky though.”

Scott flicks the gunk from his claw, and it flies unintentionally onto the torch. The flame sputters blue, surprising Scott and Isaac. They share a look.

“It’s some kind of fuel,” Scott realizes.

“Quick. Make a fire in the bowl,” Isaac orders. “Put a small amount of gunk in the bowl, and use a twig and the torch to light it up.”

Scott sets about to do just that. “What do you think we need to burn? The flowers? Something about planting a future?”

“It said broken heart, right?,” Jackson asks. “Maybe we have to add blood to the fire. Some magic stuff uses blood.”

“Or it could be platinum.” Scott starts to light a twig, urging to step back just in case. “Platinum is above gold when it comes to records.” The fuel catches the flame and burns a bright blue.

“All viable options,” Isaac agrees. “But not everything has to be straightforward in riddles.”

“I think it all boils down to what’s in the safe.” Scott asks. “If there’s a bunch of metal in there then we need to find some platinum and burn the shit out of it.”

“Speaking of which,” Jackson leads up. They hear a small click and the safe opens up. Inside the safe were letters and diamond rings, and a bunch of scrolls for the group to read.

“Well, shit,” Scott gripes. “Maybe it’s the diamonds then? Are those love letters?”

“We don’t have time to read all these,” Jackson complains. “We have maybe 1 and a half minutes to try and go back and start climbing.”

“WAIT!,” Scott stalls. “What’s on the safe door?”

On the door lies a periodic table of elements, a staple in any high school science room. “What’s this doing here?”

“That’s it,” Isaac softly spoke. “I figured it out.” The blond teen slowly sulks to the bowl. “I was wondering why Lydia gave me this.”

Isaac pulls out his brother’s medal. He rubs it gently, memorizing the scratches and markings lining its faces. Its lace strap was partially frayed and tattered from the events of New Year’s Day. He pushes down the memories that are drowning him in. On the medal’s front lies a heart broken in two. While on the back, it lists his brother’s name, his own name, and his Dad’s.

Isaac breathes deep before chucking his brother’s medal into the flame. “In some mythology, loved ones place a coin in the deceased’s mouth as they are buried. The coin is a toll for the harbinger of death to bring their soul safely into the afterlife. It helps both the dead and the living to move on towards a better future.”

The medal is slowly charring and melting. Portions of the face smooth to orange sheen. The lace immediately catches into a white and yellow fire, slowly bubbling as the plastic strands melt down to oil and ash.

“My brother’s silver medal has a heart engraved on it. It is almost a small coin, the literal size of a
natural token. And on the periodic table, Silver Ag is the element right above Gold Au,” Isaac explains. “I have to pay this price for us to move on and get through the maze quickly and safely.”

The three of them quietly watch the metal melt into the black tar. Scott grasps Isaac’s shoulder in support. Jackson nudges him softly with his shoulder.

Bjorn the door starts to rattle and shake behind them. His face splits in two right down the middle, opening to the hallway behind.

Isaac runs out of time to say goodbye to the heirloom. Their sensitive ears hear yips and squeals in the background- the wolves are coming close. The three teens run past the door and pull it closed.

As the two halves of Bjorn meet, he leaves them with some parting words. “Thank you for the payment and the chit chat, lads. Congratulations and best of luck. You have roughly 22 minutes left to go through. Oh, and beware the ground you run on.”

With those ominous last words, the boys rush onward.

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**BACK OUTSIDE**

In the middle of the fight, Erica was caught in a chokehold from behind. She was growling and struggling to get out of the compromising position. Meanwhile, another berserker was raising its claw to impale the captive blond.

Suddenly, a pitch black blade bursts through the berserker’s chest. The would be attacker coughs out grits before bursting into a pile of sand. In its place, a creature with an ornamental mask flurries the blade to clean it. It seems to absorb the light around it. Wisps of black smoke surround it, adding to the already menacing look.

The creature runs toward Erica, sword in tow. The teen takes the opportunity to jump from the chokehold and, supplanting her feet on the incoming swordsman’s chest, she flips over her choker’s head. The surprise move overwhelms the berserker as the momentum topples him backwards with Erica’s escape. With the berserker in a prone position, the swordsman impales the the creature in chest leaving another pile of dust.

Before both of the creatures can catch their breath, more thuds can be heard behind them as 3 more berserkers land from a long jump. Erica takes stock of the field, and see a half dozen or so berserkers fighting another shadow creature and-

“Kira’s mom?,” she asks out loud.

The woman in question is currently flanked by 2 berserkers with their bony claws extended. She deflects each blow with her sword, strike for strike. Every chance she gets, a kick or a slash is sent to her attackers. It was a graceful and stern battle as she would not give an inch. The less talented of the attackers falters ever so slightly and that was all it took for the swordswoamn to cleave through its leg and send a decisive blow. With a clear opening, the second berserker raises its claw above its head and rams his body weight down in a strike. But instead, he finds himself impaled on her sword knowingly waiting for that attack. And just like that, both “attackers” are literal dust in the wind.

The other 4 berserkers were fighting dark creatures, one of which Erica recognized as the monster that intervened in her fight. Before she can catch her breath some more, 5 more berserkers landed from a jump nearby. All 5 were rushing towards the tiring not-so-humans’ direction. They soon find
that not all 5 engage them into battle. Two of the 5 run into the woods behind them. “No! Not Boyd and Matt!,” Erica screams as she tries to chase after the 2 pursuers. She was immediately blocked by the three other berserkers and was forced in a 2 vs 3 fight.

“Ms. Kira’s Mom, I gotta say thank you for pitching in, but I gotta go after them,” she explains.

“Are they chasing your friends?,” she asks.

“Likely. One of them is literally blinded and the other has a crushed hand. They can’t fend for themselves.”

“Then we have to cut the palaver and get ourselves out of this bind.” Letting their eyes glow with power, the two femme fatales growl and charge their enemies.

Before they clash in battle however, a barrage of bullets hit the berserkers across their armored chests. A mist of sand flies everywhere, as Erica and Mrs. Yukimura drops to the ground. “Who are they?,” the elder warrior screams over the noise.

“Must be the backup my friend wanted us to meet,” Erica screams back.

A screech of tires fills the air as a leather clad motorcyclist brakes in, with a rider clutching their chest aiming a submachine gun. The riders dismount coolly, with the driver pulling out two high caliber handguns. Another hail of bullets later, the 3 berserkers are dust. In the background, the two shadow swordsmen were still fighting 4 berserkers still alive.

Once the two gunmen reloaded their clips, Erica looks up and asks the arrivals if they were the ones they were supposed to meet.

Both riders removed their helmets letting their long brunette hair flow out. “Braeden,” the driver introduces herself. “This here is Morell. We were tracking your phone and rushed over once we saw you go off road and skid to a stop.”

“And we’re glad we did, seeing that you needed help,” Morell added.

“Noshiko,” Mrs. Yukimura introduces herself. “Those creatures with the swords are-”

“Oni,” Braeden continues. “Japanese warrior spirits. Since they’re fighting the berserkers, I’m assuming they’re friendlies?”

“Yes, but we’re not out of the woods yet. Literally,” Mrs. Yukimura continues. “I believe a couple of berserkers followed this girl’s friends into the forest.”

Erica curses, remembering that Matt and Boyd are still in trouble. “I’ve got to-,” she starts to run.

“No need,” Morell interrupts. “Just take my hand and follow me.”

Erica takes her hand as they walk to the nearest tree. “Wait, are you about to-”

As Morell touches the damaged trunk, the two women get sucked into the bark, popping up elsewhere in the forest. Erica grasps the nearest tree trunk and dry heaves into the brush.

“What we just did was jump through the forest,” Morell explains. “You see all of nature-”

“-it’s connected, yada yada, I heard the sales pitch before.” Erica interrupts. “I know someone who
does this regularly. Just warn a girl first.” She clears her throat and spits nearby, before wiping her mouth with her tattered leather sleeve.

Morell raises a brow before continuing. “If I jumped correctly we should be within earshot of the path of your friends. Once we meet up, we can just travel back.”

Erica turns a slight shade of green at the thought of another jump. “Then why didn’t you just magic here with the other girl?”

“That would be a distance of a few miles. No one in their right mind would jump that far,” she answers.

Erica smirks. “My friend jumped from California to Kentucky at the start of the year.”

“Then your friend has a death wish.”

“You don’t know the half of it.”

Taking note that Peter was right about banter being fun, Erica shakes herself out of her reverie. She hollers for Matt and Boyd to head in the direction of her voice. No two minutes later, the brush breaks letting Boyd and Matt through. They were covered in scrapes and thoroughly confused.

“Erica? How did you-

“Grab my hand, and hold onto your lunch,” Erica warns as Morell grabs onto them, pulsing through the nearest tree. As they left, the berserkers hunting the teens land at the crossing, confused at their prey’s sudden disappearance.

FINALLY, INSIDE THE TUNNEL

Jackson, Isaac, and Scott are still running along the same winding corridor for a while now. No crossroads, no forks, no obstacles, and still- no exit.

“Do you think the stone face dude was lying about the exit?,” Scott asks the two. They were soaking in sweat, but hardly out of breath.

“Too late to turn back now,” Jackson answers.

“Maybe we passed up a wall hidden by an illusion or-,” Isaac confers.

“We have to watch out for magic now?,” Jackson complains. “I don’t think-”

Scott shushes them. “Listen,” he tells them. “You hear that?”

Isaac and Jackson perk up. They never heard stuff across the walls, or anyone else in the maze aside from them. Was that sound coming from enemies or friendlies?

“Help! HELP!”

“Who was that?,” Isaac ask.

“Does it matter?,” Scott answers, before running into a sprint.

A few yards of running later, Jackson had to yank Scott back from the sprint. “Watch OUT!”

Before the three teens, a miniature lake of sand lay in the middle of a large room. Sandstone boulders are interspersed in the middle of the lake. Centering the fixture lies a subtle sand whirlpool.
“Quicksand,” Isaac guessed. “That’s why Bjorn warned us to watch our step.”

“How much time do we have?,” Jackson asks the group.

“Roughly 9 minutes give or take,” Scott answers. “If we carefully scoot along the edges, we should be get around with roughly 4 minutes to spare.”

“SCOTT, JACKSON, ISAAC!”

The three teen locate the source of the plea. Ethan was waving at them from roughly the center of the lake. No more than 5 feet from him, a brittle thread lay hanging from the cavern’s ceiling.

“Help my brother, QUICK!,,” the twin pleads.

He points to the center of the vortex of sand. Aiden is half submerged in the flowing gravel, grasping on one basketball-sized island of rock.

Ethan goes on to explain that there is a locked concrete door behind them, and Aiden grabbed the key from the rope. But, he slipped and had been fighting the danger of drowning for the past 30 minutes.

“He can’t throw me the key, because if he misses, the key sinks in the sand. He can’t get a solid grasp of the rock because of the key in his hand!”

“And now you were just waiting for either help to show up, or for the time to run out so you can get out,” Isaac puts together. The 3 had jumped rocks to get closer to twin above ground.

“We do a human chain in the sand to reach him?,” Jackson asks. “I can try to get my tail out to get us closer.”

“While that would be so very hot, I wouldn’t risk us all ending up in quicksand,” Ethan answers, to a quirked eyebrow from everyone. Ethan catches on to the slip of his tongue, and starts turning beet red in embarrassment. “Just ignore that, please.”

“Did you *really* tell them about your thing with tails?,” Aiden shouts from his far perch.

Isaac changes the subject. “Look, we can’t all get stuck here. We have less than 5 minutes left. We NEED that key,” he reminds them.

“Then we get him out with this,” Scott says, brandishing the grappling hook that he picked up at the start. “I guess this is what Lydia wanted me to use it for.”

With a spinning motion, Scott preps to throw the hook by Aiden. He lets it fly, with the hook landing 3 feet to Aiden’s left. The teen curses and starts reeling the hook back in.

“It’s crazy that Lydia knew that my brother would fall in,” Ethan says.

“She probably thought at least one person would,” Jackson motions his hands to Scott. “Give it here. I used to throw these around in Colorado.”

With Jackson’s help, they were able to get Aiden out of the sand. As they get through the door, Ethan pulls out a stopwatch. “FUCK! We have 96 seconds left!”

“Then book it!,,” Jackson shouts as they all run off into a sprint. Ethan keeps updating them with the time.
“70 seconds, guys!”
A couple of yards in front of them, there was net ladder, typical of military obstacle courses. “We
don’t have time for this,” Aiden declares before sprinting forward, cutting the rope with his claws
then ramming the wooden pedestal ahead. The fragile wood splinters into an opening. Aiden gains
big bruises on his right shoulder and his right brow.

“52 seconds!”
“GO GO GO!”
In another few yards, a veritable hallway of mirrors stood ahead of them. They all curse under their
breath.
“Guess now is the time to use this. Cover your ears!,” Aiden warns them. “Fire in the hole!” Aiden
throws a sonic grenade at the hallway of mirrors like a fastball. The glass shatters a second later,
leaving metal frames and a clear path.
As the dust clears, they see Stiles and the rest waving at them from the far end of the hallway, the
library door behind them.

