Iron Claws and Fragile Hearts

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Friend or foe? Packmate or werewolf? Safety and security or excitement and danger?...Good or evil?

Unfortunately, not all choices are black and white, and sometimes heroes and monsters lurk where they don't belong.

As supernatural forces loom large and threaten to destroy his pack, Isaac has a choice to make: Stiles or Ethan?

Plot-heavy, slow burn Isaac/Ethan & Isaac/Stiles love triangle set against a backdrop of supernatural danger and suspense. Set after 3A and diverges completely.

Ch 62: Race Ya

“Take me upstairs and fuck me,” Stiles said as he broke the kiss and bounced in Isaac’s arms. “My ass isn’t sore anymore.”

“So you want it to be again?” Isaac asked with a ragged laugh.

Stiles nodded – fucking nodded. “You wouldn’t believe how many times I jerked off yesterday because I could feel what you had done to me, how many times I played with my hole because it was still wet with your cum.”

“We don’t have much time,” Isaac said as he turned and raced up the stairs with Stiles in his arms.

“I’ll fucking race you to see who can get off first once you’re inside me.”
Isaac moaned into Allison's mouth as he cupped one of her breasts and reached back with his other hand to unclasp her bra.

She allowed the garment to be opened, but as he pulled it away and broke the kiss to eye her bare chest, she raised her palm, stopping him.

"Wait." Her voice was breathy and her face flushed.

"We can slow down," Isaac answered, willing his blazing yellow wolf eyes back to their cool blue human color.

The couple had already gone much further than this during their brief time together, but Isaac was more than fine with pumping the brakes if that's what Allison needed. She'd been having a rough time since they had defeated Deucalion and the alpha pack and she had come back from the dead along with Scott and Stiles. Part of Isaac wondered if that's why their slow-burn, burgeoning romance had ignited almost over night into an inferno – an inferno of lips, and breasts, and hands, and flesh, and warm supple things Isaac had only fantasized about until three weeks earlier. Part of Isaac wondered if he was little more than a distraction to her, a way to escape the troubled thoughts and waking nightmares she wouldn't share with him but was obviously having with increasing frequency. Part of Isaac wanted to be more than a distraction, wanted to be a true partner with whom she could share her burden...but those thoughts were but a small part of Isaac, and a much larger, practically raging part simply wanted to go back to kissing and groping and to whatever blissful destination that would lead.

Still, if Allison wanted to slow down or stop, Isaac wouldn’t let on that he was disappointed. Besides, they were in the school library and maybe that wasn’t the ideal place for passionate groping and raging lust.

"We need to talk." Allison’s face was face solemn as she re-buttoned her blouse, never breaking eye contact with Isaac.

"Okay," Isaac answered in a soft tone, his hand finding hers on the old oak table.

"I..." She trailed off, finally looking away from Isaac's face and to his fingers, which were entwined with hers. As she studied his hand she used her free one to pick up her discarded bra from her lap. She stuffed it into her purse, idly twisting the elastic strap around her fingers as she chewed her bottom lip.

"We can talk about whatever you need to." Isaac stroked the back of her hand with his thumb. "I don't know exactly what you're going through of course, but I...I know what it's like to live in a nightmare, to wonder if you're awake or--"

"I don't want to talk about that."

"That's okay too," he assured her, squeezing her hand gently.

"No." She huffed and pulled herself free.
“Allison, I–”

“I need to focus on my training.” The anxiety on her face morphed into determination. “I need to focus on becoming the leader my family needs. No distractions.”

“I can help. I'll train with you. We can–”

“Isaac,” she said sharply, her face hard, “we need to break up.”

Isaac gaped at her, a pit forming in his stomach as he tried to make sense of what she was saying.

They hadn't even technically defined their relationship, and only moments ago they had been racing toward what had all the markings of after-school library sex. Now suddenly they were breaking up, just like that? No fight, no discussion, just...over? Isaac shook his head, trying to understand what was happening, what he had done wrong.

Allison's face softened as she stood and placed a gentle hand on his shoulder. “I shouldn't have...I guess I was using you and...and I...” She released him and hurriedly crammed her things into her book bag, her face crimson. “I just have a lot I need to think about right now. I'm sorry.”

And with that she turned and walked quickly out of the room.

Isaac listened to her footsteps click briskly down the hallway toward the main doors. He willed her to stop, to turn around and tell him she'd made a mistake, to offer him another chance. A moment later, one of the school's double doors clanged shut behind her, the metallic thud reverberating down the empty corridor with a finality that almost choked Isaac. What had he done wrong? How had he messed up his first and only relationship?

He fought the urge to get up and race after her, to catch her in the parking lot and plead with her to take him back. He remind himself that he wasn't the gangly thirteen-year-old locked in his father's freezer, desperate for any approval or kindness. He was a werewolf. He had a pack. He had strength and confidence. He had claws...claws that were digging into the scarred wooden table. He had...

He gulped and choked back a sob.

He had a splintered pack. He had an alpha who looked through him more than he looked at him. He had almost failing grades, no money to his name, no family, and a crippling paranoia that he was one wrong move away from pissing off Scott or Melissa and ending up homeless...again. And now, somehow, without even knowing how, he had fucked up the only stable thing he'd had in his life.

He allowed himself a few minutes to wallow, to feel the edges folding in on him as his father, as Derek, as Coach Finstock, as Allison...as a hundred other disappointed voices shouted at him.

Then he growled. He hurled the library table across the room and threw his backpack over his shoulder so hard it would have left bruises if he could still bruise. He stalked out of the main school building and across the courtyard to the gym, intent on working out some of his feelings in the weight room.

As he walked into the weight room, he peeled off his shirt and tossed it into a corner. Then he changed out of his pants and into the gym shorts he had in his bag, not bothering to go to the locker room. He deposited the pants on top of his discarded shirt, opting to workout in just his gym shorts and sneakers so that he would have clean clothes to change into when he was done.

He had only completed a couple of reps on the bench press when he heard a voice that had his blood simultaneously running cold in dread and burning with hate.
“– pick me up,” Ethan was saying in clipped tones as he thundered down the hallway toward the weight room.

One set of footsteps. Who is he talking to?

Isaac froze as Ethan stepped into the weight room, his phone pressed to the side of his head and a deep scowl etched across his face.

Cornered. Isaac was cornered in the weight room with his enemy. He stood up quickly but quietly, looking for a way out that he knew didn't exist. Ethan stood in the doorway of the only exit, but he didn't seem to have noticed Isaac yet as he turned and leaned against the door frame.

Isaac didn't have the presence of mind to listen for the voice on the other end of Ethan's phone but a moment later the former alpha spoke. “I broke it.”

This time Isaac did listen as Aiden's voice demanded, “Why the hell did you do that?”

“Danny cheated on me okay?!” Ethan shouted, his voice bubbling with barely contained rage. “I caught him making out with some guy in the basement.”

“Is your bike the only thing you destroyed?” Aiden asked, amusement in his voice.

“I'm not you, Aiden. I don't kill people when they piss me off.”

“Fuck you,” Aiden answered, his tone more offended than Isaac would have expected.

“Sorry,” Ethan muttered reluctantly but apparently sincerely. “Are you coming to pick me up or what?”

“Later. I'm just pulling up to Lydia's. I'll call you when we're done.” He let the implication hang in the air for a moment before continuing. “You can always run home if you get tired waiting.”

“Asshole!” Ethan growled as the line went dead.

“I coulda told you that,” Isaac remarked with his best cocky smirk as Ethan's eyes finally alighted on him.

“Lahey.” Ethan spat Isaac's name between clinched teeth, his eyes already turning blue.

Isaac flashed his own gold ones at his adversary and opened his mouth to return the hostile greeting only to be brought up short as he realized something. “Eh– What is your last name anyway?”

Ethan ignored the question. “What are you doing here?”

“It's a free weight room.” Isaac inwardly snickered at his accidental pun but kept the cocky smirk on his face.

Ethan looked like he was going to argue, but then he eyed Isaac's bare torso and visibly sniffed the air. A smirk mirroring Isaac's settled on his face, and he shrugged before peeling his shirt over his head. “Fine. Whatever.”

Isaac was taken off guard by the sudden change in attitude. He hadn't really wanted to stay, not now that Ethan was here. He had simply wanted to save face before leaving, hopefully without getting into a fight he knew he probably wouldn't have won.

Ethan continued smirking at Isaac as he kicked off his shoes and opened his pants. “No shorts, so I
guess I'll have to work out in just my briefs.”

“Umm.” Isaac fumbled as his eyes involuntarily dropped to the tight, black fabric straining to contain Ethan’s manhood. His underwear looked...soft, and Isaac recognized the designer name. He guessed Ethan had dressed for his date with Danny and for a brief moment Isaac felt something akin to empathy for his usual nemesis. He could relate to date night not quite going as planned.

“Come on, I'll spot you,” Ethan said as he brushed by Isaac and took up position behind the workout bench. Then he added with a wink, “And you can spot me.”

“Seriously?” Isaac asked, ignoring the jarring flirtation and focusing on the larger absurdity of the situation. “You want us to just lift weights like we're workout buddies?”

Ethan sighed, a mess of emotions radiating off him: anger, sadness, confusion, lust, fatigue. All in all, it was a cocktail Isaac was pretty sure he was also emitting.

“Stay, go, whatever.” Ethan waved his hands as he spoke, then folded them over the weight bar and looked at Isaac, somehow managing to look neither hopeful nor hostile, just neutrally expectant as he awaited Isaac's response.

Isaac had a long history of making stupid, self-destructive decisions and allowing people to put him in danger, so he simply shrugged and lay back across the bench, wordlessly resuming his reps.

When Isaac was done with his set, Ethan added forty-five pounds to each side of the bar – showoff! – and switched places with him.

They continued that way in silence for long enough that Isaac lost track of how many sets they’d done. Their torsos glistened with sweat and Ethan's barely-there briefs had long since stopped leaving anything to the imagination. Isaac realized his own shorts, modest by most standards, were likewise now clinging to him in a way that made him self conscious.

“So what happened?” Ethan asked abruptly, sitting up on the bench but making no move to stand.

“Huh?” Isaac asked, Ethan's voice startling him after such prolonged silence.

“You're...sad,” Ethan answered, pointedly not looking at Isaac.

“I'm fine,” Isaac said, wishing he'd used a more hostile tone, wishing he'd told Ethan to mind his own business instead.

“You heard my problems,” Ethan pointed out, giving Isaac another hard-to-read look. “Tell me what happened with Allison.”

Isaac cocked his head to the side in surprise and regarded Ethan with confusion.

“I'm good at reading people. It's kinda my thing,” Ethan said.

“I could be– I mean there are lots of things– It doesn't have to be about Allison.”

“I smell her on you and you're horny, but you're also upset. Easy read,” Ethan said with a shrug.

Isaac felt himself blushing. He wanted to pick a fight with Ethan, or at least grab his stuff and leave, but he was...

“Tired. Yeah me too.” Ethan moved over on the bench and looked at the empty space expectantly.
Isaac sighed and sat down. “We broke up.”

“Yeah. Figured.”

“I don't want to talk about it with you.”

“Uh okay,” Ethan answered, his neutral tone suddenly sarcastic. “I don't want to talk about Danny with you.”

The sour scent of hurt roiling off Ethan intensified, and Isaac inexplicably felt like apologizing. He had messed up again, like he always did. And it didn't matter this time. He hated Ethan after all – screw his feelings – but the fact that he had accidentally offended him reminded Isaac what a fuck up he was.

“So why are you here at all?” Ethan asked, calm and impassive again.

Isaac opened his mouth but fumbled for an answer. “Why are you here?” He countered, unable to come up with anything better.

Ethan regarded him with annoyance. “I'm stranded, remember? Ruined motorcycle, asshole brother – any of this sounding familiar?”

“Oh. Well...”

“But you have somewhere to go.” Ethan frowned and looked away. “Scott's house. Your pack. Why are you sitting in the school weight room at” – he glanced at the wall clock – “8:29 on a Friday night with someone you don't even like?”

“It's not like I can talk to Scott about this,” Isaac answered, ignoring the new scent wafting from Ethan: envy.

“Because Allison's his ex?”

“Yeah and–” Isaac caught himself just before revealing pack secrets to the enemy. “Yeah and that would be really awkward.”

Ethan gave Isaac a long, appraising look, clearly aware there was something he was hiding. Eventually the moment passed with Ethan apparently deciding not to press him. Isaac's relief was short lived as Ethan abruptly changed the subject.

“So, wanna have rebound sex?”

Isaac gasped and shifted away so fast he fell off the bench.

“On the floor, huh? Okay, works for me.” Ethan stood up, making to join Isaac on the foam-covered weight room floor.

“No, no, no!” Isaac crab-walked backward till he was against the wall.

Ethan's earnest expression gave way to a full grin, and he broke into a long, deep belly laugh, his abs twitching and contracting spasmodically.

“You were joking?!” Isaac demanded, standing up and glaring at Ethan. He was still reeling to make sense of the indecent proposal and to come to terms with the fact that apparently humor was something they were doing now.
Ethan waved his hand dismissively as he shook off the last of the laughter and retook his seat. “I dunno. Yes and no, I guess. I mean I’m absolutely down for it if you are, but I just wanted to get a reaction.” He chuckled some more. “And you didn’t disappoint.”

Isaac shouldn’t have felt pleased. Ethan was laughing at his expense, and it’s not like Ethan’s opinion mattered anyway. But...well, Isaac still liked hearing that he wasn’t a disappointment. He reluctantly reclaimed his seat on the bench. “Not cool.”

“Aww come on, lighten up.” Ethan placed his hand on Isaac’s shoulder. Isaac flashed his eyes and bared his fangs at the unexpected contact, but there was no malice on Ethan’s face. He simply waited patiently, his hand still in place, until Isaac calmed down.

Isaac wasn’t sure if he should apologize for overreacting, pretend it hadn’t happened, or pull away and order Ethan to never touch him again. He was spared the decision as Ethan continued.

“Anyway, I’m pissed at Danny and I’d really like to fuck someone else to get even.” Ethan took his hand off Isaac’s shoulder and smirked at him. “So, seriously, let me know if you’re interested.”

“Why would I be interested?”

Ethan rolled his eyes and waved his hand up and down in front of his lean, rippling torso, finally ending the display with a pointed look at his sizable package.

Isaac laughed nervously. “Yeah, but I’m–”

“Bi,” Ethan finished.

Isaac gaped at him, his stomach tying itself in knots. Ethan certainly wasn't the first person he had expected to come out to.

Ethan laughed again. “Seriously, dude, you're not as mysterious as you like to think. Even if I didn't know, I'd be able to tell by the obvious scent of arousal you've had around me all evening.”

“'I'm not...aroused,” Isaac answered, glancing at his crotch in spite of himself to make sure.

“But you're like this close” –Ethan raised his thumb and forefinger together– “and you have been all night.”

Isaac started to protest but then something Ethan had said derailed him. “Wait, what do you mean even if you didn't know?”

Ethan looked at him incredulously. “I saw your memories. You know, when we captured you last summer. I know.” Ethan's face softened, and he looked almost guilty. “Did you really not know that we knew you were bi?”

Isaac looked at the floor, wishing it would open and swallow him. “I don’t– I’ve never– I don't have bi memories.”

“Well maybe not bi sex memories, but you certainly have plenty of bi jerk off memories.”

“That– That is a terrible invasion of privacy!” He glared at Ethan, his eyes glowing with golden heat.

Ethan’s face sobered. “Yeah, I know. Uhh...sorry?”

“Sorry?”
“Yeah. Um, about that and” –Ethan shifted uncomfortably in his seat and stared past Isaac to a spot on the wall– “Uh...the other stuff.”

“The other stuff?”

Ethan nodded awkwardly, still not looking at Isaac.

“The other stuff,” Isaac repeated, fury welling up inside him as his claws extended, stabbing holes through the fabric of his gym shorts and piercing the skin underneath. “The other stuff. Like killing Erica?” His arms shot out, and he pushed Ethan off the bench in one swift motion. “Like killing Boyd?” He leaped down on top of Ethan, knocking him off his elbows and sending his head crashing back against the ground. “Like torturing me and trying to kill me every chance you got?” He slashed his claws across Ethan's face. “Like trying to kill Scott?” He sunk his claws into Ethan's face and used the grip to slam his head against the ground. “Like trying to kill Stiles?” He rolled back on his heels and clawed Ethan's abs and chest, which admittedly – yes, he had been lusting to lick the entire evening. “Like threatening Melissa?” He punched Ethan in the eye before lusting to lick his feet. “Like trying to destroy my pack and hurt everyone I give a shit about?” He kicked Ethan in the ribs. “You mean that other stuff?”

Ethan coughed up blood as he sat up. “Yeah, that stuff.”

“Well then you're right, Ethan: fuck you.”

He kicked Ethan over again as he stepped past him and picked up his clothes and bag. He left without sparing a backward glance.

Chapter End Notes

Feedback is greatly appreciated.
Isaac winced as the cold night air stung his sweaty, shirtless body. His original plan had been to shower after working out and then put back on his regular clothes, but it wasn’t as though he could just casually climb in the shower after attacking Ethan and leaving him bleeding on the weight room floor. That would have been inviting a reprisal.

He scowled as he scanned the empty parking lot. Ethan had whined about being 'stranded' and hadn’t seemed to even consider running home like Aiden had suggested, yet Isaac was in the exact same predicament. Allison had been his ride. His chest tightened as the loss closed in on him again.

He was distracted from his ruminations as he walked by the old, heavily dented dumpster that the school kept near the back of the lot. There, sitting on a mound of trash, was Ethan’s mangled motorcycle, its handlebars and headlight peeking out from scraps of half-eaten food and discarded homework as though pleading to be given another lease on life. Isaac shook his head and scoffed at the ridiculousness of Ethan throwing it away like an empty takeout carton instead of trying to fix it, sell it, or at least scrap it. Spoiled dickhead.

He was considering hauling it out himself and seeing what could be done with it, when he caught the first hum of Aiden’s bike approaching in the distance.

“Fuck!”

That was all he needed, for Aiden to pull into the parking lot and find him standing around – barely dressed and covered in his brother's blood. Ethan could be coming out at any moment too. Isaac was about to be outnumbered.

Seeing no alternative, he took off at a sprint into the nearby woods, hoping he could get far enough away that Aiden either wouldn't hear him or wouldn't bother chasing him.

He moved as quickly and quietly as he could, his supernatural senses and fast reflexes helping him avoid major tree limbs and keeping him relatively unharmed as he slogged through branches and brambles. Unfortunately after a short while his book bag got hooked on a large limb and he went tumbling into the leaves and underbrush as it tripped him up.

Picking himself up and listening for any sounds of pursuit, he looked around, trying to get a sense of how far he was from Scott's house – still far he realized with frustration. He could continue through the woods for another few miles, or he could risk going down to the road and having an easier, but more exposed journey. The twins would have no reason to be going in this direction, so he didn't think he would run into them if he went down to the road...unless they really were chasing him, in which case he'd rather try to evade them in the woods.

He was still weighing his options as he heard the distinctive rumbling of a familiar Jeep barreling down the street a few hundred yards up the road. He hurriedly wrenched his bag off the tree limb and ran at breakneck speed through the woods toward the sound. It would be a tight squeeze to make it before Stiles passed.

The Jeep's rumble got louder as Isaac bounded over large rocks and darted around tree trunks. From the corner of his eye, he saw the headlights getting closer as he hurdled through the last few meters
of woods. With a final burst of determination, Isaac sprang out of the trees and leaped over the wide
ditch, landing on all fours on the blacktop pavement.

Brakes screeched, a horn wailed, and the scent of burning rubber assaulted Isaac's nostrils as the Jeep
swerved around him, narrowly missing him. The handle of the passenger door practically brushed
Isaac's hair as the vehicle came to rest alongside him in the opposite lane of traffic.

Isaac grabbed the worn metal and hauled himself to his feet. He opened the door and casually
climbed inside. A lazy smile had already formed on his face as he glanced across the seat at Stiles.
"Thanks for picking me up."

Stiles gaped at him. His face was as pale as a sheet, and he still had a white-knuckle grip on the
steering wheel. The thump of his racing heart thundered in Isaac's ears.

"A little more and I would have been scraping you up. Off the road. As I called my dad. To. Send.
The. Coroner – What the hell, Isaac?!"

Isaac shrugged and motioned for Stiles to start driving and get back on his side of the road. They
were stopped on the wrong side of a blind curve after all. "I needed a ride."

"A ri– You needed a–" Stiles let go of the wheel and waved his hands, his jaw opening and closing
spastically. He grabbed his phone off the dashboard. "Phone! I have a phone! Did it ever occur to
you to just call me?"

"Oh I didn't want to bother you," Isaac deadpanned.

Stiles blinked at him in disbelief as he finally took his foot off the brakes and swerved back into his
lane. A moment later his eyes widened and he slowed down again as he looked more closely at
Isaac. "Wait, did I hit you?"

"No, why?" he asked, shaking his head and becoming distracted by the enticing aroma of Mexican
food wafting from the to-go bags in Stiles' backseat.

Stiles waved his hand frantically over Isaac's bloodstained chest and arms.

"Oh, this isn't my blood," Isaac replied, glancing down and examining himself. The entire front of
his body was splattered with blood, dirt, and mud. There were even leaves clinging to his sticky
flesh.

Stiles grimaced, and his pulse sped up as an undercurrent of fear replaced the tang of adrenaline in
his scent.

"It's okay, it's just Ethan's. And I didn't kill him if that's what you're thinking."

Stiles sighed and dropped his hand against the steering wheel with an annoyed thud. "So, you're
what? Just trying to start a war with a couple of homicidal former alphas while Scott's outta
commission? Good thinking, Isaac."

Isaac frowned and crossed his arms, staring petulantly out the window as they continued the trip to
Scott's house. He was angry that Stiles was judging him and even angrier that he had a point.

"I'm getting tired making up excuses for the car detailing people about why my seats are always
soaked with blood. If my dad wasn't the sheriff, I'm pretty sure I'd have been arrested by now."

Isaac grumbled, the only acknowledgment he was willing to make of Stiles' attempt to break the
silence that had formed between them. Silence didn't bother Isaac. He had grown accustomed to it after interminable hours locked in his basement. There was no point yelling if no one ever came for you. That also explained why Stiles never seemed to shut up. Even when people got irritated with him, they still reacted to him, still gave him at least some attention. Hell, even Isaac had grumbled at him.

“Are you hurt?” Stiles asked.

“No,” Isaac muttered.

“You're gonna need a shower,” Stiles observed.

Isaac turned and glared at him. “You think?”

“Mmhmm,” Stiles said with a decisive nod before changing the subject. “You know, I really appreciate you breaking into my Jeep to sit around shirtless and sulk about stuff. I woulda really missed that now that Derek's left town. Thanks for stepping up.”

Isaac huffed out an amused breath. “No problem.”

And just like that Stiles had gotten his way. The silence was broken and he began rambling about school, and homework, and how the Mexican restaurant had been out of the enchiladas Scott liked, and did Isaac think Scott would be in the mood for fajitas instead? Meanwhile, Isaac used one of the towels that Stiles kept in the Jeep for just such an occasion to clean up as best he could without soap or water.

A little while later, they pulled into the McCall driveway and parked. Stiles reached into the back for the bags of food, but they had fallen on the floor when he'd slammed on his brakes. He braced himself with one hand on Isaac's shoulder as he leaned into the backseat, struggling to get his fingers on one of the bags.

“Hold my legs,” Stiles instructed, letting go of Isaac's shoulder and wiggling further into the back.

“I will not,” Isaac answered. “You know you could just get out and go around.”

“Nah, this is easier,” Stiles replied.

Predictably, a moment later he lost his balance and would have landed on his head had Isaac's arm not shot out to brace against the backs of Stiles' thighs.

“Oh hey, this one's yours,” Stiles said, peering into the white paper bag he had finally managed to snag. He passed it backward to Isaac.

“You got me food?” Isaac asked, his stomach flipping slightly from the unexpected gesture...or maybe just from hunger. He and Scott and Stiles often had takeout together on weeknights, but it had always been when he was already home and they were all hanging out. He hadn't expected them to take the initiative unprompted.

“Yeah,” Stiles said with an ill-considered shrug that required Isaac to grab the back of his shirt to stop him from smashing his face against the floor. “We would have just eaten it ourselves if you'd still been out with Allison.”

Isaac flinched at her name. “We broke up.”

“What?!”
This time even werewolf reflexes couldn't save Stiles from face-planting in the backseat. There was a loud crunch as he landed on top of the two remaining bags of food. “Aww man, I think I broke my tacos.”

Isaac laughed in spite of himself and waited for Stiles to climb back over the seat, having finally retrieved the rest of the food.

“So, you want to talk about it?” Stiles asked as they walked up the driveway.

“Not much to say about broken tacos,” Isaac answered, hoping Stiles would take the hint.

“No, I meant...” Stiles trailed off as they made eye contact. “Oh. Yeah, you're right. Who needs tacos anyway? There's like a whole menu full of other choices out there. You can get a burrito! Or an empanada! Or maybe just have some chips and guac before you commit to a whole meal.”

“Are you done?” Isaac asked.

“Yeah, yeah I think so,” Stiles answered as he unlocked the door.

“Wait,” Isaac whispered, stopping Stiles just before he walked in. “How's Scott tonight?”

Stiles shrugged and whispered back, “He was okay when I left.”

Isaac nodded hopefully. He really needed Scott to be okay tonight.

That hope was dashed when they found Scott sitting on the couch staring at the television set...which was off. He gave no indication of being aware that they were in the room. Actually, he gave no indication of being aware that he was in the room.

“Scott, I'm back with the food, and I picked up Isaac on the way,” Stiles said as he walked toward the couch. “Scott? Hey Scott?” Stiles reached for Scott's shoulder, but Isaac grabbed his arm and pulled him away.

“Better let me,” Isaac said, motioning with his eyes toward the shredded couch cushion beside Scott.

Stiles nodded and stepped back.

“Hey Scott? Scott, me and Stiles are here.” Isaac waved a slow hand in front of his alpha’s face. When that didn't work he steeled himself for what he had to do next. “Scott, I'm going to touch you, okay? Don't freak out. It's just me.”

As soon as Isaac's fingers grazed Scott's arm, the other boy jerked away and lashed out at alpha speed with the claws of his opposite hand, swiping with all his considerable might at Isaac's chest.

Isaac had been expecting the reaction and parried backward, defending his torso but sustaining deep cuts across his forearms in the process.

“I-Isaac?” Scott shook out of his trance. “Oh my god, Isaac! I'm so sorry.”

“It's fine. I'm fine.” Isaac refused to wince as he cradled his arms against his body, hoping to keep the blood from dripping on Melissa's carpet. Stiles had already run to the kitchen, probably to get towels.

“It's not. I'm– Agh! Shit, this whole thing is so messed up.” Scott gently took hold of Isaac's arms, easing his pain as black vines snaked around Scott's hands and up his arms.

“You don't have to do that,” Isaac said, only halfheartedly trying to pull away. He didn't mind the
pain all that much, but he did like the attention he was getting from his alpha.

“Sshh, it'll help it heal.” Scott rubbed Isaac's arms reassuringly. “Alpha claws, remember? It might take awhile otherwise.”

By now Stiles had come back with the towels and was carefully wrapping them around Isaac's forearms. Scott stiffened as Isaac repositioned and he noticed the smears of dried blood still marking his skin. He sniffed the air then leaned back to give Isaac a concerned look. “You've been fighting with Ethan.”

Isaac nodded and hung his head. Fighting with the twins was in direct violation of Scott's peace decree, unless of course they started it – but Isaac somehow doubted Scott would accept, 'that asshole tried to apologize to me' as a valid provocation.

“Did he not fight back?” Scott asked, tilting his head and continuing to study Isaac's bare torso. “I don't smell any of your blood except...well except what I'm responsible for.”

The guilt in Scott's voice made Isaac's chest hurt, and he gave in to his urge to nuzzle closer against his alpha in response. Then he remembered he'd been asked a question. “Uh, no he didn't. I guess I took him off guard.”

“Isaac. This is not okay.”

There was such a resolute strength in Scott's voice that Isaac momentarily wasn't sure whether to be pleased or ashamed. Shame won out.

“Look, I know how you feel about the twins, but you can't just–”

“Isaac and Allison broke up tonight,” Stiles interrupted, placing his palm on Isaac's middle back. Isaac glared at him for bringing that up so abruptly but didn't try to pull away from his touch. His warm fingers felt nice against Isaac's chilled skin.

“So let's cut him some slack,” Stiles continued, ignoring Isaac's glare. “You know he has trouble not breaking Ethan's face even at the best of times. It sounds like he was just having a bad night.” Stiles pressed in even closer as he placed his other hand on Scott's back. “I think you're both just having a bad night.”

“I wish it was just a bad night,” Scott remarked, frowning at the bloody towels on Isaac's arms, “but you're right.” He gave Isaac's forearms another gentle squeeze, then let go and wrapped his arms around Isaac's and Stiles' shoulders. “Thanks, Stiles. I'm sorry, Isaac.”

“Uh, yeah...me too,” Isaac mumbled, his cheeks heating with a blush.

The three of them were pressed so closely together in the small space between the couch and the TV that if Isaac hadn't been with pack, his claustrophobia would have kicked in. Even with it being pack, he was uncomfortable. They were basically in group hug territory, and Isaac had no idea how to handle something like this.

“So, uh, let's eat,” Isaac suggested, trying to pull away as casually as he could.

“Yeah, I'm starving.” Stiles let go and went to the table where he'd left the food.

“Hey Scott, did you know Stiles has broken tacos,” Isaac stage whispered as they joined him.
“Wait, what?” Scott’s brows knitted with confusion as he looked between Isaac and Stiles.

Chapter End Notes

Feedback is greatly appreciated.
The Mandatory Dream Sex

Chapter Notes

Was anyone disappointed when Isaac and Ethan didn't hook up in weight room in the first chapter? Here you go.

I originally planned to make this chapter much longer and include more than just the sex, but then I decided to keep this chapter exclusively smutty instead so that readers could easily skip it if smut isn't their thing (or skip to it if smut is their thing). It's also a bit more hardcore than I typically make my sex scenes, so be warned if you don't like reading about rough sex, dominance and submission, or barebacking. That said, the smut is relevant in that it's meant to reveal insight into Isaac's subconscious and psychology, as well as how he views Ethan...it's also just meant to be hot though. Enjoy.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

For the past six months Isaac had been learning how to lucid dream. He had started researching the practice after his father had been killed and his nightmares had begun. He found it ironic that during his years of abuse he had seldom suffered nightmares. He hadn't slept well, not with his frequent injuries and the constant fear that he'd wake up to cold hands striking him or yanking him out of bed, but sleep had always been his refuge, a short respite from the waking nightmare that was his life...until his father died.

Maybe it was because he was finally free of his tormentor and able to begin processing and coping with the trauma he'd suffered. Or perhaps it was the conflicted feelings he had about his father's death, about the man himself – a man who had made Isaac feel completely safe and loved his entire childhood, yet terrified and utterly worthless his entire adolescence. Perhaps it was the fact that the monsters his father had banished from beneath his bed as a child had turned out to be real. Maybe it was because Isaac had become the monster. Regardless, a few short nights after his father's death, sleep had ceased to be Isaac's sanctuary and had taken up the mantle of his new tormentor.

That's when he'd come across an unlikely solution while researching his problem online: lucid dreaming. At first he'd dismissed the practice as unlikely nonsense, but it kept coming up over and over as he searched for an answer, until eventually he decided he had nothing to lose by trying it out...and it had failed completely.

He'd tried it for a few weeks, had zero success, and decided to abandon it altogether. But then something wonderful and unexpected happened: one night before his usual round of nightmares, Isaac had a sex dream about Jackson. That would have been a godsend regardless, but the turning point happened during the dream when Isaac realized that it was a dream (because seriously, like Jackson Fucking Whittemore was going to crawl through his window in the middle of the night, climb into bed with him, and plead for Isaac to fuck him?!). He had known it was a dream, but he'd forced himself not to wake up. That was when he had reached a conclusion (well two technically): if he could realize he was dreaming and decide not to wake up, then he could realize he was dreaming and decide to wake up.

Nowadays, he was good at controlling his dreams and could usually guide them in the direction he
wanted them to go, or at least have the most fun possible with the direction they took on their own. To that end, when he went to sleep that night he went back to where it had all started, to a sex dream featuring someone he hated and wouldn't consider touching in real life, but whom he was more than happy to play with in his slumber. Specifically, Isaac was back in the gym lifting weights with Ethan.

“So, wanna have rebound sex?” Dream Ethan asked.

“Fuck yeah,” Isaac answered, reaching out to palm Ethan's manhood through the soft black fabric of his snug cotton briefs.

“Looks like you know what you want.” Ethan's breath was hot against Isaac's neck as he grazed his fingers across Isaac's chest.

“Oh, I want it bad,” Isaac admitted, rubbing the outline of Ethan's cockhead through his briefs and watching in fascination as it rapidly swelled and pushed back against his hand.

“I'll give it to you,” Ethan whispered, his voice rough and just short of a growl. “I'll own your virgin ass, Isaac. I'm going to make you beg for it. Then I'm going to breed you like a bitch in heat.”

His hands were no longer soft against Isaac's body. They had traveled to Isaac's sides and held him in a vice grip, claws extended against his ribs, pressing just hard enough that he felt every sharp tip without actually being injured.

In response Isaac stroked Ethan roughly through his underwear, pleased when he felt a sticky drop of precum leak from Ethan's slit. He leaned back and grinned at Ethan, all fangs and golden eyes. “Do it, Ethan. Make me your bitch – if you think you can.” He pressed his thumb harshly against Ethan's bloated cockhead, scraping the damp fabric across the glans in a way he knew would feel awesome and agonizing at the same time.

Ethan growled and turned on the bench, straddling it and giving Isaac greater access to his crotch, inviting him to continue his rough handjob if he dared. He dragged his claws down Isaac's sides and across his abs just hard enough to draw blood before the scratches instantly closed.

Isaac gasped and trembled. He grabbed Ethan's bicep with his free hand, relishing the way the muscle strained and bulged beneath Ethan's hot, supple flesh. Then, not to be outdone, Isaac adjusted the grip he had on Ethan's length, squeezing just beyond human strength as he slowly jerked him.

“These have got to go,” Ethan said, voice rumbling as he hooked his claws under the waistband of Isaac's gym shorts. With a quick tug he shredded the front of the garment and yanked at the torn pieces. Isaac complied, rotating his hips and leaning back so that Ethan could remove the ruined shorts.

But Ethan didn't stop there. As Isaac leaned back, he pressed a firm hand against Isaac's chest, kneading his left pec as he pushed him down until Isaac was lying flat across the workout bench. Ethan moved to reposition himself on the bench, but as he did Isaac maintained his hold on Ethan's briefs, tearing them away from his body with a loud rip.

Isaac was disappointed that from his new angle lying across the bench he couldn't see Ethan's now exposed erection. His attention was quickly diverted, however.

“Well, fair is fair,” Ethan said, raising his eyebrows and smirking down at Isaac as he grabbed the front of Isaac's underwear in each hand and tore them in half, leaving both boys fully nude.

“Suck my cock,” Isaac ordered with glowing eyes as he grabbed his erection and slapped it against Ethan's arm.
“Only because I want to,” Ethan answered, crystalline eyes boring back at Isaac. He rubbed Isaac's chest and abs, tweaking his nipples and grazing a sharp thumb against his navel. “God, you're hot. I'm gonna fuck you so hard.”

“Yeah, yeah, but what about my– Ohh my god!” Isaac gasped as Ethan lowered his head and took him fully into his mouth.

Isaac's hands found the top of Ethan's head, fingers briskly massaging his scalp as he pushed down hard, forcing Ethan to deep-throat him, which he did with no difficulty.

“You're really good at that,” Isaac said, chewing his bottom lip and trying to ward off the sudden urge to cum as he thought about all the cocks that must have been in Ethan's mouth before his own for him to be this proficient at the task.

“Ummhmm,” Ethan hummed, the vibrations from the back of his throat tickling Isaac's cockhead and traveling down his shaft like a bolt of electricity.

“Uhnn!” Isaac moaned and thrashed against the bench, holding Ethan's head still as he struggled not to unload.

He was still breathing hard as Ethan slid a couple of fingers into his mouth alongside Isaac's cock. At first the new sensation was almost his undoing, but then Ethan distracted him by removing the fingers from his mouth and sliding them down along Isaac's taint, simultaneously lifting one of Isaac's legs with his other hand.

Isaac took the hint and moved lower on the bench, raising his legs and exposing his hole for Ethan, who wasted no time in plunging one of his slick fingers into Isaac’s tight opening.

“Aaahh,” Isaac gasped, unable to decide if he hated or loved the stinging sensation. Ethan didn't give him much time to adjust before forcing in a second finger, keeping Isaac in the gray area between discomfort and satisfaction, and also succeeding in bringing him down from the edge of his orgasm. Isaac's balls lurched in his sack and his cock throbbed, disappointed they had been denied their release.

Ethan continued fingering him and lightly sucking his cock for a few minutes before disengaging and standing up. “You might want to get my dick wet.”

Isaac nodded, open-mouthed and transfixed by Ethan's long, thick, veiny cock. He would have wanted that in his mouth even if it hadn't been about to go in his ass. It jutted majestically from Ethan's dark-auburn, close-cropped thatch. The tip glistened in the light, a dollop of precum coating Ethan's deep, flared slit. Isaac couldn't resist stroking himself as he imagined a torrent of cum blasting from that swollen cleft, knowing that when it happened next, it would be going straight into his ass.

Ethan walked toward Isaac, still straddling the bench. The tiny hairs of his inner thighs tickled Isaac's arms and shoulders as he positioned his erection in Isaac's face, and when he smirked and slapped Isaac's cheeks and mouth with it a few times, well Isaac wasn't exactly offended. Ethan pressed the middle two fingers of one hand against the base of his shaft, keeping it angled down as he plunged forcefully into Isaac's waiting lips and down his throat.

Isaac gagged, his nostrils filling with a salty, primal musk that went straight to his head and had him furiously jerking off as Ethan plundered his throat. He could have sucked Ethan all night, but he only got about a minute before Ethan pushed his head away and pulled out.

“Raise your legs and don't expect this to be gentle,” Ethan ordered with a devilish grin as he slid
back down Isaac's body to the foot of the bench.

“Quit running your mouth and shove it in,” Isaac countered, lifting his legs in the air and spreading his cheeks wide with his fingers.

Ethan nodded, apparently pleased with the response. “Damn! This is going to feel so good.” His pupils dilated as he poked his finger in and out of Isaac's hole a few times, gauging the tightness. “Well for me. You won't like it at first.”

“Wanna bet?” Isaac challenged, stomach tightening in anticipation.

Ethan snickered and pressed the tip against Isaac's hole, daring him to flinch. He didn’t.

“Okay then.” Ethan breached him with one long, forceful thrust, slowly but relentlessly pushing in to the hilt and grinding out hard.

“AAAAHH!” Isaac screamed, releasing his asscheeks and clutching the sides of the bench as a sharp, fiery heat ignited his pelvis and radiated savagely throughout his body. His eyes watered and sweat broke out across his face.

“See.” Ethan smirked with with satisfaction as he pulled out and immediately slammed back in. “And god, I was right. You feel amazing. SO. FUCKING. TIGHHHHHHT.”

He punctuated each word with long, deep thrusts.

“Who says I'm not enjoying this,” Isaac whimpered in a shaky voice. He felt like he had been torn in half, but pain was nothing new for Isaac and his eyes were already rolling back in his head as the rush of endorphins he was counting on hit him like a freight train. He felt dizzy and lightheaded in the best possible way.

“Oh that's right, I forgot you get off on being hurt,” Ethan taunted, changing angles and speeding up so that Isaac couldn't get used to the rhythm.

“Works both ways though doesn't it?” Isaac said between gritted teeth.

“It does,” Ethan confirmed, squeezing Isaac's hips and wrenching him down brutally onto his cock.

Isaac moaned wantonly, black spots appearing on the edges of his field of vision. He flexed his straining ring of muscle, trying to reward Ethan as he looked into his cold blue eyes and nodded at him.

Ethan lifted Isaac up by his hips until just the tip of his cockhead was still inside. He released him, making Isaac impale himself hard and fast.

Isaac let out a stuttering gasp as Ethan's cock slammed his prostate and there was suddenly decidedly more pleasure in the mix.

“Found it?” Ethan asked, grinning darkly.

Isaac nodded, eyes squeezed shut as he struggled to process the intense flood of conflicting stimulation.

“Then what are you waiting for?”

Isaac opened his eyes, and a wave of determination washed over him. He grabbed Ethan's shoulders and braced his heels against the foam floor mat for better leverage as he bounced up and down on
Ethan’s cock for all he was worth.

“I’m going to fuck the cum out of you,” Ethan snarled, hands rubbing erratically across Isaac’s torso, as though desperate to claim every part of him.

“I’m pretty sure I’m fucking you at this point,” Isaac said as the pain gave way completely to a white hot pleasure that was building by the moment.

“Well I’m going to get you off first.” Ethan licked his hand and grabbed Isaac's cock. He jerked him with long, deft strokes, momentarily leaving Isaac too weak in the knees to continue riding Ethan.

“Nope.” Isaac gritted his teeth, trying to resist the blinding, aching need to unload. He redoubled his efforts to make Ethan cum, clenching his muscles tight around Ethan's shaft and establishing a fast, steady rhythm that gripped every inch of Ethan's length.

Ethan was starting to pant now, his hips stuttering against Isaac's ass, chasing his hole with every bounce.

“Oh yeah? Just watch.” Ethan’s voice was thick and uneven with desperation.

Damn him for sounding like that, Isaac thought as he felt himself growing impossibly harder in Ethan's hand.

Ethan licked his other hand and placed it against Isaac's glans, ruthlessly polishing his knob as he continued the blissful handjob.

“Oh my FUCKING GODDAMNIT! That is intense!” Isaac felt himself hurtling inexorably toward his orgasm as his prostate was pounded into heavenly oblivion and his cockhead and shaft sparked and hummed with pleasure at every flick of Ethan's wrists.

Yet Ethan's bare cock was trembling inside Isaac, signaling that he was also on the edge. Isaac thought about the effect Ethan's needy, lustful voice had had on him and took one more gambit to win and make Ethan cum first, knowing his own words would also send him over the edge.

“God Ethan, you're making me feel sooogood.” leaned close and whisper-moaned in Ethan's ear. “I need you to fucking claim me. It's all I can think about. Please Ethan, fucking pleeease fill me with your cum.”

Isaac wasn't sure if he won or not. Ethan let out a sharp, desperate moan and sank his fangs into Isaac’s neck, sending Isaac flying over the edge and blasting thick ropes of cum all over Ethan's palm. It coated Isaac's cockhead and shaft as it kept coming, making Ethan's hands even slicker as he continued milking Isaac, enveloping his whole body in a bone-shattering, mind-blowing pleasure as Ethan filled Isaac with the load he had so eloquently pleaded for.

Ethan had Isaac locked in place against his hips, rocking him back and forth as he shot jet after jet of hot cum all over Isaac's spasming inner walls. He moaned and keened, whimpering into Isaac's neck as cum spewed from his exhausted, spent body.

Isaac loved the wet fullness, but as their orgasms subsided he couldn't resist loosening his glove-like grip around Ethan's cock and letting some of the creamy liquid seep from his hole and pool against Ethan's pelvis. He bounced a few more time, savoring the slick, loose feeling in his ass as well as the dense, almost bleachy smell of fresh semen that cloaked the room in a pheromone-rich veil of awesome.

Isaac sighed, totally sated. “Thank you,” he whispered into Ethan's ear.
Then he opened his eyes and woke up.

Chapter End Notes

Feedback is greatly appreciated.
Isaac stretched languidly and grabbed his phone off the nightstand. He was feeling really good. It was only 2:00am; he had plenty of time to cleanup and go back to sleep, and could still look forward to a lazy Saturday morning.

Since learning how to lucid dream, he had become something of an expert at minimizing the usual mess associated with wet dreams. He sat up and flicked on his bedside lamp. The front of his pajama pants had only a couple of small wet spots.

His t-shirt was completely dry, so he peeled it over his head and tossed it on the pillow beside him, then lay back across the bed and arched his hips to slide off his pajama pants, which he dropped atop his shirt – no sense worrying about a couple tiny cumstains.

The hand towel he had folded and placed in his pants before going to sleep was soaked in hot jizz. He tugged it onto his stomach and eyed the front of the briefs he’d worn underneath. The dark fabric over his swollen, semi-hard cock was saturated in creamy white, but the sticky wetness didn’t stop there. It had seeped over his hips and also dribbled down between his thighs. Anymore and the mattress would be in danger. He hurriedly stripped out of his underwear and spread his legs, enjoying the sensation of cool air on his warm, sensitive crotch.

He threw the towel and briefs in the dirty laundry hamper near his bed without getting up, and scratched his bush as he relaxed against the pillow. The thick brown hairs were gummy with cum, and his treasure trail was matted to his stomach thanks to the hand towel. He would need to go clean up in the bathroom before going back to sleep, but not yet. His cock had gone from a lazy semi sprawled across his hip to an aching hard-on quivering to be touched, and images from his sex dream still consumed his mind. If he washed up now, he would probably end up jerking off in bed and getting sticky all over again. He’d might as well relive the fantasy and rub out another load.

It had been a hot dream, but it freaked him out how rough he’d wanted to get fucked. He wasn’t sure if he ever wanted to get fucked in real life. It was terrifying to think of being in such a vulnerable position, of giving up so much control to someone else, to anyone else, but especially to someone like Ethan.

What Isaac really wanted in that moment was to fuck someone – not rough and hard like Dream Ethan had fucked him, but slow and gentle with someone he cared about. Isaac laughed to himself. After getting off once in his dream to fucking, here he was jerking off a second time to the idea of making love.

His good cheer was short-lived as he transitioned into thinking about his real-life sexual experiences, all of which had been with Allison. Their sex had been something between fucking and making love. She didn’t like it rough exactly, but she didn’t need or want him to treat her like delicate china either, and while Isaac had definitely felt emotions during their encounters, he held no delusions that she had mostly just wanted to have fun and enjoy their physical connection. Isaac was okay with just sex – more than okay, it was a thousand fantasies and wet dreams come true – but it still sort of hurt that she didn't find him worthy on a deeper level.

Isaac sighed and took a ragged breath, his chest hurting. He knew he wasn't a lovable person, that maybe there wasn’t anything to him besides werewolf strength and keen senses. He wasn’t kind and
good like Scott, or funny and perceptive like Stiles. He wasn't smart and intuitive like Lydia, or rich and confident like Jackson. And he had certainly never been in Allison's league; he wasn't courageous and resourceful like she was. He wasn't born to be a leader or to make a difference in the world like she was. Why would she stay with him? He was just lucky that being a werewolf had improved his physical attributes enough that he'd turned into someone who was sort of okay to look at, someone she thought was at least worth having some casual fun with.

He gritted his teeth and growled in the back of his throat to keep his tears from spilling. One thing from his dream had been true: he could take the pain. He had gotten really good at taking pain. He supposed that might be a strength of sorts. It was all he had anyway.

His dick was now soft and shriveled, so he got out of bed, put on a robe and slippers, and exited his room, intent on getting cleaned up and going back to sleep before he could get anymore tangled up in his head or fixated on his many short-comings.

After handling his business and leaving the restroom he was alarmed by the sound of muffled groans and struggling coming from Scott's room. He recognized the voice making the sounds: Stiles. He was sleeping over in Scott's bed tonight since, like most nights recently, Scott had tranced out on the downstairs couch. They'd already learned the hard way not to try to rouse Scott or move him when it got to be that late.

Had Scott gone back to his room in his fugue state? Was he attacking Stiles? Killing him?

Isaac raced down the hall and hurled himself into Scott's room, claws and fangs already out even though he knew he didn't stand a chance against his alpha if he couldn't wake him from his daze.

“Scott, stop it's–”

Isaac looked around in confusion. Scott was nowhere to be found. Stiles was alone in the room, asleep in Scott's bed – if what Stiles was doing could be called sleeping. He was thrashing all over the mattress, which had been exposed now that the sheets and blankets were all tangled up around him. He groaned and whimpered, garbled words punctuating the sounds of his distress. Isaac tilted his head, surprised as he recognized his own name in the muttered jumble.

“Stiles, Stiles, it's okay. You're just having a nightmare.” Isaac sat on the edge of the bed and put firm hands on each of Stiles' shoulders, stilling him.

Stiles' eyelids flew open and he let out a terrified shriek, his body trembling in Isaac's hands.

“Isaac?”

He blinked and gasped. His racing heart thundered in Isaac's ears.

“Isaac!” Stiles lunged forward, his arms finding their way through the opening in the front of Isaac's loose robe as he embraced him. He squeezed tightly and rubbed his hands up and down Isaac's bare back, his chin hooked snugly over Isaac's shoulder. “Oh, Isaac, you're okay!”

“Uh, yeah...Are you?” Isaac asked, reluctantly enveloping him in the robe since he didn't have much choice short of shoving him away. He wished he'd at least had on a pair of boxers.

“Yeah, I'm okay. I jus– Hey, you're not wearing a shirt.” He giggled and stroked his fingers across Isaac's skin again. “Mmm, warm!”

“Stiles!” This time Isaac did shove him away.
Stiles laughed. “I guess I should be used to shirtless werewolves by now but– Oh!”

Stiles’ eyes widened as he glanced at Isaac’s nude body through the now open robe.

“Do you mind?!” Isaac glared at him and wrapped the robe tightly around himself, tying the cord securely in place.

“Not at all!” Stiles laughed and shook his head enthusiastically.

Isaac sighed. He was tired of Stiles pretending to be bisexual for the sake of jokes. Since Isaac actually was bisexual, he didn't find it particularly funny. However, he doubted coming out to Stiles would make much of a difference since Stiles also joked that way with Danny, who was openly gay.

“I'm going back to bed now,” Isaac said, not bothering to keep the irritation out of his voice.

“Isaac wait.” Stiles grabbed his hand as he moved to get up. “I...could you...you died in my dream, like horribly.”

Isaac narrowed his eyes at him and pulled his hand away but stayed seated on the bed. “You do know that doesn't affect me in real life, right? I'm fine.”

Stiles frowned and picked an imaginary piece of lent off one of his jumbled blankets. “I know. I just...don't really wanna go back to sleep.”

“Ohh-kay.” He shrugged. “So don't.”

“Could you stay with me?” Stiles asked, looking back up and making eye contact with Isaac.

Isaac's stomach twisted and he looked away from Stiles, uncomfortable with the vulnerability on his face.

“I...uh, can go get Scott for you.”

Isaac inwardly kicked himself for the suggestion. Getting Scott to handle Stiles' emotional turmoil – hell, getting Scott to handle anyone's emotional turmoil – was Isaac's first instinct, but he knew it was a really dumb idea given Scott's current state.

“That's okay. Never mind,” Stiles said quietly as he lay back down.

“I–I'll stay.” Isaac looked at the wall as he said it.

“You don't have to,” Stiles said, plainly annoyed.

Great, Isaac had fucked up again and disappointed someone else.

“I don't mind,” Isaac said honestly, glancing back at Stiles to emphasize his point. “I just don't see why you want me to.”

Stiles huffed at him. “Because you're my friend, jackass. And because the dream was about you.”

“Oh,” Isaac said quietly.

Objectively, Isaac knew he and Stiles were friends. Of course they were. They were packmates after all – even if Stiles was still human – and more than that they spent a lot of time hanging out. But Scott was the only reason they were ever together...wasn't he? And just when had their sarcastic rivalry and genuine contempt for each other turned the corner into friendship?
“We could watch a movie or something on Scott's computer,” Stiles suggested, learning off the edge of the bed to grab Scott's laptop from his desk. He popped the lid open and tapped the space bar a few times, prompting the machine to wake up and go to the lock screen. Without hesitating Stiles typed a string of characters into the password field and hit enter.

“You know Scott's password!?”

“Yeah, of course.” Stiles scrunched his face at Isaac and shrugged like it would have been ridiculous if he hadn't have known it.

“Why?” Isaac asked, horrified to think of someone knowing his own password.

Stiles considered the question for a moment. “Just 'cause I guess. Ohh! But also so I can delete all his porn and stuff before his mom sees it if he dies suddenly.”

“That's...morbid.”

“But practical,” Stiles said with a frowning nod.

“I guess.” Isaac stood. “I'm gonna go put on some clothes. I'll be right back.”

“Ugh! Fiine.” Stiles folded his arms with exaggerated disappointment before chuckling at Isaac.

Isaac shook his head and walked from the room.

Once back in his own bedroom he shed his robe and put back on the t-shirt he'd removed and tossed on his pillow upon waking up from his sex dream. He hesitated as he picked up his discarded pajama bottoms. He studied the front carefully. The two small cumstains had dried and weren't visibly noticeable anymore. Isaac could smell them, but he was a werewolf. If he'd been hanging out with Scott, he'd definitely have gotten a new pair, but he decided it'd be okay with just Stiles since he wouldn't be able to tell. It would just be a little weird for Isaac knowing he had cum in them earlier, but he'd try not to think about that.

Redressed, Isaac glanced at himself in his mirror, embarrassed when he saw the state of his hair. The back and left side were sticking out where he'd slept on them. He quickly brushed things back into place and set about making himself look presentable, stopping just short of fully styling his hair the way he would have if he'd been getting up for the morning. Once satisfied, he returned to Scott's room.

Stiles had remade the bed while Isaac was gone, not exactly neatly of course, but at least the mattress was no longer showing and the blankets weren't all piled and tangled together.

“Aww, you got rid of your bed head,” Stiles said as Isaac walked in. “It was cute.”

Isaac rolled his eyes but didn't respond as he sat on the edge of the bed. “So, what do you wanna watch?”

“Hmm.” Stiles considered it for a few moments before his eyes lit up. “Oh I know. There's this show from MTV that I started watching the other day. I only watched the first two episodes, so I'll just re-watch them and we can binge it.”

“A show on MTV?” Isaac said sceptically. “I dunno. Doesn't sound very good.”

“I haven't even told you about it yet.”
“Fine, go ahead.”

“Well it's a remake of an old movie, but it's only loosely based on that.”

“Ugh! I hate TV shows that are movie remakes.”

“This one's good though,” Stiles insisted, typing and clicking on Scott's laptop. “It's about these high school students—”

“Lemme guess, they're all played by impossibly sexy twenty-something-year-olds?”

Stiles shrugged. “I haven't really looked up the actors’ ages, but yeah that sounds about right.”

Isaac shook his head. “Such a cliché.”

“Anyway, I don’t wanna give too much away, but people start getting killed so the main characters have to spend all season trying to figure out who's doing it.”

“Well, at least that part’s relatable,” Isaac conceded.

“I know right?!” Stiles repositioned the laptop between them so Isaac would have a clear view too. The screen was still black.

“So what's the name of this show anyway?” Isaac asked.

“Scream!” Stiles answered, grinning and clicking play.

Chapter End Notes

I know technically having Isaac and Stiles talking about the 2015 Scream re-make is an anachronism since the season of Teen Wolf this story branches off from (the end of 3A) was set in 2011 (but aired in 2013). But yeah, for simplicity and convenience I'm just moving this story's setting to present time.

Feedback of any kind is always appreciated.
The Coffee Date

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

_Bacon. Fried eggs. Fresh orange juice. Steaming coffee._

Isaac's stomach growled as the distinctive scents flooded his nostrils.

_So hungry. Wish it were real._

Soft morning light caressed Isaac's sensitive pupils as he opened his eyes, realizing the rich aromas permeating the room were too sharp and crisp-edged to be a dream.

“Morning!” Scott declared with a wide, cheerful grin on his face and bags of diner takeout in his hands. A cardboard drink-holder with all four slots filled perched precariously on his inner arm against his chest.

“Scott!” Isaac felt a wave of panic wash over him, overlaying his embarrassment and guilt at being caught sleeping in his alpha's bed. “I...w-we were just–”

“Watching something and fell asleep?” Scott supplied, glancing at the still open laptop sitting on the middle of the bed. “That's not exactly a crime, Isaac.”

“It's not?” Isaac asked, needing confirmation that Scott really wasn't mad at him for sleeping in his bed.

“Nah. If it was Stiles would be serving a life sentence right now. He's notorious.” Scott chuckled and placed the bags and drink-holder in the middle of the bed before picking up the laptop and moving it back to his desk. Then he plopped down at the foot of the bed across from Isaac, who had just enough time to steady the drinks and prevent a spill. Scott looked momentarily abashed. “Thanks.”

“So uh...eggs?” Isaac gave Scott his best hopeful smile, the one he was quickly learning usually got him his way with his new alpha (He could have grinned at Derek till the next full moon for all it would have gotten him).

Scott laughed and bumped his knee against Isaac's. “Yeah, eggs. Why don'tcha wake Sleeping Beauty over there.”

Isaac glanced Stiles. He was hanging off the side of the bed, a leg and both arms flailing into empty space. He looked one wrong move away from tumbling over the edge.

“Stiles.”

Stiles didn’t react.

“Stiles!”

Scott snickered and grabbed the ankle Stiles still had on the bed. “It's going to take a lot more than that. When he's really out you could drive a train through the room and he wouldn't wake up.”

“I think you'd have to lay the tracks first,” Isaac answered with a smirk.

“That wouldn't wake him up either.” Scott tugged Stiles' leg. “Grab his arms. And watch you face.”
“My face?” Isaac asked as he leaned over far enough to take hold of each of Stiles' wrists and heave him back toward the center of the bed.

Stiles grunted and jerked his arms and legs, slamming his elbow into Isaac's jaw as Scott dodged a kick and pulled a bag of food out of the way just as Stiles almost rolled onto it.

“Oww! Grrr! What did I hit?” Stiles sat up, blinking and gripping his elbow, a scowl on his face as he looked back and forth between Scott and Isaac.

“My face,” Isaac answered dryly as he rubbed his jaw.

“Our face is hard,” Stiles complained, contorting his elbow and moving the skin around as he looked for signs of bruising. “Damn you and your high cheekbones, Isaac.”

“You hit my jaw.”

“Yeah, yeah, you have a strong jaw too. Quit bragging.”

Stiles' eyes lit up as he noticed the bags of food. He wasted no time in scooping everything up and unceremoniously dumping it out all over the center of the bed. An empty, unused Styrofoam cup rolled out of one of the bags and came to rest against Isaac's knee, piquing his curiosity.

“Stiles! You're getting crumbs and grease in my bed,” Scott grumbled.

Stiles waved his hand dismissively and resumed tearing the foil off a bacon, egg, and cheese biscuit. “You needed to change your bed anyway. It starting to smell like wet dog.”

Isaac giggled as he spread a napkin in his lap and picked up another of the egg biscuits and an order of hash browns. He hadn't meant to fall asleep, but once he had, he'd slept well cloaked in his alpha's scent. He supposed Stiles was right though. Scott hadn't slept in his bed for the past week and it had probably been a couple of weeks before that since it had been changed.

“So what's that for?” Isaac asked between mouthfuls, jiggling his leg so that the empty cup by his knee wobbled against the blanket.

“Coffee milk!” Stiles fist pumped the air and smacked an exuberant, if greasy, hand against Scott's shoulder. “You got me coffee milk!”

“Yep!” Scott looked pleased with himself as he passed Stiles two of the Styrofoam cups. He handed a third cup filled with orange juice to Isaac and took the fourth cup, also orange juice, for himself.

“What's coffee milk?” Isaac asked, giving Scott a questioning glance as he picked up another tinfoil pouch, this one filled with crispy bacon. Scott nodded for him to go ahead.

“What's coffee milk?!” Stiles looked at him incredulously as he poured milk from one of the full cups into the empty cup. “Only the ultimate morning beverage.”

“So it's basically a café au lait,” Isaac remarked after watching Stiles fill the new cup the rest of the way with coffee from the second cup.

Stiles started to protest but then sighed and nodded. “Yeah, but when it's made right it uses coffee syrup instead of fresh coffee.”

“That sounds absolutely disgusting.” Isaac wrinkled his nose at the notion of coffee syrup as Scott vigorously coughed. “How did you even find out about that monstrosity? Who would make
something like that?”

When Isaac finally glanced at Scott, he was shaking his head and shooting Isaac a warning look.

Stiles scowled and took of sip of the drink before answering. “My mom used to make it for me every weekend when I was a kid.”

Isaac’s blood ran cold as he realized his mistake. He thought about how it would have felt if someone made fun of something attached to a happy memory he had of his own deceased mother.

“Stiles, I…” Isaac raised his hand a few inches into the air, meaning to pat Stiles’ arm as he apologized but thought better of it and lowered it again, deciding Stiles might not want to be touched right now.

Stiles raised his eyebrows at Isaac apparently willing to hear him out, but when Isaac didn't say anything else he looked away and changed the subject, asking Scott about his morning.

Great, I can't even get a simple apology right.

Isaac was only half paying attention as the other two boys chatted, but he caught the gist of it. Scott had been up since about 7:30am – it wasn't quite 10:00am now – and he'd decided to go pick up breakfast for everyone as a way of apologizing for 'the incident last night' as he referred to his break from reality and subsequent accidental clawing of Isaac, as well as to cheer Isaac up about Allison.

“Is that it?” Stiles asked, cocking his head at Scott and apparently picking up on something Isaac hadn't.

“What do you mean?” Scott coughed lightly and fussed with his sleeve cuff. That was a tell Isaac did recognize and one Scott only did when he was lying to one of them or someone else he was close with. Isaac had never seen Scott do it when he fibbed to a teacher, a random classmate, or a homicidal monster.

“Scott,” Stiles pressed.

“Okay, yes, I do have an interior motive.”

“Ulterior,” Stiles corrected.

Scott's eyebrows knitted together. “But I haven't let it out yet.”

“Anyway…,” Stiles prompted.

“I'm buttering Isaac up,” Scott said, giving Isaac a hopeful smile not unlike the one Isaac had used on him that morning.

“Me? Why?” Isaac asked. Apparently those looks worked both ways. He hadn't even heard what Scott wanted yet and he was already about to say yes.

“I want us to go to Starbucks this afternoon,” Scott answered innocently.

Isaac arched an eyebrow. “Okay…that sounds nice.”

“So you can apologize to Ethan,” he finished.

“What?!!”
“They're meeting us at 2:00 for coffee,” Scott said.

“I'm not- I can't- I won't...”

But it was hopeless. Scott kept give him that look.

Isaac tried to counter it with one of his own as he whined, “Scceoooottttt.”

Scott simply responded by turning up the power on his look, sticking out his bottom lip slightly and tilting his head.

Isaac broke and looked away, defeated. “Fine. I'll do it.”

“I hate this idea,” Isaac said, grumbling under his breath to Scott as they sat on one side of the long center table in the Starbucks.

“Oh really?” Stiles asked with feigned surprise from Scott's opposite side. He leaned forward and smirked at Isaac. “You hadn't made that clear.”

“Why can't I just text him an apology?” Isaac asked Scott, ignoring Stiles.

“Do you have his number?” Scott asked.

“No.”

“Well there's that.”

Stiles laughed and took a big slurp from his Mocha Frappuccino. Isaac threw his straw wrapper at him.

“But you could give it to me,” he said, returning his attention to Scott.

Scott sighed and gave Isaac a different look, one that felt like an ice pick in his chest.

“Isaac, you don't apologize for beating someone up via text.”

Isaac hung his head and dropped his eyes to the table. Scott was disappointed in him.

Isaac got lost in his head for a few minutes, tuning out Scott and Stiles' chatter. Scott had every reason to be disappointed in him; he had fucked up. He had endangered their small pack by picking a fight with a sadistic lunatic, and as Stiles had pointed out the night before, he had done it right when Scott was least able to defend them. Scott was okay right now; he was always okay during the day, but come nightfall the moon, or whatever the hell supernatural magic was behind it, would start to affect him and he would lose himself. If the twins ever found out, it would be as simple as launching an attack and slaughtering everyone while Scott looked on in a helpless, catatonic state.

Scott was right; Isaac had to apologize to Ethan. He had to do everything possible to avoid provoking trouble until Deaton, Lydia, Stiles, or whoever could figure out what was going on and how to fix it.

“Stop worrying,” Scott whispered, probably too low for Stiles to hear it. He leaned his shoulder against Isaac's and their feet brushed lightly under the table. “Everything's going to be fine.”

“They're here,” Stiles announced, motioning toward the window through which they could see Ethan and Aiden climbing off the back of Aiden's motorcycle. “Wonder what happened to their
other bike.”

Scott turned to Isaac, a new concern etched across his face. “Isaac did you…”

Isaac shook his head and took a long draught of his lukewarm latte, bracing for what he knew would be an unpleasant experience.

A few minutes later after getting their drinks, the twins joined them at their table. Ethan sat down across from Isaac, an arrogant smile on his face. Aiden sat across from Scott, looking bored.

“Thanks for coming,” Scott said. “Isaac has something he wants to say to Ethan.”

“Yeah, it looks like he can't wait,” Aiden remarked, smirking.

Isaac looked up, expecting to find a condescending expression on Ethan's face. Instead his features were once again schooled into the careful neutrality that they had often been the night before in the weight room. It made Isaac feel just a twinge of genuine remorse. He still absolutely thought Ethan had had the beating – and much more – coming, but if he were being honest he had to acknowledge that Ethan hadn't been being a complete jerk last night.

“I'm sorry I lost my temper,” Isaac said between gritted teeth.

“Okay.” Ethan shrugged and smirked at Isaac. “You're forgiven.”

“Seriously?” Stiles asked, looking back and forth between them. “That's it?”

Aiden answered for his twin, a devious glint in his eye. “Well, there is one more thing.”

“There it is!” Stiles said, sarcastically snapping his fingers and pointing at Aiden.

“It's nothing bad,” Ethan said, giving his brother a warning look.

Aiden shrugged away some of the attitude in his posture and addressed Scott in a more formal voice. “You need a pack. We need an alpha.”

Isaac couldn't believe what he was hearing. His hand clinched, crumpling his half-empty Starbucks cup. He ignored the mess it was making in favor of glaring daggers at the two former alphas. He had been expecting to hear any number of things but not this.

“Um, yeah, we're gonna pass. That's hilarious though,” Stiles said. Beneath the sarcasm, he radiated the same anger and disbelief Isaac felt.

“Why would I say yes?” Scott asked, as carefully neutral as Ethan had been.

“We'd add strength. We'd make you more powerful,” Aiden said

*Typical. Fixated on power and control and assuming everyone else is too. He doesn't know Scott at all.*

Aiden continued, his demeanor confident, “There's no reason to say no.”

“I think I explained a few good ones to Ethan last night,” Isaac said, sneering at them and struggling to keep his claws and fangs from extending. He had to remind himself they were in a public place.

Aiden wasn't as discreet. His eyes flashed blue and he snarled at Isaac, fangs out. “You wanna explain to me?”
Scott stood, causing everyone else to tensely follow suit. The twins looked ready to lash out and Isaac would be damned if he’d let them get the first blow in. Before Isaac could move, Scott grabbed his wrist and gave him a meaningful look, silently ordering him to retract the claws he’d just given up controlling. Isaac frowned but complied.

“Sorry, but they don't trust you,” Scott said to the twins.

Isaac's gaze darted over to Stiles before refocusing on his enemies, alert to any movement.

Stiles' hands were clinched in fists, and Isaac knew he'd throw himself into the melee too if one broke out. It forced Isaac to calm down. He and Scott could trade blows with the twins and come out fine after some healing; Stiles on the hand could be killed in a matter of seconds.

“Oh, I think Isaac and I can learn to play nice.” Ethan gave Isaac that same flirtatious smile he had used the night before. Isaac gaped at him in disbelief.

“I'm afraid I don't trust you either,” Scott said.

“Why not?!?” Aiden’s face was fully human again, but his voice was a growl.

Scott glanced around the room meaningfully before leaning across the table, not quite in Aiden's personal space. He said in a low voice, “We're in a public place and you just barred your teeth at someone. You have control issues and I can't afford that in my pack.”

Aiden's eyes flashed blue again, but before he could speak Ethan grabbed his shoulder and pulled him back, inserting himself between his brother and the table so he could address Scott directly.

“I can keep him in line,” Ethan said calmly, as though negotiating with Scott.

“You can try,” Aiden snarled, shoving his brother.

“This conversation is over,” Scott said. He gave Isaac a look to make sure he got the message, then turned to hustle a still fuming Stiles away from the table.

Isaac turned to follow his packmates out, but before he could leave Ethan called out to him.

“Oh and Isaac,” Ethan said, prompting Isaac to glance back at him over his shoulder. He smirked. “See you on Monday.”

It took all of Isaac's self control not to lunge across the table and give himself something else to apologize for.

Chapter End Notes

Feedback of any kind is always appreciated!
The rest of the weekend was uneventful, and Isaac and Scott arrived at school Monday morning at the usual time, Isaac on the back of Scott's motorcycle as they pulled into Scott's regular space out front. Isaac was disappointed if unsurprised to notice Aiden's motorcycle already parked nearby. He sighed as Ethan's words from Saturday afternoon rang in his ears. *See you on Monday.*

Isaac recognized it as a threat. Ethan may have pretended to accept Isaac's apology, but he clearly had some kind of retribution planned.

Isaac frowned, irritated that he had to put up with this on top of everything else that was happening. He was already dreading the afternoon classes he shared with Allison and was worried about Scott's ever-worsening condition. Now he also had to be alert to danger from the twins.

“Hey, you okay?” Scott asked, his hand lingering on Isaac's shoulder as he climbed off the motorcycle.

Isaac nodded, giving Scott his best everything-is-fine look, the one he had perfected from years of domestic abuse.

Scott's eyes narrowed and the concern on his face deepened. “You know it's okay if you're not, right?”

Isaac dropped his eyes, embarrassed he'd been caught trying to deceive his alpha. He looked back up at Scott and nodded again, this time allowing the vulnerability to show on his face. “I'm worried about seeing Allison.”

Scott clapped the hand that was on Isaac's shoulder and rubbed his back as they turned to walk into the school. “I know how you feel.”

Isaac swallowed thickly. Scott's statement was true in every sense, and it was deeply uncomfortable for Isaac to accept sympathy from his ex-girlfriend's ex-boyfriend, even if that ex-boyfriend also happened to be his alpha and best friend. “Sorry.”

“Don't be.” Scott bumped Isaac's shoulder with his own. “Text me if you need me. Even if it's during class.”

Isaac nodded, resisting the impulse to turn and hug Scott. Instead, he turned in the opposite direction and walked down a different hallway, separating from Scott as they went to their respective lockers.

Isaac was halfway through his first hour anatomy class when his phone vibrated in his pocket. As discreetly as he could, he pulled it out and checked the message.

*Lydia: We have a problem. Meet me under the stairwell across from our English class.*

Isaac frowned and typed back.

*Isaac: When?*

He didn't have time to put the phone back in his pocket before it was going off again.
Lydia: *Now.*

Isaac covertly put his phone away, then coughed and raised his hand to catch Mr. Stevenson's attention. It was just Isaac's luck that after barely managing to survive chemistry with Mr. Harris the year before, the man who was now teaching him Human Anatomy was somehow an even bigger hard-ass.

“Mr. Stevenson, can I go to the restroom?” Isaac asked as the man looked in his direction.

Stevenson shot him a withering look and stopped his lecture on the body's autonomic nervous system. “Mr. Lahey, do you think your grades are such that you can afford to miss instruction time in today's class?”

“I think my bladder is such that I can't afford not to,” Isaac retorted, trying his best not to smirk in response to the snickers his comment earned from his classmates.

Stevenson smiled, deceptively pleasant. “Well then by all means go” –he waved his hand expansively, then hardened his voice– “and don't bother coming back for the rest of the period. I'll be calling Mrs. McCall on my break to discuss your bladder and your attitude.”

Isaac inwardly cringed but tried not to look like he cared as he gathered up his things and left the room. At least Melissa was usually understanding about werewolf business. If his father were still alive and taking a call like that from the school, Isaac might just as well have thrown himself down the stairwell instead of meeting Lydia under it; the bruises would have been about the same either way.

“What's up?” Isaac whispered as he ducked his head and hunched over so he could fit under the cramped space. Lydia had just enough room to stand up straight.

“It's Allison,” Lydia whispered back.

Isaac frowned and gave her an offended look. She must have heard the news of their breakup by now, probably directly from Allison. Why was she bringing this up to him?

“Lydia, I don't want to talk–”

“She tried to kill me yesterday afternoon.”

“What?!” Isaac shouted, forgetting to be quiet and no doubt interrupting nearby classes.

Lydia shushed him and pulled him further under the stairwell and up against the far wall so they were definitely out of the line of sight of anyone looking down the hallway unless they came to look directly under the stairwell.

“What happened?” Isaac whispered, softly but urgently.

“We were in the woods, chatting while she practiced her archery – I'm sorry to hear about you guys by the way.”

“Aaannd?” Isaac waved his hand in the air.

“And she just sort of...zoned out. The next thing I knew she was firing an arrow at my face.”

“Oh my god.” Isaac placed a worried hand on his friend's shoulder even though she was obviously okay. “So...she missed?”
“Aiden caught the arrow out of the air,” Lydia answered, her heart rate accelerating slightly as she recounted the story. “It was like two inches from my face when he stopped it.”

Isaac gave her a sour look. “You were hanging out with Aiden?”

Lydia rolled her eyes at him. “He's my boyfriend, and it's obviously a good thing he was there – anyway, can we focus?”

“Right.” Isaac shook his head, clearing it of smug psychopaths. “What was her reason? Did she lose her temper or –”

“She said she thought she saw something that wasn't there. Then she ran off. She called me last night to apologize, but she was evasive when I asked her what was going on.”

“Wow!” Isaac stood open-mouthed for a few seconds, trying to process what he'd been told. He'd known Allison was having a tough time since coming back to life. He had tried unsuccessfully to reach out to her about it, but he had thought she was coping, overcoming it. This, *this* was shocking. “I can’t imagine her ever losing control like that.”

“She's clearly having some kind of break,” Lydia answered, giving Isaac a meaningful look. “Like someone else we know.”

The pieces clicked into place for Isaac. “Scott.”

Lydia nodded.

“Wait,” Isaac said as something else occurred to him, “Do you think she might have been out of her mind when she broke up with me?”

Lydia raised an incredulous eyebrow at him and shook her head. “Yes, Isaac. I think anyone who would break up with you must be out of their mind. Is that what you want to hear?”

“Well not in that tone,” Isaac answered, folding his arms and pouting for a few moments before getting back on track. “Did you talk to Scott about this?”

Lydia shook her head. “I don't know what any of it means yet. But I do know it all goes back to their sacrifice, to their time in the Nemeton. It has to.”

“Then what I don't get is why Stiles is fine when they're both having so much trouble.”

Lydia frowned and gave him a look that Isaac knew too well. She was about to shatter his belief in that statement. “Have you noticed anything unusual about Stiles lately?”

“Can you be more specific?” Isaac smirked, hoping if he didn't take this seriously it wouldn't be serious.

“He hasn't been sleeping well and he seems more preoccupied than usual.”

Isaac's stomach lurched as he thought about Stiles' nightmare from a couple of nights prior. “No he...he's just been worried about Scott. That's all.”

Lydia shook her head. “Not just worried about Scott. He's affected too, in his own way, like Allison just...different.”

Isaac crumpled in on himself, leaning backward against the wall for support. His whole pack was falling apart and he was powerless to stop it.
“I have to get back to class.” Lydia gave his arm a quick squeeze. “I’m going to talk to Deaton after school. In the meantime, let’s keep an eye on them.”

Isaac nodded his agreement and watched as she left, her heels clicking down the hallway until she reached her classroom door. He tilted his head to the side, listening to the more muffled sound of her footsteps inside the room until they too stopped, indicating she was back in her desk.

Isaac thought for a moment. Scott and Allison weren’t near by, but he remembered that Stiles had trigonometry class in this wing of the school right now. He strained his ears, trying to narrow in on the right classroom. He found it and after a couple of moments picked the distinctive thrum of Stiles' heartbeat out of the cacophonous crowd.

Content that at least two of his packmates were safely where they should be, Isaac left the stairwell, deciding to kill some time in the library until second hour started.

He’d hardly entered the cavernous room before he was darting down one of the side aisles. Ethan was sitting at one of the center tables, a textbook open in front of him. Isaac concentrated on slowing his breathing and keeping his heart rate steady, trying to sync it with the librarian’s as much as possible so that it would be less conspicuous. Meanwhile, he focused his preternatural hearing on Ethan’s pulse, vigilant for any elevation or other change that might indicate his enemy had detected him. There was none.

Relieved, Isaac took a moment to consider how much he’d been checking people's heart rates in the last five minutes. Perhaps if he could pull his anatomy grades up, he’d have a future as a cardiologist.

Snickering to himself, he decided to be thorough and also check the scent of Ethan’s emotional state. There were no signs of the anger or agitation Isaac would have expected if Ethan were aware of his presence, but there was something else, something similar. Isaac sniffed the air again to be sure. Anxiety. Ethan was nervous about something.

Isaac glanced back toward the door, trying to determine his chances of slinking back out without being noticed. He wondered if Ethan would even try to hassle him if he did notice him. They were in the library during school hours after all. Chances are he wouldn’t pick a fight here and now.

Isaac had just decided to make a break for it when he heard a different distinctive heartbeat approaching from the hallway, not a packmate, but a teammate. Danny. Ethan's heartbeat sped up a moment later, and his anxiety thickened.

Not wanting to chance Danny seeing and addressing him, Isaac turned and faced the other way as Danny walked by his aisle, but he kept his ears perked and his nose primed, curious how this conversation would play out.

“Hey,” Danny said, his voice hitching. The spicy burn of anxiety hung just as densely around him as it did Ethan. “Thanks for meeting me.”

Ethan grunted an acknowledgment but otherwise stayed silent. Actually, he didn’t stay silent. His heartbeat fluttered and a sour plume of sadness filled the room. He wasn’t optimistic about how this conversation was going to go.

“I guess I owe you an apology,” Danny said quietly. The sound of a chair sliding against the floor accompanied his words.

“Who is he?” Ethan demanded in a rough growl that would only pass for human because humans didn’t know any better.
“He’s not important.”

“Oh so I guess, 'he means nothing to you?”’ Ethan asked, his voice thick with wounded sarcasm.

“Not nothing...He's a friend.”

“A friend?!”

“Ethan, it wasn't real,” Danny said quietly, a cloud of guilt rolling in. “I-I just wanted to get your attention.”

“My attention?!” Ethan scoffed, a low *scritch* indicating his claws were digging into the underside of the table.

It was the same table Isaac had thrown across the room Friday night. He idly wondered how many broken relationships it had witnessed, and how many more it could endure before it fell apart.

“Yes,” Danny answered.

“Instead of sticking your hand down your friend's pants, did you ever think of maybe saying, 'Hey Ethan, listen up?’”

“I wanted to break up...you would have tried to talk me out of it,” Danny’s tone was sympathetic but resolute. “Ethan, I- I can't do this anymore.”

For a moment Ethan's heart stopped and Isaac regretted his decision to stay in the room. It didn't feel right listening in on this personal conversation, or hearing the tremble in Ethan's voice as he asked, “Why?”

“Because you're not being honest with me. I don't know about what, but you're not.” Danny took a deep breath and slowly released it. “Sometimes you look at me like I'm the only thing in Beacon Hills that matters—”

“You are,” Ethan choked out. Isaac tasted salt.

“—and that's overwhelming and a little scary,” Danny answered. “But other times...other times you run off without any explanation. You cancel our dates or outright stand me up. You make me feel like I could be on fire and you wouldn't notice.”

“I would *always* notice if you were in danger,” Ethan said, the soft splish of skin touching skin as Ethan took Danny's hands in his own.

Their distressed pheromones spiraled around each other in a chaotic swirl for a few seconds. Then Danny's chair skidded harshly against the floor and his voice was full of tears. “Take care of yourself, Ethan.”

He ran out of the room.

Isaac stood awkwardly in the aisle, trying not to pay attention as Ethan composed himself. A few minutes later he coughed, put his things away, and stood. Isaac froze, praying that Ethan wouldn't notice him as he walked toward the door.

No such luck. Ethan paused as he came astride the aisle Isaac was hiding down. He sniffed the air once, then slowly turned and made eye contact with Isaac. His eyes were red and watery. It made Isaac feel something he didn't know he was capable of feeling toward the other werewolf.
“Ethan, I”—Isaac licked his lips, resisting the urge to look away or mask the sympathy in his voice—
“l'm really sorry.”

Ethan nodded once and walked out of the room.

Chapter End Notes

Feedback of any kind is always greatly appreciated.
Isaac's final class of the day was even worse than he'd expected, and not just because history wasn't his strong suit. He shared the class with Allison, Lydia, and Scott, and for that reason alone, a week ago it had been his favorite class. Today, however, it was like the Siege of Charleston (okay, so maybe Isaac had learned a little in the class). It went on and on until Isaac was ready to offer an unconditional surrender just to make it stop.

Normally the four of them sat together, and Isaac, Scott, and Lydia had been in their usual places when Allison walked in...and promptly sat as far away from them as she could. Nor had she looked pleased when Lydia changed seats to sit by her. As class progressed, each of them became increasingly anxious and unhappy until Isaac couldn't stand it anymore and was sure he would scream if he didn't get out of the room. Fortunately, just as he opened his mouth to howl (well maybe it would have been a yawn) the bell rang, dismissing them.

Isaac and Scott walked together to the parking lot, but Isaac paused as he spotted Stiles exiting the main doors. He was curious to see for himself if what Lydia had told him that morning was true, if Stiles really was having trouble coping with day-to-day life since his time in the Nemeton.

“I think I'll catch a ride with Stiles today,” Isaac told Scott.

The other boy shrugged, apparently lost in his head as he dug his keys out of his backpack.

“What's up?” Stiles asked as Isaac flagged him down.

“Riding with you,” Isaac answered, going around to the passenger side.

“Thanks for telling me,” Stiles said, climbing into the vehicle. “You know, instead of just flinging yourself in front of the car.”

“Yeah, I know. What kind of an asshole would do something like that?” Isaac gave Stiles his best devilish grin.

“Probably some cherubic-faced demigod with a taste for irony,” Stiles answered, starting the Jeep.

Isaac wasn't sure if he was being complimented or insulted, but either way Stiles probably didn’t mean it. Isaac remained silent as they waited their turn to exit the crowded parking lot, but spoke as they pulled out onto the main road. “Lydia told me something about you today.”

“Okay, but in my defense, I was really drunk when I took that picture, and the lighting was bad, and how was I supposed to know the head was out of the frame?”

“Yeah, I know. What kind of an asshole would do something like that?” Isaac gave Stiles his best devilish grin.

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“Okay, but in my defense, I was really drunk when I took that picture, and the lighting was bad, and how was I supposed to know the head was out of the frame?”

Isaac furrowed his brow. “Wait, what do you think she told me?”

Stiles shrugged. “That I take bad pictures.”

Isaac sighed. Stiles wasn't making this easy for him, but if he were honest with himself, he didn't really want to have this conversation in the first place. True, they had acknowledged their friendship a few nights ago (well Stiles had acknowledged it, but Isaac hadn't denied it, so that counted), but that didn't mean they were ready to start having heart-to-heart talks in the Jeep.
“So what did Lydia tell you?” Stiles asked.

“That you take bad pictures,” Isaac answered with a smirk.

“Damn! She is killing my Instagram following. I'll never get Instafamous at this rate.”

Isaac groaned. “Do me a favor and never say the word Instafamous again.”

“You got it, buddy. I'll be hashtag chill about that.”

“I hate you.” Isaac turned toward the window, so the smile tugging at the corners of his mouth wouldn't betray him.

The atmosphere in the Jeep was calm as they puttered along the winding, scenic road with the trees and grass whizzing by in a muddled blur. It gave Isaac the opportunity to evaluate Stiles' vital signs in their resting state, no awkward conversation required. What he found both surprised and worried him.

He had been spending so much time with Stiles over the past couple weeks that he assumed he had a good understanding of Stiles' general well being. He had been wrong. The sustained close contact must have blinded Isaac to the dark circles that had formed beneath Stiles' eyes and the pallid, haggard quality that strained his face. Even Stiles' natural scent was off. The energetic, almost caffeinated aura that always buzzed around him was present, but it was underpinned with stress and a sort of stale adrenaline.

“Dude, you're freaking me out,” Stiles said, fidgeting in his seat. “Why are you lookin' at me like that?”

“Are you feeling okay, Stiles?” Isaac asked, trying to keep his tone neutral.

“Fine,” Stiles answered, clearly on edge.

Isaac hummed a nonchalant acknowledgment, pretending to take his response at face value. He picked up his phone and browsed through his messages, acting like the device occupied most of his attention. “Guess, it's just been a rough few weeks all around. I'm pretty tired. What about you?”

Stiles let out a deep sigh and answered with complete honesty. “Exhausted.”

Isaac forced a yawn and continued playing it cool, “Yeah, you haven't been sleeping very well, huh?”

“Hardly at all.”

“More bad dreams?” Isaac asked, allowing just a hint of concern into his voice.

“Yeah,” Stiles answered softly. “Every night.”

“If you...” Isaac trailed off, unsure what he even wanted to say.

“Hmm?” Stiles shot him a curious look.

“If you feel like binging some more Scream lemme know.”

Stiles smiled at him and nodded. “Yeah. Yeah, that'd be fun. Maybe after Scott...um.”

“Yeah, maybe later,” Isaac agreed.
When they got to the McCall house, Melissa was waiting for them in the kitchen, arms folded as she leaned against the counter.

“Uh oh, did I do something?” Scott asked, putting his hands up and slowly backing away.

“Not you,” Melissa answered.

“Me?” Stiles yelped and looked around nervously.

“Not you either.”

Isaac frowned but accepted his fate. “So I guess Mr. Stevenson called you, huh?”

Melissa nodded.

“You know, Scott, I don't think I feel like having a snack today,” Stiles said to his best friend.

“Me either,” Scott answered, turning to follow the other boy out of the room. “Good luck,” he whispered, clapping Isaac on the shoulder on his way out the door.

“Isaac, why are you cutting class and copping an attitude with your teachers?” Melissa asked, looking pointedly at one of the kitchen chairs in a way that left no room for argument.

Isaac reluctantly sat down. He tried to stay calm, reminding himself that even if he was in trouble this was just going to be a conversation and not an assault. “I didn't cut class. I got thrown out.”

“For catching an attitude.”

“I guess but...he was hassling me about going to the bathroom.”

“Isaac, repeat after me, 'May I please be excused? It's an emergency.'”

“Yeah but...” He trailed off as she raised her eyebrows expectantly. He sighed and tried to keep the sarcasm out of his voice. “May I please be excused? It's an emergency.”

“Good boy,” She said, patting his shoulder and making him wonder if she was cracking a dog joke or just being affectionate.

“I'm sorry,” he muttered, eyes downcast.

“It's okay. When I talked to him I got the impression he was a self-important dick anyway.”

Isaac snapped his head up and gaped at her for a few moments before a laugh tumbled from his mouth.

“Which still doesn't give you the right to disrespect him or cut his class,” She said, stern again despite the smirk on her face.

Isaac nodded.

“One more thing. Are you really having bladder control issues? Can werewolves even be incontinent?”

“He told you I peed myself?!”

“He just said you complained of bladder trouble. I assumed you just wanted to get out of class, but I
am a nurse, so I wanna know if you're having health concerns.”

“I'm fine.” Isaac glanced over his shoulder toward the living room and dropped his voice to a whisper. “Lydia just needed to talk to me about something.”

“You mean about...?” She motioned toward the kitchen table, which had four long claw marks gouged into its surface.

Isaac frowned and nodded.

“Well, Isaac, you're going to have to make up the work you missed,” Melissa said, slightly louder than necessary as she took out her phone and started texting.

Melissa: Does she have a lead on what's wrong with Scott?

“I'll ask one of my classmates if I can borrow their notes so I can do the homework,” Isaac said as he texted back.

Isaac: No but now Allison's having a breakdown too...and maybe Stiles.

She frowned and gave him a worried look. “Do you think you'll be able to find the answers? Or get the help you need to figure it out?”