“25 SECONDS!!!
“RUN!”
The teens were going as fast as their legs could carry them. They were so close. The ground starts to
shake. Dust escapes from between the brick inlay. The walls were slowly sinking into the ground. At
the end of the hall, the doorway by Stiles also had a concrete slab closing down.
“15 SECONDS!!”
“We’re almost freaKING THEREEEE!!”

Jackson was the first to make it. “COME ON!”
Isaac stumbles and Scott had to catch him.
“10.”
“9!”
Ethan and Aiden duck through the door.
“Come on, Isaac and Scott!”
Ethan and Aiden tried to hold the concrete slab up, but it’s pointless.
“Baseball slide, if you need to!,” one of them screams.
“THEY’RE NOT GONNA MAKE IT!”

Stiles curses under his breath.
ZEFIIR!

All the teens get the air sucked from their lungs as an instantaneous vacuum forms behind them. Everyone already in the exit gets pulled back and tumbled into a pile. With the help of the magical vortex, Isaac and Scott slides relatively unharmed.

They did it-
Everyone made it through. The rest of the group groan as they unpile themselves from their tangled heap.

Stiles scrambles a small way from the group to empty the contents of his stomach. As he straightens himself, his face peters from a faint shade of green.

Stiles wobbles before tipping over, getting caught by Derek who then gently rubs Stiles’ lower back. “You okay?,“ Derek asks.

“No preparation for that spell- makes things wonky.” Stiles hiccups four times in a row, then burps. “... Yeah, I’m gonna be all sorts of wonky for the next few minutes.” He proceeds to sneeze and hiccups painfully from the looks of it. “Everyone ready?,“ he asks in between his convulsions.

People just groan in assent, as they move on finally, shakily, veritably, into the Arthur Archives.
Chapter Summary

The gang successfully enters the Arthur Archives after a bevy of trials. But with Stiles not in peak condition after a last minute spell, everyone’s hackles are up as they enter the Library proper. Meanwhile, Erica, Matt, and Boyd are helped by strangers after an ambush from a dozen berserkers. As they regroup and retreat, they are unaware that nearby, the orchestrator has been plotting and planning the big event that can ruin their plans to come out alive.

Three (main) chapters are left for this arc’s events.
What adventures await the teens?
What secrets do the books of the Arthur Archives hold?
And will we ever find out why Stiles needs to find that amulet, scroll and compass?

T/W: None found in this chapter.

Chapter Notes

A/N:
Belated happy berfday to me. I got a cheapo laptop, and my new job has me at a desk, 9 to 5. So a bit more writing. Updates have been slow because as said before, I do not know much about Arthurian myth and legend so a lot of research has been going on and tweaking. Also, I am a perfectionist so I keep on rereading before I post, trying to make sure I fix grammar. I simply would not post until I think my chapter is perfect and any mistakes are from editing fatigue. And as my own beta, I am extra strict.

Please enjoy.

I do not own the name "Hogwarts." This belongs to JK Rowling. Same can be said about R. R. Martin and Game of Thrones. I own nothing, Jon Snow.

UPDATE: I made small grammar corrections. Sorry to my bookmarked people.
“Never doubted for a minute,” Lydia adds, pulling a bang away from her forehead.

Stiles interrupts the reunion from the back of the group with some coughing, hiccuping and burping. “What’s wrong with him?,” Danny asks.

“Last minute spell,” Peter answers. “It came with some quite entertaining yet worrying side effects.”

“Is this gonna last long?,” Lydia inquires.

Peter shrugs. “From what I know of magic, effects can last anywhere from 5 minutes to a week.”

Lydia raises a brow before taking charge of the room. “Well, that means we will less likely get spells from Stiles if we run into any unexpected hiccup-, unexpected issues.

Teams, get ready to split up. As a reminder, Stiles said he hasn’t seen physical guards in the Library proper- only traps, magical or otherwise. I know handheld transceivers are all we have, but make use of them wisely yet sparingly. Some spells and traps trigger on sound, so use the light transceiver before calling in. Avoid damaging any books, unless you want an unsightly rash, or a hole where your arm is supposed to be since they can bite back- sometimes literally.

Now, who is taking over as leader for Stiles’ team?”

“Isaac is,” Derek answers. “What??,” Isaac replies in surprise. “Why me and not you? You’re the Alpha!”

“One, I gotta keep propping up Stiles. Two, you’re more resourceful and creative. And right now, that is what we need,” Derek explains. Stiles, seeing Derek give Isaac praise, grins widely at the man showing compassion. (Derek tries not to blush in response. Good thing it’s somewhat dark.)

“I agree,” Lydia adds. “Don’t worry, Isaac. Stiles and Derek will help you out in any bind.” Stiles and Derek nod in agreement, before Stiles goes into another sneezing fit.

“Isaac, head your team in any direction you see fit,” Peter says, without time for Isaac to disagree. “If I remember correctly, Stiles only saw the amulet, compass, and scroll on his last outing and completely by accident. That means he doesn’t have any ready clues for you to go by.

My team will figure out where the exit is, using our instincts and senses. I suggest we would go in the complete opposite direction of Isaac’s team to lessen redundancy. Lydia, I suggest for right now, zigzag forward through the center of this chamber and if you hit a dead end, always make rights. This will create at least a safe hallway for us to go back to in case of any emergencies.

No more idle squabble. Let’s go.”

OUTSIDE THE TUNNELS, with Erica, Matt, and Boyd

Noshiko Nakamura and Braeden were surveying the damage on their three vehicles when Morell and the 3 teens from Beacon Hills show up from the trees. The two oni were patrolling the perimeter, watching for any more ambushers that may show.

Matt and Boyd rush to the side of the road to empty their stomachs while Erica and the others regroup. “You said your names were Marell and Braeden?,,” the blond asks.

“It’s Morell, not Marell,” she corrects her. “You’re lucky we got here when we did.”
“Well, luck tends to favor my kind,” Noshiko interjects. “Not the kind I had hoped for today, but we attract all sorts.”

“You’re a were-fox, right?,” Braeden asks. Noshiko Nakamura’s expression sours at that label. “What brings you all the way out here?”

“I preferred to be called Kitsune if you do not mind. As for why we’re here- it seems my daughter still cannot control her luck, and we ended up here for a concert of sorts,” she answers. “And after a detour, the lesser kind of luck rolls in when we run into these teens being attacked by these dust warriors.”

“They’re berserkers,” Erica explains. “But, that doesn’t really matter. Thank you for helping us out.” The blonde teen extends her hand for a shake.

Noshiko ignores the hand with a look before excusing herself. “I am sorry; I have to rush off. I would wish you luck, dear, but I would need all the luck I can keep. The spirits are raging a few kilometers north of here and I need to investigate.” The oni change to smoke and reform to ceremonial knives in her hand. Her katana melts to lights in the air.

After the smallest curt nod, Noshiko Nakamura turns and walks briskly to her car. She orders her husband to hurry to their destination, with a stern and irritated tone. The moment her daughter Kira opens her mouth to ask a question, she was silenced with a glare. The family drive off to their destination in silence.

“...She wasn’t with you guys?,” Braeden asks. “You know what? I’m not paid enough to care to know. Let’s get you guys in your car and back to civilization.”

“Um, can either of you drive stick shift?,” Erica asks meekly. “I never really got my license, and just getting here was a bitch.”

Morell shakes her head before asking the blonde for the car keys. “Teen wolves and cars never mix, do they?”

Nearby in the forest, a purple skinned redhead smashes the head of a berserker into a nearby tree. The poor hulking creature turns to dust immediately.

“You idiots!,” she raged. “How difficult is it to capture 3 kids in a car, when they haven’t broken in their training claws yet??”

The redhead clawed the tree in fury, before kicking and punching any nearby berserker, as she blindly vents her anger with gnarls at every attack. “Those stupid brats would have been a PERFECT addition to my bait pile. I know very well that the Hales and that mopey Scotty boy would run at the chance to save their icky little friends. I had it all planned out- splitting the hostages into different locations, bombs at every corner. It would have been the perfect piece of turmoil for their sorry littles asses to trudge through. But no, you incompetent idiots have to ruin it all by getting killed by total strangers with shadow critters and leather outfits! What kind of supernatural hunters are you??”

The vixen with her monologue takes out a silenced pistol from her back pocket and starts dealing headshots to more of the berserkers nearby. Each one turns to dust as the bullets puncture in between their eyes.
“Well, no matter. I’ll still get my revenge. I guess we just have to stick with Plan C.” The leader motions for her hostage to be pushed forward through the crowd. A brunette with lightly brunneous eyes glared at her captor. She lets out a frustrated growl and was ready to pounce, but two bone claws aim at her throat and prevent her from lashing out.

“And Plan C stands for Cora. Cora Hale.” The redhead cackles as the berserkers roar and slam their shields of bone in frenzy. All the birds that heard their battlecry flew away in fear.

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BACK AT THE ARCHIVES

Lydia’s group is facing major fatigue. Every other row seemed to have a pitfall, or spikes coming out the shelves, or one special stone outcrop that would cause the floor to open into a lava pit. Every movie cliche trap of doom was in place in EVERY. OTHER. ROW.

“This is too illogical for me,” Danny ends up complaining, while editing his map on his tablet. “I mean the other groups can’t be seeing traps every other row. And they’re the ones looking for treasure or the exit.”

“Well, it has to be like lacrosse or football, right?,” Jackson answers. “To bar the other team from getting to the other goal, the straightest path has to- WATCH IT SCOTT!- has to have the most defense. And our group just went straight up forward.” The blonde haired jock was being hoisted down from his tail by Scott. They were both perched atop a bookcase and using their hanging combination to cut a trigger rope from above.

“Jackson’s cutting the rope in 5 seconds,” Allison calls out. “Everyone get off the ground.” All three of Lydia, Danny, and Allison climb the nearest bookshelf as a ladder for about two shelf heights. “You can cut the rope now, Jackson.”

As soon as the teen cuts the rope, large saw blades horizontally spring out from the bottom rung of the bookshelves. Anyone standing on solid ground would have had their calves sliced through the bone, just below the knee.

Deeming it safe, the teens dismount the bookshelves and prepare to move forward. “Are any of these books helpful to us?,” Danny asks.

“My shelf is all about carpentry,” Scott answers. “And different types of hammers and mallets.”

“Saws. Lathes,” Jackson adds from his end.

“Well, maybe we can build a gazebo from all the information we get from this aisle,” Danny adds sarcastically.

While the boys scan through the next few shelves, Allison pulls Lydia aside shaking her out of a gaze that keeps forming. “Hey, are you okay? You’re… uncharacteristically quiet and not present. Shouldn’t you be bossing us around more?”

Lydia tries to center, but she is still being pulled away. When a glazed look finally fully covers her eyes, she turns around and goes back to the tool shelves. “There’s… there’s something here…,” she says to no one in particular. Lydia is running her hands along the spines of the books. She is feeling the dust of the imprints slowly, methodically. “There’s a… a warning…” The pale teen slowly wanders off away from her friend.

Worried for Lydia, Allison calls the guys and beckons them to come back over. “Hey guys, head over here,” she calls. “Something’s going on with Lydia.” The three teens turn around and jog over asking Allison what’s up.
“I don’t know. Lydia’s been getting.. distant for the past few rows,” Allison replies.

“Do you think it’s related to whatever inhuman thing she is?,” Danny asks. Jackson shrugs and replies. “I’d ask Stilinski.”

The 4 teens follow Lydia, bewildered by her actions. When Danny finally gets a hold of Stilinski, he tries to muscle through a response. “Are you *hic* near anything science fi- *hic* science fiction?,” he asks hurriedly, to which the four reply no. After an audible sigh. Stilinski explains that as long as they are nowhere a fiction book, then let Lydia read it. “-and *write it down*,” he emphasizes. “This is bound to be important. *hic hic hic*”

The four give each other a look of confusion and just trust their friend. “Anything else you want us to know or do, Stiles?,” Scott adds.

“Well, in the odd case that *hic* Derek or Isaac can’t hear it, *hic* let me know if Lydia ever ever everevereverEVER screams.”

“Screams? Why would she scream?,” Jackson asks.

“Well, if- *bzzzt* and ther- *bzzzt* *hic hic*-.” Stiles gets cut off with so much static that they can no longer decipher what he says.

“They must have gone too far,” Scott supposes. “You think?,” Jackson quips sarcastically.

The boys to proceed to comically bump into each other and into Allison as she stops abruptly ahead. Lydia tilts her head to the side and slowly pulls a worn red and green book from the shelf. Caressing the spine, she turns the book over and lets it fall open in her palm. Her mouth mimes the words incoherently under her breath.

“What aisle are we on?,” Scott whispers. “All I see are more books on tools,” Jackson points out. “If Curly and Moe can quiet down, maybe we can actually check on Lydia for a moment?,” Danny says.

Allison walks forward and cautiously taps Lydia on the shoulder. “Hey, Lydia, what are you reading?” It took a minute but Lydia actually responds. “...I don’t know…,” she says. “But I think, it’s a warning…”

“A warning?,” Allison responds. Lydia opens a book to a certain page and pauses. The paper is yellowing and fraying. Handwritten notes lay within the margins- Allison notes French words written in cursive. In the corner, presumably a name is written in red ink. “La Bete?,” Allison reads aloud.

In the book proper, pages of drawing of various tools of torture lay into play. Drawings of bones and organs of different creatures, some distinctly supernatural, lie within each page. More and more paragraphs were haphazardly scratched off nearing the end of the book. As Lydia finishes flipping through the pages, she rubs her fingers to feel the dust film covering her tips. They are itchy, and somewhat electric. She snaps the book closed and reads the French title along the spine.

“Tools for the Curing and Culling of the Supernatural, by Marcel Maladie,” she translates out loud. Lydia shoves the book back into its spot and walks briskly back into the hallway they manufactured. The boys follow suit awkwardly in pace.
A minute into her purposeful gait, she notices that everyone was walking behind her. “Boys, Allison, what are you doing?,” she scolds them. “We have a job to do and we need to stay focused.”

The teens look to each other, then back to her. “Lydia, we were following you,” Scott finally answers.

“Of course, you’re following me. I’m supposed to lead and delegate, and I am delegating you to more trap removal. Now let’s go.”

Jackson jogs up, and catches Lydia by the hand. “No, seriously Lyds. You walked off and grabbed a book a few shelves down, read it, then put it back.”

“What? That never-” Here is the moment when the redhead feels the book dust at the end of her fingers and remembers slowly what happened moments ago. “wha-. That book? Where was that book?”

The teens start to pace back when the ground shifts some more as shelves seem to move into new places. By the time they reach the aisle they were in before, newer spines of tool catalogs and handbooks lay where the offending book was once.

“What happened?,” Scott asks confused again.

“The library must have updated,” Danny theorizes. “Books get added to libraries and some books have to be moved down. It won’t take forever, but we could continue searching for that book if we want to, or need to. It should just be in rows to come.”

“No,” Lydia answers. “It’s fine. We go back to our task. Did anyone catch what book I was reading?”

“Allison was reading a bit of the book over your shoulder,” Scott points out. “You said the title was something about the Supernatural by Marcel something.”

“Tools for the Curing and Culling of the Supernatural, by Marcel Maladie,” Allison offers. “The book was anatomy diagrams and tool schematics. A lot of handwritten notes. There was the name La Bete that kept popping up in the margins.”

“The Beast?,” Lydia says confused with pursed lips. She shakes herself out of thought and tells Allison to work with Danny to take as many notes as she remembers. “Scott, Jackson- we are moving forward and continuing this trap removal. Ignore what happened right now and we will talk to Stilinski about this. Let’s go- there are deadly traps that need to be disarmed.”

ELSEWHERE IN THE ARCHIVES, REWIND A MINUTE OR SO

Derek is propping up Stiles as Isaac is holding the transceiver. They had found a convenient conveyor belt moving them along with less walking. “Well, in the odd case that *hic* Derek or Isaac can’t hear it, *hic* let me know if Lydia ever EVER EVER screams.”

“Screams? Why wou- bzzzzt screa- bzzzzt” It seems that Jackson’s reply was starting to cut off.

“Well, if you guys hear me, it’s a long story and there’s not enough time. *hic hic* If Lydia tells you to run, just run. Hello? HELLO?” Stiles sneezes a couple of times with increasing strength, and with the last sneeze a loud abnormal pop was heard from his chest.
“What was that?! Are you okay??,” Derek starts asking, feverishly feeling around Stiles’ chest and upper back for any damage. “Did a bone break? What’s going on?”

Stiles does his own cursory check before answering. “I think the spell’s blowback is gone and done. That last sneeze hurt, but I think I can talk normal again.” Stiles then attempts to say a few limericks and a haiku he remembers from some game forum, before breaking into a grin. “Yup, back to normal. Whatever that means.”

“Good,” Isaac points out. “You can take lead again.”

“Nuh-uh, you were doing an excellent job. I still need to recover a little bit longer.”

“You saw that trip wire a few yards back. If you didn’t catch it, we’d be charcoal by now,” Derek points out.

Isaac’s ear turned pink from the small praise. “Well, I think we’re sufficiently deep into the Library, likely far from the others. Any suggestions on where to go from here?”

“Why did you head in this direction anyway?,” Derek asked.

“I followed a hunch,” Isaac starts to explain. He points to some bookcases they are passing by. Along the sides, small ornaments of pinecones, feathers and flowers crop out. “Near the entrance, those flowers were sunflowers with wide faces, and those feathers were short and wispy. Now they are some other delicate looking flower, and the feathers are longer.

I saw small differences down the aisles and I thought those described a direction, maybe? Like we’re going from a more temperate region to elsewhere? Don’t birds have longer feathers in colder regions?,” Isaac asks the two.

“Don’t look at me, I wouldn’t know,” Stiles concedes. “That is surprisingly not in my lexicon of random knowledge.” Derek shrugs in response to the question as well, marking lack of knowledge in that specific department.

“Well, if I am correct, then maybe we’re heading north-ish. And since we are looking for a compass, then it might be located at wherever the North Pole of this library would be.” Isaac looks deflated. “Look I know it’s a stupid idea; I’m sorry for wasting our ti-”

“No, stop, look,” Stiles interrupts. “It’s better than what I would have recommended which is just walking forward and waiting for a wall. It’s a *good idea*, Isaac. A great one. Fantastic, marvelous-I’m running out of synonyms here. Let’s keep at it, and if we get stuck we’ll try something else.”

Stiles checks his watch. “We have another 4 hours of searching and trying to get out. That’s plenty of time. Let’s just remember to keep on watching out for stuff we might want to read on the way.”

“Well, if I see the next Game of Thrones book on any of these shelves, I’m reading it,” Isaac declares. “This library does that, right? Books that aren’t written yet?”

“Sadly, it even puts in different versions. And I’m sorry, R. R. Martin can’t seem to decide an ending to all the versions I’ve read in here.”

“Back on track, you two,” Derek reminds them. Stilesmocks a fake salute before wobbling and collapsing back into Derek’s arms.

“Just a few more minutes, Der-bear, then I can walk on my own again,” Stiles promises. Derek huffs at the nickname before blushing. The conveyor belt they are on moves steadily forward.
“I hate going into traps blind,” Peter huffs to no one in particular. His group is running briskly away from some weird half-snake half-fox creatures, care of one of the traps they triggered five or so minutes ago. Instead of the usual pitfall or saw blade that they have been seeing, this trap opened five doors along alcoves on the walls. These fast, poisonous and flexible predators climbed out hangry and have been chasing after them for the time being.

“Peter, remind me why we aren’t slashing and clawing at these things,” Aiden complains.

“Because, if even one of us gets BIT, then they are most likely to die from POISON,” Peter explains. “Stiles did not provide us with magical antidotes to creatures he may not even know about.”

“Well, we can’t just keep running,” Ethan points out. “Hoped to see them tire out, but that ain’t happening.”

“Well, the only thing we can fight with are our limbs!,” Aiden says.

“Books!,” Malia exclaims.

“What?,“ Aiden replies in confusion.

“Malia, you’re a genius!,” Peter agrees, before grabbing books from a nearby bookcase and chucking them at the creatures behind them. “Keep running, but throw and aim the books at those bastards!”

Because the four aren’t directly damaging the books, they were safe from the protections the library holds. The creatures on the other hand did not have that spark of information. Being bombarded by books left and right, the half-reptilian pursuers were getting angry. On instinct, some start clawing and swatting the projectiles away. As soon as some books received extensive damage, they start melting into acid, burning those who damaged it. Others animated into little biting fiends, remiss of the specific textbook from Hogwarts™. Some exploded upon damage, into small concussive bombs. If the creatures weren’t tripping up on the books, they were slowed down by the minefield they soon become.

The wittier of the predators soon learned to just avoid the books and continue with the chase. “What now?,“ Ethan asks.

“I guess it’s now or never,” Peter explains, taking out a red vial from his person. “Make a line of books wall to wall a few feet ahead of us, then we keep running. If we get stuck later on, we climb a bookcase and go from there.”

Discussing that plan did not go well for the four. As if the library heard, the space between the aisles widened in their horizon. And a tall bookcase wall stood several yards away. “The plan isn’t changing. We build that wall at the second to last aisle. At that last corner, we all run left. Now go GO!,“ Peter orders.

As soon as the four create the barrier, Peter chucks the vial at the fuel. “Wait, small change of plans. This is the last time we will have access to a fire wall so we need to make this last. Feed the flames and throw more book bombs.“ A few seconds later, the exposed liquid catches a chemical flame. Thankfully, the first book that catches flames turns to more fuel instead of a concussive blast. Peter and Malia jump over the barrier before it grows to an encumbering height. Much to Peter’s chagrin, Ethan and Aiden weren’t lucky enough to pass beforehand.
“What now?,” Aiden asks.

“I think, to quote Stilinski, it’s Morphin Time,” Ethan recommends with a grin.

The twins take a moment to combine to their hulking form. With the added height and musculature thanks to a skill only they have, they jump over the flames as soon as the closest creature almost nips at their heels. As soon as they land their jump, Peter orders everyone to continue running only to curse as he turns the corner first.

“Dead end,” the twins exclaim poorly in their combined form.

“Horrible choice of words there, boys,” Peter quips before biting his lip. “Okay, back to the original plan of climbing bookshelves. Ethan and Aiden, continue chucking books over the fire. Malia, throw some more books into the fire to keep the flame going. And stay away from the fire in case any of the books explode, or any of the creatures jump over. Hopefully, these things don’t know how to climb.”

Peter tosses book after book to the top of the nearest bookcase. The others try their best to maintain the wall they built. (It took about 3 minutes before the twins realize they can throw more books when separated.) They were covered in sweat from the heat and were running out of fodder. As soon as Peter gave the signal, the three of them start climbing the roughly 14 shelves of books before the fire starts dying out. From atop the bookshelf, they used the fodder Peter prepared to take some more of the creatures out.

“If we’re lucky, there will be a little under 40 left of them by the time we run out of stuff to throw,” Peter informs the group after a quick survey of the situation. “The good news is I can see the smoke dissipating towards there on the left. That means the exit has to be in that direction, since I can faintly smell fresh air. The bad news is the gap is too far between shelves for us to jump across an aisle. But if we get a running start, we can probably jump across the gap to the top of the bookshelves we passed up.”

As if on cue, the end of the platform they are on starts crackling and creaking. All four of them seem to pale after realizing their biggest mistake- all of them collectively forgot that wooden bookshelves can also catch flame.

“...well, shit,” Peter exclaims.

Chapter End Notes

A/N:
I will stop making promises of when I will post since I keep on breaking them.
Comments are appreciated.
Chapter Summary

The gang splits up to focus on their tasks in the Arthur Archives. Lydia gets sidetracked by a trance while her group disarms traps. Stiles warns her group via walkie-talkie to watch out for Lydia’s screams. And, somewhere further from everyone else, Peter’s group is trapped on a burning bookshelf surrounded by half-snake half-fox creatures with their chances of escaping looking horribly grim. And outside the magical library, the Yukimura’s race towards an unknown location after parting ways with Erica and her group.

Two (main) chapters are left for this arc’s events.
What has this arc been building up towards?
Where will all these moving pieces converge?
When will the leader of the berserkers enact their master plan?

T/W: Mentions of attempted suicide, descriptive character death, pop-culture reference to a suicide cult, parental abuse, epilepsy, dubious-consent spell casting.

Chapter Notes

A/N:
This pseudo-short chapter is focused on Stiles, Isaac and Derek’s group. No bouncing around. Fully intentionally expositional/boring for some people, and mostly conversational. One more main chapter after this, then epilogue. End of Book 1 in sight people.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

ARTHUR ARCHIVES, UNDER GLASTONBURY ABBEY

Derek, Stiles, and Isaac took somewhat of a break, in the form of reading up on fantasy lore in an aisle of books they stumbled upon. Stiles was thumbing through more lore on dragonkin and reptilian creatures. Every once in a while, he takes out his journal and scribbles stuff down. Isaac has been absorbed in some books about reincarnation since he didn’t even know that existed. Derek on the other hand has been brushing up and reviewing through a summary on the Greek Pantheon.

Fifteen minutes into this browsing, Stiles claps his hands and decides they should move on. He takes out some hand warmers from his bottomless satchel for the three of them to share, before stepping onto the conveyor belt once more. “I really hope we can find that aisle again,” Stiles notes. “There’s some cool sounding stuff about Kanima maturing into some fantastical things that differed from previous books I’ve read.”

“As long as Matt and Jackson don’t develop wings, I’m fine with that,” Derek answers.
Stiles makes a face that gives it away, to which Derek just facepalms. It took a moment for them to notice Isaac just watching Stiles with a thoughtful look on his face.