“Definitely.” Isaac stood and looked her in the eye. “I'll do whatever it takes to fix this. I promise.”

That evening after Melissa left for her shift at the hospital, Scott fell into a daze twice before dinner but was able to bring himself out of it when Isaac and Stiles called to him. Unfortunately, the later it got the deeper his trance states became and the more likely it was that he would lash out when someone tried to snap him out of them.

The third incident of the evening happened shortly after dinner when Scott went to the downstairs restroom. He never came back out and didn't respond when they called to him through the door. Eventually, Isaac went in to check on him and found him sitting on the toilet, staring blankly at the wall in front of him, pants around his ankles.

“Well this is awkward,” Isaac said as he left the bathroom.

“I have my bat in the Jeep. We could nudge him.”

“I dunno know, Stiles...poking an alpha while he's on the toilet just seems like a really bad idea.”

“Okay, then Plan B.” Stiles went to his bag and tore a sheet of paper out of a notebook. He wrote Out of Order on it, added a little drawing of wolf claws, and hung it on the doorknob. “There. That way his mom won't accidentally go in when she gets home from work.”

Isaac and Stiles spent the next couple hours doing homework and watching TV in the living room.

“You're spending the night, huh?” Isaac asked as he crammed his books back into his bag for tomorrow.

Stiles shrugged. “Yeah, I guess. Dad's working late and I...I don't feel like being in the house by myself.”

Isaac nodded, suspecting it had something to do with his nightmares.

“So, Netflix and chill?” Stiles asked hopefully as he scooted closer to Isaac on the sofa.
“You do know what people mean when they say ‘Netflix and chill’ right?”

“You don't you explain it to me?” Stiles answered, waggling his eyebrows and brushing his leg against Isaac's.

“You're unbearable,” Isaac said, legitimately annoyed as he stood and put some distance between them. He was starting to hate this running gag Stiles was doing. It was even less funny now that Isaac was actually single and starting to wonder more and more what it would be like to date a guy. Stiles damn well shouldn't have been making offers he had no intention of keeping.

A sour cloud of disappointment radiated from Stiles as Isaac moved away.

God, he takes it so personally when people don't laugh at his dumb jokes.

“Come on, I guess let's go watch in my room,” Isaac said as he headed for the stairs.

Stiles immediately brightened and bounded to his feet, running toward Isaac in a caricature of clumsy excitement. Isaac let himself admit it was kind of cute. He simply reminded himself Stiles didn't really mean it.

Once they were in his room, Isaac pulled off his shirt and tossed it in the hamper. “I'm going to put on some pajamas.”

“Oh...uh, okay,” Stiles answered, fidgeting as he glanced at Isaac's bare stomach, then away again, then back.

Isaac rolled his eyes. Stiles seriously needed to knock it off. He decided to teach him a lesson by upping the ante and hopefully making it awkward enough that he would quit once and for all.

Without letting himself get psyched out about it – it wasn’t that weird changing in front of Stiles. They did it all the time for lacrosse and cross country – Isaac opened the fly of his jeans, hooked his thumbs into that waistband and the one for his underwear, and briskly pulled everything off.

Stiles let out a strangled gurgle and turned around, embarrassment practically dripping from his pores.

There. That's what you get, asshole. I knew I didn't have anything you actually wanted to see.

Isaac dug an old pair of boxers out of his dresser and a baggy t-shirt and put them on, fighting the urge to laugh as Stiles continued to keep his back turned and tried to make small talk about the color of the walls.

“Why don't you go get Scott's computer?” Isaac suggested, putting him out of his misery.


When he came back a few minutes later with the laptop, he had also changed into a set of Scott's old pajamas. He set the laptop on the bed and climbed in, invading Isaac's personal space as he snuggled up.

“Now isn't this cozy?” Stiles remarked teasingly, nuzzling his head against Isaac's chest.

“Get off!” Isaac said, alarmed by the sudden urge to wrap his arms around Stiles and cuddle him. Stiles just sort of fit really well against his body, and now that Isaac was attuned to it, the distressed notes in Stiles' personal scent were practically begging to be soothed. Isaac decided it must be a pack thing as he forced himself to push Stiles away, making him sit up but allowing him to stay close.
“Who says I didn't do that when I went to get the laptop?” Stiles answered with a cheeky grin.

Isaac reminded himself to look annoyed as mental images that were anything but unpleasant flooded his brain. He shook his head, clearing it. “You were only gone for like three minutes.”

“What can I say? I had extremely compelling inspiration.” He gave Isaac a pointed look.

“I would have heard you. And I'd be able to smell it. And seriously, just stop talking.” Before I get a very embarrassing and hard-to-explain erection.

“You're no fun.” Stiles folded his arms and turned away in a pout...but leaned back against Isaac's chest again.

Good god, he smells incredible!

If Isaac hadn't known better he would have sworn he smelled arousal coming from Stiles, but it had to be his own lust-clouded mind playing tricks on him.

Houston, we have liftoff!

Isaac cleared his throat – hoping it didn't sound as much like a whimper to Stiles as it did to his own ears – and tossed a pillow into his lap and pulled the laptop over it, pretending to just be setting up for their binge session.

Of course having the screen so close to his body was basically an invitation to Stiles, who grinned at Isaac and lay his head on Isaac's shoulder.

Isaac gave up fighting every instinct he had and wrapped his arm around Stiles. Stiles responded by placing a hand on Isaac's stomach. And suddenly just like that they were officially cuddle buddies, and okay yes, Isaac kind of loved the way this felt...except for the raging boner trying to rip its way through the pillow...well actually that felt good too, just really inappropriate and – oh god, Stiles' hand was really close to it.

“Do you want me to turn it on?” Stiles asked.

“Huh?!”

Stiles didn't answer, just slid his hand lower down Isaac's abdomen, so low it was basically on Isaac's pelvis.

Oh fuck! I think he's going to give me a hand–

Stiles' fingers strayed up onto the trackpad, and he clicked to start the episode.

Forty minutes later, and they were almost finished with the next episode of Scream. Isaac's boner had subsided thanks to all the blood and gore, and the boys were now fully under the covers as they watched. Isaac had to admit Stiles was a first class cuddler. He was actually cuddlier than Allison had been, which was a comparison Isaac probably shouldn't have been making.

It felt awesome right now, but Isaac was painfully aware of how awkward it was going to be once it was over, the next time they were just casually hanging out at school between classes, or chowing down on tacos at the Mexican restaurant, or trying to solve a grizzly, supernatural murder – the usual stuff. How was he supposed to look Stiles in the eye and act normal knowing this had happened?
Just as the credits were rolling Isaac's phone vibrated against his nightstand. Stiles gave him a questioning look, silently asking if he wanted to check it. Against his better judgment — after all epic cuddle sessions weren't exactly a part of Isaac's daily life and his odds of having another any time soon didn't seem all that high — Isaac nodded. Stiles looked disappointed but rolled over and grabbed the phone. He placed it on Isaac's chest, along the top fold of the blankets, then reclaimed his spot beneath the covers and under Isaac's arm, snugly wrapped around his body.

Isaac tried to ignore the way Stiles' pinky finger played with his navel though his shirt — *god, this is going to be awkward later* — as he unlocked his phone and checked the message.

Unknown: *I need help and Scott's not answering.*

Isaac's stomach tightened with worry beneath Stiles' fingers.

“Mmm.” Stiles moaned and patted the taut muscles.

Isaac ignored him and typed a reply.

Isaac: *Who is this?*

While he waited for a response, he showed Stiles the cryptic message. Stiles sat up, looking as worried as Isaac felt.

Unknown: *It's Ethan...Isaac, please? This is important.*

“What do you think I should do?” Isaac asked after they had read the message.

Stiles shrugged. “Ask him what he needs I guess.”

Isaac sighed and grumbled with frustration. Ethan wasn't even in the room, and he was still ruining Isaac's night.

Isaac: *What's wrong? What do you need?*

A moment later a text with Ethan's GPS location came through. He was in the middle of the woods east of his and Aiden's loft.

Another message came in a few seconds later.

Unknown: *I'll explain when you get here. Bring Scott.*

“Okay, I'm just gonna say it: trap!” Stiles shouted, glaring at the phone like it was personally trying to trick them.

Isaac nodded, his brain replaying the messages, trying to interpret words that weren't there, make sense of underlying intentions. It would have been so much easier if only he could have listened to Ethan's heart rate and smelled his emotions.

“I know you're right but...”

“But? But! Isaac, no buts. It's a trap.” Stiles was literally shaking him as he said it.

“But if it's a trap why does he want me to bring Scott? I'd be an easier target alone.”

“I don't know. Maybe they want to jump you both.”
Isaac shook his head. “They’re not alphas anymore. Me and Scott could take them.”

“But you can't actually bring Scott,” Stiles pointed out.

“But Ethan doesn't know that,” Isaac answered.

“I can't believe you're actually considering this.”

Isaac frowned. He couldn't believe he was considering it either. A week ago he would have texted Ethan back and told him to go fuck himself, then blocked the number. But now...now he kept thinking about the entirely relatable guy whose boyfriend had dumped him in the library that afternoon. He kept seeing the genuinely devastated look on his face. He remembered their encounter in the weight room too, Ethan's apology. It had been worthless bullshit that was infuriatingly inadequate...but it had seemed real. Isaac didn't trust Ethan, not even close, but his gut was telling him Ethan wasn't trying to set him up, at least not this time.

“I'm gonna go,” Isaac announced, shifting onto his knees to get past Stiles on the bed.

“No! I'm not letting you. It's too dangerous.” Stiles got on his knees too, planting himself directly in Isaac's path.

“Stiles.” Isaac rolled his eyes, picked Stiles up by the waist, and gently placed him on the bed behind him.

“No fair using werewolf strength!”

Isaac pulled on his jeans over the boxers he was wearing and turned to retrieve his phone from the bed.

Stiles grabbed Isaac’s hand on top of the phone. “Please, Isaac, I don't want you to get hurt.”

Isaac swallowed around the lump that formed in his throat. He gave Stiles' hand a quick squeeze, then pulled his own free, taking the phone with it. “I'll be fine. I promise.”

“I'm gonna hold you to that. If you get killed I'll never forgive you!”

Isaac chuckled and walked out of the room.

“Or get over it,” Stiles muttered quietly once Isaac was in the hallway.

The comment stopped Isaac in his tracks and had him glancing back over his shoulder at his doorway. He wished he could turn around and go back in, climb into bed with Stiles and cuddle-watch another episode of their horror series.

Isaac sighed. That just wasn't the way his life ever went. He took a deep breath and steeled himself for what he knew was a mistake. Then he kept walking.

Chapter End Notes

What did you guys think of this chapter? I hope Isaac and Stiles' burgeoning closeness doesn't feel rushed. I just felt like their relationship needed some forward momentum. I re-wrote pieces of this chapter three times, trying it with both more and less
intimacy/development. This is what I settled on.

Anyway, I have a much clearer plan for the next couple of chapters and I'm really excited about the Isaac/Ethan arc I have coming up.
Isaac stalked quietly through the night woods, aware of every sound, every scent. His golden eyes glowed with heat as he used his powerful night vision to uncover details that would have otherwise been obscured in the darkness. He knew he might be walking into a trap, but he would be damned if he was going to allow the twins to ambush him. He was going to scope things out covertly, decide if he wanted to reveal himself or simply slip away like a shadow in the night. If he chose to leave they would never even know he had been here.

“Where’s Scott?”

Isaac shrieked and spun around, hands raised and claws out.

Ethan was leaning casually against the trunk of a pine tree that Isaac had just crept past. “You suck at prowling by the way.”

“I– how did you– but I jus–” Isaac frantically looked around, expecting Aiden to dart out of the shadows at any moment and attack.

“We’re alone, Isaac,” Ethan said in an irritated tone. “Which is the problem. Where's Scott? I told you to bring Scott.”

“Scott couldn't make it,” Isaac answered, doing his best to slow his racing heart and appear calm.

His efforts at finding inner peace were set back as Ethan growled with fury and spun around, swiping his claws across the tree trunk he'd been resting against.

“FUCK! Why can't anything go right today?!” As Ethan completed the arc of his swing, he shifted his body weight in the opposite direction, delivering a wood-splitting punch to the slashed tree with his other fist.

Isaac swallowed and backed away. The twins were always dangerous and unpredictable, but Ethan was supposed to be the calmer, more collected one. If he was acting like this, Isaac had even less chance of anticipating his next move, and he didn't particularly want his chest to be a stand-in for that tree trunk the next time something set Ethan off.

He sniffed the air to get his bearings as he turned to leave. The woody fragrance of pine sap from the damaged tree and the metallic tang of blood from Ethan's busted knuckles blended together in the night air, creating a macabre alpine fragrance that wasn't entirely unpleasant – still Isaac doubted the Glade people would descend on Beacon Hills for the formula anytime soon.

He was about to sprint away when there was a rustling of leaves and the snap of a single twig behind him. Air whooshed past him, and suddenly Ethan stood in his path, blocking his escape.

“Wait!” Ethan raised his hands, one of which was bloody but already healing, and reached for Isaac's arms like he was going to restrain him.

Isaac snarled and lashed out, just missing Ethan's face as the other werewolf dodged backward. Isaac realized too late that his failed attack left him vulnerable to a counterstrike. Ethan would have an easy time grabbing him or landing a heavy blow.
Instead of pressing his advantage, Ethan raised his palms and took a step back, out of Isaac's personal space.

Feeling less threatened, Isaac reassessed the situation. The scent of Ethan's anger had mostly dissipated, gone as suddenly as it had come. Ethan's claws and fangs were retracted, and his eyes were their normal chocolate brown color. He had an almost apologetic look on his face.

“I wasn't going to hurt you.” Ethan’s tone was level, soothing. Isaac knew the other werewolf was trying to play him. “Thank you for coming. I'm just upset Scott isn't here.”

“I wish Scott were here too,” Isaac muttered under his breath.

“So why isn't he?” Ethan asked, disappointment darkening his features.

“He...he just couldn't make it.”

Ethan raised his eyebrows, clearly expecting more of an explanation.

Isaac glared at him. He hadn't left his warm bed and his even warmer packmate to come out into the cold, dark woods and be interrogated by a lunatic with a tree vendetta. “He just couldn't, okay?! Drop it.”

Ethan frowned and started to say something else, but Isaac beat him to it.

“How did you get my number anyway?” Isaac folded his arms and leaned his shoulder against a still-intact nearby tree. He was eager to shift the conversation away from Scott and by extension his pack's vulnerability.

“Oh, I've always had it,” Ethan answered, resting his hand near Isaac's shoulder on the tree and leaning just a little too close for Isaac's comfort.

“Always?” Isaac tried not to get distracted by the way the moonlight shone on Ethan's face, making him almost magnetically attractive.

Fucking moonlight!

Ethan shrugged and smiled roguishly. “Well I mean I didn't come out of the womb with it tattooed on my inner wrist, but yeah, always since coming to Beacon Hills. We got phone numbers and other general info from Erica and Boyd when we first captured them.”

That snapped Isaac out of his lunar-fueled daze. “Oh right, you mean before you murdered them.”

Ethan's smile faded and he looked like he was going to say something but then stopped and tilted his head to the side, clearly listening for something. He turned in the other direction and sniffed the air. “Damn it, she's on the move.”

“Who?”

Isaac was alarmed when instead of answering, Ethan grabbed his wrist and took off at a brisk run. It was either fall and be dragged, which he wouldn’t put past Ethan, or run along with him and maybe finally get some answers. Isaac choose to run.

The path rose sharply in front of them, and Isaac assumed they were running up the side of a hill. He was wrong. His heart leaped into his throat as he realized it wasn’t a hill but a cliff – and he wouldn’t be able to stop in time to keep from falling.

Next to him, Ethan was already skidding to a halt and wrapping a strong arm around Isaac's chest,
arresting his momentum and preventing him from hurtling over the edge. Isaac watched in stunned silence as a few rocks and a pile of dirt flew over the edge and seemed to hover in the air a moment before crashing to the ground below.

“There you see?” Ethan calmly whispered, practically into Isaac's ear, as he pointed with his free arm. His other arm was still securely in place around Isaac's body, and he didn't seem in a hurry to let go.

Isaac pulled himself loose and took a step back, away from the edge. “I see that you're fucking insane!”

Ethan huffed and touched a hand to his forehead before waving his arm in a circle over the edge of the overlook. “Isaac, look!”

Isaac tentatively stepped forward and peered over the edge. Down below an injured wolf – no coyote – hobbled along a brush-lined path with a bear trap clamped to one of its forepaws. A long chain that must have originally been used to secure the trap to the ground was trailing between the coyote's hindlegs, dragging through damp dirt and clinking and bouncing over rocks.

“Aww, poor thing,” Isaac said.

“Yeah. When I got home from school I decided to take a walk to clear my head after...after what happened with Danny. Anyway, that's when I found her. Isaac, we have to help her!”

The intensity in Ethan’s voice surprised Isaac. He felt sorry for the injured animal too, but Ethan had killed actual human beings before. Why was he so concerned about some random coyote? Ethan must have had a soft spot for animals. It was unexpected but...well, kind of nice. Not that ‘nice’ was a word Isaac would ever dream of using to describe Ethan.

“Of course, we can't turn her back without Scott,” Ethan continued, “but once we get that trap off her leg, we can keep her here until he comes.”

“Turn her back?” Isaac asked.

“Well yeah.” Ethan shrugged.

Isaac felt like he was missing something obvious.

“You mean, like, back into a coyote without a broken leg?”

Ethan looked at him like he was an idiot. “You do know what she is, right?”

Isaac shook his head because apparently he didn't.

Ethan sighed and grabbed Isaac's wrist again, pulling him along the line of the embankment so that they could keep the coyote in their sight. “Okay, time for a werewolf lesson. Focus on–”

“I am not taking werewolf lessons from you,” Isaac cut in, already annoyed with himself for making ‘werewolf lessons' sound like a real thing.

“But you clearly need to,” Ethan smirked at him. “Don't worry, we'll cover prowling another night.”

Isaac grumbled and folded his arms. He was embarrassed that he had apparently missed something, but it would be even more embarrassing if he couldn't figure out what it was. At this point, Ethan was basically challenging him to figure it out.
“Okay, focus on the trap and her injuries. On the sounds they're making.”

Isaac trained his senses on the coyote a few dozen feet below, honing in on the trap as directed. Ethan was right; he did hear something, something...grindy and squishy and kind of crawly. Whatever it was, it was disgusting.

“What is that?” Isaac asked, cringing as they continued walking along the edge of the overhang, following her.

“It's the sound of her flesh trying to close up and her bones trying to move back into place.”

Isaac gaped at him as he realized the implication. “You mean she's a werewolf?! Err...werecoyote?”

Ethan nodded.

Isaac looked at her more closely, trying to make sense of what he was seeing. “Well then why doesn't she just shift back and pull the trap off?”

“Smell her,” Ethan told him.

Isaac sighed. Was Ethan physically incapable of giving him a straight answer? He inhaled deeply anyway, trying to ignore all the other scents and focus on just the animal. “Wait are you sure she's not just a regular coyote? She doesn't smell human.”

“Yes she does. You missed it. Try again.”

Isaac glared at Ethan. He knew what a frickin’ human being smelled like.

“You're confused because there's no chemical or artificial scents like you're used to on people, but look deeper,” Ethan said. “Go on, try again.”

Isaac took another deep breath and frowned, wondering if Ethan was just messing with him after all. “I seriously don't smell anything but fur and mud.”

“That's still superficial. Focus on finding her purest body scent underneath everything else.”

Isaac was a few seconds away from giving up but took one more deep breath. He held it in his lungs and slowly exhaled through his nose. There it was! It was the faint but distinctive scent of a human girl, but it smelled all wrong, unnatural somehow, even though apparently this was its most unadulterated form.

“Got it?” Ethan asked, smiling at him.

“Yeah,” Isaac answered, grinning back before he thought to stop himself. It felt good proving to Ethan that he could do it. Part of him also bristled with pride at the look of approval on Ethan's face. Then he remembered he didn't care what Ethan thought and told that part to shut up. “I still don't see why she doesn't just change back.”

“She can't. She's stuck. That's why we don't smell anything human on her except her personal scent, because it's been so long since she came into contact with human stuff. I don't know if she even remembers being human. I tried to talk to her before you got here, offered to help, and she didn't react like a person; she reacted like a wild animal. She growled at me and ran away, scared and angry.”

Isaac gave Ethan his best innocent look. “But isn't that how everyone reacts to you?”
Ethan huffed in amusement, evidently unoffended. Then he gave Isaac a more serious look. “That's why we need Scott. He's an alpha. He can reach past the animal and remind her of her humanity. He can make her shift back.”

Isaac nodded in agreement. If there was one thing Scott was good at, it was reminding someone of their humanity.”

“How long until he can get here?” Ethan asked.

Isaac didn't answer. He turned away, watching as the coyote limped off the trail and into a small opening in the rocks. He could tell by scent that it was her den. It all seemed so strange. He couldn't imagine what life must be like for her if she had any remnants of a human mind left.”

“How long?” Ethan repeated, placing a hand on Isaac's shoulder.

Isaac shrugged out from under it and stepped away. “He can't come out tonight.”

Ethan growled, sounding at risk of losing his own tenuous humanity.

“It's not that he wouldn't want to,” Isaac said, feeling like he needed to defend Scott's character. “Of course he would want to help her. He just...can't tonight.”

“And you won't tell me why?”

Isaac shook his head.

Ethan groaned and scrubbed a hand across his face. Flecks of dried blood still clung to his now fully healed knuckles.

“Do you know her or something?” Isaac asked, trying to make sense of why this was such a big deal to someone like Ethan.

“What? No, this is the first time I've seen her,” he answered, giving no indication that he was lying.

“Then...I don't understand why you even care.”

“She's scared and alone. Now thanks to that trap, she's also helpless and in constant pain” –Ethan turned and looked him in the eye– “and inside she's still just a regular human girl.”

“But why do you care about any of that?” Isaac asked. He didn't see how helping this girl would benefit Ethan, so it didn't make sense that he would bother at all, much less be so worked up about it.

Ethan scowled at him. “You mean because I'm an evil, selfish prick who delights in the suffering of others?”

“Well...yeah.”

Ethan's eyes widened, and he gaped at Isaac like he’d been slapped. Then his face hardened, and he narrowed his eyes. “Fuck you, Lahey!”

Isaac shrugged and backed up, hands out. “Hey that's not an unfair characterization.”

“Oh really?” Ethan stalked forward, crowding Isaac. “Did you forget the part where I basically betrayed my pack during the lunar eclipse to help save your pack and stop the Darach from killing more people?”
“That's your defense?” Isaac asked, claws extending by his side in preparation for the fight he knew was inevitable. “That you're basically a treacherous backstabber?”

“I did it because it was the right thing to do, asshole!” Ethan shouted, eyes glowing ice blue as he took another step forward.

“Oh right.” Isaac returned the cold glare and calmly took another step back, staying just out of reach. “Because we both know you care about doing the right thing.”

Ethan growled, claws and fangs finally extending. “We lost everything because of that decision. Our pack. Our alpha status. Aiden and I are fucking omegas now.”

“Gee, it's almost like karma's a bitch or something,” Isaac said with a laugh.

As soon as the words were out, Isaac knew he had gone too far. Hurt flared across Ethan's face, almost making Isaac regret his words, before it was replaced by a terrifying, fiery anger.

Okay, so maybe taunting an agitated former alpha with nothing left to lose hadn't been such a great idea. Isaac took a nervous step back, hoping to put as much space as possible between himself and Ethan.

Ethan lunged forward, claws hooking into the front of Isaac's shirt and closing in a tight fist as he lifted him off the ground.

“Let go,” Isaac gasped, thrashing and raking both sets of his claws down Ethan's arm.


There was no way to misinterpret that. Isaac swallowed once and steeled himself as he stared back, glaring into the icy abyss with what he hoped came off as unaffected apathy. He wasn't going to give Ethan the satisfaction of knowing he was scared in his final moments.

Ethan closed his eyes. When he reopened them they were brown again and so full of tortured emotion that Isaac gasped.

“But I'm working on that. And I don't need you judging me and throwing it back in my face every time I turn around. Now there's a scared, hurt girl down there, and I'm going to do something about it. You can either help me or you can get the fuck out of here and leave me alone.”

Isaac couldn't believe what he was hearing. He blinked at Ethan, almost more terrified somehow to be seeing him in a new light.

Ethan smirked at him. “Also, you just backed up off a cliff, dumbass. Watch where you're going.”

**HUH?!!**

Isaac's stomach lurched as he looked down and realized he wasn't being held a few inches in the air. He was dangling over a chasm.

A moment later Ethan tossed him back onto solid ground.

Chapter End Notes
Feedback is always greatly appreciated.
Isaac slogged through the underbrush behind Ethan, ducking branches and grinding through sticky bramble as he tried to make sense of what was happening. Ethan hadn't waited for his answer about whether or not he would help with the wounded coyote. He had simply walked away after tossing Isaac back onto the safety of the embankment, leaving Isaac to get up and scramble after him.

He smelled angry and hurt as they emerged from the tree line and onto a dirt path that would take them down the cliff. He must have been faking those emotions somehow to deceive Isaac and gain his trust as part of some machiavellian scheme that would screw over Isaac's pack and win him and Aiden the power they sought. There was just one problem with that theory: Isaac didn't believe it.

The adrenaline from the cliff incident had subsided, leaving Isaac jittery with rage as they followed the winding path through another clutch of trees and back toward the direction of the werecoyote's den. Ethan had killed Isaac's packmates, tortured him, invaded his mind, made his life hell for weeks – and now he was showing signs of genuine humanity? Fuck that. It wasn't fair. Isaac deserved to hate an unambiguously evil asshole. Ethan didn't get to try to make up for his past atrocities, and he sure as hell didn't get to make Isaac feel guilty for hurting his feelings. He didn't even get to have feelings as far as Isaac was concerned.

“I fucking hate you,” Isaac snarled into Ethan's ear as the other werewolf stopped and raised an arm, motioning for Isaac to stop too.

“Yeah, I got that,” Ethan whispered back, his tone blessedly sarcastic and bitter. Isaac could work with sarcastic and bitter. “She'll probably try to run when we get close.”

Isaac shrugged even though Ethan's back was to him. “I'm sure we can catch her.”

“Do you want to hold her or take off the trap?” Ethan asked, his voice now a tired monotone as he turned to face Isaac.

It was the first time Ethan had looked at Isaac since he hadn't dropped him off the cliff (in the back of Isaac's mind he knew 'hadn't dropped' was more like 'saved from falling,' but he certainly wasn't ready to confront that yet). Isaac found himself inexplicably trying to look into Ethan's eyes. He needed to see that they were back to normal, not that cold, terrifying icy blue or that devastated kicked-puppy brown, just regular old cocky douchebag chocolate.

“Stop.” Ethan turned away, denying Isaac eye contact. “Hold her or trap? Pick one.”

“I'll hold her,” Isaac answered, allowing a hint of apology into his voice.

Ethan nodded and they resumed walking. As they got close, the coyote popped her head out of her den, growled, and darted off at a hobbled run down the path in the opposite direction.

The two werewolves chased her with Isaac passing Ethan so he could be the one to catch and hold her. She was surprisingly fast given her broken leg, but it still wasn't much of a race. When he was sure he was close enough, Isaac pounced and tackled her.

What he hadn't expected was her strength and ferocity. She writhed and contorted in his arms, matching his strength and snarling in his face. Isaac's blood ran cold as he realized her eyes weren't
golden like his, but homicide blue like Ethan's and his brother's. Great, Isaac was trying to help a possibly psychopathic coyote.

As they struggled, Isaac did his best to stay out of range of her snapping jaws, but it was difficult trying to lean away while also hanging on tight so she wouldn't get loose. Just as she was about to sink her fangs into Isaac's face, Ethan grabbed her head from behind and wrangled her jaws shut.

“Thanks,” Isaac said as neutrally as possible as he took over the jaw hold from Ethan and sank down on top of her, pinning her to the ground.

Ethan didn't acknowledge him. Instead he crouched in front of the coyote and addressed her. “My name's Ethan, that's Isaac, and we're just like you.” He flashed glowing blue eyes at her. “I'm just going to take that trap off, okay?”

She growled and tried to attack when Ethan touched her injured paw, but Isaac held her firmly in place. After a few seconds, Ethan succeeded in prying the serrated metal teeth apart and freed her mangled paw. She whimpered and Isaac detected a shift in her scent as some of the pain and anxiety abated. She tried to get up, but Isaac continued holding her down.

“What now?” Isaac asked.

“I'll take her back to my loft. Send Scott over whenever he can make it,” Ethan answered, infusing extra sarcasm into the end of his statement.

Isaac just wanted to go home and put this overwhelming night behind him. He was more than happy to let Ethan figure out the logistics of getting a wild werecoyote up to a seventh-floor loft and keeping her restrained overnight. “Okay, here.”

He got up, intending to keep a firm hold on her until Ethan could take her, but as he shifted his weight, she lunged forward, wrenching her free and plowing over Ethan where he crouched in front of her. He toppled backward, grabbing at her as she ran over him. She snarled and sank her fangs into her hand, tearing out a large chunk of muscle and flesh before bounding into the woods at preternatural speed.

Ethan hissed in pain and collapsed to the ground on his back, clutching his torn and bleeding hand to his chest.

“I'm sorry. I'm so sorry. It was an accident. I swear.” Isaac rushed forward and knelt by Ethan's side, wrapping his hands around Ethan’s mauled one and drawing the pain away.

“What- Why are you...?” Ethan slowly sat up, blinking at Isaac.

Hand injuries fucking hurt. Isaac winced and braced himself as he redoubled his efforts and tried to ignore the sharp, shredded sensations that crept up his arms in thick black vines.

“Isaac stop.” Ethan pulled his uninjured hand away, but Isaac kept both his own sealed around the one that was still bleeding.

“It's my fault. It's all my fault.” Isaac shook as everything from the past few days crashed down on him. Allison dumping him. Lydia almost getting killed. Scott losing himself every night. Stiles' nightmares. Melissa's disappointment. The werecoyote hurting Ethan and getting away. Isaac was to blame for all of it. He had fucked everything up – again. He was as worthless as his father had said. No wonder Derek had kicked him out of their old pack.

“Dude, it's fine. It was just an accident. I'm fine.” Ethan was rubbing Isaac’s back, all soothing tones
Isaac gritted his teeth and took another long drag of Ethan's pain, stretching his ability to its limit. He wasn't doing it for Ethan; he was doing it because the pain felt right. He deserved it. It was his and Ethan couldn't have it.

"Come here." Ethan whispered as he drew Isaac against his chest with his free arm.

A cold sweat slicked Isaac’s skin as he trembled and buried his face against Ethan’s bloodied shirt. He clutched Ethan’s hand until the pain shriveled and dried up, until he was just clutching Ethan’s hand. Then he let go because that was fucking weird.

"Stop." Isaac’s voice was strong and his eyes were dry. He hadn't broken down. He had kept everything inside. He had taken the pain and gotten through it. He backed away from Ethan on his knees.

"Isaac, it's okay if—"

"No, it's not okay, Ethan. I don't like you. In fact, I hate you." Isaac whispered the next part, determined to keep his composure. “So please stop being nice to me.”

"Okay," Ethan said as they both stood, “but just so you know, I don't hate you.” He stepped across the dirt path and paused by the tree line. “I'm coming back out tomorrow night to try to find the coyote.” He gave Isaac a lopsided smirk and shrugged. “You could meet me.”

Before Isaac could respond, Ethan disappeared into the woods, heading west toward his loft.

Isaac was physically and emotionally exhausted by the time he got home that night, but he had learned long ago that life wasn't fair and that there was truly no limit to the amount of crap it might decide to heap on him at any one time. That's why it came as no particular surprise when he walked through the front door and directly into the middle of two separate crises.

A slow, sinister scraping rooted Isaac in place in the doorway. He cocked his head and listened. It was coming from the downstairs bathroom where they had left Scott tranced out earlier in the evening. Before he could move to investigate, a sharp scream pierced the air and sent a jolt of fear rolling down his spine. It was Stiles' voice, accompanied by the creaking of Isaac's mattress as he thrashed around in Isaac's bed upstairs.

Isaac took a breath and steeled himself. Stiles must have been having another nightmare. Isaac needed to go wake him, but since he already knew what was going on with Stiles, that meant that Scott and the sinister scraping in the bathroom won out in getting first dibs on his attention.

Isaac listened carefully as he approached the bathroom door, trying to make sense of what he was hearing. He couldn't recognize the sound, but his heart stopped as he recognized something else: the scent of blood, Scott's blood. Isaac rushed to the door and yanked it open, tearing the little paper sign Stiles had hung up several hours earlier in warning to Melissa.

“Oh my god!” Isaac shouted as he looked around the room. Etched in blood from floor to ceiling on almost every inch of the walls was the same two-word phrase, over and over: *Iron Claw.*

Scott sat by the base of the sink, covered in blood and scratching the last arm of a W into the wall. His latest scrawl complete, Scott raked the claws of his right hand down his left forearm, bled into his right palm, and smeared the blood over the scratched etchings he had carved.

“Scott stop!” Isaac ran into the room, grabbed Scott’s shoulder, and vigorously shook him.
Predictably, the entranced alpha turned and took a powerful swipe at Isaac, but it was easy to dodge since Scott was sitting on the floor and Isaac was on his feet.

Scott slowly stood. His unseeing eyes stared directly at Isaac but looked through him rather than at him.

Isaac wasn't sure what to do. In the past, Scott had always snapped out of it when he'd been shaken, but then again he had never done anything like this before.

Upstairs Stiles' distressed shrieks had elongated into stomach-churning wails, providing an eerily appropriate soundtrack to the waking nightmare playing out downstairs.

“Scott please, please wake up.” Isaac raised his arm in a defensive posture and darted close to Scott, poking and prodding him with his other hand, frantic to bring him back to his senses.

Isaac had expected Scott to take another swipe at him, but instead he grabbed Isaac's arm and twisted it backward, hard and fast. Isaac yelped and dropped to his knees at the alpha's feet.

“Please Scott, let go! Let go!”

Scott twisted Isaac's arm back into the correct position, relieving the strain as he continued holding him at the wrist. Isaac thought he had finally gotten through to his friend, but before he could even sigh in relief, Scott sunk the claws of his other hand into Isaac's forearm. Isaac whimpered and tried to pull away, but Scott was at least an entire order of magnitude stronger than he was. It was hopeless.

Scott yanked Isaac's wrist, pulling his arm taut as he held his palm against the gushing wound he had inflicted and filled his hand with Isaac’s blood before releasing him.

Isaac gasped and skittered away on hands and knees, only rising to his feet once he had reached the bathroom doorway.

Scott was using Isaac's blood like finger paint to scrawl *Iron Claw* on the bathroom mirror.

Isaac had had enough. There was only one other thing he could think to do to snap Scott out of this trance. He'd just have to deal with the consequences later.

He took a deep breath, faced Scott, and let out a long, deep, loud howl. It would likely wake everyone in the neighborhood, but at least the sheriff knew about werewolves and probably wouldn't take the inevitable noise complaints too seriously.

It worked. Scott blinked and shook himself as he looked around the room in horror. His voice was fragile and confused when he spoke. “Isaac...Isaac, what happened?”

Isaac rushed to Scott's side and wrapped his still bleeding arm around Scott's shoulders – Scott was already caked in so much of his own blood, Isaac wasn't worried about adding to the mess – and gently but urgently guided him out of the bathroom and away from the horror vignette.

Once they were back in the living room, he pulled Scott into his arms and held him tight.

“It's going to be okay now, Scott,” Isaac whispered, rubbing his back and aware that Scott would detect the lie. “Everything's going to be fine.”

“Isaac, what happened?” Scott repeated as he clung to Isaac and buried his face in the crook of Isaac's neck.
Stiles appeared in Isaac's field of vision over Scott's shoulder. His hair was disheveled and his shirt was drenched in sweat.

“Yeah, what happened?” Stiles asked in a voice so scratchy it almost masked the fear.

Isaac didn't have an answer for either of them.

Chapter End Notes

I know this chapter was pretty heavy, BUT I'm planning sexy time with both Isaac/Stiles and Isaac/Ethan in the next two chapters. So yeah, Isaac is going to get a nice respite soon.

Feedback is always greatly appreciated.
Isaac had missed out on a lot during his early teenage and adolescent years. His mother had died when he was eight, and his brother had died when he was ten; by the time Isaac was eleven his father had descended into full blown alcoholism and begun abusing him. While of course the abuse was painful from a physical and emotional standpoint, a more subtle effect was that it had also made it virtually impossible for Isaac to do the normal things kids his age were doing. He couldn't have friends over; he wasn't allowed to go to sleepovers or parties; he couldn't even hang out in public places. School was the only time Isaac got to socialize, and with what he was going through at home, it was difficult for him to connect with others. He couldn't open up; he couldn't trust. He had missed out on having close friends for much of his life.

Isaac had also missed out on having crushes. His sexuality itself had developed according to a normal time line, and he had always known that he liked both girls and boys. He had certainly had sexual feelings, but he hadn't gotten to develop his sexual identity through crushes and casual dating the way his peers had. He hadn't gone through the giggling-and-whispering-about-it-with-friends phase of crushes; he had missed the sitting-together-on-field-trips-and-holding-hands phase. There was no innocent, low-stakes, group dating phase. He had never stolen a kiss at the end of a school dance or nervously introduced himself to anyone's parents (Chris Argent didn't count because though he had made Isaac nervous, that was more of a werewolf/werewolf hunter kind of thing than a boyfriend/girlfriend's dad kind of thing).

But things had changed for Isaac when he became a werewolf; things had changed for Isaac when Scott McCall started paying attention to him. It would have been almost impossible for Isaac not to trust Scott. He had found out Isaac's darkest secrets: his history of abuse, the loss of Camden and their mother, Isaac's claustrophobia, the way he used sarcasm to keep people at a distance, and of course his werewolfism. But Scott hadn't hurt him; he hadn't used Isaac's painful past against him. In fact he had made it pretty damn clear that he was going to do whatever it took to keep Isaac safe. It was the first time Isaac had felt protected and cared for since childhood.

So Isaac had gotten a friend...and a crush. Isaac had been actively attracted to lots of people by that point: Derek, Erica, Lydia, Jackson, Allison, half the lacrosse team, most of the cheerleading squad, the entire population of a few small island nations (Isaac was a horny, bisexual teenager after all), but those hadn't been crushes. Isaac hadn't actually wanted to be around any of those people, at least not at first. Scott was different. Scott made him comfortable. Scott made him feel like he could let down his defenses and be himself. Scott was Isaac's first crush.

But Scott was his alpha now and his best friend. Scott was completely straight, and Isaac had moved on. He truly didn't have a crush on Scott anymore.

But Isaac did have eyes...and hormones, plenty of hormones. And Scott did have a fucking amazing ass — like an oh my god, I just want to spend the rest of my life worshiping it with my fingers, tongue, and cock kind of ass — and they were in the shower together after all. So yeah, crush or no crush, Isaac did have a raging boner.

It had been a matter of pure necessity. Scott was covered in blood. Isaac was covered in blood, sweat, dirt, and other forest detritus. They were both going to have to shower, and it was after four am, much too late for Scott to have any chance of resisting another dangerous fugue state if left to his own devices. Their only chance of keeping him present was to keep him actively engaged so he...
couldn't zone out. That meant that as awkward as it was for both boys, Isaac and Scott had to shower together.

Meanwhile, Stiles had taken Scott's keys and gone to the animal clinic to get mountain ash. It had been one thing for Scott to fall into a trance and not move until sunrise, but tonight had proven that if left unchecked he could be dangerous. All three of them, particularly Scott, had agreed that they couldn't let that happen. When Stiles got back, Scott would get in bed, and Stiles would encircle the bed in mountain ash. They would let him out in the morning and repeat the process each night until they could figure out a solution.

That just left the shower to get through. Isaac had gotten in first, rinsed away the worst of the grime, and scooted to the rear of the shower so Scott could enter in front of him and have access to the showerhead. There was enough room that they weren't touching, but it was a very different scenario than showering after lacrosse or cross country. In athletic showering situations, Isaac could keep his eyes to himself and focus on his immediate surroundings; tonight Scott was his immediate surroundings, and they were alone together, which made the whole thing much more intimate. Isaac may have been over his crush on Scott, but intimacy with his alpha, whether physical or emotional, was still something he craved with every fiber of his being...especially his cock.

Scott had started the shower facing Isaac, letting the water cascade down his shoulders, back, and buttocks. This had left Isaac carefully trying not to notice Scott's muscular chest and well-defined abs, or the heavy treasure trail that descended from his bellybutton, gradually thickening until it became his luxurious, dark pelvic bush – and yeah, Isaac had seen that tantalizing black shadow in the bottom of his field of vision and had desperately wanted to look, wanted to see Scott's equipment up close, but he hadn't. He'd kept his eyes squarely on Scott's face as they made small talk about their classes, carefully avoiding the topic of death curses and werewolf business, and certainly avoiding the topic of their current awkward predicament – and it had worked. Isaac had respected their friendship and Scott's boundaries, still didn't know what Scott's cock and balls looked like up close, and was generally feeling pretty good about his self control.

...Then Scott had turned around. Why did Scott have to turn around!?

Okay, yes, Isaac realized that most of the dried blood was all over Scott's chest and arms and that they would require a thorough washing, but still, everything had been fine until Scott turned around.

It was weird trying to talk to the back of Scott's head, and it wasn't like his broad shoulders and muscular back were killing the mood anyway, so Isaac had gradually allowed his eyes to wander lower.

Isaac gasped and the blood rushed to his crotch so fast it was like someone had turned on a hose. He went from respectably soft to I think I could drive nails with this thing if I wanted to hard in three seconds flat.

“Is everything okay?” Scott asked, interrupting his rant about the history essay they had due at the end of the week.

“It’s great!” Isaac cringed, his face heating. “I mean fine. I-I’m fine.”

Isaac liked different qualities in different asses, depending on whether the assholder was male or female. Scott definitely had the ideal male ass. It was round and muscular, but still looked very soft and pliable, practically begging to be squeezed. It was almost obscene the way it jutted out from the backs of Scott's strong thighs. To say it was perky would have been an understatement. It fucking defied gravity as it jiggled and bounced, powerful muscles flexing along with every move and half-step Scott made as he directed the water stream along the front of his body.
“Thanks for doing this, man. I know this is kind of weird,” Scott said softly, finally acknowledging their situation.

“Yeah, sure, uh no problem,” Isaac answered, utterly distracted by the cleft of Scott's ass and the cords of muscle above it that created three perfect valleys. Water rolled down Scott's lower back, filling each indentation and lingering in the light patch of wispy hairs above Scott's crack before flowing in thick, rushing streams over his smooth, bronze ass cheeks. Scott's ass was completely hairless except for that small area at the base of his spine as well as a thin line of black hairs that peeked out from along his crack, hinting at the existence of a very secret and magical forest that Isaac yearned to explore.

Isaac needed to turn around, think of something disgusting, and plead with his cock to get soft before Scott saw it. With the water running in Scott's face and the scent of body wash and shampoo dense in the air, there was even a chance that Scott wouldn't smell Isaac’s arousal. He just needed to turn around. He needed to stop thinking about closing the small distance between them and sandwiching his achingly hard dick between those wet, beautiful ass cheeks, nestling the underside of his throbbing shaft in that hot, hairy asscrack, squeezing the hard, sinewy muscles around his needy length, grinding his swollen cockhead into Scott's tight cleft, locking it in place with his thumbs, and just fucking thrusting his way into a manic euphoria until he shot thick, creamy ropes of cum all over his alpha's back.

“Oops,” Scott said as the bottle of body wash slipped out of his hand and clattered to the floor below. He bent down to retrieve it, his cheeks spreading in the process.

“Uhnn!” Isaac bit his lip and involuntarily stroked his cock, worried it would disown him if he didn't.

“Dude, I'm sorry, I bet I just flashed you.” Scott turned around, the body wash still in hand. “Ohh...WHOA!”

The bottle thudded against the shower floor again as Scott stared wide eyed and open mouthed at Isaac's erection for a few seconds before covering his mouth in surprise and looking away.