“What’s on your mind, Isaac?,” Stiles asks.

“Something’s been bugging me, now that I’ve been thinking about these past few months. Especially when I read about reincarnation.” Isaac starts. “You said you’ve been living this year for the past 16 years, right?”

Stiles nods.

“How did you do it? Like get through everything without going crazy?,” Isaac started the question exasperated. He reaches for his arm and rubs it subconsciously. “I mean, I just thought it had to suck to end up right where you are year after year. ...Reliving every day and every month like that AND having to keep secrets until the right time. Meeting the same people over and over again. Plus being a teenager SUCKS. I would feel like- like I was trapped in my own body all alone…. I really don’t like feeling trapped. Especially back then when… when my dad kept locking me in that fridge.

There were days I fought to claw myself out, when I would scream myself hoarse. And then there were days that I just gave up and just lied there waiting, hoping that it would just... end. Erica told me there were days like that for her too, when she was still epileptic. She would just want things to stop and freeze and let her have her way. The way I think more about it, I just want to crawl out my own skin. It’s just the whole thing is just—”

Isaac looks Stiles in his eyes and vulnerably asks, “How did you get through the loneliness?”

Stiles tensed momentarily, before coughing out a start to his answer. “The truth? Some years I handled it well and others I didn’t.

The good years, I had my dad, Scott, and the pack. I also had Derek and Peter for most of those years too. Life was exciting, and there was never a dull day. Life was full of love and happiness, even between Harris’s homework and Gerard’s brutality. At the end of the day, it could be the end of the world but I would greet it with the biggest smile on my face.”

Stiles breathes deep, in and out before continuing. “The not so good years were stuff I really wish I can forget. There were the times that I had to bury my dad, or Mama McCall; those were the worst. Or the times I couldn’t make it just in time to save someone from the pack. Losing everyone, seeing their life leaving their eyes, just made me more numb. Or stark crazy.”

It was Stiles’ turn to grab him arm for safety. “The lowest of lows, I even tried to kill myself. Multiple times.”

Derek flinches and tries to reach out for support. Stiles brushes the arm away. “No, no need to treat me like a fragile thing. I said I tried. It’s in the past. It’s there. It happened. And I am not feeling that way at this moment.

I also can’t brush it off like I never got that low. I can even acknowledge that I may end up that low in the future. It is a fact that I attempted, and we just move one from that fact.

*sighs* The whole point is that I never got to stay dead. I would feel the pain of being burned alive, or being shot and stabbed.” Stiles rubs his neck for a moment. “I remember the times I was in a noose, intentionally or otherwise. I remember the pulsing in my head when I was both losing air and feeling the pressure of my heartbeat in my temples. I would blackout and next thing I know, I’m intact on the floor, the noose still hanging.
I even got beheaded once. It didn’t feel like anything special. I just noticed not feeling my arms or legs, and how my head was falling. I couldn’t scream because I couldn’t breathe without lungs, or I didn’t have a throat to scream from. It felt like forever to die that way, but it also felt like a millisecond. Because, the next thing I knew I was intact on the floor grabbing my neck to see if it was still there. *sighs* I have died so many times I can’t count them anymore. I remember most of them even.”

Stiles walks away from them a couple of steps. “I told you about year 11, how none of us remember anything that year.” Stiles audibly gulps. “I also told you guys about the 2 years I joined Gerard, remember that?

Well, those were years 2 and 12. The first time was right after the loop happened. And I thought maybe if I got rid of all of the magic in the city, I would get my life back. Especially since that was the first year I had m-m-my dad die because of magic.

So I drank the Kool-Aid. I drank that Kool-Aid hard… and.
..and
and- I killed a lot of people that year. Practically all the pack. With my own two hands.”
Stiles shuddered visibly. Isaac also shuddered in response.

“Year 12 was more of me lashing out for not remembering much that previous year. And I fell off the deep end HARD.” He stared at his palm as he closed it into a fist. “I wanted the world to burn. I tortured and maimed so many innocent people. And I was consumed and reveled in the chaos and destruction.”

Stiles looked back at Derek and Isaac with a sad smile. “It took the both of you trying to save me while I was actively hunting you to bring me back to good side.

I know it isn’t you two specifically, but it still feels the same to me. So thank you for having will have had saved me. I think that tense is correct. You know what I mean.”

“High trip wire ahead,” Derek interjects. The three of them duck under it as they let the moment sink in.
It was silent for a bit after that.
The only sound came from Stiles playing with his zipper, obviously lost in his memories.

“And I’m getting to it. You also can summon your other selves; we saw it twice now. First during New Year’s and second when you showed us your fight with Gerard.”

“Uh-huh,” Stiles nods to continue.

“Do you talk to them? Like voices in your head? Have you had to deal with that every year? Also, why is it that only 15 of you showed up on New Year’s but 16 showed up during Gerard’s?”

Stiles smiles. “That’s technically three questions but I’ll allow it.
Yeah, they are all here in my noggin, screaming at me half the time with their opinions about everything. And with my ADD it gets pretty hectic enough in here. And this is like, maybe the 3rd year I’ve had to deal with them in my head and-

-yeah, they told me it is the 3rd year I dealt with this which is, hold on. Look, gimme a minute. Ugh. *sighs* As for New Year, year 11 didn’t want to come out that day. And Lord knows we wouldn’t want to force him out if we wanted to.”

“He’s a handful?,” Isaac asks.

“I could’ve told you that,” Derek chimes.


“Another mystery for your idea board,” Derek adds.

“Not really. I’ve kinda given up on forcing information out of himself, or myself. He comes in handy in fights though.”

“Yeah, we all saw that,” Isaac agrees.

“Yeah,” Stiles adds.

“Yeah, Derek agrees.

The three fall into an uncomfortable silence again, thanks to a conversational dead end.

After dealing with a web trip wires in their path, Stiles lies down on the conveyor belt to catch his breath. Derek and Isaac were sweaty but overall just fine. In between one of Stiles’ gulps of air, Stiles just spouts the first thing on his mind.

“I’m surprised *YOU* don’t have questions, Derek.”

“Me?,” the older man replied.

“Yeah, you.” Stiles pushes himself off the ground. “It doesn’t take a genius to see you have questions of your own. We have a lot of walking time between us, and I could feel the glares on the back of my head. So, lemme have em. How many questions you got? Twenty? A hundred?”

“Three.”

Stiles smiles in reply. “Which one you want first?”

Derek scrunches his brow before deciding with a huff. “How many times were you a wolf in your past lives?”

Stiles has a wide grin. He starts with, “I guess you would also want to know who bit me, and if I would accept the bite from you or anyone else.”

“I never said that.”

“It’s fine, Derek. I know all the questions you normally ask. It just took you a long while to ask them.”

With Stiles’ last word, you can start to see the fog of his breath as it gets colder and colder. “I was a werewolf exactly 2 times. I was a beta for one, and the other I became an Alpha.”

“Who did you kill to become Alpha?,” Derek follows up almost immediately.
“Calm down, Sourwolf. It was extenuating circumstances. I can’t tell you that right now though, as it kinda ruins something in the future. I can tell you that I never killed an Alpha to become an Alpha that year.”

“Then how did you-”

“I’ll tell you sometime in the future, Derek. I promise.”

In response, Derek’s eyes glow red in anger. You hear a growl rumble in his chest. That lasts a second, before the anger just dissipates and Derek is immediately calm. Derek shakes his head before asking his next question.

“How do you do that? Calm me down against my will almost immediately?”

“Is that your actual second question?”

“Yes.”

“Okay.” Stiles turns around to show Derek the back of his sweater. He lifts his clothes to reveal his mole-ridden back. In the center lies a triskelion, his family’s crest, tattooed on his back.

Derek is staring at the tattoo before slowly reaching out to touch it. The moment his finger touches Stiles’ skin, Stiles shivers from the sudden touch. Derek takes his hand back immediately.

“...Sorry,” Derek offers.

“No need,” Stiles responds as he puts his shirt down.

“How come I never saw that when I was changing your bandages when you were… healing from the berserker attack in California?”


I have to paint this on magically before a big spell to center my thoughts. Casting spells need a foundation. And with my affinity for magic as a Spark, well it-”

“What is a Spark?,” Isaac interrupts.

“What?”

“I know you heard my question,” Isaac answers.

Stiles takes a while to mull his answer. “Magic can come from a lot of sources, like the energy within someone allows matter and space to transform. A Spark is a being that isn’t necessarily borne of magic or supernatural parents but can sense and will magic to their benefit. We tend to use the magic already around us to change everything to our needs. We just need to believe it can happen.

When a Spark is strong enough, we tend to feel magic like the metaphorical electricity in the air. I usually see it to a degree when I power up for a spell, which is why my eyes turn a shade of electric yellow. It can turn into any color I want actually, but I see electricity as yellow so it sorta stuck that way.”

“So, you are like a druid,” Derek adds.

“Yes and no.

Druids are typically defined as borne of a supernatural parent. Their powers are often plant or animal
based, or requires the variable of life. Elemental spells are typically difficult but not impossible for druids,” Stiles explains.

“I, on the other hand, can do pretty much any magic as I can want to, but I usually require that magic be in the air surrounding me.”

“Doesn’t mistletoe and wolfsbane cancel magic?,” Isaac asks. “How can you use those then?”

“Because I don’t have the magic in me inherently. I am using the magic that is already in the air. Look, I never said it makes sense.”

“That doesn’t explain your past selves, and how they are constantly there,” Derek points out. “That has to use up a lot of magic. You would tap out your reserves in minutes.”

“I had some magic stuff from previous years that would- you know what, uh it’s kinda really complicated and we got way off track. What was your actual question again?”

“Your calming effect,” Isaac answers for the both of them. “How do you calm Derek down with a tattoo?”

“It’s not the tattoo itself is it?,” Derek tries to answer.

“No, you are right. It is not the tattoo,” Stiles continues. He faces Isaac for a quick moment. “Pop Quiz, Isaac! What are the three types of werewolves?”

“Alpha, Beta, and Omega,” Isaac answers in a ‘duh’ fashion.

“Ding, ding, ding! That is correct,” Stiles chimes. “Now-”

“Trip wire,” Derek points out. The three of them duck under before they continue.

“Now, when bitten werewolves change, people tend to rush and look for an anchor to tether the pups on a full moon. Usually it is a person, place, item, or a feeling. But way before, borne werewolves were taught a calming mantra to quicken the process.” Stiles looks to Derek.

Derek nods in response. “We used to chant Alpha, Beta, Omega again and again like a meditative mantra hoping it would calm us down. But usually we needed the family amulet to do so.”

“And since not everyone had an amulet, some wolves got the tattoo as a permanent reminder that it is there,” Stiles adds. “But, the real thing that grounds the wolves are the connection they make with the mantra. By evoking the feeling that the pack will be there to protect and support you, the mantra realizes the feeling of protection and tranquility to the pup.

My tattoo has that magical effect for me and for everyone I see as an ally. It automatically sees any moment that someone starts to get dangerously angry or worried, and induces a magical calm if needed or wanted. A calming buff for my adventuring party, if you will.”

“So you’re casting a spell on me at this very moment, without my consent,” Derek interprets. “I should be angrier than I actually am, but I assume it’s because of the spell.”

“Yes and no,” Stiles replies. “Wow, I’ve been saying that a lot lately.

The spell can’t force someone to get out of a mood if they never had the ability to do so in the first case. Since you are calm and not angry, this means you actually are able to overcome that anger at your own pace and get to a place of calm. The spell just facilitated the process.”
“Great. A magical therapist,” Isaac declares deadpan. “Should we tell you about our childhood?”

“Wow, I can’t believe I never called it that before,” Stiles realizes. “I should charge by the hour.”

Derek massages his temples as a migraine is slowly setting in.

“You okay?,” Stiles asks.

“I should really not be, but your spell says I’m fine,” Derek complains. “I am getting a stress migraine from all this.”

“Unfortunately, I don’t have any medicine for that,” Stiles apologizes. “And for your last question?”

Derek’s shoulders tense before he asks the big question he was hoping never came. “Laura and Cora,” Derek says to no one. “We never ended up talking about Laura and Cora. It’s not really a question, but you never told me anything about Laura and Cora.”

Stiles tenses up in response to that statement. “…yeah, wow, I’m… I’m legitimately sorry I never got to that. It shouldn’t be something that slipped my mind.”

“Just… just get to it. How did you talk to Laura and Cora?,” Derek softly demands.

“Laura is really dead, Derek. I’m sorry about that. No way to sugar coat it. Somewhere in here is a mirror, in the same hallway as the stuff we’re looking for. That mirror allows us to talk to the dead. We also eventually ended up meeting with her but that is again, another story for when we are outside this magical place,” Stiles explains.

“As for Cora, she… She is alive, Derek. She is usually in South America at the start of the New Year. But—

... After Peter and I killed Gerard, we popped right over to where she should have been but she wasn’t there Derek. I was using all the contacts I had to find her but I couldn’t. Magic couldn’t find her, nor could science. Something was legitimately wrong and I’ve been using up my background time to look for her.