“Scott! Ahh! I'm sorry, I'm so sorry!” Isaac's face burned as he spread his palms in front of his crotch.

The motion drew Scott's attention back to the area in question and he chuckled. “You're gonna need more hands, dude.”

Isaac groaned. His cockhead and the top of his shaft were still exposed. He repositioned, palming his balls with one hand and pinning the length of his erection between his arm and stomach. “Scott...I don't know what to say.”

“You don't have to say anything,” Scott answered, his voice gentle. “Nothing to be ashamed of. I know firsthand that those things kinda have a mind of their own.”

“Y-you're not upset?” Isaac asked, eyes carefully locked on Scott's face out of respect for the situation despite his instincts telling him to drop his gaze in submission.

“Of course not,” Scott answered, giving Isaac's upper arm a reassuring squeeze. Isaac couldn't believe he was willing to touch him right now. “So then that was, uh, from me?”

Isaac reluctantly nodded. He couldn't have lied to Scott even if he'd wanted to, which he didn't because lying to Scott felt beyond horrible.

“Wow!” Scott said with a grin. “I'm not interested, but that's a big compliment. I mean a really big...”
“R-really?” Isaac asked, an unexpected wave of pride flowing over him.

“Um yeah,” Scott answered, eyebrows raised as he nodded. “You're packin' some serious heat, dude.

“I uh- I just thought it was about normal.” Isaac wanted to believe Scott, but he was suspicious that he might just have been trying to make him feel good. Scott was relentlessly supportive of his friends.

Scott laughed and hit Isaac lightly on the arm. “Only if you're a horse.”

Isaac grinned unabashedly at Scott, earning a grin back in return. He knew Scott was exaggerating at least a little, but it still made him feel amazing.

“I guess Allison has a type,” Scott said with a wink.

“You mean, uh, werewolves?”

“Yeah, werewolves.” Scott smirked at him. “–with big dicks.”

Isaac giggled. “That's going to look strange on her Tinder profile.”

Scott laughed and squeezed Isaac's neck. “C'mon, big fella, it's your turn under the water.”

Isaac was almost tingly with happiness at how amazing Scott was being about all this and how casually he slid past Isaac in the shower. There was minimal body contact, and none in their private regions, but he wasn't at all awkward about touching Isaac in general.

The remainder of their shower was even more relaxed than before Isaac had gotten hard. Upon reflection, he wasn’t surprised. Scott always went out of his way to protect people's feelings. When they had been on even footing, Scott had seemed about as embarrassed as Isaac had felt, but once Isaac was vulnerable, it was just like Scott to make sure he didn't get hurt.

After they dried off and dressed, Scott reached for the bathroom doorknob, but Isaac grabbed his wrist. Before he could let himself over-think it, he pulled Scott into a tight hug, draping his taller, lankier frame around the shorter boy's muscular body and drawing his scent as deeply into his lungs as he could. Scott hugged back with just as much urgency, and the sweet, silky aroma of happiness rolled off him in thick sheets.

Before letting go, they made eye contact and held it for a few seconds, smiling affectionately at each other. Scott stroked the space between Isaac’s shoulder blades with his thumb, and Isaac’s heart fluttered with joy. In that moment Isaac felt utterly cared for and safe. He finally had a friend, a best friend, an alpha he could trust completely. Scott may not have been able to give Isaac the physical intimacy that he had craved in the shower, but the emotional intimacy he lavished on him instead was richly satisfying in a much more enduring way.

I meant for this to be a Stiles sex chapter, but Scott insisted on showing off his ass and being affectionate with Isaac first ;(-)
So yeah, sexy time with Stiles coming up next, followed by sexy time with Ethan after that.

Feedback is always greatly appreciated.
The Good, The Bad, and The Dirty

Chapter Notes

A/N: Warning, this chapter contains graphic and somewhat kinky sex with some fetishes and light BDSM content (well no B actually, but DSM). If that isn't something you want to read, you can skip the second half of this chapter when the smut starts.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Stiles returned to the McCall house with the mountain ash shortly after Isaac and Scott got out of the shower. The boys pulled Scott's bed into the center of his room, and Stiles surrounded it with the mystical dust. Isaac didn't like that he wouldn't be able to free Scott himself if he needed to, but he took solace in the fact that Stiles was usually on hand, and if he wasn't Melissa probably would be. After telling Scott goodnight, Isaac and Stiles left the room.

“I'm sleeping with you by the way,” Stiles announced, walking into Isaac's room ahead of him.

“I figured,” Isaac answered, entering behind Stiles and closing the door. After their unexpected cuddle session earlier in the evening, Stiles had apparently remained in Isaac's bed while Isaac went to meet Ethan in the woods. It seemed unlikely that after spending most of the night in his bed, Stiles would suddenly decide to go sleep on the couch now that Isaac was home.

“Sorry, I messed up the bed,” Stiles said, nodding toward the disheveled heap of blankets.

“It's okay,” Isaac answered, patting Stiles' back as he moved past him to the far side of the bed so they could remake it.

“Really?” Stiles asked, pushing the blankets aside and retucking the bottom sheet. “Damn, you must be tired. I was sure you were going to bitch at me.”

“I don't bitch. I make well-reasoned observations,” Isaac countered, retucking his end of the sheet.

“Yeah...like a little bitch.” Stiles grinned. Isaac scowled and threw a bunched up blanket at him, but he caught it in the air and stuck out his tongue. “Is that the best you got, Mr. Big Bad Wolf?”

Isaac narrowed his eyes on his prey. Challenge accepted. He grabbed another blanket from the heap, but this one he threw over Stiles' head.

“Oh real, mature,” Stiles said, standing with his hands on his hips and the blanket completely covering his head and upper body.

Isaac snickered and grabbed the sides the blanket, using it to pull Stiles against his body.

Stiles' breath hitched, and his hands landed on Isaac's chest through the blanket. “I'm not complaining.”

“Oh really?” Isaac picked him up by the waist and tossed him on the bed.

Stiles shrieked and laughed, immediately sitting up and trying to pull the blanket away from his face, no easy task since he was partially on top of it. Isaac grabbed a pillow and waited as Stiles continued
giggling and flailing around.

“Huzzah! I have overcome the woolly fiend,” Stiles declared, finally pulling his head free and triumphantly fist pumping the air. Isaac promptly smacked him in the face with the pillow.

Stiles reached for the other pillow to retaliate, but before he could Isaac jumped on the bed and pinned him to the mattress, gently immobilizing his hands above his head and straddling his waist. “Gotcha!”

Stiles arched his eyebrows and shivered once from head to toe. “You're playful tonight. So I take it everything went okay in the woods?”

Isaac shrugged and rolled off Stiles, lying down beside him. “Not really...but yeah, I am in a good mood now.”

Stiles rolled onto his side, facing Isaac. “How’d that happen?”

Isaac glared at him in a way that intentionally lacked any heat. “I am happy some of the time you know.”

Stiles snickered and feigned surprise. “Really? Hmmp, news to me.”

Isaac frowned and folded his arms. “Just forget it.”

“Nope, I like it.” Stiles shook his head and grabbed one of Isaac's wrists, pulling his arm away from his chest. “And I'm going to take advantage of it.”

“What are you doing?” Isaac asked as Stiles draped Isaac’s arm over his shoulders and scooted in against Isaac's body.

“Reclaiming my spot!” Stiles declared, beaming at him before snuggling down against Isaac's chest.

“Oh,” Isaac said quietly, tightening his grip around Stiles and trailing his fingers along Stiles’ lower back. He placed his other hand on Stiles' chest, and in response Stiles spread his fingers so that Isaac's slotted between them. Isaac sighed and drew in a deep whiff of Stiles' scent.

If Isaac had been honest with himself, he would have admitted that this was exactly what he had been hoping would happen when he got home from the woods. He would have admitted that Stiles felt incredible in his arms and that other than Scott there was no one he'd rather touch. He would have accepted that he was developing feelings for Stiles, and that he desperately wanted to take things to the next level – whether that meant physically or emotionally.

But Isaac wasn't honest with himself. He was scared, scared of letting himself develop another unrequited crush on a straight friend like he had with Scott. He was even more scared of developing a possibly, just maybe requited crush on Stiles, connecting with him, and then getting dumped like he had been with Allison. Most of all, Isaac was scared of not being enough for Stiles, of letting him down when he inevitably fucked things up like he always did. Allison had never needed him; she was just having fun with him. That had been okay though because it meant that when Isaac screwed up, she wouldn't get hurt. Stiles on the other hand...Stiles was vulnerable. Stiles made Isaac feel needed – and Isaac loved that feeling - but it was also utterly terrifying. Isaac was already thinking about all the ways he might hurt Stiles or disappoint him now that they were becoming closer friends. He couldn't let anything else happen. The stakes were too high.

That's why when Stiles asked in a serious voice, laced with that damn vulnerability that was breathlessly intoxicating yet absolutely panic-inducing, “Hey, do I smell okay? I got pretty sweaty
Isaac wasn't honest, not with himself and not with Stiles. He didn't tell Stiles that he smelled like home and pack and everything good in Isaac's life. He didn't admit that Stiles smelled a little too good, that his pheromones were starting to have a physical effect on Isaac. Instead, he answered in a hard voice, full of practiced derision, “Yeah, you do smell really bad.”

Stiles pulled away from him and sat up. He looked a little bit hurt, but mostly just embarrassed. It was worth it so that Isaac could keep his distance.

“I'm sorry.” Stiles grabbed the front of his shirt and pulled it to his nose. “I keep forgetting you and Scott are so sensitive to odors.”

“It's fine. I guess we should just put a little more space between us and maybe some pillows and blankets to help block the smell.”

“Fuck that,” Stiles said, climbing off the bed.

For a moment Isaac assumed Stiles was leaving to go sleep on the couch after all, and he wasn't sure whether to be disappointed or relieved, but then Stiles did something unexpected: he grabbed the hem of his t-shirt and peeled it over his head.

Isaac kept his face carefully impassive as he casually tossed a blanket over himself for a little extra coverage. He could handle shirtless Stiles, at least for now, but if things went any further he was going to be in the same predicament he'd found himself in during his shower...and Stiles was already fumbling with the waistband of his pajama pants.

To Isaac's relief – or perhaps immense disappointment, probably immense disappointment – Stiles didn't take off his pants; he tucked the end of the t-shirt into the waistband, then draped an arm over the back of his head and sniffed his armpit – and okay, Isaac knew he should have found that weird and gross, but instead his crotch flared with interest as he studied the lean, tightly corded muscles of Stiles' biceps and triceps. They were compact, matching the rest of Stiles' slim frame, but they looked hard and strong. Isaac kinda wanted to touch them. Meanwhile, the pope was kinda Catholic.

“I'll go wash my pits and get rid of this shirt. Sound good?” Stiles asked, hooking his other arm behind his head too and bouncing on the balls of his feet as he twisted and stretched.

“Yeah, sure,” Isaac answered with forced nonchalance, doing his best not to leer at Stiles' stomach. When he was relaxed and had his arms by his side, Stiles simply had a trim, flat stomach, but all the turning and flexing he was doing had revealed a set of lean abs that Isaac had no idea even existed. Isaac couldn't help but wonder what other erotic secrets Stiles' body was hiding from him.

While Stiles washed up, Isaac finished tidying the bed and set an alarm on his phone. Normally, he would have to be up in less than two hours for school, but Stiles had called his dad and Melissa while he was out getting the mountain ash and filled them in on the Iron Claw situation – Isaac appreciated that. He hadn't been looking forward to seeing Melissa's face when she saw the state of her downstairs bathroom – and they had agreed that Scott, Stiles, and Isaac could skip school that day. Isaac set his alarm for noon anyway. He'd be hungry and ready to eat lunch by then if nothing else. He wondered if Melissa might leave them some leftover breakfast in the fridge. She usually got home around the time they were getting up for school and often made breakfast before going to sleep. On the other hand, Isaac was pretty sure she only did that for them, so if they weren't up, she probably wouldn't. It didn't matter. Isaac needed to remember not to count on stuff like that anyway.

A little while later, Stiles came back into the room, his face and bare torso dripping with water. He
wasted no time turning off the lights and climbing into bed. “Better?” he asked, burrowing back under Isaac's arm. It really was becoming his spot.

“It's okay,” Isaac answered, trying to play it cool as his fingertips slowly trailed along Stiles' bare spine. He flinched when he brushed against the cotton waistband of Stiles' pajama pants, and his hand darted back up to the much safer territory of Stiles' middle back.

“Isaac?” Stiles said a few minutes later, his voice just above a whisper.

“Hmm?” Isaac asked, continuing the slow massage he was giving Stiles. He could tell that Stiles was becoming every bit as relaxed as he felt.

“Thanks for...” Stiles trailed off and squeezed in closer. “Just thanks.”

Isaac mumbled something that wasn't meant to be coherent, just comforting. If Stiles said anything else after that, Isaac wasn't awake to hear it. He hadn't meant to fall asleep yet. He had wanted to hold Stiles until he fell asleep first and make sure that Stiles didn’t have any bad dreams. That's what he should have done, but Isaac was exhausted from everything that had happened that day and lying in the dark with Stiles turned out to be surprisingly relaxing. Although, relaxed certainly wasn't what Isaac felt when his mind began to wander into dreamland shortly thereafter.

“Stiles, you're naked?” Isaac asked, hand trailing along Stiles' spine again, but this time not stopping as it slid onto his nude ass.

“Well so are you,” Stiles pointed out, winding his legs around Isaac's naked thigh and gently pressing his cock and balls against Isaac's hip. “And you can play with my ass all you want.”

“Thank god, I'm so desperate for ass. I just thought it would be rude to ask,” Isaac answered, slipping his fingers into Stiles' smooth, hot valley.

“You can do whatever you want to me, Isaac.” Stiles rubbed Isaac's right pec a few times. Isaac enjoyed the contact until Stiles pinched his nipple and squeezed hard enough to make him gasp and whimper. “But there is one rule.”

“What is it?” Isaac asked, his middle finger finding Stiles' tiny puckered asshole. It was so tight he couldn't even get his fingertip into it, and good god being able to do whatever he wanted to Stiles as long as he followed one rule sounded incredibly fair.

“You're not allowed to cum,” Stiles answered, pushing back hard enough to impale himself on Isaac's finger. “Mmm, ohh. That's good, Isaac. I like that. Please promise not to cum so you can fuck me.”

Isaac bit his lip and gasped. Stiles had the most heavenly hole. The tight, tight heat was wet and silky. Everywhere Isaac probed felt amazing and blissful.

“Please Isaac, I really need this inside of me.” Stiles let go of Isaac's nipple and trailed his fingernails down Isaac’s abdomen before gripping Isaac's erection.

Isaac moaned and humped Stiles hand.

“Not until you promise!” Stiles snapped, releasing Isaac's dick and tweaking his other nipple in punishment.

Isaac exhaled a halting breath and his eyes rolled back. This was discipline he could get behind. The sharp sensation was perfectly on the border between pleasure and light pain, and Isaac was pretty
sure he'd be happy with whichever course it took.

However, Stiles ended the nipple play all too soon, leaving Isaac agonizingly aware of his cock. It was achingly hard, throbbing with every beat of his heart. The shaft bulged, straining against the skin, pleading with Isaac to get it the hell inside of something NOW before it got any harder, before that throbbing, wholly unsatisfying ache intensified.

Isaac's cock made a compelling case. And Stiles' hole wasn't just something he could get it inside of; it was everything. The ring of muscle squeezing Isaac's finger did so with perfect tension, expanding comfortably but snugly as Isaac slipped a second finger in. Stiles' inner walls embraced Isaac's digits, pillowing every nerve ending with silky warmth. Yes, yes, yes, he needed to get that on his cock.

"I'll feel so good for both of us, Isaac," Stiles told him, grinding against Isaac's hand. "Don'tcha wanna come inside?"

"I really need to come inside," Isaac answered as he slid in a third finger.

"You can, Isaac, you just can't cum inside," Stiles said, spreading his legs and getting into a squatting position so that Isaac's hand had even better access.

The new position had Isaac staring at Stiles' dick for the first time. It was hot. He had a long, slender prick. It jutted out in a straight line from his thick, brown bush, girthier around the base, but gently, almost elegantly, narrowing as it extended. The tip, however, undid the narrowing and then some. Stiles had a huge, bulbous mushroom head. It was flushed with excitement, a deep crimson. All in all it wasn't a cock Isaac was desperate to get fucked by but...

"You can jerk me off while you fuck me."

Yes! Isaac really wanted to stroke that long, beautiful cock while he fucked Stiles' ass. It would fit perfectly in his hand and he imagined how satisfying it would be to make it shoot. But not as satisfying as...

"Why can't I cum?" Isaac asked, voice strained with need. He was desperate to relieve some of the mounting pressure in his balls. They were already swollen and heavy. Fucking and not cumming would only make it worse.

"Stop whining," Stiles snapped, pinching both Isaac's nipples and rolling the delicate buds briskly between fingers and thumbs.

"Aaahh!" Isaac panted and moaned shamelessly.

"You can't cum because I'm in the bed," Stiles explained, giving Isaac's hardening nubs a few more tweaks, then flicking them for good measure. "The real me. I'm pretty sure you don't want to cum in your pants while he's sleeping on your chest."

Isaac frowned. Dream Stiles was right. That would be a bad idea.

"Okay, I'll do it. Get on your hands and knees," Isaac told him, pulling his fingers out of Stiles' hole and stroking his throbbing cock with the residual heat. God it felt good. He couldn't wait to sheath himself completely in that heat. "I can edge, right?"

"Oh, as much as you want," Stiles answered, arching his back and burying his face in the pillows as he wavered his butt in the air by Isaac's face. "Go on, take a good look."

"Holy fuck!" Isaac exclaimed, licking his lips as he spread Stiles' asscheeks open. It was so glorious,
Isaac could have sworn he heard trumpets and harps playing. Stiles' tight pucker slowly pulsed, opening just a bit, then squeezing shut again. It was a light pink, much lighter than the tan skin surrounding it, and the inner folds, just visible as it winked at Isaac, were a deeper, engorged red. He ran his index finger over it, toes curling in anticipation as it gently gripped the pad of his finger.

While Isaac played with Stiles' hole, his knuckles ground against the smooth, soft skin of Stiles' crack. The flesh was warm and supple. It would feel beyond good pressed against Isaac's shaft as he plunged in and out, chasing a release he wasn't allowed to catch, but would nevertheless pursue with unbridled enthusiasm.

Isaac bent forward and placed the tip of his tongue against the base of Stiles' hairless taint. He took a moment to inhale the rich, masculine scent of Stiles' balls. It was intoxicating, clouding his mind with even more lust. He reached a hand around Stiles' hips and grabbed his erection. Stiles' balls jumped in response and his cock throbbed in Isaac's hand. He gave it long, tight strokes as he slowly licked a wide, drooling swath from the back of Stiles' balls along his soft, fleshy taint, and onto his tight asshole. He lapped at the ring, coaxing it to open for him.

Stiles moaned and ground against Isaac's face, slowly impaling himself on Isaac's tongue as he reached between his legs and took hold of Isaac's hand, guiding it up from his shaft onto his big, swollen cockhead. It was slick and wet. The tip wept a sporadic but copious flow of precum. Sometimes it would seem to dry up, but then Isaac would change the way he was rimming Stiles, go a little deeper, a little faster, and the generous slit would reward his efforts with a gush of liquid encouragement.

Once Isaac's hand was completely saturated and dripping on the bedding below, he reached for his own neglected dick, clumsily slathering it with Stiles' juices and giving himself a rough, vigorous handjob.

"Isaac." There was a warning in Stiles' voice.

Isaac reluctantly pulled his mouth away from Stiles' hole long enough to answer. “I promise I'll stop. I just want to get right on the edge.”

God it felt blissful but utterly maddening. His cock was so needy that for the split second that his hand was stroking over one part of his long, aching shaft, the other parts were throbbing in protest. He was panting, moaning wantonly into Stiles' pucker as he pleased himself with Stiles' precum.

Isaac’s balls drew up against his body, and every stroke felt so good it was making him lightheaded. He trembled, keening with need. Nothing seemed as important as stroking himself harder and faster.

So he whimpered and let go. He only had one rule to follow, and he damn well wasn't going to break it.

“Good boy,” Stiles told him, turning around on the bed and giving him a pleased look as he squeezed and teased Isaac's nipples.

Discipline, reward, it was a blurry line, and Isaac was just relieved he had done what he was told. He grinned at Stiles, folding his hands behind his back and proudly pointing his angry, quivering erection at him, showing him how well he could keep his hands off it.

“You did so well, Isaac.” Stiles twisted Isaac's swollen right nipple until Isaac groaned and flinched. “I could tell you were really close.”

“So close,” Isaac emphasized, glancing at his left nipple hopefully.
Stiles moved his fingers there, gently rubbing the sore nub, teasing Isaac.

“Please,” Isaac whispered, his look shifting from hopeful to all out pleading.

“You think you deserve it?” Stiles asked, voice stern.

Isaac nodded.

“For being good or for being bad?” Stiles asked.

“I-I don't know,” Isaac answered.

“Then you better figure it out,” Stiles told him, his voice and face hard for a moment before softening, “But this one's free.”

Stiles clamped down hard on Isaac's left nipple, pinching it flat and twisting.

“Owww! Fuck Fuck FUCK! Oww!... Ohhha...Ohhh! Ahhhhhhh! Oh yeah!”

“There you go. Is that what you wanted?” Stiles asked.

Isaac nodded, his head cloudy with endorphins.

“You think you can fuck my ass now without cumming?” Stiles asked.

“Yes!” Isaac bounced on his knees in excitement, his arms wrapping around Stiles' waist, hands darting to his ass cheeks, fingers scrabbling into his smooth, spit-slicked valley. “Oh please, Stiles, please. I really need to get inside you.”

“Lay on your back,” Stiles told him, hand pushing flat on Isaac's chest.

Isaac quickly complied, stretching his long body across the mattress and folding his hands behind his head.

Stiles straddled his waist, facing him on the bed as he slowly began to squat, poising his entrance over Isaac's raging erection. Isaac held his breath in anticipation as Stiles' moist heat kissed just the very tip of his cockhead. He pulsed with excitement and drooled a bead of precum against the tight opening. There was no actual penetration yet.

“Please,” Isaac begged, practically tearing up in frustration, “I want to go in so much.”

“Fine.” Stiles smirked at him and abruptly sat all the way down against Isaac's hips, sheathing every part of Isaac's cock in a heartbeat.

Isaac yelped and clenched the sheets with both hands. “Fuck, FUCK, oh god yes, YES. FUCKKK”

He went from desperate need to full sensory overload in the blink of an eye. It was like Isaac's dick had been on fire and someone had suddenly drenched it in ice water, only it was warm, fleshy ice water, and it enveloped every part of Isaac in a tingly pleasure. Stiles' walls embraced every inch of him, caressing him, soothing the painful ache and turning it into something unspeakably good.

Isaac let go of the sheets and placed gentle hands on each of Stiles' arms, just above the elbows. “Oh Stiles, thank you,” he said with as much sincerity as he could. “Thank you so much. You're so amazing.”

“So are you, Isaac,” Stiles told him, slowly rising off of him, making Isaac whimper at the loss before
he plopped back down and enveloped him all over again. He maintained a steady pace, looking at Isaac with complete trust and admiration. “You're so good, Isaac.”

Isaac moaned, his chest tight and mind reeling as he met Stiles on one of his down strokes with a powerful up thrust of his own.

“You're so fucking hot, Isaac, and you're making me feel sooo good.

Isaac could barely stand it as Stiles’ perfect ass relentlessly massaged his needy shaft. He felt his balls quivering, frantic to at last unleash a very long overdue load.

“Your cock’s a fucking gift. You’re a gift, Isaac, a special gift.” Stiles gave him a warm, earnest look and rubbed his stomach. “Thank you for being in my life.”

Isaac gasped and thrust into Stiles with abandon. This was by far the most intense sex he had ever had. Stiles’ ass was heavenly, perfect, but even more than that – the things he was saying...Isaac felt like crying in happiness. His cock was quaking violently now, ready to let go and be consumed by all that warmth and joy.

“Wait, are you about to cum?” Stiles asked, hovering in the air with just the tip of Isaac's dick in him.

Isaac closed his eyes and nodded desperately.

“What the fuck, Isaac?!” Stiles yelled, startling him as he climbed off Isaac’s erection and sat on Isaac’s stomach instead. “I told you you only had one rule.”

“Stiles, I'm sorry, it's just–”

Stiles grabbed Isaac's nipples and violently twisted as he glowered at him with disgust and contempt. “I'm in the fucking bed with you, Isaac. And you were just gonna spray cum all over the sheets?”

“I'm sorry, I'm sorry,” Isaac said frantically, wincing and fisting the bedding as Stiles continued punishing his chest.

“You know what? I was wrong. You're not a good person, Isaac. You're a worthless piece of shit.” Stiles let go of his nipples. “You don't even deserve to be disciplined. You don't deserve to be acknowledged at all.”

“But...no, no that's not true. I-I'm trying to do better.”

“You couldn't even make me cum,” Stiles snapped, shaking his dick angrily at Isaac. “You're a lousy friend and a useless lover. What kind of werewolf can't even control his own body?”

“But I didn't cum,” Isaac answered.

“You think you can take credit for that?” Stiles folded his arms and lay back on the bed.

Isaac drew himself up, calling on the last ounce of his inner pride. “Yeah, how about this then? I'm going to fuck you again, and this time I'm going to make you cum so hard you scream.”

“Don't give me that cocky bullshit, Isaac. We both know it's an act. You're just channeling Jackson Whittemore.”

“I'm sorry.” Isaac dropped his eyes in shame. He should have known Stiles would see through him. Stiles had always seen through him.
“Fine, you can try to get me off.” Stiles spread his legs and slid lower on the bed so that his gaping hole was fully visible. His long, half-hard dick rested against his smooth stomach, daring Isaac to milk a load out of it. “But if you cum too I swear to god I’ll make Scott kick you out of the pack.”

Isaac tried to protest. “Scott wouldn’t–”

“Scott wouldn’t deny me anything. I’m his best friend, not you. If you hurt me or let me down in any way, you’re fucking done in our pack. Got it?”

Isaac swallowed thickly and nodded. He was on the verge of panic and he could barely breathe, but he knew Stiles was right.

“You better make this good for me, Isaac, and real me sure as hell better not find out what you’ve been dreaming about.”

Isaac nodded again and knee-walked into place between Stiles’ spread legs. He lined his cock up with Stiles’ hole and slowly eased in, carefully studying Stiles’ face to gauge his reaction.

Stiles’ eyes slid closed and his mouth opened. That was a good sign. Isaac licked his palm and rubbed it back and forth over Stiles’ softening but still bloated mushroom head. Stiles nodded, giving him the go-ahead, so he began working it back to a full erection as he thrust in and out of him, slowly at first but with increasing urgency as Stiles began to moan.

Stiles’ dick stiffened in Isaac’s hand, moving beyond merely hard again to pulsing and straining. Isaac could do this; he could get Stiles off. There was just one problem.

“Stiles, it’s starting to feel really good again,” Isaac whispered, ashamed of himself as he had to slow down his thrusts.

“That’s fine. You can get close, you just can’t finish,” Stiles answered, rolling his hips and grinding on Isaac’s cock.

Isaac moaned and bit his lip. “I’m scared I might.”

“Don’t be such a fuckup, Isaac. Now quit whining and get me off.”

Isaac took a deep breath and asked for what he needed, praying Stiles would do it for him. “Will you hurt my nipples some more. I think it might help.”

“Mmm, yeah, that'll be hot.” Stiles’ eyes flared with lust as he took Isaac's buds back in his hands.

“Aahh, FUCK!” Isaac gasped, his hips stuttering and rhythm breaking as Stiles twisted the nerve-rich nubs. Maybe he had been wrong. A hard wave of pain rolled over him, but it was swiftly followed by an intense breaker of pleasure. He felt more like cumming.

“Harder, Isaac,” Stiles demanded, gyrating his hips in a tight circle on Isaac's cock.

“You too, please,” Isaac panted, scared of how good it felt now that all the pain was gone.

“Tell you what, I won't stop squeezing till you make me cum.”

Isaac yelped as Stiles clenched harder, and he had to remind himself not to let his claws come out and hurt Stiles. This was about pleasing Stiles; Isaac was the only one who got pain.

“Fuck yeah, Isaac, use that big cock like it’s worth something!” Stiles yelled.
Isaac gritted his teeth and railed Stiles with renewed vigor, focusing exclusively on the burning throb in his nipples and ignoring all sensations from the waist down.

“Jerk me faster,” Stiles barked.

Isaac sped up his strokes, flicking his thumb over Stiles' cockhead with every jerk, trying to make it as good as possible for him. He felt a glow of pride as precum oozed Stiles' slit, some of it coating Isaac's thumb and the rest dribbling onto Stiles' stomach.

“Fuck yeah! I'm so close. Harder! Faster! Make it count,” Stiles ordered, pulling and twisting Isaac's nipples.

Isaac's hands and hips became a blur as Stiles' dick trembled and throbbed in his hands.

“Yes, YES, NOW!”

Cum erupted from Stiles' cock, hitting Isaac's thumb and spraying like a soda can all over Stiles' face, chest, and stomach. At the same moment Stiles released Isaac's nipples. Isaac gasped and whimpered, collapsing on top of Stiles as the blood rushed back into his bruised nubs, providing a sensation that was too intense to take but had to be endured regardless.

Isaac shivered and shook as he got up a few minutes later on wobbly knees. He was still ludicrously horny and completely unsatisfied physically, but psychologically, he felt a deep inner calm. He had gotten Stiles off good; the boy still looked like a cummy pool of jelly on the bed. He had served Stiles and proven his worth.

Stiles sat up. “Well Isaac, I have a surprise for you.” He reached under the pillow and pulled out a nipple clamp. “Do you want it?”

Isaac nodded. He really wanted it.

“Okay, so answer my question from before.” Stiles closed his hand around the clamp and gave Isaac a serious look. “Are you good, or are you bad?”

Isaac furrowed his brow and carefully turned the question over in his mind, considering it from all angles.

“Well?” Stiles pressed.

“I still don't know,” Isaac admitted. “I think I need someone to tell me.”

Stiles frowned and shook his head. “Then I'm afraid you can't have this.” Stiles clamped it onto his own chest instead. “Now wake up and figure it out.”

Isaac opened his eyes to bright morning sunlight streaming into his room.

Chapter End Notes

I know this may not have been the Isaac/Stiles sex chapter people were hoping for – perhaps because it took place in a dream or perhaps because it featured some extra kinks, or maybe both – but this is a slow build story, and I feel like Isaac and Stiles aren't ready to have sex in real life (well real story life :-P). Also, I'm playing with
different dynamics in Isaac's sex dreams as a way of highlighting his state of mind. His real sexual relationships may or may not be similar. Regardless, Isaac and Stiles will be having 'real sex' as the story goes on, and at least some of the time, it'll be fairly straightforward non-fetish sex.

Also, I know Stiles seemed 'out of character' in Isaac's dream (at least I hope he seemed out of character) but that's because he wasn't really Stiles. He was a construct of Isaac's subconscious imbued with various fears, desires, and curiosities about Stiles and channeled through dream logic.

Anyway, spoiler, the sexual contact between Isaac and Ethan next chapter won't be taking place in a dream, but rather in the real story world. I feel like they are ready to mess around since the emotional stakes are much lower for Isaac with Ethan at this point. Plus he's going to be really horny from the last two chapters ;-)

Feedback is always greatly appreciated!
Warning, this chapter contains graphic sexual content. No dream sex this time; this is Isaac's first sexual experience with a guy.

Isaac groaned and covered his face with his arm, trying to fend off the sunlight invading through his window and stinging his sleep-weary eyes. His other arm was wrapped loosely around Stiles' shirtless torso. Sweat dampened their overheated flesh at the points of contact.

Isaac's arm wasn't the only thing that was sticky-wet and uncomfortable. His dick was ramrod hard and had leaked into the front of his pajamas pants. The damp fabric clung to his over-sensitive cockhead as he shifted his hips. The thick, needy scent of his precum tickled his nostrils as he adjusted the blankets.

Stiles mumbled incoherently in his sleep and nuzzled his face against Isaac's chest.

Before falling asleep, Isaac had been borderline overwhelmed with warm, protective feelings toward Stiles, but now he was kind of pissed at him and resented his presence. Not only had Dream Stiles been a huge prick to Isaac, but Real Stiles was preventing Isaac from sliding his hand in his pants and relieving his aching problem.

To make matters worse, an unmistakable stiffness pressed against Isaac’s thigh, adding to his arousal. There were at least three layers of cotton separating them, Isaac's underwear and both their pajamas – four layers if Stiles was also wearing underwear beneath his pajamas – but it was completely maddening having their straining morning erections so near each other and not being able to do anything about it.

Isaac’s phone chimed and vibrated against the nightstand, jarring him from his thoughts and announcing it was noon. Stiles didn't stir as Isaac reached over him and grabbed the device to silence it. Scott was right: Stiles was a very sound sleeper, at least when he wasn't having nightmares.

Would he even wake up if I...

Isaac slid his hand under the sheet and tentatively rubbed his palm across the tip of his erection, grinding his swollen glans against the wet spot in his pants. He shivered and moaned under his breath. It ached really good. He couldn't remember the last time he had needed to get off this bad.

Stiles mumbled again and moved his hand higher along Isaac's side, into the space between Isaac's arm and his body, as if subtly nudging Isaac's hand away. Isaac glared at the top of Stiles' sleeping head, seething with anger that Stiles was once again preventing his release. Who the hell was Stiles to tell him he couldn't jerk off in his own damn bed?!

Isaac grumbled and reluctantly pulled his hand out from beneath the covers. He was mad at Stiles but even more angry at himself for what he had been considering. Masturbating with Stiles asleep next to him would have been pervy and morally questionable.
Isaac forced himself to be gentle with his sleeping packmate as he eased him away and slid out of bed. Dream Stiles kind of sucked, but Real Stiles hadn't actually said or done anything wrong.

Isaac tucked his erection into the waistband of his pajamas, picked up his phone, and stalked out of the room, intent on locking himself in the bathroom, finding the most hardcore video he could on his phone, and finally getting some fucking relief.

His hand was on the bathroom doorknob when he was stopped by Scott's voice from the kitchen.

“Mornin' Isaac. Could you come down here when you get a chance? We need to talk.”

The voice was below a whisper. No one but a werewolf could have heard it, but Isaac was attuned to Scott's voice, and the almost muted volume made it even more noticeable since Scott never spoke that low to anyone except Isaac.

“Uh sure, be right there,” Isaac whispered. A pang of anxiety stabbed his gut. The last time he had heard the phrase *we need to talk*, Allison had broken his heart. Was Scott about to 'dump him' too, throw him out of the pack?

As Isaac brushed his teeth and washed his face, hoping his erection would go down enough that he could pee, his rational mind tried to calm him.

*Scott's not mad at me. He seemed really happy with me last night, and I haven't done anything wrong. I'm not being kicked out. Scott's my friend. He cares about me. I can trust Scott. I can always trust Scott.*

But Isaac's anxious side had something else to say about that.

*Like I trusted Derek? Like Dad cared about me? Like I didn't do anything wrong with Allison?* *Fuck, I don't know when people are mad at me. They just are, and I can't control it or do anything about it.*

Isaac trembled as he walked into the kitchen a few minutes later, nauseated despite having an empty stomach. Nevertheless, he tried to slow his heart rate and force a calm expression onto his face. If Scott wasn't mad at him, it wasn't his job to deal with Isaac's neuroses, and if he was mad at him...then Isaac probably deserved it, and it would have been shitty to make Scott feel even more guilty about whatever he had to do.

“Mornin,” Isaac said cheerfully as he walked into the room and casually sank into the chair next to Scott. “What's up?”

Isaac was pleased with his effort, but it was difficult to fool a werewolf, especially the one who happened to be his alpha and best friend. Scott tilted his head and regarded Isaac thoughtfully before responding. “You okay? You seem tense.”

“Fine,” Isaac answered with a smile, but that felt too much like lying to Scott so he added, “Just curious what's going on.”

Scott patted his arm in a way that was probably meant to be reassuring but only made Isaac more anxious. He could sense the tension that also radiated from Scott.

“I've been texting with Lydia all morning about” –Scott frowned and took a sip from the glass of orange juice that sat on the table beside him before continuing– “everything that's been happening. And...Isaac, I think it might be better if you moved in with her for awhile.”
“What?!” Isaac’s heart leaped into his mouth. As worked up as he had gotten about this conversation, he had truly thought he was being irrational, that Scott wouldn't actually kick him out.

“No, it's okay!” Scott said in a rush, scooting his chair closer to Isaac's until their knees brushed under the table. He waited until Isaac made eye contact with him then continued. “You didn't do anything wrong. I did.” He dropped his eyes to the empty plate in front of him. “I hurt you last night, and I know that must have brought up a lot of painful memories. I don't want you to relieve that crap. I want you to feel safe at home.”

“I feel safe with you,” Isaac answered urgently, before dropping his voice to a whisper. “Please don’t make me leave.”

“I would never make you leave, Isaac. I just...” Scott frowned and took another swig of orange juice, finishing the glass. “Lydia told me what Allison's been going through and” –he took a deep breath and let it out slowly, worry plain on his face– “he's trying to hide it, but I know Stiles is struggling to keep things together too. I have to figure out how to fix this for the three of us, and of course I'm going to need you and Lydia involved in that, but I want to protect the two of you from the fallout as much as possible. They have plenty of room and she's sure her mom won't mind. You'll be safe there and you can keep her safe too.”

“And what about your mom?” Isaac asked, anger rising now that the shock had worn off. “What about Stiles? Who's going to keep them safe?”

“I talked to my mom about stuff when she let me out of the mountain ash circle this morning. She's going to close the ring every night before the sun sets and not let me out till morning. She'll be fine. And it's up to Stiles to decide if he wants to be here or at his house.”

Isaac folded his arms and frowned at Scott, feeling entirely like a guy pissed off at his friend and not like a beta challenging his alpha. “Oh so Stiles gets to make his own decisions but I don't? And it's safe enough for him and Melissa to be here, but I'm in danger if I stay?”

“Not physically...” Scott frowned back and fussed with the empty juice glass, spinning it upright on the table between his hands. “When I told Lydia about Iron Claw she said it supported one of her theories. She thinks I might be possessed.”

“So what?” Isaac frowned when he realized how that sounded. “Not like so what it doesn't matter, so what like that's going to make me want to leave. Scott, I” –he swallowed and brushed his knee against Scott's before steeling his courage and grabbing Scott's hand, hoping he wasn't being weird or inappropriate– “I would never abandon you. I don't care how bad things get.”

“I know,” Scott said, squeezing his hand, “but I'm worried if Iron Claw is like a dark spirit or something, he'll say something to you and it'll feel like it's coming from me, and...”

“And what? I’ll fall apart?” Isaac let go of Scott's hand and refolded his arms. “I'm not that fragile. Like at all. I can take a lot of abuse.”

“I don't want you to take any abuse.”

“But Stiles and your mom?”

“They don't have the same...history you do. They'll know it's not me talking.”

“Am I kicked out or not?” Isaac asked, cutting to the chase.

“No, of course not, but–”
“Then I'm staying.”

Scott smiled at him and looked relieved, making Isaac wonder if Scott had ever really wanted him to leave in the first place. “Okay, if you're sure?”

“I am,” Isaac confirmed, feeling proud of himself, like he had passed a test he hadn't known he was taking.

“Mom left us breakfast by the way. Yours is in the fridge.”

A wave of happiness warmed Isaac’s chest. There was no way he was leaving this house unless someone made him.

As he reheated and ate his breakfast, Isaac filled Scott in on his time with Ethan in the woods the previous evening. He kept the details sparse, excluding his and Ethan’s argument and his near fall off the cliff as well as the details surrounding how the werecoyote had gotten away, Ethan's hand injury, and his own unexpected reaction to it. He recounted only the basic facts and the outcome, concluding with how Ethan had essentially asked him to come back that night to continue the search and that he wasn't sure what to do.

“I think you should go,” Scott said when Isaac had finished his story.

“You do? Why?”

Scott shrugged. “She needs help, and it sounds like Ethan would have a tough time by himself.”

“But we don't trust Ethan,” Isaac answered, desperate for Scott to reaffirm that fact, even hoping that he might forbid him from seeing Ethan again by himself. If Scott wanted to protect him from something, this was what he should focus on.

Scott didn't answer right away, and when he did, Isaac didn't like the response. “I don't necessarily not trust Ethan.”

“You don't?”

Scott shook his head. “Besides, it's not really about Ethan. Someone needs to help that girl. I wish I could but...”

Isaac nodded. “You're right. I'll go.”

“You don't have to,” Scott answered, his voice serious. “I'm just giving you my opinion as a friend, not...being an alpha.”

“I want to help,” Isaac said, meaning it.

Scott smiled at him in the same way he had earlier, and another swell of pride filled Isaac’s chest. He might have skipped school today, but he was passing tests left and right.

That evening Melissa gave Isaac a ride to the woods after enclosing Scott in the mountain ash circle for the night. Isaac was reluctant to leave since Stiles was spending the evening at his own house and Scott would be alone, but Scott insisted that he would probably be trancing out soon anyway and that it would be better for everyone if he was alone when that happened.

“I don't like Ethan,” Melissa said as they rode to the drop off point, which happened to be conveniently located along the same stretch of road she would have taken for work anyway.
Isaac watched their GPS location on his phone so he could let her know when it was time to pull over and let him out. He shrugged but didn't look up. “Me either.”

“Are you sure you want to do this?” Melissa asked in a tense tone.

Now Isaac did look up. He gave her his best reassuring smile. “I don't think he'll try anything.”

Melissa looked like she wanted to protest but instead gave him a stern look. “Text me when you get home tonight. And call if there's a problem.”

Isaac cleared his throat and looked out his window. He wasn't used to being on the receiving end of what sounded very much like maternal concern, and he had no idea how to react to it. He also had no idea what Melissa intended to do for him if there was a problem, but eventually he coughed and nodded. “Okay.”

“You didn't bring your jacket,” She scolded, her eyes on the road.

Isaac almost laughed but managed to keep it in. It was like she was going through some kind of mental checklist. “I'm a werewolf.”

“Werewolves get cold too.”

He shrugged. There wasn't really anything he could do about it at this point. “Sorry?”

“Is your phone charged?”

“Yes,” he answered. The novelty of the situation had already worn thin. A few minutes later he motioned for her to pull over as they reached the closest point possible by road. “Here's good.”

She placed a hand on his shoulder as he moved to get out. “Isaac?”

He looked back.

“Be careful.”

“I will,” he promised, giving her a quick smile before climbing out of the car.

He wasn't sure if Ethan would already be in the woods this early, or where he was even supposed to meet him, but heading toward the coyote's den seemed like a good start. Sure enough, just as he was debating whether or not to text Ethan, a hand landed on his shoulder.

“You came.” Ethan sounded both pleased and surprised.

Isaac spun around, trying not to look startled, trying to act like he had known Ethan was there. Seriously, how had he not known Ethan was there?!

“You weren't at school today,” Ethan said matter-of-factly, as though informing Isaac of something he didn't already know. “I thought you might have been avoiding me.”

“Not everything's about you,” Isaac answered with a cocky smirk.

“You look nice tonight.” Ethan said it flirtatiously, almost sweetly, but then his nostrils flared and his eyes flashed blue. When he spoke again his tone was anything but sweet; it was completely predatory. “Fuck! And you smell even better.”

“Why would you say that?” Isaac glared at Ethan and pulled away from the hand that had still been
“Because it’s true.” Ethan took another long breath and let it out slowly through open lips, his eyes half-lidded in a look of intense satisfaction. It simultaneously made Isaac very uncomfortable and very turned on. “Geez, Isaac, you smell like you’re about to cum in your pants. What did you do, skip school so you could spend the day watching porn without getting off?”

Isaac cheeks burned with a blush. He hadn't had any alone time that day to take care of his mounting sexual frustration, and having Ethan standing there getting him more worked up and teasing him about his status as the horniest werewolf in Beacon Hills sure as hell wasn't helping.

“Fuck you,” Isaac growled.

Ethan smirked at him. “Sorry, I'm a top only, but I’m more than willing to slip you the D to help with your problem.”

“I'm just going to go home—”

“And jerk off,” Ethan cut in, talking over Isaac.

“If you're just going to stand around hitting on me all night,” Isaac finished, ignoring Ethan. “Are we going to look for the werecoyote or what?”

Ethan grew serious, the smile fading from his lips. “Yeah, you're right. Come on.”

Isaac wanted to protest as Ethan grabbed his wrist and led him in the direction of the coyote den, but he decided to pick his battles and, well, he was sort of getting used to Ethan doing this. It also wasn't the worst thing following him through the trees as the moonlight reflected off his tan skin and highlighted his lean, muscular back. He was wearing a snug, dark blue tank top and low-rise, brown pants. The backs of his thighs and calves gently strained against the fabric, leaving plenty to the imagination, but certainly getting the imagination flowing. As for his ass...well part of Isaac was still reeling from the news that Ethan was an exclusive top. Not that anything would ever happen between them – Isaac would never allow that – but that was an awfully hot ass going to waste.

Isaac coughed, shaking his head and trying to clear it of inappropriate thoughts. He blamed his shower with Scott the previous night and his hardcore sex dream about Stiles. His mind was addled with lust. That was the only reason he would ever have these feelings toward Ethan.

Ethan paused and sniffed the air. Isaac thought he was trying to track the werecoyote, but then he turned and gave Isaac a cheeky smile over his shoulder. “That is seriously so distracting.”

Isaac pulled his wrist out of Ethan's grip and resolved not to let Ethan touch him ever again. He also resolved to keep his eyes at face level for the rest of the evening.

That second resolution lasted all of three seconds as Ethan peeled off his shirt and tossed it over his shoulder before continuing through the trees.

“What are you doing?” Isaac asked, trying and failing not to study Ethan's lower back and the cords of powerful muscle that sloped down into that beautifully wasted swell of ass. No one got to enjoy it? Ethan really was a monster.

“I'm just doing you a solid,” Ethan answered as he stopped and turned all the way around, making sure Isaac got a good look at the hard, perfectly sculpted planes of his chest and his tight, rippling abs. God, he had an amazing torso. Isaac couldn't pry his eyes off it and completely embarrassed himself by not even attempting to make eye contact with Ethan.
“That’s not funny.” Isaac squeezed his eyes shut and desperately tried to get a hold of his racing hormones. It was difficult rebuffing Ethan’s advances when he was this horny and Ethan was being that shameless.

“It's not meant to be.” Ethan sounded more earnest and less teasing than Isaac would have expected. “Seriously, look all you want.”

Isaac opened his eyes but forced himself to look at Ethan's face like a civilized member of society. It wasn't that hard to do; Ethan had a really cute face too, especially with that damn glint in his eye and that playful smile tugging at his full, soft-looking lips.

“Let's just get to the werecoyote's den,” Isaac said, hating the obvious lust in his voice.

Ethan's smile widened and he stepped into Isaac's personal space before looking up at him from beneath a strong brow and very mischievous lashes. “We're already here.”

“What?” Isaac looked around. He didn't see the coyote's den. They were still in a thicket of trees, not along the open dirt path that lead to her rocky hideaway.

“Smell,” Ethan whispered, commanding all of Isaac's attention back to him. He was pressed almost against Isaac's chest, his body heat close enough to feel – and wow had Melissa ever been wrong earlier; it sure as hell wasn't a cold night.

Isaac studied his face. God, he looked good in the moonlight. His features were handsome, strong and masculine, yet with a soft, boyish quality. Smiling up at Isaac like he was, with crinkled eyes and wide cheeks, he could almost pull off innocent of all things, but the impish sparkle in his chocolate eyes belied his true nature. He was dangerous, unpredictable.

*Exciting, sexy,* Isaac finished involuntarily in his head.

“Smell,” Ethan whispered again, his mouth and lips somehow making the word sound much more sensual than it should have.

Isaac did as he was told, inhaling slowly and – *fuck,* Ethan was horny too. The thick, velvety scent draped itself around Isaac's insides, sinking lower and heavier until Isaac felt it in his absurdly hard cock. “You're aroused too,” he whispered, letting the need drip in his voice.

“Well yeah,” Ethan moaned more than said as his hands came to rest on Isaac's hips.

*Dammit!* Ethan was not allowed to touch his waist; *Fuck!* He really liked Ethan touching his waist.

“But that's not what I was calling your attention to,” Ethan whispered, pulling their bodies closer until their pelvises and the fronts of their thighs touched.

There was only one thing occupying Isaac's attention now, and that was the heavy hardness pressing tightly against his own through their pants.

Isaac whimpered and focused all his willpower on not rutting against Ethan's erection. He succeeded, but it truly was about picking his battles, and that meant that his arms were free to twine around Ethan's hips and his hands were allowed to hook loosely over the top of Ethan's ass, his thumb massaging the hot, hard flesh at the base of Ethan's back.

“We're about a hundred feet away,” Ethan murmured, his mouth almost but not quite on Isaac's.

Isaac closed his eyes and took another long drag of Ethan's arousal, holding it in until he felt tingly
with lust and then using the same breath to answer. “I think we're a little closer than that.”

Ethan’s hands left Isaac's hips and palmed his ass instead – and he might have ground Isaac's crotch forward against his own, or that might have been Isaac's initiative; Isaac wasn't really sure. Ethan took a long, shameless breath too and this time Isaac really liked that Ethan was smelling his arousal, especially when it resulted in Ethan's cock pulsing against his own. “Hundred feet away from the coyote's den.”

Isaac's eyes opened and a wave of embarrassment crashed over him as he remembered why they were there. He used the temporary clarity to push Ethan away and likewise backed up himself until he was bumping against a thin pine tree.

Ethan didn't seem to react to the broken moment, though he did take advantage of the new perspective afforded by the increased space between them to eye the bulge in the front of Isaac’s pants.

Crud! Isaac was pretty sure he was supposed to feel angry or self conscious instead of proud by Ethan's appreciative nod and the way he licked his lips.

Ethan sniffed the air again, this time lightly and with his head turned slightly away. “She isn't in her den. We don't want to get any closer or she'll know we're here.”

“So, we just have to wait?” Isaac asked, his voice shaky as he carefully looked past Ethan, over his shoulder instead of directly at him. He desperately needed to calm down and get himself under control.

“Isaac, look at me.” There was a sympathetic, gentle quality in Ethan's voice that had Isaac complying before he thought better of it.

Isaac gasped and bit his lip. Ethan looked obscenely hot now. His face was flushed with lust and he certainly didn't look innocent anymore. His broad, rounded shoulders and solid, muscular arms glimmered in the moonlight. His torso was lean and slim, but all sinewy muscles, deep ridges, and sloping planes. Most appealing, however, was the fucking huge tent in his pants and the way he slowly, lewdly stroked his hand across it as Isaac watched.

“Ethan, please I–I can't control myself right now,” Isaac admitted, hating how weak and scared he sounded.

“You don't have to,” Ethan answered, opening the top button of his pants and slowly unzipping his fly.

Isaac was transfixed. There was no way a small, suddenly visible patch of gray underwear should have been nearly this exciting. “I don't want anything to happen between us.”

“Then it won't,” Ethan answered in that same gentle tone as he spread his fly open enough that Isaac got a good look at the front of his underwear. They were gray boxer briefs, sexy, but nothing special, not like the designer briefs he’d worn Friday night for his date with Danny. They were nevertheless perhaps the most enticing piece of fabric Isaac had ever seen in his life as they strained against the thick base of Ethan's shaft and bulged around the outline of Ethan’s weighty balls. The majority of his shaft was still obscured by the flap of his pants. “Do you like what you see, Isaac?”

Isaac nodded, too scared to open his mouth for fear of what he might say, what he might offer or suggest.

“Do you want to see more?” Ethan asked, slowly rubbing his balls with one hand while using the
other to coyly toy with the flap of his pants that blocked Isaac's view of the rest of his clothed cock.

Isaac nodded again as he chewed on his bottom lip, his whole body trembling withlust.

“And you like porn right?”

Isaac flicked his eyes to Ethan's face long enough to let him know that was a stupid question before re-gluing them to Ethan's almost exposed crotch.

“Then think of this live action porn,” Ethan told him as he quickly bent and retrieved his discarded blue tank top from the ground. Isaac wasn't sure when it had fallen off his shoulder but wasn't surprised that he hadn't noticed, given how fixated he had been on other things. “Here.” Ethan tossed him the shirt, and he automatically caught it in the air with one hand. “If you don't want me to see anything, you can spread that over your waist.”

Isaac rolled his fingers over the soft, ribbed fabric, fighting the urge to hold it up to his nose andinhale.

“Go on,” Ethan told him, a hint of amusement in his voice as he read Isaac's mind.

That was all it took. Isaac was too lust addled to be embarrassed as he buried his face in the front of the tank top and absorbed as much of Ethan's scent as he could.

“You can also cum on it if you want. You don't have to, but I certainly won't mind if you do,” Ethan said, enjoyment plain in his voice as he talked about Isaac cumming.

Isaac looked back at Ethan, and his stomach tightened, whether in fear, anticipation, or pure lust, he wasn't sure. “Wait, I can...?” He didn't finish the question, but instead made the universal jerk off gesture with his hand.

Ethan laughed. “Uh, yeah, that's kinda the point. I'm not trying to wind you up or tease you. I want to help you get off.”

“Why?” Isaac asked, genuinely confused.

Ethan smirked and shot a look at Isaac's straining crotch. “Because you really need to, and because you've also made me horny as fuck now. So just sit back and watch me jerk off for your entertainment.”

Isaac's eyes flashed gold, and he let the moan he had been holding back tumble out of his throat. As hardcore – often disturbingly so – as his dreams and fantasies were, Isaac had never done anything nearly this sexual with another guy before. He had never even seen a naked, aroused guy in person. He could hardly stand the excitement and anticipation that coursed through his veins. He just needed to be sure there wasn't a catch.

“And I don't have to do anything in return? There won't be any...touching?” Isaac asked. It wasn't that he didn't want to touch Ethan, he very much did want to; he just didn't think his first sexual experience with a guy should be with one he couldn't stand.

Ethan shook his head. “I promise. No touching. You don't even have to show me anything.”

Isaac grinned, feeling happy and very excited. “Wow, thanks!” he said, slumping back against the tree and slowly sliding to the ground as he finally let himself look at Ethan with intent. No more stolen glances or nagging feelings that he needed to look away and calm down. This time he was going to keep looking at Ethan until he got off.
Ethan toed off his shoes and shimmied his pants down his hips until he could step out of them and kick them away. He stood there for a few moments in just his boxer briefs, letting Isaac take everything in. There was a lot to take in. His bulge was very substantial. The outline started front and center of his pelvis and went all the way off the side of his hip. The tip didn’t even press against his body, but rather jutted out into open space.

He stepped closer to Isaac, still maintaining a respectful distance, but inviting him to view things up close as he rubbed his fingers along the thick outline of his erection a few times, then gave his hefty balls a gentle squeeze through the thin gray fabric. From there his hand slid down along his inner thigh, fingers tugging at the edges of the fitted elastic legs and pulling them down where they had ridden up slightly.

Isaac sighed with satisfaction as he studied Ethan's inner thighs, surprised by how much they turned him on. They were thick, muscular, and a good bit hairier than Isaac had expected. Still not really hairy by some standards, certainly not as hairy as Derek's or even Scott's inner thighs – and yeah maybe it was inappropriate that Isaac knew how hairy Derek's and Scott's inner thighs were, but it was just something he’d noticed – but hairier than Isaac's own inner thighs, and certainly a surprise considering Ethan's ultra smooth torso.

Ethan slowly turned sideways, giving Isaac a good view of the perky swell of his ass and providing an opportunity for Isaac to appreciate how far out his tent bulged. Isaac swallowed and finally spread Ethan's tank top over his lap as he imagined what it would be like to rub his face against that bulge. He was trying to pace himself, but he was going to have to open his pants soon. They felt like they were about three sizes too small, and his balls ached in the tight confines.

As soon as Ethan turned around, Isaac regretted his decision to request a no-touching rule. Ethan had a beautifully sculpted, bouncy little ass. His underwear hugged the back of his thighs and hard-looking glutes perfectly, and his asscheeks were full enough to bow the tight gray fabric around them, teasing just a hint of crack down low between his legs, but pulling taut and smooth up high. Isaac really wanted to grope that ass and find the rest of his crack.

Ethan's cock was answered a moment later as Ethan slowly slid the snug material off his ass. Isaac yelped and thrust his hand into his pants, fumbling to get inside his own underwear as Ethan's came off. He tried to burn the image of Ethan's smooth, perky asscheeks into his mind. Unlike Scott's crack there was no hint of hair peaking out, but the growth clearly continued up the back and inner parts of Ethan's thighs and Isaac really really wanted to spread his crack open and find out exactly what was going on in there.

Plus...asshole. Isaac wasn't sure what he was when it came to guys, but he figured he was a top too, and he really wanted to see Ethan's asshole. He debated requesting that Ethan bend over and show him, but he didn't have the nerve. Besides, Ethan had said he was a top, so he might not want to show things off in that way, and Isaac definitely didn't want to press his luck. Then Ethan turned around...

Isaac's jaw dropped and he instantly began to reconsider his assumed preference. Ethan's cock was huge and kind of fucking terrifying, but as much as Isaac knew he didn't want that thing inside of him...he really fucking wanted that thing inside of him.

“Hold on, hold on, hold on,” Isaac chanted desperately as he yanked his hand out of his pants and fumbled with the button of his fly under Ethan's spread shirt. Forget clumsy in-the-the-pants action, he needed to jerk every inch of himself as he looked at Ethan’s cock.

“It's not going anywhere,” Ethan teased as he nevertheless paused with his boxer briefs still halfway down his legs, giving Isaac time to sort himself out.
Isaac never took his eyes off Ethan as he got his pants open but struggled with his underwear. Frustratingly, his erection was making it difficult to push the front down while staying seated and also trying to keep himself covered with the shirt. After a couple of infuriating seconds, Isaac growled and carefully but urgently ripped the front open with his claws. His cock at last sprang free, making a lewd tent under Ethan's shirt.

“Wow!” Ethan’s exclaimed.

Isaac quickly readjusted, bending one knee to hold the shirt up and keeping things securely in place with his left hand as he finally began stroking his full length with his right hand, all the while eye-fucking Ethan's cock.

He had fantasized graphically about Ethan in his sex dream, and he had been correct in some regards. Ethan did have a dark-auburn, close-cropped thatch of pubes – Isaac had inferred the color from his hair and the grooming from his general style – but his cock was even longer and thicker than Isaac had imagined. It was also shaped a little bit differently, curving up a little bit more. The main difference, however, was Ethan's cockhead. In Isaac's dream, Ethan had a cockhead that flowed sleekly from his shaft, was dark red and rounded, and terminated in a deep, swollen cleft and flared slit. Ethan's real cockhead was more or less the opposite. It was a reddish pink and sat lewdly on the end of his big shaft beginning with a thick, flared ring that Isaac couldn't help but imagine hooking on the rim of an asshole as Ethan fucked, keeping him from sliding all the way out. It also wasn't flat and rounded, but a tall, triangular dome, adding another solid inch and half or two to Ethan's already considerable length. His cockslit was anything but flared; it was sleek and tight looking and Isaac realized it would make the cum shoot out in a more concentrated, powerful stream.

Isaac's ass hurt just looking at that behemoth, and he told himself it only reaffirmed his decision to be an exclusive top like Ethan. No way was that or any other cock going anywhere near his tight backdoor...but part of Isaac keened with want and fantasized about Ethan's power cock stuffing him full and seeding him with a huge, thick load. Isaac never wanted to get fucked...but goddamnit, Isaac desperately wanted to get fucked.

In the few seconds it took Isaac to think about all that, Ethan finished sliding his underwear down his legs and stepped out of them with one foot. He kicked them into the air with his toe and caught them. “You want these?” he asked, his voice perfectly nonjudgmental.

Isaac furrowed his brow and reluctantly looked away from Ethan's dick so he could glance at his face. “What for?” he asked, genuinely at a loss for what he might do with them. Did Ethan think Isaac might want to put them on since he'd torn the front of his own? Because it would be a cold day in hell before that happened.

Ethan looked at him like he was an idiot and pointedly sniffed the air.

Isaac's mouth dropped and an immediate blush burn his cheeks. He was an idiot. As much as he had been getting off on the scent of Ethan's arousal before, he had stopped paying attention to any smells as soon as Ethan started stripping. It was an important skill for a werewolf, choosing to filter scents when necessary so that he didn't become overwhelmed, but in this case it was like choosing to eat a delicious meal with only half the taste buds.

Isaac drew a tentative breath into his lungs and groaned, his whole body trembling and his eyes involuntarily sliding closed despite all the wonderful sights to be seen. Everything smelled unreal. Ethan was so much more turned on now. The heavenly scent of his arousal had been dialed all the way up to eleven, and Isaac could friggin smell his cock and balls, completely raw and unfiltered.

Isaac's heart stuttered as he re-opened his eyes and stared with absolute want at the gray boxer briefs
Ethan was offering him, yearning for the amazingly dense, rich bouquet of sex pheromones that were packed into the front.

“I’ll take that as a yes,” Ethan said with a snicker as he threw them directly onto Isaac's face.

“Aaahh!” Isaac gasped and a spurt of liquid shot out of his cock as the most delicious, sexually charged scent he had ever smelled flooded his nostrils and coated the back of his throat. He immediately released his erection and pulled his hand away, unsure if he had cum or not. He barely had the presence of mind to even try to figure it out as he started to become euphoric from the crisp, blissful musk of Ethan's genitals. But calling it a musk wasn’t quite right because musky smells were usually old and dank. This was fresh, pure, and wonderful.

“Did you just cum a little?” Ethan asked, his voice low and dripping with lust.

“I–I think so,” Isaac answered between deep, stuttering breaths. It had felt almost that good and his hand, cockhead and shaft, pubes, and Ethan’s shirt were too wet for it to have just been precum, but it wasn't nearly enough or nearly thick enough to be a full load.

“FUCK, it smells good,” Ethan half growled, half moaned.

Isaac scoffed, incredulous that anything could smell good compared to the crotch of Ethan's underwear. The scent was making him warm and tingly all over and the mildly euphoric feelings he felt at first were intensifying, making him lightheaded and utterly blissed out.

“I'm getting close if you want to watch me shoot,” Ethan said, his voice more strained and erratic than Isaac had ever heard it.

“What?!”

Isaac sat up and pulled the underwear away from his eyes, making a point to bunch it up under his nose instead. He couldn't believe he had been missing the incredible show Ethan was putting on.

“Can you wait?” Isaac pleaded as he began to slowly stroke himself again. The pleasure was much more intense and richer this time. He could have gone off like a rocket if he had wanted to, and he certainly didn't need Ethan to wait for him to catch up. It was just that this was his first sexual experience with a guy, and he felt like he had missed half of it by not using his nose at first and then not using his eyes. He'd also had to stop jerking off for awhile. This was the first time he'd managed to get all three incredible sources of pleasure going at once, and he wanted to savor them for a little while before it was all over.

Ethan nodded and let go of his cock, but he was still breathing heavily and his heart was pounding. Isaac was kind of amazed he had been able to stop like it was nothing. Not wanting to miss anything else, Isaac got back to eying Ethan’s goodies and cautiously stroking himself as he drew Ethan's sex hormones deeply into his lungs again and again.

Ethan’s cock was obviously close to erupting. It had been smooth and, if Isaac were honest, kind of beautiful before, but now large, throbbing veins had broken out along the thick, girthy shaft, and his pink cockhead had flushed to a deep, dark red. The flared ring where cockhead met shaft was even more bloated and was now a swollen purple. Once again Isaac was filled with images of that big cockhead and pronounced rim hooking around his hole and staying satisfyingly in place as Ethan pumped him full of cum.

“I'm ready now,” Isaac whispered through Ethan's underwear, knowing his body well enough to know he was seconds away from slamming into a very intense orgasm. “And hurry.”
“Not a problem,” Ethan whispered back, low and needy.

Isaac took a long, deep breath, pulling Ethan's ball scent deep into his lungs one final time and holding it there as he began frantically pumping himself.

Ethan moaned and panted, jerking himself off with long, brisk strokes and cupping his balls with his other hand. An instant later his eyes flashed blue and he let out an animalistic howl as a torrent of thick, milky white cum blasted out of his tight slit with every bit of the force Isaac had been expecting. The first volley shot straight up into the air, clearing Ethan's head before raining back down into his hair and down one side of his face. The remaining ropes of cum drenched Ethan's chiseled chest and spattered gloriously against the hard ridges of his abs before dripping into the deep valleys.

Isaac had been wrong; Ethan's balls weren't the most sexually charged scent he'd ever smelled: Ethan's cum was, and that combined with the way Ethan's howl reverberated through every one of Isaac's bones, had him releasing a long, frenzied howl of his own as he erupted into Ethan's shirt. It felt so good his vision started to go black around the edges and he thought he might pass out. He had never cum this hard before. It felt like his whole cock had become one big, exposed nerve. His left hand scrabbled backward, seeking purchase against the tree and gouging deep claw marks into it as he deliriously jerked himself with his right hand, trying to ride out the powerful prolonged orgasm and watching in amazement as cum geysered through Ethan's shirt.

He collapsed all the way down once it was over, releasing his deathgrip on the tree and sliding sideways enough to end up flat on his back. He shook his head, dislodging Ethan's underwear from his face. The strong, rich smell was too intense to take now that he'd cum and all of his senses were heightened. He just lay there for a long time, panting and trying to slow his racing heart.

By the time he finally sat up, the cum was cool and starting to thicken and dry on his clothes, and his dick was soft.

Ethan had already put back on his pants and shoes and was staring down at Isaac with folded arms, a deeply satisfied, cocky smirk on his face.

Isaac shrugged and tried to look casual about it as he tucked himself back into his shredded underwear and rezipped his pants before tugging aside Ethan's sopping, saturated shirt. "That was okay, I guess," he said, wishing he could keep the huge, goofy grin off his face, but utterly unable to. He was still flooded with endorphins, and it felt like there wasn't a single problem in the entire world.

Ethan snickered and reached an arm down for Isaac, which he gladly accepted, gripping Ethan's forearm as Ethan likewise gripped his and hauled him to his feet.

Isaac kind of loved that their hands were still sticky with cum as they touched each other, and his heart almost stopped as Ethan took his shirt back and promptly stuffed it into the front of his pants. It made Isaac feel wanted on a deep level, and it was all he could do to keep from throwing his arms around Ethan in a tight embrace. He knew it was a hundred percent just hormones and that he had no true feelings for his sworn enemy, but in that moment he felt nothing but intense, fluttery affection toward him.

Ethan grabbed Isaac's wrist in that now familiar way. "I don't think we're going to be able to sneak up on the coyote tonight."

Isaac barked out a sharp laugh and leaned against Ethan's shoulder for a moment. "Probably not."

"Same time tomorrow?" Ethan asked, still holding Isaac's wrist and grinning with raised eyebrows in
a way that was absurdly adorable.

Isaac took a breath and carefully swallowed before answering. He didn't want to sound too eager at the suggestion. “Yeah, sounds good.”

Chapter End Notes

Anyone else enjoy this chapter besides Isaac and Ethan?

Whether positive or negative, feedback is greatly appreciated.

Also, this chapter now has an AU companion smut piece in my masturbation series Feels Good to be Lonely in which Isaac wakes in bed with Stiles like at the beginning of this chapter, but does decide to jerk off with Stiles asleep next to him. I felt it would have been inappropriate in the main story, but it was fun writing it as a one-off smut piece, so check it out if you’re curious.
It's About What You Don't Say

Chapter Notes
See the end of the chapter for notes

Isaac was almost giddy as he wolfed out and ran back to the McCall house that night. He was mindful to stay in the woods and out of sight from any passing cars, but other than that he let himself enjoy the shift in a way he never truly had before. Derek had always insisted that Isaac keep himself under control, even in the woods, in case he encountered a hunter or a supernatural enemy. Objectively Isaac couldn't fault that wisdom, but it had meant that his only opportunities to explore his wolf side to its fullest extent had been during training or combat. Oh sure, he had played with and tested his strength, speed, and heightened senses in numerous small ways, but he had never before gotten to enjoy everything at once for the pure pleasure of it.

But Derek wasn't Isaac's alpha anymore, and Scott had never told Isaac not to wolf out and play in the woods, so he wasn't technically doing anything wrong. Besides, they had a tentative peace with the hunters right now and since defeating the alpha pack there had been no sign of any new supernatural threats...except the ones that seemed to be developing within the pack, within Scott, Stiles, and Allison. Regardless, if Isaac couldn't let go and have fun on a night like tonight, when could he?

He grabbed a low hanging tree limb as he bounded by it, intent on swinging himself up and onto it. That plan was aborted as it creaked and snapped in his hands just as he launched himself into the air. He didn't mind. He laughed, enjoying the challenge of landing on his feet without colliding with anything. He could practically hear Derek's stern voice in his head, pointing out that Isaac could have smelled the rotting wood and avoided his blunder if he'd been paying better attention. That was true, but Isaac didn't feel like he had made a mistake; he had simply found an unexpected way of enjoying himself.

As if on cue, his phone buzzed in his pocket.

Unknown: Btw you're really cute when you smile.

Isaac had already been smiling before he opened the message, smiled harder when he saw it was from 'unknown,' and full on grinned when he read it.

Isaac: Shut up

Unknown: No [hand flipping someone off emoji]

Isaac snickered and waited a few minutes before putting his phone away, telling himself he just wanted to check his email and find out tomorrow's weather forecast, and okay yes, if Ethan happened to text him again he supposed he could be bothered to read it.

When he got home twenty minutes later, after poking his head in to confirm that Scott was zoned out peacefully on his bed, he sent another text, this one to Melissa.

Isaac: Home. Everything went fine.

He chuckled as he plugged his phone in to charge and took off his clothes, dumping his shredded underwear straight into the wastebasket under his desk. He had told Ethan getting off with him had been 'okay' and now he was describing his overall night as 'fine.' At this rate Isaac wasn't sure he'd even be able to survive a 'pretty good' orgasm.
That thought still in his mind, he tentatively raised his arm, sniffing the place where Ethan had touched him with sticky fingers. He moaned. The scent had blended into the background on the way home, but now that he was focusing on it again, it was potent...and still every bit as wonderful. He hated to wash it away, but he needed a shower.

Once out of the shower and in bed, Isaac was treated to another intensely pleasant olfactory treat: Stiles' scent on his pillow and bedding from his sleepover the previous night. It was a much less overtly sexual aroma than Ethan's semen, but every bit as delicious and pleasant in its own way. Isaac snuggled in directly atop the spot, his face nuzzled against the pillow Stiles had used. Between feeling utterly sexually satisfied and thoroughly enveloped in his packmate's soothing scent, Isaac slept better that night than he had in weeks.

The next morning was surprisingly pleasant for a typical Wednesday. Scott radiated a toasty-sweet happiness all over the house, and Melissa was tired but content as she fixed breakfast for the three of them. Isaac supposed her more sedate happiness was due to relief that Scott had gotten through the night safely in the mountain ash ring. He also allowed himself the indulgence of considering that maybe she was also relieved he hadn't had any trouble in the woods. It might have been unlikely, but it felt oddly believable as she ruffled his hair along with Scott's before sending them off to school.

“You're in a good mood today,” Scott said as he handed Isaac his helmet in the driveway.

“Yes.” Isaac strapped on the helmet and climbed onto the back of Scott's motorcycle. “So are you.”

Scott smiled at him before taking his place on the seat in front of Isaac. “Yes.”

Isaac and Scott got to school early so they stayed together, both going to Isaac's locker so he could change out his books. Then they would head to Scott's locker. Isaac liked that Scott was sticking by him, and Scott had already texted the others to try to arrange an informal pack meeting before classes started for the day. Isaac was eager to see his packmates, even Allison whom he hadn't spoken to since their breakup the previous week. It didn't hurt as much today. In fact he hadn't thought about it at all until now. He was cautiously optimistic that he and Allison could get through this transition period with their friendship intact. They were pack after all, and while that hadn't ultimately meant a whole lot in Isaac's first pack with Derek (what with everyone running away, getting killed, kicking him out, or leaving town), he was beginning to trust that things were different in his new pack with Scott. His packmates mattered. He wasn't willing to lose any of them, not again.

Just as Isaac was closing his locker the distinctive thrum of a heartbeat caught his attention, well twin heartbeats actually. He spun around, unsure what to do as the former alphas strode confidently through the hallway toward them, side-by-side with matching cocky smirks on their faces. He usually prepared for a fight when he saw them, and seeing Aiden still had that effect on him – his anger and adrenaline wanted to start pumping in anticipation of a battle – but seeing Ethan had the opposite effect. Isaac just didn't hate him anymore and was no longer viscerally afraid of him. In fact...

“Hey.” Ethan’s voice was low, too quiet for anyone but the werewolves to hear in the noisy, chaotic hallway. He flicked his gaze to Isaac and let it linger just long enough for Isaac to feel it.

“Hey,” Isaac called back automatically, his voice just as low.

For a moment Ethan's smirk softened into a genuine smile. Then his head and eyes were pointed forward again as the twins continued past them without further interaction.

“Wow, you guys are really starting to get along,” Scott said, his hand on Isaac's shoulder as they walked away in the opposite direction toward Scott's locker.
“All I said was hey,"

“Yeah but...you meant it.”

“How do you not mean a hey?” Isaac asked.

“It's about what you don't say,” Stiles interjected, falling into step on Scott's other side. “Like, 'hey, what's up?' versus 'hey fuck you!' It's a different hey even if you don't say the other stuff.”

Isaac leaned around Scott and made eye contact with Stiles. “Hey.”

“Okay that's just rude,” Stiles answered, folding his arms.

Scott chuckled and patted their backs as he stepped forward to unlock his locker.

Isaac propped himself against the locker next to Scott's and was neither surprised nor bothered when Stiles crowded close to him and slumped against his chest.

“Ugh, I'm so tired,” he complained, nuzzling his head against Isaac's neck.

Isaac snaked an arm around Stiles’ lower back and discreetly inhaled his scent. It made his lungs tingly and his chest tight with happiness.

“Wow!” Scott remarked, gaping at them. “You guys have gotten a lot closer all of a sudden too.”

Isaac’s cheeks heated as Stiles answered. “Yeah, Isaac's my new werewolf body pillow. You know, since you've been all clawy and bitey lately.”

Isaac and Scott both flinched.

“Keep your voice down,” Scott cautioned, frowning.

“And your brain on,” Isaac added in a harsh tone. He thought about pushing Stiles away in rebuke but...well he felt really nice where he was, and he was tired after all. It wouldn't have been fair to deny him a little rest and comfort.

Stiles grumbled and raised his head, but otherwise remained wrapped around Isaac. “Are we going to have that pack meet- err, packing contest this morning or not?”

Isaac sighed and Scott rolled his eyes as he shoved a book into his locker and slammed the metal door shut.

“It looks like Lydia can't compete this morning,” Scott said as he checked his phone. “She's running late, and Allison hasn't texted me back yet.”

“You're lucky then,” Danny remarked from the row of lockers across from them. “I've gone on trips with Lydia. She's a packing genius. She would have won easy.”

Stiles coughed and choked, and Scott looked like he had swallowed a goldfish. Isaac cringed but tried to look casual.

“Have fun with your contest, guys,” Danny said pleasantly as he walked off.

“How much of that do you think he heard?” Stiles whispered.

“Enough to know that you're an idiot,” Isaac answered.
“Well yeah but...”

Isaac's good mood continued until lunch when he went outside and spotted Allison across the common grounds sitting by herself under an oak tree. Sadness and distress hung over her like a cloud. Isaac had to do something to cheer her up.

“Hey,” he called as he approached.

She frowned but gave him a small wave.

“Mind if I join you?”

“Isaac...”

He didn't wait for her to finish as he plopped down next to her. “Scott was thinking about having a pack meeting today.”

She stared straight ahead at nothing in particular. “I don't think I can make it. I'm not feeling well.”

“Oh, what's wrong?” Isaac asked, keeping the question as light as possible.

Her muscles tensed, and anger swirled in her scent. “I don't want to talk about it.”

He tried not to take that personally, but it was difficult. He couldn't shake the feeling that she didn't trust him and never truly had.

“So, did you hear about Scott's Iron Claw incident,” he asked, hoping it might spur her to open up about her own problems.

She sighed, still staring straight ahead, her jaw clenched with barely controlled emotion. “Yes.”

“Stiles has been having really bad nightmares too and--”

“I'm sorry they're having problems!” Allison snapped, finally looking at Isaac.

He kind of wished she hadn't. He had never seen so much hatred in her eyes before, not even when Gerard had tried to brainwash her a few months earlier. It was devastating to be looked at that way by someone he cared about...again. He couldn't help but compare it to the way his father used to look at him.

Her face softened as Isaac’s started to crumple. “I'm sorry, Isaac, but I really can't do this right now.”

That's nothing new.

Before he could form a verbal reaction she got up and jogged away from him, apparently unable to stand his company even a moment longer.

He sighed and closed his eyes. The good mood he had so desperately clung to for the past twelve hours was utterly destroyed, and as that look flashed through his mind, he couldn't even remember what it had felt like.

His mood didn't improve as a warm scent brushed his face and a familiar heartbeat reverberated in his ears...but it didn't get worse either.

“You okay?” Stiles asked as he took Allison's place beside Isaac.
Isaac opened his eyes and regarded Stiles curiously. “Would you tell me about your nightmares?”

“W-what do you mean?”

“Like what happens, how they feel, what you think they mean. That kind of thing.”

Stiles licked his lips nervously, a conflicted expression on his face.

“You don’t have to,” Isaac said, feeling guilty for springing it on him and wanting to let him off the hook.

“No, I” –Stiles licked his lips again and very consciously pressed his bare arm against Isaac's—“I trust you. If you want to know. I'll tell you.”

Isaac pulled his arm away and a wave of hurt crashed over Stiles’ face before it just as quickly rolled back out to sea as Isaac dropped his arm heavily over Stiles' shoulders and pulled him against his body. “Your spot's free.”

Stiles shot him a look laced with so much unguarded affection that Isaac couldn’t help but cough and look away. A moment later Stiles' head was on his chest and Isaac was tracing lazy lines along his side.

“Last night it was Scott,” Stiles said softly, his heart rate accelerating. “I was stabbing him with a hunting knife, over and over. It was very...realistic.”

“That sounds awful,” Isaac said quietly, tightening his grip on Stiles just a little.

“Before that it was Lydia. I strangled her and then” –Stiles cringed and pressed the side of his face hard against Isaac's chest—“cut up the body.”

“Oh god...If you want to stop talking about—”

“It's been you too,” Stiles whispered in a shaky voice. “You remember the night you woke me up, and I was really happy to see you?”

Isaac knew he shouldn't have smiled but he did. That hadn't even been a week ago yet, but he already recognized it as major turning point in their relationship. “Yeah.”

“I was dreaming a-about when you jumped in front of my Jeep earlier that evening.”

“Oh god, Stiles, I wouldn't have done that if I had known—”

“In my dream I didn't stop...I accelerated...and backed up...and accelerated...and...”

Isaac squeezed him closer, wishing he could pull the painful images out of Stiles' head the way he could have drawn physical pain out of his body.

“I would never hurt any of you,” Stiles said with a quiet ferocity.

“I know that. Of course you wouldn't,” Isaac answered.

“But it feels so real when it happens. Like–like every time I think I really have killed one of you. I-I always...It makes me want to die in my dreams, do to myself what I did to you or the others. And sometimes when I wake up...that's what doesn't feel real.”

Isaac held him, slowly stroking his hand along the side of Stiles' body.
“Have you ever heard of lucid dreaming?” Isaac asked after the tension and fear had finally eased from Stiles’ body.

Stiles shook his head against Isaac's chest. “What is it?”

“It's where you learn how to control your dreams.”

Stiles scoffed. “Doesn't sound like a real thing.”

“I do it all the time.”

“Really?” Stiles raised his head and looked at him.

Isaac nodded. “I have some stuff bookmarked. I'll send it to you.”

“Isaac, thank you, but I-I don't think these are just regular bad dreams. I think...”

“I know.” He slid his hands along Stiles' arms, gently squeezing them. “But maybe it'll still help.”

Stiles nodded. “I guess it's worth a try.”

“Come on.” Isaac stood, pulling Stiles up with him. “Let's go get some lunch.”

After getting their food, Isaac and Stiles found Scott and Lydia at their usual table. Isaac was unsurprised that Allison wasn't there today; however, in her usual place was Danny, effectively preventing them from discussing pack business. Lydia was outwardly calm and collected as she chatted about a movie she wanted to see, but based on the discreet looks she kept giving Isaac and the others she had something she wanted to tell them. Isaac sort of wished he could just tell Danny to get lost so they could speak freely, but he knew that wouldn't exactly go over well with anyone at the table, and it would have been a lousy thing to do.

A couple minutes later, Ethan and Aiden entered the cafeteria and sat down a few tables away. Their arrival relieved some of the frustration Isaac felt about Danny's presence since the pack couldn't have discussed private matters with the twins in the room anyway, but it also made Isaac even more uncomfortable about having Danny at their table. He didn't miss the brief but significant look of anguish that passed over Ethan's face when he saw Danny, and it felt like a punch in the gut when Ethan's hurt gaze shifted a fraction of an inch and he made eye contact with Isaac.

Isaac frowned and shifted awkwardly in his seat under the weight of Ethan's scrutiny. It felt like an entirety before Ethan finally looked away and returned his attention to his brother, making an off-hand remark about the quality of their food.

Isaac didn't like that he didn't have to seek out Ethan's scent to monitor it for emotional changes. He had automatically honed in on it as soon as Ethan walked into the room, and he smelled the hurt, anger, and confusion billowing off of him the moment the emotions formed. Isaac's focus on Ethan was a bad sign. The fact that he felt guilty sitting next to Danny was an even worse sign. Why the hell was he taking Ethan's side in this breakup, and when had Ethan's feelings suddenly started mattering to him?

Isaac inwardly called bullshit on himself. Obviously this was because of what had happened between them last night. Isaac just kind of hated that it had affected him this much. He didn't want to feel anything for Ethan.

A flare of anger burned through him. This was Ethan's fault. He had probably planned it this way on purpose: Get Isaac off really hard so he starts siding with you – fucking asshole.
“Isaac, what is it? Your mood is all over the place,” Scott whispered almost silently behind a piece of bread.

Dammit, now Ethan was looking at them, regarding Isaac curiously and obviously awaiting his answer.

Isaac raised his milk to his mouth. “Can we talk later, Scott? We're not alone.”

Ethan dropped his eyes to his plate like he'd been caught.

“Sure, just hang in there,” Scott answered, not turning his head but glancing sideways toward the twins' table with his eyes to indicate he understood what Isaac meant.

“What is your problem?” Aiden asked his brother from their table, his tone none too kind.

Isaac couldn't help but draw a comparison between the gentle, concerned way Scott had checked on him versus the rough, demanding way Aiden was checking on Ethan.

Isaac dismissed the thought. Okay so Aiden wasn't being nice to Ethan. Of course he wasn't; he was Aiden. At least he had noticed something was wrong, which Isaac reluctantly admitted he appreciated on Ethan's behalf. Isaac had spent years sitting by himself, not being okay, and no one had noticed. Not even Scott and Stiles had noticed Isaac until he had become a werewolf.

“Dude, did your Jello tell you a sad story or something?” Stiles asked, draping his arm around Isaac's shoulders like it was the most natural thing in the world.

Isaac leaned into him. “Just reminiscing.”

“Well stop,” Stiles answered more sternly than Isaac would have expected. “Live in the now. It's better here.”

Isaac nodded and gave Stiles a quick one-armed hug, appreciating just how right he was without even knowing it. Isaac should focus on the here and now. He wasn't that lonely boy suffering quietly by himself anymore. Today as soon as he'd become only a little upset two people had noticed and checked on him, three if he counted the concerned affection radiating silently from Lydia.

Danny was looking at him too, but with less concern and more confusion and curiosity. “So what's going on here?” he asked, nodding at Isaac and Stiles, a smile tugging at his lips.

“Stiles is just being a good friend,” Isaac answered almost defiantly. He was normally completely cool with Danny, but the guy was unintentionally doing a lot of things today that were getting on Isaac's nerves, and that certainly included putting him on the spot about his burgeoning feelings for Stiles.

“You called me a friend!” Stiles declared happily and with no trace of self consciousness about the fact that everyone at the table was listening.

Isaac turned back to him, not seeing what the big deal was. “Well...yeah.”

“You've never done that before,” Stiles told him, still smiling as he went back to eating.

“But...you knew it.” Isaac wasn't sure if he should feel guilty or annoyed.

Stiles shrugged. “Still nice hearing it.”

Isaac furrowed his brow, utterly confounded by his friend and packmate. Over the last couple days
Isaac had gradually started to acknowledge that he was developing a crush on Stiles. He wasn't stupid, and he could only deny it for so long. Stiles felt a little too good in his arms and his scent was a little too comforting for it to just be friendship. Yet as much as he had always assumed that Stiles was completely straight, he had started to delude himself into thinking that just maybe he had been wrong, that maybe Stiles had feelings for him too. He seemed so receptive and affectionate.

This emphasis Stiles was placing on their friendship, seemed to confirm Isaac's worst fear: friendship had been all Stiles wanted from Isaac in the first place. He had even said in so many words that morning that the only reason he had cuddled up with Isaac was because of Scott's problem. He had probably just been feeling scared and isolated and had turned to Isaac for some much needed support and affection. Isaac was really glad he had been able to provide that for Stiles. It made him feel needed, and he was legitimately grateful that he and Stiles had bonded over everything that was happening. It was just disappointing that that's all it had been.

Isaac felt unexpectedly broken at the realization. He hadn't realized how invested he had gotten in this completely theoretical potential relationship with Stiles, yet it felt a bit like someone had replaced his intestines with broken glass and was now giving him a vigorous tummy rub.

Isaac's phone buzzed.

Unknown: *Your sadness is making my fruitcup taste rancid. Knock it off.* [angry face emoji]

Isaac couldn't stop the chortle that escaped his mouth as he looked up and saw Ethan grimacing dramatically at a forkful of pineapple. Aiden had left the table and Ethan was alone now.

Isaac: *You caught me. My singular goal today was to spoil your lunch.*

Unknown: *Asshole*

Isaac tried really hard not to smile as he put his phone back in his pocket, thinking about his plans to see Ethan that night. There may still have been broken pieces inside of him, but he was pretty sure there was more than one way to put them back together.

Chapter End Notes

Feedback is always appreciated.
To say Isaac was frustrated with Ethan would have been putting it lightly. Nothing he did ever made any sense. Just when Isaac thought he had figured out the 'rules,' Ethan was changing them. They were enemies until suddenly Ethan was working with them to stop the Darach. Ethan was his tormentor until suddenly he was being nice. Ethan made Isaac feel weak and worthless until suddenly he was making him feel special and wanted. Ethan had asked Isaac to come out to the woods and now suddenly he was hiding from him.

Isaac sniffed the air, once again trying in vain to locate Ethan's scent. This was ridiculous. Over the past several days he had gotten really good at recognizing Ethan's scent. This should have been as easy as detecting the aroma of freshly baked bread in a library or the stench of fertilizer in a shopping mall; it should have stood out. Yet the only traces of it were old and secondhand. The actual primary source, which should have been the strongest and most apparent, was nowhere to be found.

Isaac: This is stupid. I'm going home if you don't come out.

Several minutes earlier Isaac had walked toward the coyote's den, expecting Ethan to appear behind him like he usually did. When he hadn't, Isaac had sent him a text.

Isaac: I'm here. Where are you?

Unknown: Nearby. I can see you. Find me. [winky face emoji]

"That's it, I'm leaving," Isaac said out loud as he folded his arms and turned a full three-hundred-and-sixty degrees while glaring. Wherever Ethan was, he was getting a glare.

All at once Ethan's scent flooded his nostrils. It was like a dam had broken and drenched Isaac – and yes, Isaac had developed some positive associations with that scent, especially over the past twenty-four hours, but the cloying smugness pervading it made him want to gag. He turned toward the strongest point. Sure enough there was Ethan, barely fifteen feet away, leaning against a tree and waving at him with mock innocence.