I really thought I might’ve brought it up with you before today but I guess it literally slipped my mind.”

Derek was shaking in response. He falls to his knees and tears start flowing from a stoic face. Stiles walks over and cradles Derek in his arms. Isaac sees a bright light shining from underneath Stiles’ hoodie; the calming spell must be working on overtime. “Why?”

“You gotta be more specific than that, Derek.”

“Why didn’t you or Peter tell me? I could’ve helped look for her,” he squeaked.

“For me, I literally forgot. I kept bringing this up with Peter and I guess my brain just assumed you were present at any of those times.

As for Peter, I can’t really tell you his reason.”

“Maybe he just wanted me to continue to hurt,” Derek says defeated.

Stiles shushes him softly. “No, Derek. If anything, I think he just didn’t want you to get your hopes up. Cora disappearing off the face of the earth, where no magic can find her, is a big mystery.”
“Could she be d-dead?,” Isaac stutters through for Derek.

“No. Well, not likely. If she were dead and her body was disposed, I could still have magically found her body, no matter where it is lying. For it to be untraceable means something or someone is blocking her presence from us. Someone who knows we are looking for her.”

“But that doesn’t mean she is still alive, does it?,” Derek adds.

“I would like to think so. Peter is arguably on the fence on the matter. Strategically, who or whatever is doing this would not waste energy blocking a corpse.

So, she is likely alive, Derek. And we are still looking for her.”

Derek wipes his eyes on his sleeve. He raises his head and glares at Stiles. “I am helping you look for her. After this mission, that is what we are doing.”

“If that is what you want to do, I can’t stop you, Derek,” Stiles replies. “But Peter and I have been scrounging for the past couple of months. And sorry to say this so bluntly, but we have more avenues to search in than you. I also was hoping you’d stay here and train the pack some more since we still have a lot of trouble ahead of us. I can’t stop you though, Derek. So if you want to help, we can.

... And for what it’s worth, I unintentionally really did forget to tell you. I cannot apologize enough for that.” Stiles dives in for a deep back breaking hug unannounced, which Derek doesn’t quite accept. Stiles just lets him process the information for the rest of the trip there.

Speaking of which- “Low trip wire,” Isaac tells the both of them. Stiles and Derek coughs and stands, stepping over the poorly set traps. They are reminded that they are still underneath Glastonbury Abbey searching for magical artifacts. They are still on some weird out of place conveyor belt in a mythical magical library. And they still have so many questions that lie ahead.

The one thing they just didn’t know was that in less than an hour, Stiles’ calming spell will break-right when the emotions of the pack were just too much to quell.

Chapter End Notes

A/N:
I have 2 scenes out of 5 on the last chapter done. I get chills every time I review it. Thank you for staying with me so far everyone. Comments are love. And I do sincerely hope my answers will suffice for a lot of you.
Arthur Archives Part 14: The First Goodbye

Chapter Summary

After a heart-to-heart, we fall back to the action as Stiles’ quest for three magical objects comes to an end. While Stiles’ group treads into the cold and Lyda’s group continues their task of disarming traps, Peter’s group has been trapped by reptilian creatures atop a burning bookcase in mortal danger. With books exploding and their wooden scaffolding about to give way, things are not looking up.

With the second to last chapter about to start, how will their adventures in the Arthur Archive end?
Of course, it with a “Hello”, an “Are You Okay?,” and the very first “Goodbye...”

Chapter T/W: character death, descriptions of gore in battle to fictional creatures.

Chapter Notes

A/N:
Wow, this chapter took a while to reach. Yes, if you watched a lot of the show, a lot of stuff can be pieced together so far. So I hope I can still catch you into this world I crafted. Please enjoy, and I will try to write the arc conclusion chapter as quick as possible.

How many of you predicted this would happen? I hope to hear from you in the comments, if you are still listening...

See the end of the chapter for more notes

ARTHUR ARCHIVES, UNDER GLASTONBURY ABBEY

“Stiles?? STILES??,” Ethan screams into the walkie-talkie. “PLEASE! There’s gotta be SOMETHING you can do!” Ethan smacks the radio with his hand, shaking it for every last ounce of hope it contains. All he gets in response is deafening static and the taunting echoes of his pleas.

Ethan glares at the crackling device in his hand, through tears of desperation. “... Stiles? Are you there?,“ he whispers defeatedly. He surveys his surroundings, hoping for any sign of help whatsoever. All that he finds are charred burnt remains of books and shelves. Peter and Malia are piled in a heap, unconscious. Wisps of ash are floating in the air. In front of him, a marble statue stands with cracks aplenty. The statue’s chest is breathing slowly, cycling between contraction and expansion, and holding a weakening heartbeat.

“...anyone?
...Stiles?...
...please...

In seconds, the statue finally freezes and hardens to its sheened marble finish.
From a distance, Ethan hears an earthly bone-chilling scream.

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**30 MINUTES EARLIER, ELSEWHERE**

Isaac, Derek, and Stiles have huddled relatively closer for warmth. In Isaac’s hand, a sole flickering torch is sharing a smidgen of heat in the well-lit corridor. “I really hope we are headed in the right direction,” Isaac complains through chapped lips. “I don’t think the place could get much colder or else the books are gonna get damaged. But dammit, I can only stand the cold for so long.”

“Well it might be a hope fueled mirage, but I think I see the conveyor belt leading to giant doors in the horizon,” Stiles points out. “I say we warm ourselves up with a jog and see if we wasted our time or not.”

And so they jogged to their destination with hopes for at the very least some temporary shelter from the cold. Huffing more warm air into his cupped hands, Stiles prepares to push the door open. With a loud creak, a cobblestoned hallway is revealed, housing objects on various pedestals. Noting the change of scenery, Stiles quickly offers a warning. “Don’t touch anything, or read any names out loud. This place is likely gonna be extra dangerous and magical.”

“Stiles.” Isaac calls out and points forward. “There is a literal head on that pedestal.”

“Don’t look at it!” Derek interjects. “We don’t want to risk it being the head of a you-know-what that can turn us into stone.”

“Good call,” Stiles agrees. “The only thing that can remove petrification is a phoenix’s tear. And I don’t have those on hand.”

“Is this the place we are looking for?,” Isaac checks. The three tread carefully through the interior.

“I think so,” Stiles answers. “I recognize some of these objects. If I am correct, then we should see a full length mirror in the next room. If Laura is home, we should see her.”

“Well, I’m just glad it is warmer,” Derek offers, not immediately registering what Stiles said. “Let’s g- wait, what do you mean if Laura’s home?”

“Just stop asking questions and go,” Isaac says, pushing the other two to walk forward. The three walk forward at a marginally faster pace, avoiding the pedestal that could hold Medusa’s head. They hear hisses and snaps in the general direction, and choose to ignore the source. At the end of the corridor was another wooden door that opens to a large barrel vault.

More paintings line the walls, which cause the three’s hackles to rise, remembering the very first room they fought in. True to Stiles’ word, at the very end of the hall stands a ceiling to floor length mirror with an ornate wooden frame. Within the surface, a tall brunette with a familiar smirk waves a greeting violently.

“Laura!,” Derek chirps as he breaks out into a sprint. Years of worry and anxiety shave from his
expression. Mid-stride, a wisp of a smile graces his cheeks.

Stiles and Isaac jog to catch up. Stiles is beaming as this is one of his favorite parts of the year. Isaac has brow furrowed with curiosity. Derek stops short of the mirror, standing in awe as his comrades catch up to his side.

“Laura, is it really-” Derek turns around to ask Stiles a question. “Can she hear me? Can I talk to her or-”

“Maybe just ask me directly, Sourwolf,” a dour voice passes through the mirror. Laura is smiling wildly at seeing her brother again. She never gets tired of seeing his smile grow in surprise. She casts the other two a glance. “Hey Stiles, Isaac. Wait, I guess Isaac doesn’t know me yet, so nice to meet you. Again.”

“Again?,” asks Isaac, confused.

“The de- *ahem* departed aren’t affected by the time loop either,” Stiles explains. “But then again, they are outside of time. So they just see everything.”

“What he said,” Laura replies, before focusing on Derek. “Sup little bro. Though you’re not very little anymore.”

“Laura, I-” Derek starts. “I don’t know where to start. I-I-” Small tears start welling up in the Alpha’s eyes. He hesitates before reaching out to the mirror. “I just wish that-”

“Shhhh it’s okay, Derek,” Laura consoles. “It’s fine. Look before we get mushy, which happens every year, you and Stiles need to be responsible for a moment. So, umm Stiles?”

“Hrm? Oh yeah, umm. Laura, if it is you, please tell me a color and a number we have previously decided on,” Stiles asks.

“Amber and 69,” Laura answers with a snicker. “Stiles, if it is actually you, please tell me an animal and a food we have previously decided on.”

“Platypus and rhubarb pie,” Stiles answers with a grimace. “I really hate those answers. But, I am glad it is you and not a shapeshifter.”

“Same here,” Laura responds. “Now, do you think you and Isaac can give me and Derek a few minutes to catch up?”

“Of course,” Stiles answers. “Derek, we’re a loud shout away if something happens, okay? Isaac and I will focus on the mission.”

Derek is still staring at the mirror, fascinated. He replies a noncommittal chuff. Isaac follows Stiles through a nearby door, and waves goodbye absentmindedly to the two Hales. The siblings start their private personal reunion.

MEANWHILE, IN LYDIA’S GROUP...

Jackson is bored. No, he is. Inconsolable bored even. And when Jackson is bored, he starts to bother Danny with stupid questions. This time, the banal topic in question is about which snowboard he should buy next.
“The blue one has better reviews, but it isn’t a big brand name. I can’t decide whether to just stick with that one or get the red one,” Jackson explains to his bestfriend. “What do you think? I should just stick with the red, right?”

“Huh?”, Danny responds. The teen is looking the slightest bit pale, and covered with thin sheen of sweat. The color of his lips are a bit off if someone paid a bit more attention. “Oh, sorry. Yeah, go with the red one.”

“Are you okay?,” Jackson asks, finally noticing that his friend looking more worse for wear. Danny’s lips were chapped than when they entered the library proper. He also kept rubbing his left shoulder every few seconds. “What’s wrong? Is your arm bothering you?,” Jackson inquires.

“Oh it just stings a little bit since the tunnel,” Danny answers. “You do remember that I got shocked and poisoned in one of the trials, right?”

Jackson shudders. “Don’t remind me. You were in so much pain, and I couldn’t help.”

“Well, maybe the fatigue is catching up to me.” Danny tries to smack his lips after realizing he has pure cottonmouth. “I would kill for a bottle of water right now.”

“Hey, Allison!,” Jackson shouts in no time to the group ahead. “Do you happen to have an extra bottle of water on you?”

The hunter in training did, and offered it to Danny who downs it quick before they all continue going forward. Jackson is a little bit worried, but just goes on quieter than before. He forgets about snowboards and reviews and steals glances at his friend more often. Moments later, he secretly asks Lydia for the two-way radio while the rest of the group works on another trap. He’s decided that he’s gonna get answers from Stilinski and help Danny out, one way or another.

**ELSEWHERE...**

Stiles and Isaac were very much in luck after parting with Derek. No more than 4 rooms away, Stiles freezes and sees display case after display case in an adjacent room. Placing his face flush against the glass window into the treasury, he peers in to find the very case containing the objects he was after. “Jackpot!,” Stiles celebrates. He turns to Isaac and does a little jig of joy. “I so want to jinx ourselves, but I guess we should grab the stuff and go before our luck runs out.”

Isaac rolls his eyes before opening the door to the room, entering and walking over to the nearest case with items inside. “These are all really cool looking, Stiles, but there are no locks. Do you want us to just smash these in?”

“Uhh, no,” Stiles answers quite hastily. “Any glass that shatters reforms quickly because of some magic mumbo-jumbo. If your arm is in the way, it will look like a glass cactus before you can blink. What we need to do is cut an actual circle out, and keep the disc separate by force.”

“Force?,” Isaac asks even more confused.

“Look, I’ll use this glass cutter,” Stiles rummages for a tool out of his satchel. “I cut out and hand you the glass disk. You might need some wolfie oomph to keep it away and not reform. Then just gimme a minute or so to learn what I can from these artifacts. Now, where are those buggers?...”

Stiles motions to Isaac to follow him two aisles over.

With an exuberant a-ha, Stiles jogs over and opens the case with the diamond tipped glass cutter.
With a few deep swipes, he soon pulls out the scroll. He unfurls it to find a map of the world’s ley lines but ever so slightly morphed. Certain nodes were colored blue, red, and dark green. He traces the map to Beacon Hills to find it clearly green, causing him to bite his lip. “That’s bad,” he mentions to himself. “If green means what I think it means, then this is really bad.” He takes out a digital camera from his pouch, and snaps a quick picture. The camera’s flash fills the room.