"You're not funny," Isaac said, trying to keep the anger out of his voice so Ethan wouldn't know how much his antics had affected him. He felt like a complete failure to have screwed up something as relatively simple as near-range scent tracking on a familiar target. In his head, his dad's voice reminded Isaac he had always been useless while Derek's sneering face informed Isaac he regretted ever turning him.

Ethan’s smirk faded as Isaac turned away, intent on leaving. Before he could take more than a couple steps, Ethan had crossed the short distance and grabbed his wrist in that damn obnoxious way of his.

"I'm sorry." Ethan’s voice dripped with too much sincerity for it to be natural, but a quick heart rate and sniff test confirmed that he did mean it; he was just laying it on intentionally thick.

Great. He fucking pities me.

"You didn't make any mistakes. I was just showing off," Ethan said, tugging Isaac's arm too gently. If he would have only yanked it or squeezed too hard, Isaac would have been justified in growling and shoving him away, but with him being apologetic and gentle, Isaac would have looked like a
petulant child who couldn't control his emotions. “I'm good at stealth,” Ethan continued. “You weren't supposed to be able to find me.”

“So why couldn't I smell you?” Isaac asked hesitantly. He was playing into Ethan's hand, but he was too curious not to ask just to deprive him of the satisfaction. Besides, maybe Ethan did have a valid explanation that would let him off the hook for his failure.

“I was masking my scent,” Ethan answered, pride bubbling to the top of his emotional soup. It was a relief. The sympathy and remorse that had been there were much harder to take, especially coming from Ethan. The past few days notwithstanding, Isaac still desperately wanted to believe Ethan was an unconscionable asshole.

“How do you do that?”

“Well, there are the simple ways like staying downwind of the person you're trying to evade, not staying in one place too long, and not touching anything.”

Isaac nodded. That wasn't 'scent masking,' just common sense and basic werewolf training.

“But,” Ethan added, his voice rising dramatically, and okay yes, it was kind of cute how excited he was getting about this, “you can also literally stop releasing your scent and hold it close to your body.”

“Yeah, right!” Isaac pulled his wrist away and folded his arms over his chest. Ethan was messing with him. If that was a thing werewolves could do, he'd have found out about it by now.

Ethan gave him a cocky smirk and shrugged. A moment later his scent disappeared.

“Holy crap!” Isaac leaned into Ethan's personal space and sniffed his neck, too shocked to feel self conscious. His scent was there, but it was staying close to his body like he had said. “Okay, how are you doing that?!”

Ethan chuckled and his scent flared back to normal, prompting Isaac to take a step back since the close proximity was no longer necessary. Ethan took a small, half-step forward in response, keeping them slightly closer than standard conversation dictated.

A thoughtful look crossed Ethan's face, and he paused before answering. “It feels sort of like holding your breath but in reverse.”

“I think that's called exhaling,” Isaac remarked.

Ethan ignored him. “It's a specific type of shift. Like how you can control just your eyes or only your claws if you want to, but it's less instinctual and more learned.”

“So why haven't I heard of it?”

Ethan shrugged. “It's fairly advanced. A lot of werewolves never learn. It's easier for born wolves or alphas.”

“Oh,” Isaac frowned.

“But I'm sure you can learn.”

Isaac glanced at him curiously. “Really?”

Ethan smiled and placed his hand on Isaac’s shoulder. “Absolutely, you're a natural at werewolf
Isaac gaped at him. “You always make fun of my werewolf abilities.”

Ethan smirked. “Well yeah, you still suck compared to most werewolves, especially alphas, but considering you're a bitten wolf who was only turned – what, eight or nine months ago? – you're doing incredible.”

Isaac couldn't keep the smile off his face. Scott was the only other werewolf who had ever praised his abilities, but while Scott's opinion was certainly extremely important to Isaac, Scott was probably biased what with being Scott and all. Ethan on the other hand was an experienced former alpha who wasn't even Isaac's friend. If he said it, it must be true. Unless...

“Are you hitting on me?”

“Your smile is breathtaking, and those jeans make your ass look so good my cock throbbed when I first saw you in them.”

Isaac's jaw dropped, and he backed away slowly.

“That's hitting on you.” Ethan laughed and stepped forward, staying close. “Noticing that you're a quick learner and a naturally talented werewolf isn't. So do you want to learn how to do it or not?”

“You'll teach me?” Isaac was excited but uncomfortable with the implications.

“Of course,” Ethan answered with feigned nonchalance. His words might have been casual, but his body language revealed hesitancy, and his heart rate and scent belied mild anxiety. This was the least sure of himself Isaac had ever seen him.

That meant they both recognized this for what it was: a show of good faith on Ethan's part. If Isaac could learn how to mask his scent it would make him more difficult to track or capture and considerably more dangerous at stealth attacks.

“So while we're waiting for the coyote?” Isaac turned in the direction of her den.

“No.” Ethan gripped his upper arm to stop him. “We need to stay quiet once we get there, or we'll never catch her. I'll teach you the basic technique now, then you can practice while we wait. I'll practice too, and she'll be even less likely to know we're there.”

“You still practice?” Isaac narrowed his eyes. “I thought you were already really good at it?”

“Only half as good as I used to be,” Ethan said with a frown. “It's not something you can just turn off and on. You have to hold it, sort of like clenching a muscle.”

“Or holding your breath?” Isaac smirked at him.

“Indeed.” Ethan nodded and smirked back. “When we were alphas, Aiden and I could keep our scents masked for over fifteen minutes individually, and about nine in merged form.”

“Why–”

“It took more coordination and concentration to do it merged,” Ethan answered before Isaac could finish his question. “But now that we're betas again, we're around seven minutes each. It's meant to be a short burst thing anyway – use it to get away or sneak up and attack – but still the longer the better.”
“So which one of you can last longer?” Isaac asked innocently, fighting the smile tugging at his lips.

“Are you making a twin sex reference? Not cool, dude.” Despite his words, Ethan looked mildly amused before annoyance flared across his face. “But Aiden can go about ten or fifteen seconds longer right now. That's why I need to practice. I have to beat his time.”

Isaac snickered, wondering just how competitive they got. “Okay, so what do I do?”

“Start by focusing on your own scent. Let me know when you have it.”

Isaac raised his arm and sniffed the sleeve of his shirt. He smelled the soothing scent of pack where Scott and Stiles had touched him throughout the day; the fresh, clean fragrance of the fabric softener and laundry detergent Melissa used on his clothes; even traces of the astringent chemicals and dyes that had been used during manufacturing – but he couldn’t catch his own unique scent.

“Not your clothes.” Ethan took Isaac’s elbow and repositioned his arm so that the back of his hand hovered beneath his nose. “You. Your skin.”

Isaac frowned, his nostrils tingling from a different scent only a couple inches away on his wrist. “I smell you.”

Ethan nodded, a satisfied look on his face. “I like my scent on your skin. But ignore it for now.”

Isaac couldn’t focus as he felt the first stirrings of a physical reaction that definitely wouldn’t help. “Yeah well...it's distracting.”

“You're welcome,” Ethan answered with a smirk.

Isaac hooked his thumb in the neck of his shirt and sniffed his bare shoulder. There were traces of Stiles here too, but they were faint enough to look beyond. His brain shifted gears, and all at once he had a lung full of his own distinctive scent. Now that he had found it, it was obvious and pervasive. He released his collar and raised his head. “Got it.”

“Oh, now feel it emanating from your body, out through your skin and hair. Maybe try visualizing it as its own color.” Ethan shrugged and smiled playfully. “I see it as a slate blue if that helps, but that’s probably just because it's your favorite color.”

Isaac blinked at him and lost his scent. “How do you know my favorite color?”

Ethan rolled his eyes and flipped his hand up, his claws flicking out. He pointed at the back of his neck, reminding Isaac he had been inside his head.

“Fuck you!” Isaac snarled, his eyes flashing with golden heat as he felt the violation all over again.

“Just being honest.” Ethan retracted his claws and took a step back, granting Isaac the space he needed in his agitated state.

Isaac tried to calm down. Ethan knowing his favorite color was hardly the most personal thing he had learned by invading his mind. He turned his head and sniffed his shoulder again. “Okay, I've got my scent, and I'm feeling it and visualizing it. What next?” He didn't add that he was picturing it as a slate blue like Ethan had suggested, or that he was curious about Ethan's favorite color so he could likewise ascribe it to Ethan’s scent.

“Stop it, block it, squeeze it shut. Maybe imagine your pores closing around it.”
“I don’t know how to do that.”

“Hmm.” Ethan traced his thumb across his chin as he thought. He had soft-looking lips and a great jawline – but Isaac didn’t notice. “Okay, you know how when you do a shift it feels sort of like your eyes get warm, or your fingers feel sharp, or your face feels fuzzy?”

“Yeah.”

“It’s like that but more of a cold, tight feeling. To me it feels like holding my breath but on the outside, and it’ll feel sort of like clenching a muscle around your entire body, but especially your chest.”

Isaac closed his eyes and concentrated, trying to find and feel those sensations.

“Keep visualizing your scent. Picture it as a cloud of gas slowly wafting out of a pipe and you’re squeezing a valve shut to seal it.”

Isaac strained and tensed his whole body. He thought he might have located the ‘muscle’ Ethan was talking about, but it didn’t feel like it was within his control. He grunted and tried to force it to yield to his will, but he barely managed a few seconds of weak twitching before his strength gave out and he gasped. “I can’t do it.”

“You did it,” Ethan countered with a serious look.

“No, I didn’t. The...valve stayed open.”

“Well yeah. You’re not gonna shut it completely on your first try, but your scent flickered and got weaker for a moment.”

“So, you really think I can do it?” Isaac asked.

“Like I said, you did do it. You just need to keep practicing.” He squeezed Isaac’s shoulder. “And I’m impressed by the way. Aiden and I couldn’t even find it the first time we tried...of course we were only about eight at the time, but still, great first effort.”

“Thanks,” Isaac said quietly, referring to both the compliment and the lesson in general.

“Come on,” Ethan said, guiding him toward the coyote’s den with a hand on his middle back. “Next time I’ll teach you how to hide your heartbeat.”

“Wait what?!” Isaac whirled around.

Ethan laughed and pushed him forward. “Keep walking.”

Once they were within the same of clutch of trees as the night before, Ethan raised a finger to his lips and quietly sank to the ground, leaning back against the tree Isaac had clawed during his orgasm the previous night.

Isaac frowned but reluctantly sat a few feet away from Ethan, leaning against a different tree near where Ethan had put on his show. He pulled out his phone and sent Ethan a text since they weren’t supposed to talk.

Isaac: Really? We had to come back HERE?

Ethan smiled and winked at Isaac as he sent his response.
Unknown: *I like it here. It smells good.*

Isaac rolled his eyes but gave in to the urge to take a deep breath and roll the scent around in his lungs. The pheromones had weakened considerably in the past twenty-four hours, but he could still smell the rich, bold yet nuanced scents of their cum. He was practically but not quite on top of where Ethan had released his seed the night before, and Ethan was sitting *directly* on what had been Isaac's wet spot.

A few seconds later, Isaac was fully hard and his stomach was clenched in a combination of anxiety and excitement. He tried to keep his breathing steady as he crossed his legs and hunched forward, hiding his erection as best he could.

He chanced a glance at Ethan, who was taking a very different approach. He had spread his legs and leaned way back, showing off the sizable bulge in his pants. As Isaac watched, he winked at him again and slowly stroked his fingers along the full length of that obscene outline a couple times before roughly rubbing his palm over the tip.

God that thing was huge, and Isaac really wanted to see it out in the open again, but he knew that couldn't happen.

Isaac: *We can't mess around again tonight or we'll never catch the coyote.*

Ethan nodded as he responded.

Unknown: *I know. I don't want mess around. I'm just having some fun.*

Isaac frowned, unsure whether he was more disappointed or offended. His phone lit up again a moment later.

Unknown: *But I'm just talking about tonight. Let me know when you're ready to do more stuff – or the same stuff again. That's a standing offer.*

Isaac looked up and made eye contact with Ethan. He nodded, completely serious before resuming typing.

Unknown: *Whenever, whatever*

Isaac gasped, his heart racing. That was an awful lot of possibilities.

Isaac: *I still don't even like you.*

Ethan let out a silent laugh.

Unknown: *We both know that isn't true. But you don't have to like me. Use me [winky face emoji]*

A low, involuntary whimper escaped Isaac's throat as Ethan lifted his shirt with one hand, flashing his lean, rippling abs as he hooked the thumb of his other hand into the front of his pants and pushed them down enough to show off his most of his pelvis and the dense, trimmed bush that covered it, but none of his actual penis.

By now the scent of Ethan's fresh arousal was blanketing the air around them, and all Isaac wanted to do was swaddle himself in that libidinous aroma for the rest of his life. He gave up trying to control himself as he typed back.

Isaac: *Open your pants.*
Ethan shook his head and sat up, drawing his knees up and obscuring his bulge. A moment later his scent disappeared entirely.

Unknown: *Sorry man, we really can't tonight. We need to stay on task. I'll quit being a cocktease.*

Isaac frowned and glared at Ethan. He really had been a cocktease, and Isaac was angry he'd fallen for it. Ethan was playing a game with him – get him hot and make him ask for it, then deny him.

Unknown: *I brought us back here because our old scents will obscure our new ones, and she's probably used to the old ones by now. Ignore them and practice your new skill.*

Isaac didn’t look up as he inwardly admitted that was a good strategy. It didn't change the fact that Ethan had intentionally wound him up for nothing, but Isaac decided to take Ethan's advice. Sure, he couldn't do the sort of experimenting he had been hoping to do, but trying to mask his scent was an equally exciting new thing he wanted to explore.

At first he didn’t have much luck, but after about ten minutes of trying he managed to squeeze his scent off fully for a few seconds before buckling and letting go. When he looked up, Ethan was grinning and nodding at him.

Unknown: *You are doing so well! You seriously shouldn't already be that good.*

Ethan’s scent flared back, heavy with admiration and approval.

Isaac felt himself blushing and looked away. It was embarrassing how good Ethan's approval made him feel. In truth, approval from *anyone* tended to have a stronger effect on Isaac than he would have liked, but Ethan's approval felt way too important considering its source. Isaac knew he desperately needed to get a hold of himself and not let Ethan's opinion matter this much. Ethan *would* hurt him, it was only a matter of time.

Isaac gritted his teeth and plunged into another scent blocking session, this time as much to hide his emotions from Ethan as anything else.

Unknown: *Relax your body. It may seem counterintuitive but it makes it easier, and you'll use less energy.*

Isaac nodded as he broke again after another few seconds. The next time he tried, he made a point of keeping his body slack. It took more focus, but it did seem to help.

About forty minutes later Ethan texted him again.

Unknown: *You should take a break.*

Isaac shook his head and kept going. He had been timing himself on his phone and he was up to twenty-one seconds. This was one of the coolest things he had ever done, and he had resolved to beat twenty-five seconds before stopping for the night.

Isaac was frustrated as his progress seemed to stall almost immediately after that. He hit twenty-two seconds than started *regressing*, falling back to the teens for awhile before eventually flat-lining at ten-to-twelve seconds. It was all he could do not to rake his claws through the dirt in frustration.

Unknown: *You're tired. Try again tomorrow. Besides 22 seconds is enough time to put some solid distance between yourself and an enemy.*

Isaac cocked his head and quirked his eyebrows at Ethan.
Isaac: *Were you timing me?*

Ethan nodded, not seeming even remotely self conscious.

Unknown: *I was curious*

Isaac: *And 22 seconds really is ok?*

Unknown: *No, it's fucking UNHEARD OF for your first time.*

The scent of Ethan's approval was back, accompanied by a fond smile – the first Isaac had ever gotten from Ethan.

Isaac flashed a small smile back then pointedly started scrolling through his phone, trying to pretend he wasn't going to memorize this moment and play it over and over again in his head.

Tonight had made Isaac curious about what kind of alpha Ethan had been. *Cold* and *heartless* had always been Isaac's assumption, but he was forced to reconsider that assessment. He was still certain Ethan had some kind of endgame in mind with him, but he obviously had the capacity to be patient and supportive when he was teaching someone. Isaac frowned as he realized something.

Isaac: *Have you ever had a beta? I mean you were in a whole pack of just alphas so...*

Unknown: *No. After Aiden and I killed our old pack we immediately joined Deucalion and the others. We never had betas.*

Isaac's blood ran cold. He needed to keep things in perspective and remember the stakes. Ethan wasn't just someone who could *hurt* him by manipulating his emotions; he was someone who could *kill* him without batting an eye. The fact that Ethan could be charming or even display occasional kindness didn't change that. It made him more dangerous.

When Isaac looked up again, Ethan was staring back at him with emotionless eyes. They may have been brown on the surface, but Isaac knew they were blue underneath.

Chapter End Notes

This chapter was a little shorter than I originally intended. However, I'm leaving town in a few days and this may be my last opportunity to write until I get back, so I wanted to update before I leave.

I think I'll do something different this time since it might be a little longer till my next update. Here are a few teasers for what I have planned for the next few chapters:
- An event to make Isaac more aware of his feelings for Stiles and his distrust of Ethan
- A confrontation or two involving Aiden and Isaac
- A deepening of the Iron Claw and related storylines
- A cameo chapter or two featuring a certain preppy bisexual werewolf. It'll be a good bit further down the line, but I'm excited about it, and if there's reader interest he may get frisky with the boys
- The introduction of several new canon characters, obviously one of them is Malia.

Anyway, as always I hope you enjoyed this chapter and feedback is greatly appreciated!
Ethan was a good strategist; Isaac could admit that even as he was disappointed Ethan's strategy was paying off. A couple nights earlier when the werecoyote's leg had been broken and stuck in a trap, catching her had been easy. Naturally, she would be faster tonight, uninjured and at full strength, but with his longer stride and similar supernatural speed, Isaac assumed he could outrun her. That's why when she returned to her den that night and Ethan suggested they split up and Isaac chase her toward him, Isaac saw the value in that strategy as a backup plan, but figured he would be able to tackle her himself and hold her until Ethan rejoined him. No such luck.

Even with Isaac using his new scent masking skill, she detected his presence and took off in the opposite direction well before Isaac was expecting – and okay maybe he really could benefit from some prowling lessons – and within the first twenty yards of the chase, it became apparent that she was increasing her lead on him, not gradually being overtaken. He corralled her roughly toward where Ethan had said he would be, but he was concerned that Ethan's precise location was as unknown to him as it seemed to the werecoyote. What if she had veered off to the side? Shouldn't he be able to hear Ethan crunching through the underbrush to cut her off?

All at once, Ethan leapt from behind a dense snarl of shrubs and saplings and bowled her over. She yelped in surprise and snapped at him as they tumbled on the ground. Isaac's stomach dropped as she sank her fangs into Ethan's arm, and he pressed the limits of his speed as he raced to aid his packmate — holy fuck! Not packmate, temporary ally!

Isaac's assistance proved unnecessary as Ethan held her jaws in place with his other arm and flipped on top of her, pinning her down. Once she was subdued he yanked his injured arm free and grinned triumphantly as Isaac bounded up to them.

The coyote snarled and tried to land another bite, but Ethan locked her head against the ground with the palm of his uninjured arm. She flattened her ears and growled.

She had demonstrated two nights ago that she was stronger than she looked, so Isaac slid on top of her behind Ethan and bore down on her rump with his entire weight. He was careful to avoid her claws as he raised one of her hind legs off the ground, denying her the leverage she would need to even try to get up. That left one more immediate problem to address.

Uncertainty prickled the back of Isaac’s neck as he made a decision that felt right, but also very wrong; he reached around Ethan with his free hand and drew him back against his chest. Ethan leaned into him without the hesitancy Isaac expected as he clutched Ethan's injured arm.

“Just take a little to speed healing,” Ethan said, nuzzling back against Isaac in a way that felt entirely too familiar yet surprisingly comfortable.

“Okay,” Isaac answered, mindful to keep himself in check as he leached Ethan's pain.

It was strange, but Isaac liked doing it, not just for Ethan but in general. It was satisfying hurting for a reason, hurting to help someone, even if for once he didn't deserve the pain for being a fuckup. It was also oddly cleansing, like he was atoning for something even if he wasn't entirely sure what. Perhaps the years of abuse had simply made pain feel right to Isaac. Regardless, pain leaching might just have been his favorite werewolf ability.
“I'm good,” Ethan said after a couple minutes of them sharing the pain roughly fifty-fifty.

“Right. You're good,” Isaac answered, infusing as much derision as he could into the remark to compensate for the awkward intimacy and the fact he wasn't actually in a hurry to let go of Ethan.

“Well, my arm's healed anyway.” Ethan chuckled and leaned away from Isaac. “Thank you,” he added quietly.

Isaac cleared his throat. “So what now? We can't really sit on her until morning.”

She was still growling and struggling to get up, but her growls were now interspersed with whimpers and her struggling seemed more perfunctory than earnest.

“Is that the soonest Scott can get here?” Ethan asked with disappointment.

“Um…”

“Whatever, I planned for this. I have a harness, chains, and a muzzle stashed about a half mile away.”

“Why do you even have a harness, chains, and muzzle?” Ethan chuckled again. “Don't asked questions you don't want the answers to.”

Isaac cringed.

“Do you wanna hold her or go get them?” Ethan asked.

“I don't know where they are,” Isaac pointed out.

Ethan shrugged. “They have my scent on them.”

Isaac frowned. He didn't like either option. He might be able to find the restraints by tracking Ethan's scent, or he might embarrass himself and fail completely. Trying to restrain the werecoyote without Ethan wasn't appealing either. She had already gotten away from him once before.

He wondered for about the hundredth time why Aiden wasn’t helping with this little adventure, not that he wanted Aiden here. It just seemed odd that he wasn't. He probably wasn't interested in helping someone he didn't know and wouldn't personally benefit from helping. Yet, his presumed reluctance aside, couldn't Ethan have persuaded him? Isaac flushed with heat. Or was Ethan enjoying their one-on-one time as much as Isaac was starting to admit that he was.

“What do you think we should do?” Isaac asked, embarrassed to defer to Ethan, but succumbing to his instincts. Ethan was a leader and former alpha; Isaac was a beta and confirmed follower. He just wanted Ethan to tell him what to do, and he'd go along with it as long as it seemed like a decent idea.

Ethan unbuckled his belt.

Okay, messing around wasn't exactly unappealing, but this clearly wasn't the time.

“I think you could handle either task just fine,” he answered, bumping his shoulder backward against Isaac's as he yanked his belt out of its loops, “but this will help.”

He slid the loop around the coyote's snout and pulled it taut. She growled as ferociously as she could with a closed mouth, and the dueling scents of fury and fear burst from her pores.
“Here.” Ethan passed the long end of the belt backward to Isaac before sliding off the coyote and crouching beside him.

Isaac flinched as Ethan's deft fingers unfastened his own belt buckle. He wanted to protest, but his hands were full gripping the makeshift muzzle and one of the coyote's hind paws. She was also struggling more now that Ethan had gotten up, and he couldn't risk letting her getting away again.

“Geez, buy a guy dinner first,” Isaac remarked, proud of the quip even if it wasn't especially original.

“Okay, I will. Pick the place.” Ethan made eye contact as he stripped Isaac’s belt from its loops with one shift tug.

Isaac shivered and looked away, unable to even begin unpacking the conflicting emotions he suddenly felt.

Ethan used the belt to trap the werecoyote's hind paws, freeing up Isaac’s other hand.

He breathed a sigh of relief as he took the strap from Ethan. Now that she was effectively immobilized, it was unlikely he would screw this up a second time.

“I'll be right back,” Ethan said as he darted into the nearby trees. His scent disappeared, and within seconds Isaac had no idea where he was. Even his heartbeat seemed to vanish. Perhaps hiding it was a real werewolf ability. He was probably showing off again, but that didn't undermine the feat.

Isaac felt a flare of irritation at Derek. He shouldn't have had to learn these skills from Ethan, much less learn that they even existed from him. Did Derek think Isaac was so useless and pathetic he wasn't worth even trying to teach?

His ruminations were interrupted as the werecoyote went slack beneath him. Her growls had turned entirely to whimpers, and the oppressive stench of her despair practically choked him.

“It's okay, girl,” Isaac said, rubbing a hand over the back of her head and neck as though she were a pet dog. “We're not going to hurt you, I promise. We're here to help. Tomorrow my alpha's gonna help you shift back into a human.”

She whimpered some more.

“You'll like him. His name's Scott, and he's a really great guy. Way nicer than me and Ethan, especially Ethan. Ethan's kind of a dick.”

Isaac fell silent. His words didn't seem to offer her much comfort, and he wasn't sure she even understood him.

A few minutes later, Ethan returned with the restraints and they set about wrangling her into the harness and proper muzzle and securing the chains in place. Once they were done, Ethan said he would take her back to his loft and asked that Isaac have Scott meet him there before school tomorrow morning.

Isaac rolled his eyes, amused by the visual of Ethan walking her around his community courtyard like a giant, oversized chihuahua. Ethan's neighbors, and his brother for that matter, probably wouldn’t love him for bringing a howling animal into the building either. Monday night Isaac hadn't worried about these logistics, but now that they were on somewhat friendlier footing he found himself wanting to make things easier for Ethan.

“Why don't we take her to Deaton's instead? He's more setup for this type of thing.”
Ethan looked relieved. “Do you have a key?”

Isaac shook his head. “I’ll have Stiles meet us with Scott’s.”

Ethan raised his eyebrows but said nothing, and Isaac realized how odd it sounded that Stiles had access to Scott’s keys but that Scott himself wasn’t available. Still, since Ethan didn’t press it, Isaac didn’t elaborate.

Tension crept across Isaac’s shoulders as he pulled up Stiles’ name in his contacts and called him. He was at least ninety-five percent sure he could convince Stiles to do this for him, but it was almost midnight and there was a good chance Stiles was already in bed; plus he hadn’t been sleeping well. This was a lot to ask and he knew it.

“Isaac?! What is it? What’s wrong?” Stiles’ voice was tight with worry. “Are you okay? What happened?”

Guilt twisted in Isaac’s gut. He and Stiles typically only texted each other, and he could see how a late night phone call would be alarming.

“I’m fine, but I need a favor.”

“Okay, anything,” Stiles answered, earnestly and without hesitation.

Warmth washed over Isaac, partially from embarrassment but mostly from happiness.

“We caught the werecoyote, and we wanna take her to Deaton’s. Can you meet us there with Scott’s key. Ethan’s right here with me by the way.” Isaac added the last part to clue Stiles in that he couldn’t speak freely.

“Uh, okay sure. I’ll be there in about a half hour.”

“I think it’ll take us longer than that to get there. Say forty-five?”

“I can pick you up.”

“No.” Isaac answered, instantly hating the idea Ethan and the werecoyote being in Stiles' Jeep. “That’s okay. Just give us a little longer.”

Stiles agreed and they hung up.

Isaac thought they would drag the werecoyote behind them, but Ethan simply picked her up and jogged away in the direction of the veterinary clinic. As Isaac jogged after him, he reconsidered his time estimate; maybe it wouldn't take long as he'd expected to get there.

He had half-dreaded, half-looked forward to what he assumed would be a slow walk through the woods with Ethan. He had hoped Ethan might show him that heartbeat hiding trick, or give him pointers on stealth – but then again now wasn’t exactly the best time. The werecoyote was in obvious distress, and Isaac himself was worn down from all the excitement of catching her and from learning and practicing scent masking earlier in the evening. He’d just have to meet up with Ethan again another night.

He licked his lips nervously at that thought and ducked a tree limb as he followed Ethan around a sharp turn onto a narrow dirt path. It was one thing to make the most of the time he had to spend with Ethan for the sake of helping the werecoyote, but did he want to voluntarily spend more time with him?
Isaac frowned as an unequivocal yes bubbled to the surface. He was having fun with Ethan, and he didn't want to stop. Ethan held the answers to questions Isaac hadn't even thought to ask yet, answers about being a werewolf, answers about...

Isaac swallowed and relived his jerk off session with Ethan the previous night. God it had been good, outrageously good, and they hadn't even touched each other yet – and it was a yet situation. Isaac wanted to touch Ethan, and he knew Ethan would let him, encourage him, teach him how to have sex with another guy, with another werewolf.

He suppressed a moan at the thought, a muffled whimper escaping his throat instead. Ethan either didn't notice or didn't acknowledge it as they loped through the woods. The werecoyote still writhed and struggled in his arms; he probably had his own concerns to focus on.

Isaac was ashamed of himself as he reached his decision: he would continue down this road with Ethan. He would ask Ethan to keep teaching him advanced werewolf skills, and the next time Ethan offered him a sexual encounter he would probably accept. He might have been a werewolf, but he was still only human. Yet, he knew he was making a dangerous and stupid mistake, and he knew what it said about him that he didn't particularly care, that he was sort of okay with the near certainty that Ethan would eventually do something horrible to him. Maybe it would be worth it; maybe Isaac deserved it; maybe it was simply inevitable.

He zoned out as they finished the trip to the veterinary clinic, refusing to think further about what was happening with Ethan, what he was letting happen with Ethan.

When they arrived, Stiles was waiting out front with the Jeep running. He killed the engine and turned off the lights as they trotted into the parking lot.

Isaac had known he didn't want Ethan and the werecoyote in the Jeep with Stiles, but he hadn't anticipated his reaction to their proximity to Stiles in the more neutral territory of the animal clinic.

Stiles climbed out of the vehicle – clad in a baggy gray hoodie and a pair of forest green pajama pants – and Isaac's heart stopped. Ethan was racing toward Stiles with a dangerous beast in his arms; Ethan was a dangerous beast racing toward Stiles.

Isaac's casual jog accelerated into a mad dash as he hurtled past Ethan, desperate to put himself between his enemy and his defenseless packmate.

Stiles' eyes widened as Isaac practically tackled him in the parking lot. Only Isaac's supernatural reflexes kept Stiles from getting hurt as Isaac picked him up and pivoted his body, careening backward against the side of the Jeep but keeping Stiles safely tucked against his chest.

Stiles let out a strangled gurgle and went rigid.

"Thanks for coming," Isaac said casually as he righted himself against the hood and turned Stiles around, not so subtly keeping him tucked under his arm.

Ethan stopped about six feet away and regarded Isaac like he was lunatic. Isaac didn't need to check the look on Stiles' face to know he was giving him a similar stare.

"What was that?" Stiles demanded, pulling away and frowning at Isaac.

"I'm just glad to see you," Isaac answered awkwardly, a blush heating his cheeks as he wrapped his arms around Stiles in a hug as an excuse to re-close the distance Stiles had put between them.

Stiles' heart stuttered, and he hugged back tightly. "I'm glad to see you too."
“I'll just say hi,” Ethan remarked with a smirk as he raised a hand off the coyote's back and wiggled his fingers at Stiles.

_Damn right you'll just say hi._

Stiles acknowledged him with a grunt and a nod, but his face lit up as his gaze settled on the werecoyote. “Wow! I didn't think she'd be so cute!”

Isaac held him back as he tried to step closer. “She's dangerous.”

“She's wearing a muzzle,” Stiles pointed out, yanking himself away from Isaac. Isaac could have stopped him, but not without starting an argument and creating a scene.

Ethan set her on the ground and held the chain attached to her harness as Stiles approached them.

“Stiles don't!” Isaac let him step forward but moved with him, resolutely keeping his body between Stiles and the monsters.

“I've got her,” Ethan said, an edge of annoyance in his voice.

Isaac's heart leaped into his throat as Stiles crouched and stuck out a hand to pet her.

“Daww, whose a pretty girl?!” Stiles declared as she closed the small space between them and nudged his hand with the top of her head.

“Stiles, you do know that's an actual girl, right?” Isaac said as he crouched next to Stiles, ready to defend him against any sudden move by the werecoyote or Ethan.

“And I'm sure she's very beautiful,” Stiles answered, scratching behind her ears.

“She really likes you,” Ethan said pleasantly. “She's done nothing but growl and snap at me and Isaac.”

Isaac tried to appreciate that Ethan remained standing with the chain rigid in his hand, ready to yank the werecoyote back if anything happened, but it was little consolation; their enemy was standing over them and would have the advantage in an attack.

It was one thing for Isaac to spend time with Ethan. Isaac was a werewolf. He could defend himself, and he knew what he was up against. It was entirely different bringing Stiles here, in the middle of the night, without Scott...or any witnesses. It had been stupid and selfish, and Isaac mentally berated himself as Stiles giggled and played with the uncharacteristically calm werecoyote.

“Let's get this over with,” Isaac said, rising to his feet and pulling Stiles up with him.

“Someone's a grumpy wolf tonight,” Stiles remarked, frowning but not struggling as Isaac guided him briskly toward the animal clinic door, trying to put more distance between them and Ethan and the coyote.

Stiles unlocked the front door and walked in, but as Isaac tried to follow him, he slammed into an invisible barrier.

Ethan laughed without malice and placed a hand on the center of Isaac's back.

Isaac whirled around and flashed gold eyes at him, a low warning snarl rumbling in the back of his throat. Isaac may have lacked the self respect to keep Ethan's hands off him when they were alone, but Ethan sure as hell didn't get to touch him like they were friends in front of Stiles or the rest of
Isaac's pack.

Ethan looked stung as he withdrew his hand.

“So uh, are you guys coming in or what?” Stiles asked. He'd already turned on the lights and was standing in the middle of the outer waiting room, apparently unaware of the obstacle Isaac and the others faced.

Isaac folded his arms irritably over his chest and scowled at Stiles through the open door. “Mountain ash.”

“Oh yeah!” Stiles snapped his fingers and nodded as he returned to the doorway and flipped back the rug. Underneath a long, flat cardboard tube rested against the threshold. Stiles picked it up, allowing Isaac, Ethan, and the werecoyote to enter before he dropped it back into place on the floor and re-closed the door.

A wave of anxiety flared in Ethan's scent, and Isaac realized he didn't like being trapped in the building. Isaac wasn't especially keen on it either, even though he trusted Stiles to let him out. He was about to tell Stiles to move the container of mountain ash away again when he got distracted by the werecoyote. She cowered against the ground and slowly crawled behind Stiles' legs as Ethan gradually gave her the slack to do it. If Ethan smelled nervous, she smelled all out terrified as she looked around the room, whimpering.

“It's okay, girl, you're safe here,” Stiles told her, leaning down and petting her.

“She has claws you know,” Isaac said, once again positioning himself in the small space between Stiles and Ethan and hovering over the werecoyote, ready to grab her if she tried anything.

She let out a long growl as she looked up at Isaac and pressed herself against Stiles' body.

“You're scaring her,” Stiles snapped, nudging Isaac away and placing a defensive hand on her shoulder.

“Yeah, dude, seriously, calm down,” Ethan said, stepping into the space near Stiles and the coyote that Isaac had just been forced to vacate.

Rage and panic consumed Isaac, and before he knew what he was doing he lunged at Ethan, claws and fangs out.

“Get away!” He snarled and sank his claws into Ethan's shoulders as he slammed into him, his fangs poised over Ethan's throat.

Stiles shouted and the werecoyote growled as she leaped forward, and the chain smashed against Isaac's knee as she winched it out of Ethan's grasp.

Ethan growled too, his eyes flashing ice blue as he shoved Isaac away hard enough to send him thudding against the animal clinic's front desk and toppling to the floor.

Isaac climbed onto on his hands and knees as there was a crash of glass at the front door. The werecoyote yipped and snarled as she threw herself against the invisible barrier that kept her from running through the jagged hole she'd just created. Stiles tugged ineffectually on the chain and pleaded with her to stop.

Isaac got up as Ethan sprinted across the room and took the chain from Stiles. He yanked it hard, dragging the agitated animal closer until he could pick her up. He ignored her growls and pinned her
flailing limbs against his body.

"Where are we taking her?" Ethan demanded of Stiles in a rough voice, his eyes still glowing and his fangs out.

Stiles took a nervous step back as Isaac once again reinserted himself between the two of them.

"I'll take her," Isaac answered baring his fangs at Ethan and staring him down as he pulled the terrified werecoyote away from him. Isaac refused to react as her clawed hind limbs slashed his stomach. "Come with me," he barked over his shoulder at Stiles.

Stiles stepped aside for Isaac to pass, but Isaac only glared at him.

"Ahead of me," he clarified, his voice still harsh and angry even though Stiles wasn't the person he was mad at. All he could think about was keeping Stiles and Ethan separated.

Stiles complied, rushing ahead of Isaac into the back room.

"Stay here," Isaac snarled at Ethan, flashing hot eyes at him.

Once in the back, Isaac and Stiles picked out a large, empty enclosure for the werecoyote and Isaac squeezed into it with her. "Close and lock it while I take the harness and muzzle off her."

"I don't think that's a good idea," Stiles answered. His hand was on the metal gate but he made no move to shut it.

"It's not," Ethan called from behind Stiles as he walked into view.

Isaac gasped and banged his head against the low metal ceiling of the enclosure.

"I told you to stay out there." He was panicking again, barely managing to hang onto the struggling werecoyote as his instincts shouted at him to let her go and get back out there by Stiles' side.

"And I decided not to let you get torn in half by a crazed beast," Ethan answered, a familiar smirk on his face. He turned to Stiles. "Go wait in the lobby so he quits freaking out."

Stiles cocked his head in confusion and gave Isaac a questioning look.

"Go, Stiles," Isaac ordered.

Stiles huffed and shot them both dirty looks before storming out of the room. A few seconds later, Isaac heard him fumbling with the door's broken glass and fought the urge to yell at him to be careful.

"I wasn't going to hurt your packmate," Ethan said quietly, crouching in front of the open enclosure and motioning for Isaac to crawl out.

"You've already killed two of my packmates," Isaac snarled, slapping away the hand Ethan offered him as he climbed out of the cramped opening.

"I won't do that again," Ethan said simply, picking up the end of the coyote's chain from the floor.

There was no indication he was lying, and his scent reeked of sour hurt. It made Isaac's throat burn and his chest tighten. He once again acted on instinct.

"I'm sorry I lost my temper," he said softly, his eyes trained on Ethan's shoes.
This time when Ethan's hand landed on Isaac's back it was a welcome relief. “Same here.”

“You didn't,” Isaac acknowledged, feeling worse as he realized it was true. Ethan's claws hadn't even been out when he shoved Isaac away.

“I did a little,” Ethan answered, slapping Isaac's back a couple times, “and I could have handled things better in general.”

“So we're...okay?” Isaac asked awkwardly, alarmed to realize that was something that mattered to him all of a sudden.

“Yeah.” Ethan nodded and let go of Isaac. “Come on, let's get these restraints off her.”

That task ended up being more difficult than Isaac anticipated – and yeah, it took the full strength of a werewolf holding her back to keep the one working on her from getting ripped apart.

Ethan unceremoniously left as soon as they were done. He kept his distance and edged past Stiles in a way that simultaneously offended Isaac and put him at ease.

As soon as Ethan was gone and they were locking up, Isaac noticed a tension between himself and Stiles.

“You wanna tell me what the fuck all that was about?” Stiles demanded once they were outside.

Isaac shrugged defensively. “What? You know I don't get along with Ethan.”

That wasn't strictly true anymore, but Stiles didn't need to know that, especially while Isaac was trying to come up with a defense for his behavior that didn't involve admitting how protective he felt toward Stiles.

Stiles sighed and walked toward his Jeep. Isaac followed him. “You've been working with him for the past three days. I kinda assumed you'd gotten beyond randomly attacking each other.”

Isaac laughed and opened his door. “Not my fault you made a dumb assumption.”

“I took a picture of the door and texted Deaton about it,” Stiles said, opening the driver’s side and heaving himself in by the steering wheel. He was apparently determined to make Isaac feel guilty no matter what. It worked.

“What did he say?” Isaac asked as he settled into his seat and regarded Stiles nervously. He was already visualizing the disappointed look on Deaton's face.

“It's one-thirty in the morning. He didn't say anything. But I put the mountain ash back, so unless a regular human burglar comes along, I guess it'll be okay until he gets there.”

“I shouldn't have called you or brought her here,” Isaac mumbled as they pulled out of the parking lot.

“Yes, you should have. What you shouldn't done was flip out for no reason.”

“Sorry.” Isaac was sick of saying that word, and even sicker of needing to.

Stiles shrugged and gave Isaac a mischievous smile. “I know how you can make it up to me.”

“How?” Isaac asked suspiciously, trying to pretend whatever Stiles had in mind wasn't already a done deal.
“Binge the rest of Scream season one with me?” Stiles asked hopefully.

“Tonight?”

Stiles nodded.

“But we have school tomorrow,” Isaac said. They had already skipped Tuesday, and Isaac couldn't afford to skip Thursday too or his grades would suffer.

Stiles frowned and lowered his voice. “I had another nightmare before you called. I'm not going back to sleep tonight.”

“Oh...okay, I'm in,” Isaac answered. It really had been a done deal all along, and there was certainly no way he would deny Stiles under these circumstances.

“Thanks,” Stiles said genuinely. “I-I uh sleep better with you in the bed, so I might be okay after an episode or two.”

“Really?” Isaac’s chest filled with pride and excitement.

“Yeah, um, maybe it's a pack thing?” Stiles offered, a cloud of embarrassed self consciousness wafting off him.

Isaac inhaled through his nose and tried not to look too amused. As far as scents went this one was probably the most adorable he had ever smelled. “Yeah, I guess that's it.”

Chapter End Notes

As always I hope you enjoyed this chapter and feedback is greatly appreciated! Next chapter will focus on Isaac and Stiles.
Since it was late when Isaac and Stiles left the animal clinic, they went straight to Stiles' house instead of stopping off at the Mc Calls' on the way. They would get up extra early tomorrow morning so Stiles could take Isaac home to change for school and Scott could get his keys back before he left for the day.

Isaac grumbled about the inconvenience of not having his own clothes that night when Stiles lent him a pair of navy pajama pants and an old gray t-shirt. He also complained that he would have to use Stiles' body wash and shampoo in the shower, but his protestations were purely to save face. He was thrilled at the prospect of swathing himself in Stiles' scent.

He had only been in Stiles' room a couple of times, and not at all since they had started getting close. It was a veritable cornucopia of smells that Isaac liked, and he had to resist the urge to pick things up and openly sniff them. He'd faced the same challenge the first time he'd been in Allison's room a few weeks prior, and before that the first time he'd entered Scott's room.

He gasped and faked a cough as he caught the scent of fresh semen wafting from the wastebasket under Stiles' desk. Stiles must have jerked off that night – and now it was all Isaac could think about. Excitement burned his core and pulsed in his veins as he pictured Stiles sitting in his desk chair, his toes curled against the carpet and his hips arched as he sprayed a thick jet of cum into the air. It smelled thick and wet, and Isaac tasted the endorphins Stiles had released during the afterglow.

As he boned up, Isaac shook out the folded pajamas Stiles had given him, letting them drape casually in front of his waist for cover. Thank god Stiles wasn't a werewolf who could smell his arousal.

“Okay, I'm gonna go shower. I'll be right back,” Isaac said, cutting Stiles off mid-sentence as he rambled about a video game he wanted Isaac to try.

“Tah, fine I won't tell you how to power up your wand.” Stiles waved an arm and tossed himself back across his bed.

Isaac snickered as he hustled out of the room. Stiles needn’t have worried. He had gotten Isaac’s wand very powered up. The only problem was it would be weird to fire it in Stiles' shower, so Isaac was going to be stuck walking around with a full bar of blue mana until he could get home and cast a spell. If only Stiles felt the same way, they could work some magic together, but it was obvious that Stiles was all in on the friendship aspect of their relationship.

Being in Stiles' shower did nothing to discourage Isaac’s raging erection. He pictured Stiles standing next to him, naked and lathering himself up. Isaac had just enough to go on from the locker room to make the fantasy realistic, but the details were frustratingly blurry, a reflection of the self control he carefully exercised while changing or showering with his teammates. He had sort of seen Stiles naked lots of time, fleetingly and out of the corner of his eye, but he had never let himself look before, which was a good thing. Stiles was his straight packmate, and Isaac’s desperation to vividly jerk off to him aside, he owed him respect. Fantasizing about Stiles from his own imagination was okay, but leering at him in the locker room with the intention of ‘using it later’ wouldn't have been. Besides, as hot as it would have been to cum all over Stiles' shower wall and imagine him unknowingly bathing here later, it would have also been creepy and wrong.
That didn’t stop Isaac from spending longer than necessary soaping his cock, balls, and ass with Stiles’ body wash – good hygiene was important after all – but it did stop him from passing the point of no return and unloading.