A breeze sweeps by, causing the torches on the wall to flicker.

“Uhh, Stiles?,” Isaac asks, noticing the change. “I think you should hurry.” The curly haired blonde was holding the disk in his outstretched hands, but the tips of his fingers are clenched tight. Whatever force wanting the glass to reform is pulling HARD.

“I hear you,” Stiles replies, putting the scroll back. Among the golden coins in the case, a leather bound compass lies. Stiles palms the device opening it to see markings in its cover. “Dammit, it’s in Enochian,” Stiles curses to no one. “I am really rusty, but I was REALLY hoping this can help us navigate through the-”

“STILES! ,” Isaac loudly whispers to the rambling teen, as he urges for them to crouch. “I really think you should look down the hall! I think- I think we’re in trouble.”

Stiles cranes his neck around the corner to see what Isaac is talking about.

A few feet away, a floating steel broadsword is floating about the cases. It’s old and ornate, but still emits an aura of strength and resiliency. Just peering at the weapon made the teens’ knees shake and wobble.

“Double drat!,” Stiles responds.

“Was that what I think it was?,” Isaac whisper-asks.

“Yeah, and that means we are about to break one of my rules,” Stiles answers. He slowly reaches into the case and grabs some of the coins along with the amulet inside. “On the count of 3, I am going to toss some coins as a distraction, and then we are going to take the amulet and the compass with us.”

“What???,,” Isaac exclaims. “I thought that taking items out of the Archive could-”

“I come back to life, remember?,” Stiles interrupts. “Look, we’re out of time so just-”

And as Stiles and Isaac’s luck runs out, the walkie-talkie in Stiles’ pocket crackles with a voice, loud and clear. “Stiles, it’s Jackson, I think Danny needs your help.”

“GODDAMMIT JACKSON!,” Stiles curses, as the two teens have to drop their plans and just book it.

Isaac and Stiles sprint for the door, and slam it shut behind them. No two seconds later, they hear Excalibur ramming at the wooden obstacle between them. “This isn’t gonna hold, is it?,” Isaac complains.

“Gimme two seconds,” Stiles orders, as he shuffles in pockets madly. He pulls out his blue vial, and pours it madly on the edges of the door as Isaac pushes it closed.

As soon as Stiles uses up his potion, a crisp steel blade pierces the wood in front of his face, and half an inch below Isaac’s left hand. If the sword aimed just one inch over, Stiles would’ve won a Voldemort look-alike contest. This causes the two teens to flinch away from the door. As soon as the blade retracted, it took to chopping at the door to chip the wood open.
“Let’s get out of here and grab Derek before it thinks of other ways to get to us,” Stiles points out. Isaac shakes himself awake and rushes behind him.

“DEREEEKK, we got to run!!,” Stiles screams at the top of his lungs. The hooded teen grabs the older wolf’s arm, and waves a goodbye to Laura. “Talk to you soon, Laura!”

The three book a good distance into the library (pun may be intended) before hiding behind a shelf. It is then that Derek got an explanation of the sudden escape. “The magic sword showed up,” Stiles explains.

“Magic sword?,” Derek asks. “You mean Excali-”

Isaac shoots his hand to cover Derek’s mouth immediately.

“It’s too late!,” Stiles explains. “Keep running, quick!” The three run away, amidst some cracking of wood in the distance. Meanwhile, they hear some crackling coming from Stilinski’s hip. “--tiles? Do you hav-- -thing wrong with Dann-”

“NOT A GOOD TIME, JACKSON!,” Stiles shouts into the receiver before turning down the volume. “I’d hate to do this, but Derek, could you be a dear and carry me all super wolf-like so we can run faster?”

“I thought you’d never ask,” Derek spouts, before lugging Stiles over his shoulder into a fireman carry. Isaac and Derek break out into a full sprint away from the corridor with Excalibur hot on their tails.

MEANWHILE, WITH PETER’S GROUP...

“Hold on tight,” Ethan and Aiden mumble to Peter and Malia. The two grab onto their pack tight as they run and jump to the next bookcase. They make the gap successfully, but their combined weight was too much for the case. A loud crack shatters the bottom of the bookcase, before a couple dozen of books fall into the nearby fire causing a few more explosions.

To make matters worse, the explosions topple over some nearby torches on the walls. The liquid fuel that kept the torches lit started to spread on the floor, creating a growing puddle of fire. While it did cause the creatures to flee a distance, more and more book cases are starting to catch flame and explode. Within moments, the very bookcase that the four are standing on is starting to topple.

“Keep run!,” Malia screams and points far to the right, in the direction of the slight draft. “Water there!”

A far squint showed a water fountain a good distance away. And while the twins are normally slowed by their bulk, they had no choice but to hope for the best as the racing puddle of flame is fast catching on. Like the veritable Hulk of Marvel fame, they jump across each bookcase gap with a pounce. With his guidance, Peter tells Ethan and Aiden which bookcases may be safer to traverse. But the explosions and the fire- they were just too fast for their bulk. They make it barely 20 yards away from the fountain before the book case they land on gives full way before a jump.

Mid-fall, the twins toss Peter and Malia closer to the fountain. The two land with a thud and pass out on impact, a stone’s throw away from safety of the fountain. The twins land into a spike of wood puncturing their shoulder HARD, with some explosions barely 2 feet below them. A mix of a roar and grunt erupts from their lips when they felt the sharp lumber pass muscle and hit bone.
Feeling their bent scaffolding descend slowly into the flames, the twins push themselves off of the broken board they are on and Hulk jump closer to the fountain one last time. After landing, they immediately separate to one-handedly grab with Peter and Malia and drag them into the source of aquatic protection that could save them. Getting into the water, the twins still clutch their shoulder before downing the largest gulp of air possible and pushing themselves as deep underwater as possible in the shallow fountain. Without a second to spare, they see 15 seconds of conflagration boiling the surface of the water they used as shelter. As the last flares die out, Ethan and Aiden drag Peter and Malia out of fountain and splash water onto the steaming surroundings. They check for obstructions for breathing, and a heartbeat from the two, before finally having fatigue catch up to them. The four collapse by the edge of the fountain, tending to the injured shoulder they both received.

“THAT- that was the closest we ever got to the barbecue, big bro,” Ethan points out in between gulps of air.

Aiden is shaking his head bad as looks more to his surroundings. “We’re not out of the fire yet, lil bro,” Aiden points out.

Embers from the fire are dying around them, yes. Peter and Malia are out of commission and alive, true. But, with no more shelves and fire to hide behind, two scores of the predatory creatures are circling into their location.

“What the???,” Ethan exclaimed. He tries to stand, only to wince and slide back down onto his rump. “How the hell are those things still alive?”

“I don’t know, but we’re like sitting ducks out here with those snakeheads coming back,” Aiden grudges. He tears of his shirt and creates a shoulder for his shoulder.

“Snakeheads?,” Ethan asks confused. He pulls Malia and Peter next to each other on their side, making sure they won’t choke if anything decides to happen. He then copies what his brother did and bandages his own shoulder. “That’s probably not what they’re called. Probably some Greek or Norse name we can’t pronounce.”


“Yeah, we don’t have any more books or weapons to fight with,” Ethan points out after tying his knot. “What do we do now?”

Aiden’s back straightens up immediately. “Wait, what did you just say?”

“That we don’t have any more books to throw at them? No weapons?,” Ethan repeats. “What do we do now? Which part gave you an idea?”

Aiden’s brow furrows as he gets the worst idea of all time. He looks to Peter. Even unconscious, he had the little smirk that edged him to do what needed to be done.

“I guess Peter is rubbing off on me,” Aiden admits.
“What?,” Ethan replies confused.

“If we’re out of weapons, we just get one to come to us,” Aiden explains. He looks to Ethan and whispers a quick apology before howling at the top of his lungs-

“EXCALIBURRRRR!!!”

NEAR STILINSKI’S GROUP.

Stiles was keeping a keen eye for the metallic predator behind them. The magic sword was catching up to them- inch by inch, the wolves were losing steam from fatigue. The two weave in and around bookcases hoping to lose the sword, but Excalibur is just smashing through the wooden shelves at its speed. Not to mention, Derek and Isaac still have to keep an eye out for tripwires and traps to duck through and jump over. Time was running out quick.

“Stop!,” Stiles screams out of nowhere, from behind Derek’s ear.

“Why?,” Derek replies in his huffs, not slowing down one iota.

“The sword just went another direction!,” Stiles explains. “This is bad!”

The actual notion causes Derek to almost trip into a full stop. He turns around to see for his own eyes. His chest is rising in and out for his own breath. “It’s gone,” he says in disbelief. "It’s really gone."

“Wait, why is it bad that it stopped chasing us?,” Isaac asks, from a hunched position. Trying to keep a running pace with an Alpha is near heart-stoppingly tiring.

“I don’t know,” Stiles answers. “It’s not bound to be a good thing though.”

“From experience,” Derek tries to answer. “Predators stop a chase on two reasons. Either it found an easier prey, or it entered the territory of a bigger more dangerous predator.”

“Well, which one is it?,” Isaac asks. “What do we do?

“Try to follow it, I guess,” Stiles answers. “I don’t want to know what might scare that sword. But it could also be after our pack. It went that way. Go on, my wolfy steed. Hip hip!”

Before the two wolves could start a jog or before Derek could smack Stiles for that insult, Derek and Isaac cower and cover their ears immediately. They crumple to the ground in what seemed to be pain as their eyes blaze red and gold.

“What happened?,” Stiles asks to encumbered ears. He doesn’t hear anything remotely painful in the area. Derek and Isaac have tears in their eyes from the pain.

“I think- I think that sword just broke the sound barrier and caused a sonic boom and broke a lot of stuff in its wake,” Derek tries to explain in a volume higher than normal. His right ear had a small dribble of blood trickling out. With his more sensitive hearing, Derek had to take a bigger flush of pain.

Derek and Isaac try to stand, only to tip over on to their arms. For both of them, the room was spinning miles a second. Isaac is turning a shade of green, while Derek’s paling forehead is sweating profusely. Soon, the two wolves were dry-retching onto the library floor.
“Damn,” Stiles curses. “Your ears help with balance. Whatever damaged your ears also wrecked your internal balance. You’re gonna be feeling extreme vertigo while this heals. Not that you two can probably hear me very well right now. This is really bad then. I should stop talking.”

Stiles gestures to the two and offers his shoulders to his friends as they hobble in the direction of the sword.
“Come on. My turn to lug you two for a bit,” he mumbles to literal deaf ears.

AND BY LYDIA’S GROUP...

Jackson heard a crackle or two from Stilinski but didn’t get a reply. He was an aisle or two behind pretending to tie his laces. He looks to his friends ahead of him, a worried expression smack dab in the center of his face. There was something he should have remembered to do, but he couldn’t put his finger on it. Something about the walkie-talkie and safety. He cursed at himself for not being able to remember, and not being able to help Danny.

The blonde teen shrugs and pockets the radio before catching up to his friends. Scott, Lydia, and Allison were inching around the next corner when Lydia grasps Allison’s arm HARD. Her eyes widen as she orders the group, “DUCK!!”

The teens hug the concrete as the shelves around them soon shatter into splinters. A few got to see a metal glint in the gale of shattered cedar and oak sweeping past them. Not a second sooner most, no, all of their group grasp at their ears as they scream in pain as a loud pop enveloped them.

As quickly as it started, the wind settles, and a ringing settles in all their ears. The tinnitus was as deafening as well, whatever happened to them.

“What was that?,” Scott tries to scream to the group.

“I don’t know,” Danny replies in kind, past their encumbered hearing.

Beside them, Lydia picks herself up in a rush. Wooden schrapnel were trapped in the locks of her auburn hair. Her eyes laid wide as she tried to process what happened. Following a gut instinct, she tries to tell and gesture to the group to run after whatever whipped by. Highly confused, the group of teens stand up as told, and raced in the direction of the rubble. Behind them, the walkie talkie that fell out Jackson’s pocket lay cracked on the library floor. The battery indicator soon had its green light snuffed out by time.

BACK TO ETHAN AND AIDEN...

The reptilian creatures are hissing and snapping at the twins and their unconscious comrades. They are practically within arm’s reach. It would take just one snakehead to gather the courage to strike and it would soon be a losing battle of 2 against over three dozen. Ethan is scolding his older brother under his breath.

“Why did you scream that, Aiden?,” Ethan spits out. “What did you think was gonna happen?”

“Something. Anything,” he answers. “It doesn’t matter anyway. Just get ready to swipe at the first one you can rea-” Aiden freezes, noticing a glint from afar.

From a far far distance, this shining pin of light seemed to grow larger and larger from behind the
nearest snakehead. And as it was to snap its first bite, the magical blade Excalibur whizzes by and
decapitates the attacker. A huge gust of splinters and tattered paper cascades in with a loud roar,
blowing back everything not nailed to a wall or the floor.

Aiden gets his breath punched out of his chest as he is blown into a nearby column. Ethan gets rolled
into a pile with Malia and Peter as small pieces of debris slap him lightly on his back. The nearby
embers pittle and pop, before resting a calm flame from the fresh air and fuel. And as soon as it
arrived with its entourage of debris, Excalibur soon starts swinging madly at anything awake and
drawing breath.

Ethan was the first to pick up his gaze. “DUCK!,” he shouts, warning his brother. Aiden noticing the
blade, does as he was told and Excalibur swings into the concrete column behind him. Ethan tries to
push himself up from his heap nearby but his good arm is the one trapped under his packmates.

For just a second, Excalibur gets stuck in the rocky edifice right above Aiden’s head. It is at this
point that the older teen takes his chance, muttering under his breath, “here goes nothing.”

The wounded Alpha grabs the handle above him with his better arm and clutches it tight. The wind
that died barely moments ago starts to pick up once more. Wisps of energy in the air start to prickle,
crackle, and dance, circling Aiden and the magical blade. If you can stare closely at his arm, small
sparks start to ride up to his neck. The energy crackles to his eyes as they shine their mighty Alpha
red. The teen grunts and groans, trying to maintain his grip. A faint magical heartbeat could be heard
in the clearing, as the snakeheads nearby start to rouse from their prone stance and stalk in on their
prey.

With a ba-bum and a huff, Aiden deftly pulls the blade from the column. In his eyes, a different glint
grows. The red of his iris fades to brown then to silver grey then a sea of white. The wind creates a
vortex around the battered shirtless teen with his blade. And in his throat, a moan grows and grows
and grows into a firm battle cry.

As the wind grows to a steady gale, Ethan finallys pulls himself out from under his friends, only to
see what was happening to his brother. “...Aiden?,” he tries to scream between the gusts that have
become so very deafeningly loud. “AIDEN??”

Ethan’s cries fall to deaf ears, as Aiden’s cries reach its peak. As quickly as it started, the winds die
and the shreds of paper float gently down. The last of the prone snakeheads nearby start ambling in
towards their prey.

Aiden’s form is standing there, breathing evident from a distance. His face maintains a blank
groaning expression and eerie moan. He turns his neck slightly and sees the nearest flock of
snakeheads. With a flourish of Excalibur in his hand, Aiden leans into a rush towards the reptiles.
The teen ran with a speed comparable to the fastest sprinters of their group. With no hesitation, he
swings down and around cutting flesh and limb from the enemies that he encountered. Aiden was
circling around and away from his brother, mowing every single creature that dared to be near his
pack.

The wild snakeheads would snap at their attackers, only to be parried by magical steel. In his gaze,
Aiden held no malice- only precise measurement of distance and force.

In shock, Ethan could only watch from his garrison. His brother was fighting faster and with more
skill than was possible. It was as if Excalibur had taken his body as his own. And as soon as the
thought crossed his mind, he noticed his brother’s uncovered skin was changing. Underneath the
splashes of blood the snakeheads spill, the sheen his tan skin had was fading. His ripped jeans were paling past acid wash. As less and less of their enemies remain, Ethan saw his brother’s motion become less graceful and poised. Instead of sweat, steam was leaving his form.

After a strong headbutt from one of the snakeheads, a cloud of dust blew into the air. It was at this moment that Ethan knew something was definitely wrong. “AIDEN!,” he screamed, pulling his legs from underneath Peter and Malia.

When there was less than a dozen snakeheads left, Aiden’s run slowed to a sturdy walking pace. His skin was matte white, maybe grey in some patches. Ethan saw how the deep breaths kept fighting in his chest. It took Ethan a while to finally shake himself out. “AIDEN, STOP!”

Ethan has to run several yards away to reach his brother. He stumbles as he tries to stand up. There were 3 snakeheads left, all within his brother’s arm’s length. “AIDEN! You have to- you have to STOP! *cough cough*,” Ethan was begging to deaf ears.

A creak and a thud was heard in each of Aiden’s steps. The snakeheads were foolishly biting at hard rock. Aiden’s chiseled abs and arms were gnawed to no success. The hardening teen grabbed the nearest reptile by its skull with his once encumbered arm and crushed the monster’s skull with all his might. Viscera dribbled down the appendage. Ethan was still nowhere near to stop him. The younger teen had just then been able to stand upright.

Aiden pushed the second to last snakehead to the ground and stomped his craggy foot through its chest. His stomp squelched through flesh and bone to the concrete below.

Ethan started running, all the while begging, reaching out for the last snakehead to survive. “No no nonononononono…,” he just pleads to no one. It couldn’t be hopeless. It shouldn’t be hopeless. It’s his brother. Both of them were supposed to be together. Until the end. Not like this. Not after they finally found something real and pure and true. It just- His legs need to move faster. Why couldn’t he be faster?

Aiden’s empty face, with no recollection of his surroundings, stares at the last creature gnawing at his shoulder. He pinches at the creature’s jaw to force a release and lifts the snakehead above his own. Aiden opens his jaw and a louder long held moan leaves his throat. With a pull of his left arm down and a thrust up with Excalibur in his right, he pierces the last snakehead through the chest above him.

Aiden stares at the tip of the sword, raised in triumph as the last of his enemies has died. He closes his marble eyelids because his battle is now over. His moan ends triumphantly. He has won. Ethan arrives to his side.

“...Aiden?” Ethan starts grabbing his brother’s chest. Feeling around for anything soft, anything moving, anything that can maybe- something that could just- He reaches out for his brother’s grip on Excalibur. Sadly, the sword was stuck in the stone grip unmoving.

Knowing this could be it, Ethan flinches back. If his brother was- No, he doesn’t want to think about it. He shouldn’t damage the stone, but what can he do? Dragging one small step back, he hears the scratch of plastic against concrete.

Looking down, Ethan finds the walkie-talkie covered in some soot. He snatches it quick, and with a
deep breath he pleads:

“Stiles?? STILES??
PLEASE! There’s gotta be SOMETHING you can do!”

Chapter End Notes

A/N: Next chapter, the last chapter, is the conclusion/epilogue. Should be no action. Tying up loose ends, and foreshadowing for the next “book” which will be a new whole fic.

This was undeniably the hardest two chapters to write. I’ve had to write both concurrently. This one finished first, so I just posted it. I had to go back and forth through all 31 chapters to make sure details are cleaned up.

Give me time on the conclusion/epilogue. Stay tuned. I hope you enjoyed the penultimate chapter of my work.

Thank you to all the readers, the kudos-ers, and the commenters. Thank you.

...and I’m sorry Aiden.
We are here, saying goodbye to one fated character. And the teens of Beacon Hills will try to pick up the pieces one last time. And after leaving the archives, it seems one member of the group decides to leave Beacon Hills permanently.

We will see you again, possibly, in a book two. In the meantime… what now?

Chapter Notes

A/N: Sorry for the delay. It’s finally here. Wow.

The closing chapter with epilogue- closing this book, and putting a spin for what book 2 might look like, if i ever get to start writing that.

Thank you for getting this far. I had my map of the UK wide open, making sure things are geographically accurate at the very least.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

LATE AT NIGHT, SOMEWHERE IN THE US

A loud thrum of a motorcycle drowns the crickets or cicadas singing in the night. The wind was warm, and not what the rider expected. Or maybe, he’s just numb from the vibrations of the engine between his legs.

It’s been hours-

he will need to stop for gas soon.

“And maybe get some food in you, you idiot,” a voice reminds him. The biker just shakes away the memory and pulls the throttle harder. He’s gotta go faster, and more importantly further, away from the memory of it all…

DAYS AGO, SOMEWHERE IN THE UK

Lydia and her team follow the trail of debris to a charred and bloody clearing. As their sprint slows to a trot, they spot Ethan limply dragging an unconscious Peter closer to Malia and a statue that looks vaguely familiar. Stick carcasses of reptilian creatures were strewn all around. They slowly approach Ethan and notice the blank stare in his face.

“Hey, buddy.” Scott inches slowly in, grabbing Peter’s other shoulder. “Let me help you right-”

Ethan instantly grimaces then snarls, aiming a wide punch to Scott. “Get the FUCK AWAY!! This is
MY PACK! MINE!!!!"

The fives teens jump back to avoid the outburst. “Whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, Ethan-,” Scott continues. “It’s us, buddy... It’s Scott and Jackson and Lydia and-”

“Why the actual FUCK would I care about you assholes when y-y-you couldn’t even help us!!,” Ethan screams. “We were surrounded and there was fire everywhere a-a-and Aiden-,” Ethan points to the statue. “-Aiden, h-h-he he- he had to-”

Lydia takes in this note and gestures to Allison, who catches the hint. The huntress inches her hand slowly to her back pocket and walks slowly towards Jackson. Lydia intends to grab Ethan’s full attention. “Ethan! Ethan! Look at me,” the redhead orders.

Ethan wildly glares at Lydia, and offers her a snarl. “What? What do you want??”

“What did Aiden have to do, Ethan?,” Lydia asks.

“Yeah, buddy, what did-,” Scott tries. This earns him a roar from Ethan. The agitated twin had his claws out ready to swipe.

“Scott!,” Danny points. “Ix-nay on the buddy already.” Allison finally gets to Jackson’s side and grabs his hand tight. The teen took a second to get the message.

“Look at me, Ethan. Only me,” Lydia orders. A smallest, faintest quiver was in her voice- almost intangible.

“Just me, Ethan.”

“Y-you?,” Ethan replies. “Why do I-”

“Yes, just look at me, Ethan.” Lydia opens up her palms to show she is empty-handed. “See- I can’t harm you. I just want to help.” Jackson and Allison circle behind Ethan slowly, while Danny and Scott stay near Lydia in case anything happens.

“You can tell me, Ethan,” Lydia coerces. “I’m here to help.”

“Help?” Ethan sounded a little out of it. The wild energy in his eyes was starting to dissipate. “You- here? to-”

“Yeah, you can tell me,” Lydia offers. “What did Aiden do to that statue?”

Ethan snaps out of the stupor at that one question. “H-he he didn’t do ANYTHING TO THE STATUE!,” Ethan snarls. His breath is becoming ragged once again. His eyes were starting to run red. “Because NONE of you helped, HE IS STUCK-”

It was at this moment that Stiles, Derek, and Isaac come rushing in. “WHAT IS GOING ON??,” Stiles screams at the group surrounding Ethan.

At this very outburst, Allison thwips a crossbow dart to Ethan’s neck, and Jackson rushes in for some more nicks of his own. Ethan slumps forward, noticing the loss of feeling in his limbs. Jackson catches Ethan by his chest as the immobilized teen starts inconsolably screaming threats at the top of his lungs. “HOW DARE YOU, YOU FUCKING ASSHOLES! I WILL FUCKING KILL ALL OF YOU!!” Growls and snarls gurgles from his mouth, as his eyes well with tears.

“Stiles, put him to sleep,” Lydia ordered him immediately..
“How do I know I’m supposed to trust you?,” Stiles becomes defensive.

“You don’t,” Lydia replies. “But we need to talk, and I’d rather Ethan not scream himself hoarse.”

Stiles grimaces at the thought before running closer to Ethan. “Somnia,” he whispers, sprinkling sand in Ethan’s face.

“Now,” Stiles stands up. “What’s going on?”

“We got here barely a few minutes before you did,” Lydia answers. “Ethan was dragging Peter and Malia closer to this statue, and he was clearly out of it.”

“We started trying to help, but he wouldn’t let us,” Scott explains. He walks over to Peter and Malia to start checking their vitals. Allison is clearing the area for the 3 to have a space to lie down clearly. Jackson and Danny lays Ethan carefully on his side, and checks for any major injuries.

“Ethan kept lashing out when Scott called him buddy, or when we said we were trying to help,” Danny points out. “He said something about his pack and that they were surrounded.”

“Ethan was blaming us for something,” Lydia concludes. “Something about what Aiden and this statue.”

“Well, what did Aiden do to the statue?,” Scott asks.

Isaac gasps in realization from behind the group. “Aiden didn’t do anything to the statue.” The blonde teen walks closer as he recognizes the sword in the statue’s hand. “Aiden IS the statue.” He looks to the group and puts everything together to a close. “This is the final story of the Arthurian Archives. The sword in the stone, with Aiden as the co-star.”

“No.” Lydia’s eyes widen. Her hand covers her mouth as she recognizes that brow and those cheeks that used to hold a smile.

Derek catches Stiles as he falls to his knees. The hooded teen’s back tattoo glows immensely, before he starts screaming reaching for his back. A trickle of blood starts running down his behind, as the emotions become too much for the spell.

Danny and Scott pale, while Allison and Jackson clench their jaws in response. Isaac has a lot look in his eyes. They were supposed to be prepared for anything and everything. But this- this was too real.

Stiles scrambles to remember the facts. “Lydia screamed. We heard the scream, so it had to happen, right? I-i-it had to happen that someone died, right?” He was murmuring under his breath. His eyes were starting to glisten yellow. His murmurs become louder and incomprehensible as various emotions fill his face. Stiles starts to shake and convulse in Derek’s hands.