He turned off the water and took a shaky breath as he stared longingly at this throbbing erection. Perhaps covering his privates in a scent he associated with Stiles and edging himself until he was just shy of cumming hadn’t been such a good idea. How was he supposed to get soft before he went back to Stiles’ room?

He pulled back the shower curtain and caught sight of the pajamas he had set on the bathroom counter, Stiles’ pajamas. Fuck, Isaac’s cock and balls would be right where Stiles' cock and balls usually were – yeah, Isaac could forget about losing his erection. He’d might as well name it. It was going to be with him for awhile.

After drying his face and hair enough that he wasn’t dripping, he picked up the navy pajamas bottoms and tentatively sniffed the inside front. It was frustratingly free of Stiles’ pheromones and didn’t smell like anything other than fresh laundry, which was a pleasant enough fragrance on its own, but definitely not what Isaac had hoped for.

He closed his eyes and re-conjured the recent scent memory of Stiles’ cum.

_Ughn, YES!_ That's what he wanted to smell in the crotch of the pajamas. Had Stiles ever cum in them before? Maybe drained his morning wood and wiped up with them before going to school? Or been too horny to sleep and rubbed one out in bed with these serving as the cum rag?

A soft moan escaped Isaac’s lips. Unless they were brand new – and they were faded enough that they weren’t – something like that had almost certainly happened before. Stiles jerked off a lot, a fact he wasn’t shy about bringing up in casual conversation.

Listening to Stiles and Scott talk about jerking off had always been a major guilty pleasure for Isaac, especially when he still had a crush on Scott. Yet he had never had the opportunity to wear Scott’s underwear or pajamas, whereas he had explicit permission to rub his junk all over Stiles’ pajamas, pajamas that Stiles had almost certainly creamed before.

Isaac wasted no more time drying off and tugging on Stiles' pants. His dirty teenage brain went into overdrive with fantasies and mental images – Stiles' thick, creamy load would look obscenely hot smeared across the dark blue fabric – as he stroked himself through the soft, cotton fly.

_Fuck!_ He was leaking precum in Stiles' pajamas. He loved that it was happening, but he also hated it because it was seriously not okay. Isaac might have been in the middle of a porno in his head, but from Stiles' point of view, tonight was supposed to be completely wholesome. Isaac was supposed to be soothing his strictly platonic packmate and helping him forget his nightmares.

He frowned at himself in the bathroom mirror and tucked his erection in the waistband, relieved that the baggy t-shirt Stiles had given him effectively hid all evidence of his debauchery. His hand was on the doorknob when he checked one more time to make sure he was thoroughly concealed.

_Are you fucking kidding me?!_

Isaac berated himself for not drying the tip of his leaking cock before he put it away. The old gray shirt Stiles had lent him now sported a big wetspot right over Isaac's swollen cockhead. At the rate he was defiling Stiles' clothes, he might as well just blow his load into Stiles’ closest and be done with it.

He tucked the shirt under his chin and glared at his bloated, rosy-red glans. The slit and surrounding
helmet glistened with shiny precum, and his whole shaft ached to be touched. He indulged it, but only for a moment as he pushed down the front of his pants and clenched his fist around the base of his cock.

*Enjoy it fucker, this is the last time I'm touching you tonight.*

His cock was seriously a dick. He took a long, tight stroke and milked the remaining precum his body had been about to release into his hand. His cock took his advice and felt fucking *unreal* while he did it. Any other time he would have rubbed the glob of slick liquid all over his cockhead and kept going until he blew, but he was determined not to cum in Stiles' house – at this point it was almost a matter of pride – so he let go of his needy, throbbing erection and lapped up the precum he had gathered in his palm.

After enjoying the treat way more than he should have, Isaac held the wet spot on his shirt under the faucet and ran some water over it, creating a much larger area that was obviously water.

“What happened?” Stiles asked with a nod at the front of Isaac's shirt when he walked back into the room.

“Dropped it in the tub by accident,” Isaac answered, feigning annoyance.

“You want another one?” Stiles asked, sitting up in bed, ready to get up and retrieve one for him.

“Nah, it'll dry in a little while,” Isaac answered, tossing himself across the foot of the bed.

“Or you could take it off,” Stiles remarked, waggling his eyebrows.

Isaac inwardly laughed. If he did that, Stiles would see the top half of his erection, which was still tucked into the waistband of the pajamas. That would certainly be one way to call Stiles' bluff on all his fake flirting bullshit.

“It's fine,” Isaac answered, mindful to keep himself covered as he crawled into the empty space on the bed beside Stiles and slipped beneath the covers.

Stiles scooted up against him and started to wrap himself around Isaac's body.

“Oh! Uhh, not-not yet.” Isaac sat up and edged away, keeping as much distance between them as he could. “I'm hot from my shower.”

“I don't think the shower can take credit for that,” Stiles answered with a wink. “But seriously, if you want to take off your shirt to cool down...”

“No um, I'm good. Let's just start the episode.”

Stiles sighed and grabbed his laptop off the nightstand.

The on-screen gore soon deflated Isaac’s erection the way it had the other night, and within a short time he had settled in and felt reasonably confident that he wouldn't have another problem as long as he kept his mind from wandering and continued to consciously ignore all the (awesome, incredible, delicious, *erotic-as-fuck*) scents in the room.

The boys were propped up in Stiles' bed, reclining on pillows and leaning back against the headboard, when Isaac took the initiative to drape an arm around Stiles' shoulders and pull him closer. There was basically zero chance Stiles would reject the gesture, but he was still proud of himself for doing it. He knew that he kind of sucked at being affectionate in general. It just wasn't
something he had done at all for a very long time and even after The Bite, after everything in his life had utterly and irrevocably changed, it still felt weird and uncomfortable.

He was making progress though. He had gotten to the point of accepting other people touching him, of letting them offer him comfort and affection on occasion...well as long as those people were packmates, or Melissa, or...Ethan.

Isaac cringed. Never mind, his issues were much more deeper-seated than he'd thought.

Regardless, he had regressed a little recently when it came to handling his intimacy issues. He had sort of made peace with his breakup with Allison – it had helped that his friendship with Stiles was deepening right when it happened – but with the exception of Scott and now Stiles, Isaac hadn't been so emotionally open with anyone since his mother and brother had died and his father had changed...and Allison had ultimately rejected him, made him feel like his feelings and affection were trash. He was sure she hadn’t meant to hurt him, and Stiles wasn’t Allison, but that didn’t change the fact that it was a fucking huge relief when Stiles reacted to Isaac’s arm around him by laying his head on Isaac's shoulder and squeezing Isaac's thigh.

Someone on-screen got stabbed just as Isaac’s chest tingled in a way that felt roughly akin to getting unstabbed.

Isaac took a deep breath and covered Stiles’ hand with his own. He could do this. He could trust.

When the first episode of the night ended, Stiles surprised Isaac by pausing it and repositioning – into Isaac's lap! Well actually he sat between Isaac's legs with his back pressed against Isaac's chest.

“Is this okay?” Stiles asked quietly, a note of vulnerability in his voice.

Isaac wasn’t okay yet. He had years of emotional baggage to work through, and his instincts were screaming at him to get up, to say something sarcastic, to do pretty much anything to put some emotional distance between himself and Stiles. Instead he wrapped his arms around Stiles’ chest and stomach and pulled him closer.

“It's great,” he answered, aware of the slight tremble in his voice as he hooked his chin over Stiles' shoulder.

Fuck his intimacy issues. He wasn’t going to reject Stiles and hurt his feelings, especially not when he wanted to hold him in the first place.

Stiles breathed a soft sigh of relief and nuzzled his head against Isaac's as he clicked to start the next episode then laced his fingers with Isaac's over his stomach.

Isaac wanted to sniff Stiles' hair, to draw his scent as deeply into his lungs as he could and let himself get high on it, but doing that would have been a one-way ticket back to bonerville, and that was a destination he just couldn’t go with Stiles. Stiles clearly valued his friendship and affection, but despite his occasional jokes to the contrary, he obviously wasn't interested in any kind of sexual relationship with Isaac.

That was okay; Isaac could respect that. He’d already had plenty of practice with Scott. If keeping his sexuality in check was the price he had to pay to be close to them it was well worth it. In fact it was probably better this way. Isaac didn't think he could handle another sexual relationship with feelings involved, at least not yet. He was already way outside his emotional comfort zone and pushing up against the limits of what he could handle without freaking out. It was actually sort of awesome that there was a firm boundary in place that wouldn’t get crossed.
“I’d fall apart if you weren’t here,” Stiles whispered, his thumb stroking Isaac’s forefinger. 

“I’m not going anywhere,” Isaac whispered into Stiles’ ear.

Chapter End Notes

As always I hope you enjoyed this chapter and feedback is greatly appreciated!
“You're up early,” the sheriff remarked from behind his newspaper as Isaac cautiously walked into the Stilinski family kitchen.

Isaac’s anxiety deepened. This was already every bit as awkward as he had thought it would be, and he hadn’t even said anything yet. Why had he let Stiles talk him into going down to eat with his dad while he got ready for school? Granted, Isaac couldn't really sit in the room and watch Stiles get ready – as much as he would have enjoyed that – but hell, cowering in the hallway would have been less awkward than this.

“Did you sleep okay?” the sheriff asked, picking up his coffee mug from the table but still not looking up from his reading.

 Uh yeah, I slept great...spooning your son all night. Thanks for asking.

“Stiles?” The sheriff put down his paper and did a double take. “Ohh, Isaac, hi. I thought you were Stiles.”

Isaac swallowed thickly, torn between two opposing instinctual responses: averting his eyes and shrinking in on himself, or putting on his cocky swagger and saying something sarcastic. The trouble was neither option really worked for interacting with the sheriff. Being too shy with him would be embarrassing and maybe even rude considering how important he was to Isaac’s pack. Yet, being arrogant and cheeky would have been even more disrespectful.

“I'm wearing his pajamas,” Isaac blurted out, a little too loud and a little too quickly – and what the actual fuck?! Why had that popped into his head?

“So you are,” the sheriff agreed with a nod. He gave Isaac a gentle smile and nudged the kitchen chair next to his out with his foot. “Sit down, have some breakfast.”

Isaac did as he was told and sat tensely on the edge of the chair. A plate of pancakes and a plate of bacon occupied the center of the table, lending a savory doughiness to the air that complemented the rich, hearty aroma of the slightly burned coffee radiating from a half-full pot on the kitchen counter.

Isaac didn’t like the taste of fresh coffee very much. When he drank coffee at all it was usually in latte form from a Starbucks or other coffee chain. Nevertheless, he loved the fragrance of hot, fresh coffee. When he was a child, his parents had made a pot for themselves every morning; Isaac always had orange juice, and Camden preferred milk. After his mother died, his father quit making coffee. Isaac was glad. He wouldn't have wanted the happy smell to be tainted with bad memories. The subsequent stale tang of his father's morning scotch had been a fitting replacement.

“Want some coffee?” the sheriff asked, tracking Isaac's gaze.

“Is there orange juice?” Isaac asked shyly, giving up even the pretense of being at ease.

The sheriff laughed and stood. He clapped a hand on Isaac's shoulder as he stepped past him and went to the refrigerator. “Sure thing.”

“I-I could have gotten it. I don't want to bother you from your paper.”
“It's fine,” the sheriff answered, filling a glass for Isaac and setting it beside him on the table along with an empty plate. “I was going to make some eggs for Stiles anyway. I just didn't expect him up this early.”

Isaac felt something he couldn't label. It was part jealousy, part happiness for his friend, with a heavy dose of admiration for the sheriff thrown in. Hot breakfasts in the Lahey household had stopped after Isaac's mother died. On mornings when his father hadn't still been passed out, he had usually sat with his whiskey and picked at cold leftovers. Camden had kept himself and Isaac in cereal – and orange juice Isaac realized with a twang in his chest – until he graduated high school and enlisted in the army. After that Isaac hadn't eaten anything in the morning. He'd had the school lunch and then whatever, if anything, he could scrounge around the house for dinner. At least his father had ordered a semi-steady stream of takeout.

“You want some?” the sheriff asked.

“Hmm? Oh, yeah.” Isaac took a big swig of his orange juice, not wanting to appear ungrateful. “It's good. Thank you.”

The sheriff laughed and poured some cooking oil into a skillet on the stove. “I meant eggs. Stiles likes them scrambled. I can make extra.”

Isaac licked his lips and eyed the carton of eggs on the counter beside the coffee pot. “If you're sure it's—”

“It's no trouble,” the sheriff finished, chuckling at Isaac. “You like cheese?”

“Doesn't everyone?” Isaac answered, forcing himself to smile and be playful even though he kind of just wanted to drink his juice and hide behind his phone until Stiles came down.

“Everyone with good sense,” the sheriff answered, grinning at Isaac and returning to the fridge to retrieve some of said dairy product.

Stiles thundered down the stairs a few minutes later and bounded into the room just as his dad placed a plateful of cheesy scrambled eggs on the table.

“Mornin',” he said cheerfully, pouring himself a cup of coffee and plunking down in the seat next to Isaac and across from his dad. He frowned. “Dad, there's bacon.”

The obvious disappointment in his tone didn’t stop him from placing several strips on his plate before filling the remaining space with a heaping portion of cheesy eggs.

“You said that all wrong, son. It should be, 'Dad! There's bacon!''' the sheriff answered with exaggerated enthusiasm.

“You're not supposed to eat bacon.” Stiles dragged the plate between himself and Isaac as though guarding it.

“Fine.” The sheriff grabbed Stiles' cup away. “You're not supposed to drink this much coffee right after taking your Adderall.”

“Ahh, but I forgot to take my Adderall.” Stiles smiled shrewdly and took his cup back.

The sheriff pulled it away again. “Go take your Adderall!”

While Stiles was out of the room the sheriff poured out his coffee and replaced it with a glass of milk.
“So how did you sleep?” he asked once Stiles had returned. Considering this was the second time he’d posed that question, albeit having accidentally addressed it to Isaac the first time, it obviously wasn’t as cursory as the sheriff made it seem.

“Good actually!” Stiles answered with his mouth full as he beamed at his dad. “I slept with Isaac!” Isaac choked and narrowly avoided spitting eggs all over the table.

“We-we just slept,” Isaac clarified between coughs.

“Well we didn't just sleep.” Stiles patted Isaac’s back and ran a hand through his hair, smoothing an unruly clump in the back that Isaac hadn’t known about. “First we had a good Scream session.”

“That's a TV show!” Isaac explained urgently. He shuddered to think what conclusions the sheriff would draw based on Stiles’ words and the way Isaac was dressed in Stiles' pajamas with his hair all disheveled.

“Anyway, sleeping with Isaac is great,” Stiles continued, ignoring the glares Isaac shot him. “Believe it or not, he's kind of a cuddlebug.”

“Stiles! I-I am not.” Isaac wasn't sure his face would ever return to its normal color.

“I didn't need to know that.” The sheriff’s tone was neutral, although his scent hinted at amusement. “But I'm glad you boys slept well. Isaac, feel free to sleep over whenever you like. Just try to keep the screaming to a minimum.”

Isaac winced and nodded, unsure what else to do. Thankfully, the rest of the conversation that morning was filled with Stiles idly chattering about whatever topic popped into his head while Isaac or the sheriff grunted pleasantly at him or gave brief responses. Once that groove was established, Isaac found himself relaxing. Stiles was adorable in the morning, and it was fun watching him interact with his dad. It vaguely reminded Isaac of the way Camden had chatted with their dad at meal times during his high school years, back when they were still a complete family. Camden and Stiles and Isaac's father and the sheriff weren't very similar in personality, but the general dynamic was same: mostly well-adjusted teenage son chatting enthusiastically with attentive, caring father.

Isaac frowned as he felt a wave of jealousy toward his deceased brother. He was legitimately happy that Camden had gotten to almost completely grow up before their mother had died and that he had never been on the receiving end of their father's abuse – some neglect toward the end sure, but no actual abuse. Yet, it wasn't fair that Isaac hadn’t gotten to experience the more mature father-son bond with their dad that Camden had...but then again it also wasn't fair that Isaac got to live while Camden and the rest of their family were dead.

Isaac pushed aside his jealousy and guilt and tuned back into the conversation as the topic shifted.

“I think I know who your werecoyote is,” the sheriff said.

Isaac shot Stiles a questioning look, surprised that the sheriff even knew she existed.

Stiles shrugged, “I had to explain to Dad after I had him put the police on standby.”

“On standby for what?” Isaac asked.

“You!” Stiles answered. “You were out in the woods, possibly walking into a trap. I wanted them to be ready.”
“I can take care of myself.” Isaac folded his arms and scowled. He was touched that Stiles had made so much effort for him and it felt good, but it was also embarrassing and a little insulting.

Stiles glared back and opened his mouth, but the sheriff cut in before he could speak.

“So neither of you wanna know who she is?” he asked.

“Ooh, I do!” Stiles answered, returning his attention to his dad.

“Me too,” Isaac answered with a shrug and an apologetic smile.

“Malia Tate,” the sheriff said. “Her mother and sister died in a car accident about eight years ago, but we never found her body. At the time we thought it had been dragged away by coyotes.”

“How do you know that didn't happen?” Stiles asked, biting into a piece of bacon.

“It was the night of a full moon, and there were claw marks on the inside of the vehicle...like something was trying to get out, not in,” the sheriff answered. “It didn't make sense at the time, but now it all fits. Besides, she's the only missing girl in Beacon Hills who would be the right age.”

“Thanks, Dad,” Stiles said. “Does she have any surviving family?”

“A father. I'll never forget the look on his face when I told him about the crash,” he answered with a faraway quality in his eyes.

“What's his contact info so I can call him?” Stiles asked.

The sheriff frowned and shook his head. “I'll call him once the werecoyote is human again and we know for sure.”

Stiles looked like he wanted to argue, but Isaac spoke up first. “That makes sense. No reason to get his hopes up for nothing if we're wrong.”

“Fine.” Stiles grumbled and took the last bite of his eggs.

After breakfast, Stiles drove Isaac home and came in with him to wait.

Isaac choked and stopped dead in his tracks as he walked into the house. The metallic tang of Scott's blood hung heavy in the air.

“What is it?” Stiles asked, his hand on Isaac’s arm.

“It's Scott. He's—”

“Hey guys,” Scott called cheerfully as he descended the stairs, a towel tied around his waist and his hair dripping wet.

“Scott!” Isaac wanted to run up and embrace Scott in relief, but he caught himself and fidgeted at the foot of the stairs instead.

“Did you want a hug?” Scott asked with a chuckle, spreading his arms as he reached the bottom of the stairs.

Isaac threw his arms around Scott and openly inhaled his scent, clutching him close before easing off just enough to glide his hands over the hot, damp skin of Scott's back, sides, and shoulders as he checked him for any sign of injury. Scott relaxed into the embrace, his heart rate slowing as his chest
expanded and contracted against Isaac's.

Isaac pulled back, gently gripping Scott's biceps as he ran his gaze up and down Scott's chest and stomach and–

*Oops.*

Isaac had truly meant to keep things clinical as he finished checking his alpha for wounds, but it was virtually impossible *not* to enjoy studying Scott's muscular chest and tight abs up close. A shallow pool of water defied gravity as it clung to Scott's navel, centimeters away from draining into the thick, black hairs of his treasure trail, which was itself already saturated and matted erotically to Scott’s hard, bronzed stomach and v-lined upper pelvis.

Isaac shot Scott an apologetic look.

Scott gave Isaac a gentle smile and squeezed the back of his neck, removing his shame and confirming everything was okay before they released each other.

Even though Scott seemed okay, Isaac was still concerned by what he smelled.

“Your blood...”

“Laundry room,” Scott said, stepping past Isaac and approaching Stiles.

“What happened?” Isaac asked, turning and eying the closed laundry room door down the hall.

“Iron Claw,” Scott answered as he wrapped his arms around Stiles. Stiles didn't seem to need the hug nearly as much as Isaac and Scott had – probably because he couldn't smell all the blood – but he freely returned it.

“How bad?” Isaac asked. A full, happy sensation fluttered in his chest as he watched his packmates and two best friends embrace each other.

“Lotta blood,” Scott answered, breaking the embrace with Stiles but keeping the sides of their bodies pressed together as he turned to answer Isaac.

“Oh for god's sake! Can you guys stop talking in two-word sentences?” Stiles waved his arms and bumped Scott's chest with the back of his hand.

“Mom's asleep,” Scott answered, chastising Stiles as he stepped out of range of his flailing limbs.

Stiles rolled his eyes but lowered his voice. “Okay, now what happened? And this time with slightly more details.”

Scott shrugged and headed for the kitchen. Isaac and Stiles followed him.

“I'm not really sure. I just woke up and found pretty much my whole bed soaked in blood.” Scott grabbed a glass from the cabinet and poured himself some orange juice from the fridge before getting a pack of Pop-Tarts from the pantry. He tore open the shiny foil wrapper and took a bite without bothering to heat them up. “One of my pillows had 'Iron Claw' written in blood, but everything else was just completely covered...I think I'm gonna need a new mattress.”

“Oh god, are you okay?” Stiles asked, grabbing Scott's bare shoulders and looking him over in much the same way Isaac had.

Scott shrugged again. “Alpha healing. I was really thirsty when I woke up, and I feel extra tired
today, but other than that I’m fine.”

“I should have been here.” Isaac dropped his head in shame.

“I’m glad you weren’t,” Scott answered, smacking Isaac’s arm. “There wasn’t anything you coulda done, and I wouldn’t have wanted anyone to let me out.”

Scott shoved the rest of the Pop-Tart in his mouth and walked out of the kitchen with Isaac and Stiles once again following closely behind. Scott laughed and stopped as he started to go back upstairs, and Stiles plowed into the back of him. “I’m gonna go get dressed for school. So maybe hang out down here instead?”

Isaac blushed, but Stiles laughed and rubbed Scott’s back. “Nothing we haven't seen before.”

“Personal space, dude, personal space,” Scott answered, walking up the stairs.

“No such thing when it comes to us, Scotty!” Stiles shouted after him.

“Creepy, Stiles, creepy!” Scott shouted back.

Isaac detected the change in Melissa's heartbeat from upstairs moments before she yelled. “I'm trying to sleep! Get to school. NOW!”

“Sorry mom!” Scott shouted back, looking abashed. He turned and whispered to Isaac and Stiles, “She's been freaking out pretty much non-stop for the last hour since she got home and came in my room. She needs to sleep.”

Stiles started to say something else, but Isaac clamped a hand over his mouth. “Okay, we'll keep it down while you get ready,” he whispered.

Isaac released Stiles, and they sat on the couch to wait, but Stiles continued speaking in his normal tone of voice, ignoring Isaac's attempts until Isaac got frustrated and covered his mouth again, this time pulling Stiles against his chest on the couch. Stiles wrapped his arms around Isaac and snuggled in, and Isaac realized this had been his goal all along.

“You're impossible,” Isaac growled quietly into Stiles' ear as he pulled his hand away from Stiles' face.

“I know,” Stiles answered with a grin, this time whispering like he was supposed to.

Isaac didn't exactly mind the excuse to hold Stiles close. He was warm and soothing, and touching him gave Isaac the happy, fluttery sensation he had been getting more blissfully frequently the past week. He wanted to argue that Stiles could have just asked for cuddles and saved them both the trouble, but on second thought he knew he would have said no if Stiles had done that, or at least he would have been considerably more embarrassed about it if he'd said yes.

After a few minutes Stiles sat up, giggling. “I was waiting to see how long it would take you to notice.”

“Notice what?” Isaac asked.

Stiles laughed out loud, and Isaac shushed him again. “That you're still wearing my pajamas.”

“I–uh, is that not okay?”

Stiles snickered and shook his head. “Not really. We are about to go to school and all.”
Isaac's jaw dropped and he had a mini-heart attack as he jumped to his feet, realizing how late he was running. “Why didn't you tell me?!”

“ISAAC!” Melissa yelled from upstairs.

“Sorry!” Isaac yelled back as he glared at Stiles then dashed as quickly and quietly up the stairs as he could to change.

Once Isaac and Scott were both ready and standing in the driveway with Stiles, Isaac had a decision to make. As much as he wanted to ride with Stiles to school that morning, his desire to ride with Scott was stronger, so he wordlessly picked up his helmet and climbed into his familiar place on the back of Scott's motorcycle.

Scott gave him a smile and seemed to lean into him more than usual as they rode. As a werewolf and most importantly as Scott's beta, Isaac was able to see beyond his surface-level mood. Scott was acting cheerful, but while that wasn't exactly fake, it also wasn't completely genuine. Beneath the optimism and reassurances that were inherently Scott, there was anxiety and even fear.

Isaac tried to keep those emotions out of his own mood. He needed to focus on caring for and supporting his alpha. The worst thing he could do was give in to his distress and wind up being the recipient of Scott's comfort instead. Isaac hated how one-side his relationship with Scott was. Scott did everything for him, and Isaac felt like all he ever did was take and take.

“Thank you for handling the werecoyote situation,” Scott said quietly as they parked in front of the school, as though reading Isaac's mind, or more likely his mood. “I couldn't do it, and I don't know if I could have lived with her being stuck out there any longer.”

Isaac shifted nervously as he put his helmet away, uncomfortable with praise hadn’t earned.

“Actually, Ethan pretty much handled it on his own. I kept screwing things up and getting in the way.”

“I wasn't there, but I know that's not true,” Scott answered, dropping a heavy hand on Isaac's shoulder.

“Hey, Ethan did teach me something really cool,” Isaac said, seeing an opportunity to tell Scott something legitimately useful. “Watch.”

He concentrated for a second and squeezed his scent off, holding it shut as he grinned excitedly at Scott.

Scott's jaw dropped and he leaned close, sniffing Isaac's neck the same way Isaac had sniffed Ethan's the night before. “How are you doing that?”

“It's called scent masking. I'll teach you,” Isaac said proudly, letting his scent reemerge. He reconsidered his statement. “Well, I'll get Ethan to teach you. He's way better at it. I think he knows some other werewolf tricks too, maybe even how to hide his heartbeat.”

“No way!” Scott declared, mouth agape. “How is that possible?”

“I don't really know on that one yet. I'll ask him.”

Scott nodded and led them into the school. “So you and Ethan really are getting along better, huh?”

“We, uh...yeah,” Isaac admitted, cheeks burning. “For the most part. There was an incident last night at Deaton's.”
Scott shrugged. “I know. Stiles included me on the texts he sent him.”

“I’m sorry,” Isaac answered, ashamed of himself all over again.

“Don’t be.” Scott pulled Isaac by the arm out of the flow of foot traffic as they reached the point where they would need to separate and go down different halls to get to their respective lockers. “A little broken glass is nothing compared to that girl’s life, or even just if it means you and Ethan learn to work together. I’m proud of you.”

“You are?” Isaac asked, beaming at him.

“Absolutely.” Scott clapped Isaac’s shoulder again. “See you later.”

“Later,” Isaac answered, turning and heading for his locker.

That day at lunch Isaac was sitting with Stiles and Lydia at their usual table when Scott walked into the cafeteria with Allison. Isaac was surprised when they joined the others. It was the first time since their breakup that Allison had eaten lunch with the rest of the pack. He nudged her foot under the table and gave her a smile, but received only a fleeting glance back before she refocused on her lunch. She was on edge and radiating a hot, tense anger. Yet it didn’t seem to be directed at Isaac specifically so much as the entire table. Isaac’s heart sank. They were losing her. He wondered how Scott had even convinced her to sit with them.

The pack agreed to meet up at the animal clinic after school, and Allison said that she would be there. However, her scent was so conflicted and agitated that Isaac couldn’t tell if she was lying.

As Isaac appraised the table, his attention shifted to another agitated packmate: Lydia. She didn’t seem outright hostile, just upset. Durings a lull in the conversation Isaac reached across the table and brushed his fingers against hers.

“You okay?”

She gave him an imperious look that had him reconsidering whether or not she was angry with him.

“I didn’t know about the werecoyote until Scott told me this morning.” She cut her eyes at Stiles too. He yelped and dropped the apple he was eating.

“Sorry,” Isaac muttered, his eyes falling to the table. He wasn’t sure what he was apologizing for, but it was obvious that he was supposed to.

“Me too,” Stiles answered, huddling against Isaac as though for protection.

Isaac resisted the urge to wrap his arm around Stiles. It wasn’t as if Lydia was actually going to hurt him and...well Isaac didn't want to do anything that might inadvertently make her angrier.

“Did Aiden know?” She asked Isaac.

He looked around nervously, half wishing he would spot the twins just so he could redirect Lydia to them, but half relieved they weren't around eavesdropping on private pack conversations.

“Probably?” he answered with a shrug. “I'm guessing Ethan told him, but I don't know.”

She gave Isaac a look he couldn't interpret, her scent offering no insight, then changed the subject and addressed her next question to Allison. “Do you have that PDF of your family’s journal?”

Isaac flinched. The tone and facial expression Lydia had used with him and Stiles had indicated
irritation, but no real damage to their relationship. By contrast her demeanor with Allison was professional, almost cold. It was clear they hadn't mended the rift that had formed between them the previous weekend, and with the detached, self-isolating behavior Allison was displaying, they might not do so anytime soon.

Allison didn't look up as she rifled through her purse and pulled out a flash drive. She slid it across the table to Lydia.

“Thank you,” Lydia said with tight lips as she dropped the device into her handbag.

Isaac recognized it as a polite fuck you. He exchanged concerned glances with Scott and Stiles.

The rest of lunch was just as tense and Isaac found himself wishing Danny would drop by again and disrupt the pack dynamic the way he had the day before. This time it would have been a welcome relief. Unfortunately, he was nowhere to be seen.

Isaac was anxious for the rest of the day until cross country practice. He had no idea how to fix the growing problems forming within his pack. Everyone but him was either angry at the others, dealing with their own personal crises, or both.

He was distracted from his troubles as he walked toward the gym and spotted Ethan coming up a different sidewalk. He didn't like how happy he was to see Ethan, but he didn't bother fighting it either.

“Hey,” Isaac whispered, too low for a human to hear and hoping that the almost muted tone would catch Ethan's attention the way it always caught his when Scott addressed him this way.

It worked. Ethan's head snapped in his direction, and a smile flashed across his face before he schooled his features back into a neutral expression. “Hey.”

“Oak tree?” Isaac whispered, motioning with his head toward the huge old tree that stood a dozen or so feet from the gym's main entrance.

“Sure,” Ethan answered, diverting his course.

“Hey,” Isaac said again in a normal volume, cringing at the awkwardness as he joined Ethan under the oak.

“Hey,” Ethan repeated, a smirk on his face as he stepped into Isaac's personal space the way he tended to do.

Isaac leaned away but didn't step back. “We're going to the animal clinic to turn the coyote back after school.”

“Good.” Ethan nodded and smiled neutrally.

Isaac hesitated, disappointed by Ethan's reaction. He was supposed to have invited himself along.

“So...are you coming?”

Ethan shook his head. “Nope.”

Isaac furrowed his brow. “Why not? Is this about last night? I thought you weren't mad.”

“I'm not mad, but I'm not going,” Ethan answered, his face still unreadable.
“But...Scott said you could.”

“Oh good,” Ethan answered with a sarcastic smirk, “but I’m still not going.”

“Why?”

“Because you don’t want me there.”

Isaac frowned. That was actually true. He didn’t want Ethan there. He kind of hated the idea of Ethan being around his entire pack. Granted, the numbers were obviously in their favor, but it still made him uncomfortable. He had only asked Ethan to come because Scott said he should.

“You...have a right to be there,” Isaac ground out between clinched teeth. “You saved her.”

“We saved her,” Ethan corrected. “But the hero thing is more you and your pack's style than mine. We wouldn't want anyone to think I'm a good person, now would we?”

Isaac couldn't bring himself to protest the point even though it was obvious from the look on Ethan's face that he wanted him to. When it became apparent that he wouldn’t, Ethan's face hardened. “Go do your thing without me.”

As Ethan stepped by him, Isaac surprised them both by darting out a hand and grabbing his wrist the way Ethan always did with him.

Ethan glanced curiously at Isaac’s fingers then back up at his face. “Yes?”

Tension roiled through Isaac's body and he regretted his impulsive action. He hadn't considered what he wanted to say or do, only that he didn't want Ethan walking away with that look on his face. His feelings for Ethan were a mess. He hated Ethan...but now he also liked him – like a lot if the tingly sensation in his fingers as they pressed against Ethan's skin was any indication.

“You said I could use you,” Isaac whispered, his cock throbbing in his pants.

Ethan arched his eyebrows, looking surprised, impressed, and turned on in rapid succession. “Text me when you're done at the animal clinic.”

Isaac licked his lips and nodded. His heart raced. He couldn't believe he had just said that.

“Try not to get hard,” Ethan whispered in a low voice as the thick, silky scent of his lust tickled the back of Isaac's throat. “We have to change for cross country in a minute.”

“Asshole,” Isaac mumbled, releasing Ethan's wrist and trying to ignore the growing heaviness in his pants.

“I think calling me a dick would be more appropriate,” Ethan answered, smiling sweetly. “You're the asshole.”

Desire mixed with fear coiled in Isaac's stomach as Ethan walked away from him. He shamelessly watched him leave, too horny not to enjoy the perky swell of his ass. But Isaac knew Ethan was right: it was his dick Isaac wanted. It was huge and terrifying, and Isaac knew it would hurt, and he didn't trust Ethan to go easy on him...and all those things made Isaac want it even more.

Isaac was late to cross country practice. He had to hide in a bathroom stall and Google videos of people throwing up on his phone to kill his boner and take himself out of the headspace Ethan had put him in. When he walked into the locker room a little while later, a short, younger looking guy
that he didn't recognize was standing next to Coach Finstock.

“Ah, Lahey, nice of you to join us. You just earned yourself five extra laps for being late.”

“Sorry, Coach.” Isaac ducked his head and hustled to his locker to change.

“Now, everybody listen up. This is Liam Dunbar. He's a transfer student from Devenford Prep. He's going to be on the lacrosse team next season.”

“But he hasn't tried out,” Greenberg pointed out, frowning at Liam.

“He doesn't need to. He's that good.” Coach Finstock clapped a hand on Liam's shoulder and glared at Greenberg. “And you can join Lahey on those extra laps. Let me know if you have any more suggestions for how I run my team.”

Isaac discreetly looked Liam over, making a point to also check his scent. He didn't like him. Liam smelled smug, and there was something dangerous in the set of his shoulders. He reminded Isaac of a spring wound too tight, ready to snap. He was cute though, and Isaac found himself disappointed that he was already dressed in his cross country gear. He had a really nice ass from what Isaac could see of it from the side, and a tantalizing tuft of brown chest hair peeked from the v-neck of his jersey. Isaac definitely wouldn't have objected to seeing his newest teammate naked.

Isaac inwardly scolded himself. His hormones had been out of control recently, especially toward guys. He enjoyed his bisexuality and the way it ebbed and flowed from one gender to the other, but lately between his infatuation with Stiles and his fascination with Ethan, his sexuality had been decidedly focused on the male form. He hoped that whatever happened with Ethan tonight would help take the edge off.

Coach Finstock was still talking. “Since cross country is mandatory for lacrosse players, Liam's now officially on the cross country team too. I want everybody outside and ready to sweat in three minutes.”

Isaac kept to himself during practice, uncomfortably aware of how fucking hot most of his teammates were. He even avoided Scott and Stiles as much as he could without acting like anything was wrong. He particularly avoided Ethan, who seemed to be actively trying to work him up, making it a point to run right in front of him or lift the bottom of his shirt and wipe his face whenever he caught Isaac looking at him.

Isaac tried to console himself with the knowledge that Ethan wasn't just teasing him. They were actually going to hook up later. It would be Isaac's first hookup with a guy, unless he counted the hands off mutual masturbation session they'd already had – which he very much did count because it had been fucking awesome – but whatever happened tonight would be a hands on experience and that knowledge wasn't exactly helping Isaac keep his cool.

Halfway through practice Aiden disappeared. Anxiety gnawed at Isaac's gut as he looked around and confirmed that he was the only one missing. Isaac may have stopped expecting Ethan to be instantly and randomly homicidal, but that confidence didn't extend to Aiden. If he had skulked off somewhere it could only mean trouble.

“Where’s your brother?” Isaac asked, jogging up next to Ethan.

“Really? My brother is who you're thinking about?” Ethan smirked and ran a hand down his neck, hooking his fingers in the front of his jersey and flashing a good bit of his right pec before releasing the fabric.
“Yes, okay, I want to get you out of your clothes. Happy now?”

Ethan grinned and nodded – and dammit he was cute with those boyish features, chocolate eyes, and full lips.

Isaac shook his head, clearing it. “But where is Aiden?”

Ethan shrugged but concentrated for a moment. “School. East wing. I think he might have gone to look for Lydia. She's mad at him.”

Isaac frowned, unsure what to do. He had mostly given up trying to interfere in Lydia and Aiden's relationship, but if she was mad at Aiden that complicated things. Isaac’s blood ran cold as he remembered Ethan's words to Aiden over the phone last Friday night.

*I'm not you, Aiden. I don't kill people when they piss me off.*

Terror and anger crashed over Isaac. Without another word he took off toward the school’s east wing.

“Isaac!” Ethan shouted after him.

Isaac didn't stop or turn around.

He wasn't sure if Ethan was following him or not – the former alpha was frustrating good at stealth – but he didn't particularly care. The only thing that mattered was finding Lydia and making sure she was okay. He wasn't sure what she was even doing still on campus after hours, which was frustrating since it meant he had no idea where to look for her other than somewhere in the east wing of the school. His cell phone was in his gym locker so he couldn't call her.

As he barreled into the building through a side door, he took a deep breath, trying to get a fix on Lydia’s scent. No such luck, but he did detect a different familiar scent: Allison.

Isaac raced toward his ex-girlfriend's scent, his fear and concern for Lydia getting tangled up with the same worry about Allison. He hoped that wherever they were maybe they were together.

It became a moot point when he caught Aiden's scent. If he could locate the source of the threat it wouldn't matter where the potential victims were.

His heart leaped into his mouth as he realized he was still running toward Allison's scent too. She was with Aiden; Lydia didn’t seem to be. This was confirmed as Allison’s and Aiden's muffled shouts reached Isaac’s ears.

Anger and more fear flared through Isaac. They were upstairs.

As he bounded through the hallway and up the stairs at superhuman speed another anxiety-spiking scent reached his sensitive nostrils: Aiden's blood. A pained howl accompanied the smell. Aiden and Allison were fighting. He had to hurry.

Once at the top of the stairs, it was obvious which classroom they were in from the sounds of the fight. Isaac hurled himself through the open classroom door just in time to see Aiden grab Allison and fling her sideways against the whiteboard.

Isaac's ears strained to hear if any bones were breaking; they weren't. This was confirmed as Allison landed in a defensive crouching position, a dagger radiating the burn of wolfsbane clutched in her hand.
Isaac leaped over Allison and tackled Aiden, relieved that she was apparently still okay and he now had his body between her and their enemy.

He growled and swiped his claws across Aiden's chest, drawing blood as he noticed the nasty knife wound in Aiden's stomach. He was bleeding heavily and a black ooze was slowly congealing around the edges of the injury. Isaac darted backward and sprang to his feet as Aiden swung at him and missed.

Aiden bounced to his feet too, his claws and fangs extended and his eyes glowing a deadly icy blue.

Isaac steeled himself for the impending attack. He couldn't dodge or he'd risk Aiden getting by him and hurting Allison.

Suddenly an intense, fiery pain erupted in Isaac's back at the base of his neck. He heard the sickening crunch of his spinal column as the agonizing sharpness kept coming. An instant later his arms and legs went numb and he crumpled to the floor at Aiden's feet.

Aiden blinked open-mouthed at Isaac as fingers gripped Isaac's hair from behind and pulled his head back, exposing his throat. Isaac felt the burn of wolfsbane as the knife blade nicked his Adam's apple and poised over his jugular. Even with the crackling burn of the poison singeing Isaac's nostrils he could still detect the horrifyingly familiar scent of his packmate and former lover cloaked around him.

“Allison don't,” Isaac pleaded as he looked helplessly at Aiden.

Ethan's brother was bleeding and injured, but he could have stopped this if he had wanted to. He made no move, just watched them intently.

As the tip of Allison's blade pierced Isaac's throat, a deafening scream erupted through the room.

Aiden covered his ears and fell to his knees at the same moment that Allison jerked her hands away, dropping the knife and Isaac.

He smashed face first against the floor, unable to catch himself or slow his fall. He howled into the dirty classroom floor as his eardrums ruptured. Then there was nothing but silence, silence and full-bodied numbness from the neck down.

Chapter End Notes

Things are heating up, you guys! Please let me know what you thought of this chapter if you have the time.
As the tip of Allison's blade pierced Isaac's throat, a deafening scream erupted through the room.

Aiden covered his ears and fell to his knees at the same moment that Allison jerked her hands away, dropping the knife and Isaac.

He smashed face first against the floor, unable to catch himself or slow his fall. He howled into the dirty classroom floor as his eardrums ruptured. Then there was nothing but silence, silence and full-bodied numbness from the neck down, which was in sharp contrast to the agony that assaulted him from the neck up.

The pain in his ears was extreme and terrifying, as though Allison's knife had been jabbed directly into his ear canals rather than shallowly across his throat. A hot, wet sensation trickled from his ears and down his cheeks, and his eyes throbbed with such intense pressure that he counted himself lucky that only his eardrums had ruptured and not his eyeballs too. His head pounded with the worst migraine he'd ever had, and his nostrils burned from the residual wolfsbane that clung to his throat wounds, severely impairing his sense of smell.

The floor vibrated softly against his cheek and a shadow darkened the ground beside him. Someone was standing over him. The world spun and the floor receded from his face as he was turned over.

Ethan!

He knelt behind Isaac and said something to him with a creased brow, but the world remained silent, and Isaac couldn't read his lips. Ethan frowned and held Isaac’s gaze as he said something else.

Isaac blinked in alarm as Ethan dragged him closer by his shoulder and propped him against his knee. It wasn't that Ethan was touching or moving Isaac that alarmed him; it was that he couldn't feel it. There was no pressure on his shoulder, no drag on his body, only the visual of Ethan gripping him as his perspective shifted.

Aiden was here too. He had been a shapeless presence in Isaac’s periphery, but from Isaac’s new position he came into focus. He was slumped against Ethan's side and looked much worse than he had a minute or so earlier during the fight. The color had drained from his face and almost the entire front of his body was soaked in blood.

Ethan said something to Aiden, then gripped the collar of Aiden's shirt and ripped it apart. The fabric gave way along the shreds over Aiden's chest that Isaac had created with his claws, but it halted against the perimeter of the jagged hole Allison had inflicted on Aiden's stomach. Ethan carefully lifted the cloth away from the injury site and finished tearing it loose as Aiden shrugged his arms out of the sleeves.
Isaac was disgusted by the gore on Aiden's torso. He was still bleeding heavily from his stomach wound, which was much larger than Isaac had first estimated. Allison must have twisted the knife a few times to have hollowed out such a large area. A black ooze slowly seeped from the edges of the wound while Aiden's crimson blood flowed more freely over and around the viscous sludge. The deep scratches across his chest were also still bleeding, but much more slowly than his stomach. They probably would have already healed if Aiden's body hadn't been fighting the toxic wolfsbane from Allison's blade. Isaac realized that the same was likely true of his own ruptured eardrums.

Ethan said something else to Aiden as he looped an arm around him and pressed his palm against Aiden's gaping stomach wound, staunching the bleeding. Thick, black vines of pain shot up Ethan's arm and disappeared under his sleeve before reemerging on his neck.

Aiden's face relaxed and some of the tension left his body as he shifted closer to his brother and lay his head on Ethan's shoulder. The black ooze seeped between Ethan’s fingers and coated the back of his hand. It was thick and gooey and so disgusting Isaac was almost grateful his nostrils were too burned to smell it.