“Stiles? STILES?,” Derek reacts. The teens was shaking stronger, far too strong for Derek to handle. “Lydia! What’s wrong with STILES??”

Lydia was a deer in headlights, seconds before the crash. The usually composed teen started to stutter. “I-I-I don’t know! Why would I know? I r-really don’t- I’m not that smart to know e-
everything! I- I just-” The redhead falls to her knees and cries out loud. She was starting to drown in her own tears.

“What do we do? What do we do?,” Scott starts to panic.

Isaac darts to Jackson’s hands. “You might have to nick Stiles too, Jackson.”

“There’s no need for that.”

Stiles stills in that moment. The silence gets everyone to focus on the wiry teen. Stiles pushes himself gently off of Derek’s arms, his eyes aglow in yellow, a different yellow than the ones they’ve seen before. A dark smirk is stuck on his cheek. “As you can see, we are just fine over here. For now at least.”

“Stiles?,” Scott asks.

“It’s not him,” Derek points out almost immediately, standing up and stepping back. His hackles start to rise as he inches closer to the others and away from that- that thing.

“Oh, but it is me, Derek,” Stiles answers. “Mieczysław Stilinski, in the flesh.” The teen stands to take a bow from the group. “Oh, but this is much more fun when everyone is up and accounted for.”

With a few flourishes of his hand, Peter, Malia, and Ethan gasp and sit up. The bruises and cuts on everyone’s arms are healing before their eyes. Stiles points a glowing hand to a nearby creature’s corpse. From its remains, a white and red flower blooms. And with a beckoning motion, a whisper, and a snap, Erica, Matt and Boyd pop up before them.

“What the hell?,” Erica exclaims.

“MATT! ERICA! BOYD!,” Isaac calls to them. “How did you-”

“Sssshhhhhhhhh,” Stiles quiets the teens with a dark glare from his eyes. “Let me finish my little fun.” He claps his hands firmly and starts rubbing back and forth as if to start a flame. Boyd and Matt start screaming loudly as Boyd’s hand and Matt’s eyes start to heal quickly and ever so painfully. And as soon as it has finished, the two were slumped out of breath, leaning against Erica. Scott and Isaac run to the two to take away some pain.

“Well, that was fun, wasn’t it?” Stiles to laugh, loudly, uncontrollably in a fit for moments. No one else seemed to be amused.

As the teen’s laughter ends, he wipes a tear in his eyes and noticing the air in the room. “WHAT?,,” he said darkly. “Wasn’t that entertaining for you? I healed everyone I could, in no time even.”

“Who are you, and what have you done with Stiles?,” Peter replies as he stands himself up.

“Oh, Peter, et tu?,” Stiles replies with a pout. “I thought you, of all people dead or alive, would appreciate some banter.”

“Banter is typically fun, when I know who or what I am talking to.”

“I TOLD YOU ALL ALREADY!!” Stiles throws a tantrum, stomping in place. “WHY WON’T YOU BELIEVE IT’S ME?? MIECZYSLAW! IT’S ME!!” The room starts to shake immensely.

“For one thing, Stiles hates his first name,” Scott points out. “So you should stop the charade.”
“Scott, I don’t think you should correct something that can shake the entire room,” Jackson points out.

A loud pop erupts in the room, and Stiles appears immensely close to Scott’s face- not even an inch from his nose. The intruder tilts his head to whisper in an ear. “It’s my name, Scott. I choose what I like or dislike.”

“What are you doing here, 11?,” Derek asks, not daring to move.

“What is 11 doing here?,” Ethan asks.
“Where’s our Stiles?,” Scott asks right after, as calmly as possible.

“Your Stiles is out of commission. For now,” 11 answers. “I told him, he needs a little break.”

“A break?,” Peter asks. “Why on earth-”

“Oh my dear Peter, you were unconscious for a while, so let me fill in the gaps. See, that hunk of marble over there is what’s left of Aiden.”

“Aiden?,” Malia asks, confused.


“Don’t talk to her that way!,” Ethan shouts.

“Oh hush.” Stiles flicks his wrist and Ethan was flung into a nearby column, the wind knocked out of him. “The lot of you are really taking the fun out of this, this momentary ride I get to have. I mean, come on Peter. We could be having a magical orgy right now if we wanted, with you, me, Derek, some incubi, and elves- ambrosia and elvish viagra keeping us up for a fortnight, but even you are taking this time of our lives oh so seriously.”

“Just, please- tell us what is going on,” Derek pleads.

“It’s called a distraction, Derek,” 11 replies. The hooded teen eyes one of the group and nods ever so slightly. The other catches and smirks in response before 11 continues his charade.

“I mean, I’m stuck inside here with 14 other whiny losers yap yap yapping non-stop about what this Stiles should do, and who this Stiles should bone. I’m like the freaking genie in Aladdin here- all the power to shape the cosmos, and I’m trapped in a frail body. Going through puberty and drowning in hormones. HORMONES.”

“I don’t remember Robin Williams being so psychopathic,” Erica murmurs.

Eleven cracks into the creepiest smile, nearby mirrors would crack. “Erica, Erica, Erica- there might be hope for you lot yet!

See, this- THIS is why I wanted out, even for two seconds.” Stiles does a little dance, a little jig, breaks out a robot, ending with his head magically going all 360 a la the exorcist on them.

“Your Stiles needs a break and I needed a break. It’s a win-win-win! Now you guys really should head up those stairs and get out of here safely and bring Aiden while you’re at it. Who knows? We might be able to save him still! It’s life or death, people.” 11 emphasizes with a clap. “And of course, we don’t want anybody else dead.” 11 continues laughing under his breath.
After a moment he stops abruptly, and anger forms darkly on his face. “I said- GET GOING!” The room starts to shake some more. “I mean, common sense people. The longer in here, the more likely you will all DIE.

And we can’t have that now, can we?” 11 claps his hands and the viscera and bookshelves in the way of the bookshelves fly to the sides, creating a clear path for all to follow.

“The lot of you should try to cheer up and try to live from time to time. Because, well, this a small warning for everyone-”

Stiles pops next to Peter to cop a feel. He then pops both of them next to Derek to do the same. He says a magic word and the both of the Alphas roll their eyes into the back of their heads and crumble into a heap, a wet spot forming in front of their pants. They pass out almost immediately, a glow and a smile on their face.

“-always-” Stiles licks his hands of the secretions. “-always keep me entertained.” Stiles falls unconscious on the other two, ending the escapade.

It took a second for anyone to speak. “Did Stilinski just make Peter and Derek… uhh..,” Jackson asks gobsmacked.

“I think so,” Danny replied.

“I ain’t touching that. Either of them. Yuck;, Jackson replies.

Boyd huffs, before standing up and lugging the two Alphas over his shoulders. Erica rushes to his side. “Are you okay enough to do that?,” she asks. Boyd just nods in response.

“Everyone else carry Ethan, Aiden and Stiles out carefully,” Boyd declares. “Scott is explaining what happened to the sheriff if he asks about all this.”

“Why me?” Scott asks.

“Cause you caused the most issues,” Danny replies as walks over to Allison who is consoling a weeping Lydia.

As the group exited the staircase, they are met by a familiar popular site: Stonehenge. As the last member left the staircase, the stone slab slowly descends behind the group closing the path tight never to be seen again. It was almost dawn, as can be seen by the glimmer of the sun far in the horizon.

With the shaking of the earth and the loud thud of the slab behind them, two rangers of the area show up in their trucks to check the historic site before the teens could get their bearings. The two security officers were obviously worried and surprised to catch the group of teens in their torn and burnt clothes, carrying 3 unconscious bodies and a large marble statue with sword in tow.

Allison and Erica rush to meet the security, attempting to sweet talk and bribe their way out of the issue to no avail. To their surprise, a lady walks out from nowhere and says clearly to the gentlemen, “There is nothing to see here.”

The security reply in tandem, “There is nothing to see here.”
“You came here on foot.”
“*We came here on foot.*”

“You will investigate away from here for 10 more minutes.”
“*We will investigate for away from here 10 more minutes.*”

The two security guards then start searching the area, flashlights in hand, with their keys left in the ignition.

Erica takes a while to recognize their hero. “Miss Nakamura?”

“Child, what are you doing here?,” she replied a bit surprised.

“It’s a long story,” Erica concedes.

“Well then, I suggest your friends take the trucks and meet my family southwest of here, at the aptly named Druid’s Lodge Polo Club.”

The teens, all too tired to question, take to the trucks immediately. Once everyone is strapped in, Isaac finally notices something they are all going to regret. “Did she just Jedi mind trick the security guards? Oh Stiles is gonna be pissed he missed that one.”

BACK IN THE PRESENT, SOMEWHERE IN THE US

The biker had stopped at some mom and pop diner along the highway. He conceded to some breakfast- coffee, eggs, and toast like his dad used to make before everything turned to shit. He pulled out his phone, his GPS turned off, with multiple missed calls and texts from the group.

He remembers earlier in his trip Danny actually forced him into a video call. “I know you know I can force the GPS to turn on on your phone. And I can tell everyone where you are, and they’ll come straight rushing to you in a heartbeat. But I won’t, cause I see you need this. So- I’ll let you go.

But you gotta tell him. Before it gets too long, you gotta tell him.”

“...I can’t. Not now.”

“Then soon, okay? I’m gonna let you go, but promise me something. If anything life-threatening happens, press the power button 3 times. I programmed the phone to call Stiles and he’ll pop over there immediately, for emergencies. So please, be careful.”

“Thanks,” the biker replies.

As that video call ended, Stiles popped up anyway, handing him a card. “The PIN is your birthday. I know it’s easy to crack, but I figured identity theft is the last thing you’ll have to worry about. That bank account’s fully stocked, and no one else will know about this except me and Danny. So rest up where needed, and withdraw as much cash as necessary. Please- be safe.”

Stiles gestures for a hug but the biker steps back in a wince. “-sorry. I guess you’re not ready at the moment.”

The biker shakes himself from the memory, plopping a 20 on the counter and telling the waitress to keep the change. He rides to the gas station nearby, and fills up the tank. The sun is coming up like
that day in the UK and he just tries to shake away the other memories. He has to get away from Beacon Hills, to get the one thing he needs to save his friends, and maybe save the one person he loves.

As he drives away, Stiles watches back from a nearby rooftop, still on a call from Danny. “He’s still safe, right?,” the techie teen asks.

“Yeah.”

“How long do you think he’ll need?”

“I don’t know. But we have a job to do, and he has his own quest to finish,” Stiles answers.

“A world to save, and finals coming up in 2 months.”

“Don’t remind me.”

“You know, you could just tell all of us what’s on the final. And guarantee a pass for everyone.”

Stiles chuckles. “Then none of you will actually learn and school will be pointless.”

“I figured you’d say no. Just had to ask.”

Stiles doesn’t respond. He just stares off at his friend riding into the horizon.

Danny finally chimes in. “He really was the last person I’d expect to run off like this.”

“Yeah, I’d’ve expected Derek, or Peter, or Ethan to drive off on a mission. Maybe Jackson with his issues. Heck Scott has his own bike to do so.”

“But Isaac- he had to go, didn’t he?,” Danny asks. “And poor Matt, blaming himself for everything.”

“It’s not his fault,” Stiles explain. “It’s no one’s fault but mine. It’s the curse of the Arthurian Archives- someone alive has to go on a quest.

And that someone- becomes the new King Arthur.”

Stiles ends the call and pops back to Beacon Hills, leaving Danny alone by his computer. The techie teen closes his laptop and starts chuckling to himself. “That’s not all Mieczysław. You with your plans to take from the archives, left us guardians with a little payback to give.

And with this nice little magical vessel, so integral to your group and ripe for the taking- we will ensure you will NEVER take from the archives ever again!”

Flashback to the last challenge in the archives Danny was in, where he was shocked. A dark sliver of electricity entered his skin and embedded into his soul. As he ran into the library, he somehow knew where to go and what to do- as if a voice was guiding him along the way. When his burn hurt, he felt a power start to grow inside of him. And when 11 gave him a smirk, the roots of the library finally took hold completely, and irreparably. This is it- this is his purpose. And Stilinski- he will never see it coming.

Danny Mahealani, alone in a little makeshift lair that no one else knew about, starts laughing maniacally as his schemes are starting to come in play. By another monitor, he sees poor Isaac
driving lonely on a road, when green lightning strikes nearby. A rider in a deathly looking horse rides beside him matching his speed. With a loud crack of a whip, Isaac and his motorcycle is gone. All that is left is a cell phone, power button pressed three times, calling Stiles Stilinski.

Chapter End Notes

A/N: How’s that for a cliffhanger ending?

Thank you for staying with me through book one. Hopefully you like the glimpse of the bad guy(s) happening in book two.

What do you think of the nice wrap-ups? and the not so nice ones? I would love to hear your feedback. I had fun tying up loose ends. I sincerely, truly, madly, deeply hope you enjoyed this work. Thank you.

Please [drop by the archive and comment](#) to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!