Ethan’s brow furrowed as he placed his other hand on Isaac’s chest. He said something but—

“I can't hear anything!” Isaac said, or perhaps shouted based on the way Ethan and Aiden both flinched.

Ethan moved his hand up to Isaac's throat – and Isaac’s heart thudded against his numb ribcage. He was already borderline panicked that Aiden was sitting over him while he was so helpless, and as much as he trusted Ethan by comparison, it was terrifying having Ethan's hand on this throat while there was absolutely nothing he could do to defend himself.

Isaac felt a twinge of shame at his reaction as the fierce burn in his throat finally abated and tendrils of black wound their way up Ethan's arm. The stabbing throb in Isaac's ears also gradually eased until for a split second there was no sensation at all; then something warm and tingly-wet started moving. He thrashed his head, the only part of his body he could control, but Ethan shushed him with an exaggerated pout of his lips and placed his thumb across Isaac's jaw, gently restricting his range of motion.

Isaac knew the skittering crawl deep in his ear canals was a good sign, so he tried to stay still like Ethan had told him. It was maddeningly uncomfortable, but his endurance was rewarded a minute later when something popped back into place in his left ear and suddenly his world was filled with sound again, albeit in one ear only.

“I can hear!” Isaac shouted, involuntarily grinning up at Ethan. The congealed blood on his face created a sticky tug as the skin moved beneath it.

Aiden raised his head from Ethan's shoulder and bared his fangs at Isaac before turning back to Ethan. “Will you please strangle him?”

“No,” Ethan smirked at his brother and grazed his thumb over Isaac's jaw again, leaving a trail of self consciousness in his wake as Isaac realized how disgusting he must have looked right now.

Aiden growled and lay his head back down, glaring murderous blue daggers at Isaac.

Isaac flashed his gold eyes back and elongated his fangs, taunting Aiden now that he was fairly confident Ethan wouldn't let Aiden hurt him. Meanwhile, his right ear finished healing and the world was swept back into glorious stereo.
Isaac's improving mood was waylaid as he glanced back up at Ethan. Ethan's face was contorted in a grimace and he was trembling and sweating. That's when Isaac realized how much of a toll it was taking on Ethan to comfort him and Aiden at the same time. His efforts were working however. Isaac was pretty sure the only reason his ears had finally healed was because Ethan had eased his pain. Likewise, the claw marks on Aiden's chest had finally closed completely, and his stomach didn't seem to be bleeding and oozing as much around Ethan's fingers. Some of the color had even returned to Aiden's face.

Nevertheless, as much as Isaac desperately hoped his spine would heal soon and he would regain the ability to move, he wanted Ethan to stop. Ethan wasn't his packmate (although friend was starting to feel like a frighteningly appropriate term); he shouldn't have been doing this for him. Isaac could handle the pain in his head and throat on his own while he waited to heal, but as he opened his mouth to tell Ethan to stop, Ethan spoke instead.

"Scott, get over here. I need help," Ethan called, looking across the room beyond Isaac's limited line of sight.

"Scott's here?!" Relief rushed over Isaac as he extended his newly restored hearing and promptly caught the soothing timbre of his alpha's voice.

"Right there," Ethan answered, releasing Isaac's throat. The pain immediately spiked from a manageable burn back to a fiery blaze as Ethan hooked his arm under Isaac's and pulled him further into his lap, propping him higher and rendering more of the room visible. A second later Ethan's palm was back on his throat and they were once again sharing the sharp bite of wolfsbane. Isaac wished the damn thing would just fucking heal already, but the wound was still slowly bleeding.

Isaac's distress was soothed as he caught sight of Scott – with Allison and Lydia! Scott placed his hand on Allison's arm before turning away and rushing toward Isaac.

"I'm so sorry, man," Scott said, his eyes troubled and apologetic as he tossed himself to the floor next to Isaac and Ethan and gently but assertively pulled Isaac away from Ethan and into his own lap. "I wanted to come straight to you, but I had to stop Allison from leaving and calm her down."

Isaac's pain level dropped drastically as Scott's hand replaced Ethan's on his throat. Then as Scott's other hand found its way to Isaac's forehead once Scott realized there was no pain from Isaac's neck down, the last remnants of Isaac's migraine quickly faded and the burn in his throat became almost imperceptible. As an alpha, Scott was much better at pain leaching than Ethan; though Isaac supposed it also had something to do with Ethan dividing his efforts between Isaac and Aiden.

"Thank you for taking care of him," Scott said to Ethan, who nodded in response. Then Scott's gaze shifted to Aiden. "You okay?"

"Peachy," Aiden answered in a ragged voice, eyes and fangs still wolfed out. "You want to tell me why the hell that bitch flipped out? She attacked me for no fucking reason!"

Isaac felt the anger flare through Scott, and his eyes briefly flashed red at Aiden before cooling.

"Why did Allison attack them?" Ethan's face remained neutral, but his arm tightened around his injured brother and he leaned forward, placing himself more squarely between Scott and Aiden.

Scott frowned and glanced at Isaac before answering. "She...lost control. She's sorry."

"Oh well if she's sorry I guess her violent rampage doesn't matter."

"You're one to talk," Isaac said, scowling at his adversary.
Aiden’s raised a clawed hand, but before anyone else could react Ethan grabbed it and pulled it against his chest, clutching Aiden closer in the process. “Calm. Down,” he rumbled into his brother’s ear.

Aiden seemed to heed the advice as he paused and took a few breaths. His features were human again as he said to Scott, “She almost killed your beta.”

“Yeah, you seemed real worried about me.” Isaac nuzzled closer to Scott, emboldened to openly challenge Aiden now that his alpha was here.

Aiden ignored him and continued speaking to Scott. “She needs to be stopped.”

“She has been stopped,” Scott answered, flashing red eyes at Aiden again.

It would have ended the conversation with a beta, but Aiden wasn’t Scott’s beta. “If she comes after me again, I’m going to put her down.”

“Over my dead body!” Isaac growled, furious that his limbs wouldn’t obey him as he tried to wave his arms.

“Not an obstacle,” Aiden answered with a sneer at Isaac.

“Shut up and hold still,” Ethan barked, shifting further back and repositioning himself and his brother so that Aiden was reclined against his chest. “I’m going to scrape out the wolfsbane now that the rest of your wounds are healed and the bleeding’s stabilized.”

Isaac gagged in revulsion as he stared at the seeping black hole in Aiden's stomach where the inner edges of his well-sculpted top set of abs should have been. The ooze had spilled down the deep vertical line of his abdomen, overflowed into the horizontal ridges of his lower stomach and coated everything in a thick slime that smelled like burning rot.

He watched in rapt fascination as Ethan propped Aiden up a little more then ran a clawed finger down the front of his own shirt, tearing it in half and pulling the pieces away from his torso before Aiden settled back in against his body. Scott helped Ethan remove the ruined garment from his arms, and then Ethan tore it the rest of the way in half. Aiden's jaw twitched and his claws scrabbled against the classroom floor on either side of his thighs as Ethan used one half of the shirt to sop up and wipe away the worst of the black ooze on Aiden's stomach.

Once Ethan was done he tossed away the soiled half of the shirt and laid the clean half in Aiden's lap. Then he extended his right hand, palm up, in front of Aiden, as if in offering. Aiden quickly took it, lacing their fingers together and settling back further into Ethan's embrace. He visibly relaxed as black vines of pain once again flowed out of his hand and into his brother's.

“I gotcha. It's gonna be okay,” Ethan murmured into Aiden's ear.

Isaac blushed. He didn't think he was meant to have heard that.

“AAGHH!” Aiden screamed, his eyes clenched shut as Ethan raked the clawed pointer finger of his dominant hand around the perimeter of Aiden's wound, scraping away more of the black sludge.

After a few revolutions, Ethan removed his finger and wiped it clean on the shirt piece in Aiden's lap. He repeated the process until all the slime had been cleared and he was scraping away flesh. Aiden was panting and bleeding profusely by this point, and Isaac was neither surprised nor upset when Scott placed the hand not on Isaac's throat over the twins’ joined fingers and began sharing the burden with them.
Lydia and Allison had been talking in the corner of the room, but at some point they had gathered around the werewolves. Lydia was across from Isaac, knelt by Aiden’s far side and reassuringly rubbing his leg when she wasn’t helping Ethan wipe his finger clean between rounds. Allison was crouched next to Scott by Isaac’s side, clutching Isaac's limp, lifeless hand.

Ethan hissed and gritted his teeth. “I found the wolfsbane.”

Isaac smelled the telltale burn as he said it and the next time Ethan wiped his finger there were traces of green in the bloody pulp. After a few more minutes Ethan stopped. He was breathing heavily and both twins' hair was matted to their heads and dripping with sweat.

“Aiden, was that it?” Ethan asked. Spirals of pain were still twining up Ethan's and Scott's arms, but that would have been the case regardless of the presence of wolfsbane given Aiden's bloody, re-shredded wound.

Aiden took a few steadying breaths before pressing his face into the crook of Ethan's neck and shaking his head. “No. Deeper.”

Ethan’s face dropped with disappointment and his brow furrowed nervously. “I don't think I should. Maybe we should take you to Deaton.”

“Yes!” Scott said, nodding at Ethan. Isaac inwardly agreed. Aiden's suffering had gone from darkly satisfying to deeply uncomfortable to witness. Mostly, however, he just wanted Ethan to get a reprieve.

“NO!” Aiden thundered, sitting up and saturating his lap and the floor in front of him with blood as he stared into Ethan's eyes, his own glowing. “Get it out of me! PLEASE! FINISH!”

Ethan swallowed and nodded, guiding Aiden back down and briefly pressing their heads together. “Hold very still,” he ordered.

Isaac looked away as Ethan's whole finger up to the last knuckle disappeared into the mangled, gaping hole. Both twins were gasping and grunting, and even Isaac was terrified at this point that Ethan would hit something and kill Aiden.

“That's it. There.” Aiden's voice was shaky, weak. If Aiden hadn't been a werewolf he would have bled out by now.

“Got it,” Ethan said a moment later. Isaac had never been so pleased to smell wolfsbane before.

Isaac tentatively looked back just as Lydia finished wiping Ethan's finger for the last time and balled up the dripping, bloody cloth. She dropped it in a pool of blood next to Aiden. The entire area looked like a scene out of Isaac and Stiles' slasher show.

“Give us a few minutes while he heals?” Ethan asked Scott. The other three werewolves' hands were still linked and given that Aiden had essentially just undergone crude, improvised surgery, Isaac knew the pain wasn't going to subside anytime soon.

“I'll call my dad to get a team out to clean this up,” Allison said, letting go of Isaac's still numb hand and pulling her phone out of her pocket.

“Well...,” Ethan said, drawing everyone's attention, with the exception of Aiden who was still sprawled out against his chest, face nuzzled into Ethan's neck. Isaac could tell by his breathing and heart rate that he was still awake, but he looked to be trying to fall asleep. “You might want to wait,” Ethan said to Allison. “Isaac's going to need the same treatment.”
“On his throat!?” Scott briefly lifted his hand and the blaze on Isaac's skin returned as his nostrils were once again singed.

“No, god no!” Isaac glared at Ethan for even suggesting it.

“Your spine too if you ever want to walk again,” Ethan answered.

“Okay, obviously he's going to need proper surgery for that.” Lydia’s voice was calm, but her scent and posture belied her anxiety. “No offense to your highly trained finger, Ethan.”

Ethan shrugged and smirked, earning a grumble from Aiden as his rest was interrupted. “I assumed Scott would do it. I don't think Isaac wants me scratching around his throat.”

“Damn right I don’t!”

“Well I don't want me scratching around your throat,” Scott said to Isaac, looking terrified. “We're going to Deaton.”

Isaac was distracted as Lydia wiped her hands on the calf of Aiden's pant leg – one of the only parts of him that wasn't bloody – and pulled her phone out of her pocket. It was lit up and insistently buzzing. A moment later Stiles' voice was on the other end.

“Lydia!” Stiles sounded like he was well into a full blown panic attack. “Thank god! I've been calling you. I've been calling everyone! Scott and Isaac suddenly ran off with Ethan during practice and I can't find them and they never came back and no one's answering and–”

“Stiles, calm down. They're with me.”

Stiles breathe a sigh of relief, but his voice was still tight when he spoke. “Where are you?”

“Ms. Barringer's classroom,” she said.

“I'll be right there,” he said.

“Stiles, wait. Everyone's alive but you need to brace yourself, okay?” Lydia said, her tone gentle.

“For what?” Stiles asked, in a small, scared tone.

“There was a fight and there's a lot of blood. It's all okay, but I want you to be ready.”

“Are Scott and Isaac okay?” Stiles asked, his voice quivery.

“They're right here,” Lydia said, not quite answering the question before pulling the phone away from her head and holding it toward them. “Say hi, guys.” Isaac and Scott both did with feigned joviality. “We'll explain everything when you get here,” Lydia added before hanging up.

During the ten minutes it took Stiles to arrive, Aiden recovered enough to sit up and complain about being thirsty. Allison offered him a bottle of water from her bag but he simply scoffed and glared incredulously at her. Ethan then offered to go get him water while he rested, but the look he got back made it clear to everyone that Aiden wasn't too keen on being left alone with the others. He gave Lydia an expectant look a moment later.

She folded her arms and frowned at her boyfriend. “I'm waiting for Stiles.”

“Fine, I'll just sit here in my blood being dehydrated,” Aiden snapped.
“Sounds like a plan,” Isaac interjected with a smirk.

“Oh my god!” Stiles whispered from the open doorway. He ran over and crouched beside Scott as he wrapped his arms around Isaac in what Isaac assumed was a tight hug. “You're covered in blood!”

“He's covered in blood?” Aiden remarked.

“Are you okay?” Stiles asked, his face still buried against Isaac's shoulder.

“Uh...sort of,” Isaac answered.

“You're not hugging back?” Stiles pulled back and frowned at Isaac.

“He's paralyzed, genius,” Aiden said.

“Did you do this to him?!” Stiles looked up at Aiden, but flinched and dry heaved as he seemed to properly take in Aiden's appearance for the first time. “...How are you still alive?”

“Werewolf,” Aiden answered, climbing shakily to his feet. Ethan shot up behind him and wrapped an arm around his waist. Aiden dropped his arm over Ethan's shoulders and leaned heavily against him. “Let's go.”

Ethan hesitated, casting an uncertain look at Isaac.

Isaac coughed and looked at the floor. “I'll, uh, text you later.”

Ethan nodded and exchanged a look with Scott that Isaac couldn't interpret. Scott apparently understood, since he nodded meaningfully in response as the twins trudged out of the room.

“What happened to you?” Stiles asked, rubbing his thumb across the apple of Isaac's left cheek. Flecks of dried blood clung to Stiles' thumb as he pulled it back, and his big brown eyes were clouded with so much worry and confusion that Isaac was borderline furious with his arms for not wrapping themselves around Stiles.

“I stabbed him,” Allison said from over Stiles' shoulder.

Stiles spun around, his mouth hanging open. “You what?! WHY?”

Scott placed a hand on the back of Stiles' neck and gave it a small squeeze. “Her version of Iron Claw.”

“So not cool,” Stiles said, his face nevertheless softening slightly. He looked around the room, “And what's with all the broken glass?”

“What broken glass?” Isaac cut in, looking around as best he could but not seeing any.

“Dude, like all the windows are blown out,” Scott said, rising to his feet with Isaac in his arms so that he could look around the room properly for the first time. It looked like a sonic blast had swept through the room, which it sort of had. Scott sat back down, this time propping Isaac up against his side. “Lydia screamed to stop Allison from killing Isaac.”

“Killing him?” Stiles asked in disbelief as he turned to Allison. Isaac couldn't see the look Stiles gave her, but it made her take a step back. “You were going to kill him.”

“I'm going to call my dad now,” Allison answered, visibly deflated as she walked to the corner of the
“And I'll call Deaton.” Lydia got up and walked into the hall.

“Stiles, can you go get me and Isaac's stuff from the locker room?” Scott asked, reminding Isaac that they were still in their gym clothes and that he didn't have his phone, book bag, or regular clothes.

Stiles shook his head and picked up Isaac's limp hand. “I wanna stay with Isaac.”

Scott looked like he was going to argue but Isaac spoke up first. “It's fine. You go get changed and stuff.”

Scott seemed conflicted as he rubbed Isaac's throat. “Are you sure? It'll hurt if I leave.”

“It always does,” Isaac joked with mock seriousness.

Scott laughed and ruffled Isaac's hair with his other hand before reluctantly releasing his throat and propping Isaac against Stiles before leaving.

Isaac tried not to wince as the dull ache in his throat became a cruel inferno and his nose once again succumbed to the burn and quit functioning.

“Is it bad?” Stiles asked, face close to Isaac's due to the necessity of holding him up. “I'm sorry. I should have gone and Scott should have stayed. I just- I'm worried, but...”

“I'm glad you're here,” Isaac said softly, wishing for the hundredth time that he could touch Stiles. Well technically, he was all but on top of Stiles and Stiles' arms were wrapped around him, but it didn't feel like they were touching.

“Can you feel anything?” Stiles asked.

“Nothing from the neck down.” And nothing good from the neck up.

“You mean even your...?”

Isaac laughed. “You could be blowing me right now and I wouldn't notice.”

Stiles eyes widened and he grinned. “Is that a serious offer?”

Isaac laughed again, this time nervously. “Well I doubt I'd be up for it if you know what I mean.”

“Uh yeah, I guess not either way, huh?”

“Um...this is awkward,” Isaac said, stating the obvious, and dammit, Stiles really needed to quit making jokes like this.

“Just forget I said anything,” Stiles answered.

“Said anything about what?” Lydia asked, rejoining them.

“Fellatio,” Stiles answered with a snicker.

Lydia rolled her eyes. “Well okay then.”

Isaac couldn't be certain due to the distracting burn already present in his throat and nose, but he was pretty sure his cheeks were hopping on the overheated bandwagon.
Isaac cleared his throat to get Lydia's attention. "Thank you, for saving me."

Lydia smiled and patted his hand (and seriously did no one understand the concept of paralysis?). "I'm just relieved it worked...I don't think Aiden was going to do anything."

Isaac frowned. He had told her numerous times in many various ways that her boyfriend was a selfish dickhead, but now didn't seem like the best time to reiterate that point. "You know, I was actually coming to save you."

"From what?" She asked. Stiles looked interested too.

Isaac shrugged. "Aiden."

"Why would Aiden hurt me?"

"Why does Aiden hurt anyone?"

"Isaac." She narrowed her eyes on him and gave him a frosty glare, and yep, he had been right: now wasn't the best time to point out her boyfriend's shortcomings.

A little while later, Allison returned and informed them that her dad and a team of hunters would be coming in a little while to clean up the mess and hide all traces of the supernatural.

"Don't worry, we'll leave as soon as Scott gets back," Stiles said, evidently reading Isaac's mind about the intense anxiety the thought of a half dozen or so hunters showing up while he was paralyzed caused.

A minute later Isaac realized that Scott didn't have his locker combination, but he dismissed the concern as it occurred to him that Scott would just be able to hear when the tumblers clicked into place and wouldn't actually need the combination.

Allison looked ready to bolt as the four of them made uncomfortable small talk, but granted it was only uncomfortable because they were avoiding the elephant in the room that was her break from reality. Fortunately, Scott didn't take long to get back and they left for the animal clinic before the hunters arrived.

Chapter End Notes

Feedback is greatly appreciated. This chapter was a bit more graphically gory than I usually write, but I want to expand my capabilities in the horror genre, so I'm very interested to hear what people thought.
Warning: Side effects of death may include extreme body odor, a loss of fine and gross motor skills, bladder and anal incontinence, severe bloating, swelling, and popping. Patients who are breastfeeding, pregnant, or may become pregnant should avoid death. In clinical trials death has been linked to certain types of sexual dysfunction including a diminished libido and an inability to achieve orgasm. In rare instances death has been associated with possession by evil spirits and homicidal tendencies. Talk to your doctor before trying death.

Iron Claws and Fragile Hearts

Chapter 19: The Side Effects

Isaac awoke to the sensation of cold steel against his back, shoulders, and calves – it was awesome!

He was sprawled across one of Dr. Deaton's long surgical tables and covered by a thin white sheet. He flexed his arms and legs and took a moment to appraise his condition as he sat up. His throat was dry and scratchy, and the residual scent of blood and wolfsbane clung to his skin, but other than that everything felt blissfully normal.

The steady thump of a familiar heartbeat beside him let Isaac know he wasn’t alone. Stiles was scrunched and folded across two chairs, napping in a very uncomfortable-looking position, but apparently keeping vigil by Isaac's bedside...well tableside.

Stiles’ presence was in stark contrast to the handful of times during Isaac’s adolescence when he had woken up alone in a hospital bed after one of his father's overly enthusiastic 'discipline' sessions. A smile tugged at his lips and a warm sensation throbbed in his chest. He wasn’t alone anymore, not in the literal moment nor in the larger figurative sense.

Stiles thrashed and whimpered in his sleep. “No, don’t grab her there.”

Isaac cast aside the sheet and hopped off the table, wincing as the cold tile floor stung his bare feet. He was naked except for his gym shorts. His other clothing must have been removed in preparation for his surgery. Being so exposed in the animal clinic was unsettling, but he ignored those feelings and focused on his distressed packmate as he crouched beside him and gently shook his shoulder.

“Stiles, wake up. You're having a nightmare.”

“Aahh!” Stiles gasped and bolted upright, striking Isaac's nose with the back of his hand as he flailed.

Isaac hissed and covered his face, relieved that at least Stiles hadn't drawn blood.

“Sorry.” Stiles raised his shoulders and flashed Isaac an adorable abashed grimace before his eyes lit up. “Hey! You're up and moving and stuff!!”

Stiles wrapped his arms around Isaac’s waist and yanked him close as he pressed his face against Isaac's stomach in a very awkward hug. At least it was awkward for Isaac; Stiles seemed relaxed about it.
Stiles giggled and pulled back enough to look up at Isaac in a way that was much too sexy as he rubbed his thumb down Isaac's lower abdomen from his navel all the way to the waistband of his gym shorts, stroking the line of light brown hairs that formed Isaac’s treasure trail. “This tickles.”

Isaac all but swallowed his tongue as he looked down at Stiles, shocked that he was touching him here, inches away from his dick, in an indisputably private area.

Stiles cheeks darkened and he released Isaac like he was a hot stove. “Sorry! I didn't mean to– I know that was inappropriate. I just got carried away but– Uh, no excuse, I get it. Sorry.”

Isaac sank into the nearby chair that Stiles' legs had occupied, eager to sit and hunch over as he felt a telltale swell forming in his nether regions. His hormones were still racing from his experiences at Stiles' house the night before – smelling his semen, wearing his pajama pants, holding him, sleeping with him – as well as the conversation he'd had with Ethan at school and the way former alpha had intentionally worked him up at practice. Granted getting paralyzed and bleeding all over himself had sort of killed the mood, but Stiles was rapidly reigniting it.

“I really regret doing that,” Stiles said with an earnest look.

“You do?” Isaac's heart sank. For a second he had deluded himself into thinking Stiles might have actually liked it.

Yeah.” Stiles nodded vehemently. “That was so skeevy.”

Isaac flinched. It felt like Stiles had just punched him in his skeevy stomach.

“I won't do that again,” Stiles said.

“I get it!” Isaac snapped, his semi-hard dick deflating as he felt decidedly unsexy. A twinge of guilt tugged at him as Stiles' face fell and the scent of his embarrassment flooded the room. This really was Stiles' fault. He damn well shouldn't touch parts of Isaac’s body that would disgust him once he realized what he was doing, but Isaac hated the tension forming between them and needed to find a way to defuse it. “So, another nightmare, huh?”

Stiles gave a half-smile, obviously appreciating the subject change as he cringed dramatically. “Ugh, it was terrible!”

“What happened? Did one of us die again?” Isaac placed a hand on Stiles' back. Stiles obviously didn't want to touch Isaac intimately, but he always seemed to appreciate platonic comfort and Isaac couldn't bear the turmoil that had formed on his friend's face.

Stiles shook his head. “No, this time I dreamed a smug, bigoted, kinda rapey orangutan took over the nation and began systematically stripping away everyone's rights.”

Isaac gasped. “Oh my god, that sounds horrible!”

“Horrible!” Stiles agreed with another cringe.

“That's it,” Isaac said, shaking his head, “you have got to learn how to lucid dream. No one should have to go through a nightmare like that without being able to wake up.”

Stiles shrugged. “Yeah, I read the info you sent. I'll give it a try.”

Isaac nodded toward the surgical table. “So how long was I out for?”
“Hmm, well you missed all the stuff with Malia.”

Isaac was confused before remembering the name the sheriff had given them that morning. “Oh the werecoyote. So she's human again?”

“Yes.”

“I'm sorry I missed that.”

Stiles shrugged. “Wasn't that big a thing. We basically just stood around while Scott howled and gave her the red eye.” A smile broke across Stiles' face. “But watching her shift back was really cool and...”

Isaac quirked an eyebrow at Stiles, waiting for him to finish. He smelled embarrassed again, only this time there was an undercurrent of arousal. “And?”

Stiles grinned and gave Isaac what could only be described as a 'bro-ish' look. “She was naked.”

“Oh yeah?” Isaac smirked back. It was a little awkward talking about girls with his guy crush, but still fun.

“Ohh yeah.” Stiles nodded, his eyes half-lidded. “Phenomenal breasts!” He leaned closer and his voice took on a slightly vulnerable quality. “They were the first ones I've seen in real life.”

Isaac inhaled, drawing Stiles' arousal deep into his lungs and holding it there, enjoying the way it tickled his insides and settled like a heavily blanket across his lower abdomen.

“And her ass! Oh my god.” Stiles voice was strained and his pulse quickened. “It was so...” He licked his lips and made eye contact with Isaac, his next words a whisper. “I'm getting horned up just thinking about it.”

Isaac practically moaned as he exhaled, then sniffed the air again. Stiles’ scent was even needier now, outright desperate, and this time when Isaac drew it back into his lungs it went straight to his cock, inflating it like a balloon. Isaac gripped Stiles shoulder and leaned close, speaking almost into his ear. “Talking about it is making me horny too.”

Stiles let out a strangled gurgle and his mouth dropped open as he turned his head and darted his eyes at Isaac's lap, even though it was unlikely he could see anything with the way Isaac was hunched forward. An instant later Stiles' cheeks flushed with color and his eyes snapped back to Isaac's face as he realized he'd been caught trying to sneak a peek.

It made Isaac feel desirable again and erased most of the unattractive feelings that had formed when Stiles had grossed himself out touching Isaac's treasure trail. Although, as exciting as it was that Stiles apparently wanted to see the evidence of Isaac's arousal, he reminded himself that it was almost certainly just innocent curiosity rather than genuine sexual interest. Isaac desperately wanted to get a look at the tent Stiles was obviously pitching too, but for Isaac it was genuine sexual interest and not simple curiosity.

“Sorry I--”

Isaac's heart pounded as he interrupted Stiles' apology by coughing and leaning back as casually as he could.

Stiles’ eyes widened and he swallowed. Then to Isaac's utter amazement he leaned all the way back in his seat too.
Isaac's eyes shot to Stiles' lap so fast he was grateful they didn't fall out and land in Stiles' lap, not that he could see all that much. Stiles' pants bulged over his crotch, but straight up and out, without any visible outlines. It didn't matter; just knowing what was happening behind Stiles' fly was enough to make Isaac's stomach tight with desire.

“Isaac, you're up!”

Isaac yelped and lunged forward in his chair, elbows quickly finding his bare knees as Scott walked into the room. Beside him, Stiles had also folded forward and was vigorously clearing his throat.

Realization flickered across Scott's face and his nostrils flared slightly. “Oh!” He chuckled. “You actually are—”

“Don't say it!” Stiles cut in, glaring at his best friend.

Scott snickered before continuing. “I was just coming to check on you. We should start the pack meeting soon...but uh, you guys take a minute if you need it.”

Isaac dropped his head in his hands, mortified that Scott had caught him aroused yet again. At least for once Isaac wasn't horny because of Scott. That had to be progress.

“It's okay,” Stiles said, rubbing Isaac's back as Scott left. “Scott was a walking perma-boner freshman year.”

“I heard that!” Scott yelled from the next room.

“I saw it!” Stiles yelled back.

Isaac laughed and leaned into Stiles' touch. He had first met Scott and Stiles in middle school, but had never gotten to know them very well until last year when he had become a werewolf. He wondered what it would have been like to have been friends with them for all those years.

He shook his head, clearing it. He knew better than to fall down the lost-time rabbit hole. He couldn't go back and change the past; he couldn't give himself the kind of early adolescence that would have involved friendship with his current packmates. He was never going to get those years back. All he could do now was move on and make the most of the life he had.

While they 'cooled off,' Stiles finished filling Isaac in on what had happened with Malia, this time with a more PG version. Apparently she could talk and remember her life as a coyote, and even as a little girl before that. Yet she wasn't quite right either. Stiles described her as semi-feral. She hadn't even been self conscious about being naked. Allison had had to insist that Malia take her coat and cover up. She had also requested raw meat and hadn't appreciated the cooked meal that Lydia had gone and gotten for her instead. Although, as Stiles recounted while cracking up, she had liked it enough to growl and bare her fangs at Dr. Deaton when he got too close while she was eating. Eventually, her father had come and picked her; however, there was already talk about possibly sending her to Eichen House for awhile if she didn't start to adjust.

Isaac sobered at the thought. Malia had already been through so much. It wasn't fair that now on top of everything else, she might wind up committed. He wondered if he and Ethan had helped her at all. Had she been happy as a coyote? Had they forced her into a life she didn't understand or even want?

“Hey, stop with the puppy face.” Stiles stroked the side of Isaac's head over his ear. “Even if it is cute as hell.”

Isaac flinched – this was certainly a new kind of touch – but he didn't move away. Stiles was his
packmate and close friend. If he wanted to stroke Isaac's head, he could stroke Isaac's head; although, he'd get growled at if he tried to pet Isaac like a dog. Anyway, it felt kind of nice once Isaac got used to it.

“You did the right thing,” Stiles whispered, squeezing the back of Isaac's neck. “You gave her her life back. She might have some trouble readjusting at first, but trust me, she's gonna thank you later.”

Isaac licked his lips and turned to Stiles. He owed him more than a simple thanks – for this and for so many other things. “I-I do.”

Stiles cocked his head, clearly confused.

“I trust you.” Isaac held eye contact even though it was scary because, well, he did trust Stiles.

Stiles’ heart stuttered. Then a grin so wide and so purely happy broke out across his face that Isaac blushed and ducked his head.

“Isaac, wow! I don't even know what to say. I know that's huge for you and–”

“Let's just go to the pack meeting.” Isaac stood without looking back. Things between him and Stiles were good, and Isaac was thrilled that he had managed to make Stiles this happy. It was also unbelievably awesome that his trust meant so much to Stiles, that by extension Isaac meant so much to Stiles. But Isaac couldn't take anymore emotional intimacy. He felt his walls closing in on him – and he was still claustrophobic after all; he needed to get some space.

They walked into the main lobby of the animal clinic and found Dr. Deaton sitting at the front desk. Scott and Allison were sprawled out on the floor of the waiting area, books and notebooks, which Isaac assumed at first glance were homework were spread around them; however, a closer look revealed they weren't studying textbooks but rather lore books. Lydia was sitting in a chair behind them reading something on her laptop, the flash drive Allison have given her at lunch protruding from the side.

“We're ready to start the pack meeting,” Stiles announced.

Lydia looked up and smiled brightly at Isaac as she set the laptop in the chair beside her and got up. She crossed the room and stood on tiptoes as she threw her arms around him in a tight hug. “I'm so relieved you're okay.”

“Thanks to you,” he said quietly as he returned the tight embrace, even briefly lifting her off the ground, and dammit, this felt amazing too, but it wasn't helping with his need for emotional space. He flushed with self consciousness as her warm fingers rubbed along his bare spine, and he remembered that he wasn't wearing anything but a thin pair of shorts...while he hugged a very attractive girl...who smelled really nice and felt even better in his arms. Oh god, no! Not again, not now!

Deaton cleared his throat, giving Isaac an excuse to politely pull away and sink into the nearest chair.

“If you'll all have a seat, please?” Deaton requested, glancing at Lydia and Stiles who were the only ones standing.

“So is this the part where we find out what supernatural curse landed on us this week and how to scrape it off?” Stiles asked, flopping onto the floor beside Scott.

“We're possessed,” Scott told him with a sympathetic smile.
“You mean you’re possessed.”

“You are too.”

“Am not.” Stiles folded his arms.

Scott shrugged and turned back to face Deaton, acting like he had dropped it before whirling back around. “Are too!” He stuck his tongue out.

“Remember when they used to try to impress us?” Lydia said to Allison.

“Fondly,” she answered with a crooked smile.

Isaac wanted to enjoy the light atmosphere in the room, but he saw it for what it was: an attempt to defuse a bleak situation. He could appreciate the effort, but he needed to know what threat his pack was facing and what he could do about it. “So how did this happen and how do we fix it?”

Dr. Deaton drew in a weary breath and Isaac braced for a long, cryptic answer.

“Do you know why Beacon Hills is called Beacon Hills?” Deaton asked no one in particular.

Stiles shrugged. “Ley lines, right? Or telluric currents, or whatever? They act like a beacon for the supernatural and Beacon Hills is right on top of them.”

“Yes and no,” Deaton answered. “The telluric currents focus and augment the beacon. They serve as an amplifier, a conduit. But the beacon itself is the Nemeton. It’s one of many all over the world.”

“Wait, so there are multiple nemetons?” Stiles asked. “Like a whole forest’s worth of giant, sacred trees?”

“Nemeta,” Deaton corrected, “and yes there are multiple nemeta throughout the world, but they aren’t all trees. They can be just about anything found in nature – a volcano, a lake, a geyser. Each nemeton acts as the nexus for supernatural activity in its region, and the telluric currents flowing around each one focus and amplify its power, helping it absorb and release supernatural energy more efficiently.”

“But werewolves don’t use that power right? Druids do, like you and Ms. Morrell, or the Darach?” Scott asked.

“Werewolves don’t use a nemeton’s power directly, but they are still influenced by it. It can enhance or diminish their power depending on the ritual performed. Every supernatural creature has some connection with their nemeton. It manifests differently.”

“So what does this have to do with us?” Allison asked.

“As I said, the Nemeton doesn’t just release power, it also absorbs it. It’s a living record of all the supernatural souls that lived within its sphere of influence.”

“Wait, so when a werewolf dies he doesn’t go to heaven or hell...he goes to the nemeton?” Stiles asked, looking back and forth between Isaac and Scott like he was considering them from a new angle.

“Essentially,” Deaton answered. “Not just werewolves of course, but all supernatural creatures.”

“And one of those supernatural creatures possessed me and Allison and Stiles?” Scott asked.
“Yes,” Deaton answered. “When you temporarily died you opened a door. Your bodies and the people you were tethered during the ritual kept you bound to the physical realm, but your souls traveled through the metaphysical realm where they were exposed to the souls of supernaturals who came before you.”

“And one of those souls hitched a ride back inside of each of us?” Stiles asked.

“So it would appear,” Deaton answered.

“How do we get rid of them?” Isaac asked.

“It depends on the soul. To destroy them you must undo their making.”

“Undo their making? What does that mean?” Lydia asked.

“It's open to interpretation,” Deaton answered.

“Of course it is.” Stiles rolled his eyes. “But the first step is figuring out what soul possessed each of us?”

Deaton nodded.

Stiles continued. “And it could be pretty much any supernatural soul who died in or around Beacon Hills ever, at any time in history? Gee, that really narrows down it.”

“Not any soul. It has to be a soul compatible with your own individual essence or it couldn't have possessed you in the first place.”

“Well mine seems to be called Iron Claw, and I'm guessing he's a werewolf,” Scott said.

“Yes,” Deaton answered, “and knowing that is half the battle. Now we just need to figure out who Iron Claw was and how to defeat him.”

Lydia spoke up. “I thought I might be able to find him mentioned in the Argent journals, but the PDF is just a scan of all their journals for generations and there’s no search feature. I'm only about a third of the way through.”

Isaac was impressed that she was already that far along. She had only gotten the PDF that day at lunch. He prayed she would be able to find the answers they needed.

“So if the possessing soul is supernatural and it has to be compatible with our essences...how did Allison and I get possessed at all? We're not supernatural,” Stiles asked.

“The person who possessed me used to be a hunter who got turned into a werewolf before she died,” Allison said quietly. “I see her when I lose myself. I already know who she is, just not how to defeat her.”

Scott gasped and put a hand on Allison’s arm. “Your mother?”

Allison shook her head. “Aunt Kate.”

Scott furrowed his brow. “But she never got turned into a werewolf.”

“Actually she did,” Allison answered. “Peter's claws scratched her so deep that she turned. Our hunters had her body under observation because they knew there was a chance it would happen. As soon as it did they killed her.”
“Damn, possessed by your own aunt. That's really cold,” Stiles remarked. Everyone turned and glowered at him. “Um, well, I mean, I'm just sayin’...it was.” He cleared his throat. “So uh, what about me? Did some random werewolf used to be somebody's plucky sidekick before he got turned and killed?”

“I have a theory.”

When Deaton didn't elaborate Stiles waved his hand at him. “I'm all ears.”

“I think it's a darach.”

“A da-” Stiles gasped and lowered his voice. “A darach? But I'm certainly not a darach. I'm not even a druid.”

“But you could be,” Deaton answered.

“But I'm not,” Stiles insisted, pursing his lips and clearly offended by the implication.

“No, I mean I think you have the potential to become a druid. There's a spark of power in you, an affinity for mysticism. Chances are nothing will ever come of it. Most people who have the potential never pursue it and nothing happens, but I think you could become a druid, and, as with everyone, there's some darkness inside of you. If you have the potential to become a druid you have the potential to become a dark druid, a darach. And if that dormant power is inside of you, it could easily have attracted a darach.”

Stiles looked on the verge of panic and Isaac could understand why; they had only barely managed to defeat the last darach they had tangled with, and now one was potentially inside of Stiles.

“How do we know it's an evil darach and not just a regular druid?” Isaac asked, clinging to the hope that whoever had possessed Stiles wasn't completely maleficent.

Deaton frowned. “Because a regular druid wouldn't have possessed someone in the first place. It's the same way we know Iron Claw was an evil werewolf.”

“All that bloody graffiti was kind of a tip off too,” Stiles remarked.

“And we know Aunt Kate was an evil hunter,” Allison said, her voice bitter and sharp.

“So why did they possess us? What's the end game?” Scott asked.

“They want to come back to life,” Lydia answered.

“Exactly,” Deaton said. “Blood for blood; life for life. If they can take lives, through you, they can gather enough dark energy to make themselves whole again.”

“So if Allison had killed Isaac or Aiden...” Scott trailed off.

“Kate would have been one step closer to coming back,” Deaton finished. “It makes sense that she's hunting supernaturals, just as she did in life.”

“So Iron Claw...” Scott's heart sped up and the scent of fear rolled off him in a thick cloud. “Oh my god. You need to put me in Mountain Ash. Now!”

“It's not sunset yet. The moon isn't up,” Deaton answered calmly.

“But Allison's been trying to kill people in broad daylight,” Stiles pointed out.
Allison cleared her throat. “Aunt Kate's been trying to kill people.”

“Right.” Stiles flashed her an apologetic smile.

“Werewolves are at the height of their power when the moon is up. I don't think Iron Claw has enough strength to control Scott during the day,” Deaton said. “Hunters on the other hand are strongest when their prey are around, when they shift into the hunting mindset...just being around each of us, a druid or a potential druid” –he gestured to himself and Stiles– “werewolves” –he motioned at Isaac and Scott– “a banshee” –he nodded toward Lydia– “is potentially enough to make Kate surface and begin hunting. Remember she spent her entire life as a hunter, but only the last few hours as a werewolf. She's strongest as a hunter, not a werewolf.”

“What about me?” Stiles asked, his voice tight in fear. “When will the darach be the strongest?”

“When you perform rituals or go near the nemeton,” Deaton answered.

Stiles looked relieved. “I don't perform rituals and okay, fine, I'll just stay out of the woods.”

Isaac wanted to believe that it was that simple, but he wasn't so sure. “He's been having nightmares about killing us.”

Stiles frowned at him and Isaac looked away, feeling like he had broken Stiles' trust even though it wasn't exactly a secret and not news to anyone except perhaps Allison and Deaton.

Deaton was thoughtful for a few moments before answering. “Hmm, sleep is a window into the unconscious mind, where the darach is currently lurking. If he doesn't have the power to control Stiles while he's awake it could be that his only chance to influence his mind is while he's asleep.”

“But he can't actually do anything to me in my sleep right? Except give me nightmares?”

“I’m not sure,” Deaton admitted.

“So how do I figure out who he is, so that I can...unmake him or whatever?”

Deaton shook his head. “I don't know that either.”

A heavy silence started to form in the room, but Scott broke it. “We've got this guys. We just need to figure out how to defeat Kate, learn about Iron Claw, and determine who's possessing Stiles. We're on the right track.”

Isaac felt a fraction of the burden lift from his shoulders. If Scott thought they could do this, then Isaac had confidence that they could too. He would do whatever it took to keep his packmates safe, and he knew the same was true of everyone in the room.

Chapter End Notes

I hope you guys enjoyed this chapter. I know it was heavy on exposition but I hope it was nevertheless fun and easy to follow. Isaac and Ethan’s first time is coming up soon!
After the pack meeting broke up everyone went their separate ways. Ordinarily there would have been talk of grabbing food or hanging out, but the reality of the situation seemed to be weighing heavily on everyone. Even Stiles departed with barely a word after Scott assured him that Melissa would be home this evening to do the mountain ash circle since today was her day off.

Scott had gotten Isaac's things from his locker before they left school, so Isaac changed out of his gym shorts and back into his school clothes before they left the animal clinic for the tense ride home. As Isaac sat in his usual place behind Scott on the motorcycle, he was all but smothered in the spicy burn of Scott's anxiety as the wind blew it off Scott's skin and whipped it into Isaac's face. At least part of Scott's agitation must have been due to concern about getting home and inside his mountain ash circle before nightfall, but beyond that, Isaac knew Scott was worried about the pack in a more general, encompassing sense.

Isaac did his best to channel a sense of calm to soothe his alpha's agitation, but it didn't work. Scott's mood was more dominant than Isaac's, and Isaac didn't truly feel calm to begin with. Eventually he opted for distraction instead and began practicing his scent masking, blocking his scent for as long as he could before allowing it to flood back out. The concentration required for the task helped break Isaac's own escalating anxiety loop and the effects even captured Scott's attention.

“That is so trippy, man,” Scott said as they pulled up to a stop sign. “We're so close that I can still smell you if I lean back, but not if I lean forward. So weird!”

Scott took off again before Isaac could respond, but he was proud of himself for managing to take Scott out of his head for a little while.

When they got home, Melissa was standing by the front door waiting for them.

“I was so worried!”

Isaac assumed she was talking to Scott, but she surprised him by stepping past her son and wrapping her arms around him instead.

“Thank god you're up and walking around. Do you feel okay?”

Isaac hugged her back but didn't try to answer as an unexpected tightness formed in his throat.

“This one didn't even call to tell me what happened until you were out of surgery.” Melissa let go of Isaac and swatted Scott's arm before pulling him in for a hug too.

“I was trying to keep from freaking you out till we knew more,” Scott answered, pulling away from the embrace and frowning.

“What if something had gone wrong?” she asked with one hand on Isaac’s arm. “I wouldn't have been there.”

“Nothing was going to go wrong. Dr. Deaton knows what he's doing.”

Isaac was distressed by the tone of their voices and the sharp bite of irritation tingling their scents, so
he cleared his throat and spoke before the argument could continue. “I'm feeling okay now, thanks,” he said to Melissa before turning to Scott. “Don't you need to hurry and take a shower before you get in the mountain ash for the night?”

Scott scowled, and Isaac quivered in panic as the full brunt of his alpha's irritation was directed at him, but then Scott shrugged and grumbled an assent before going upstairs.

Melissa snickered and patted Isaac's arm as they moved into the living room.

“Are you really okay?” she asked, giving him a stern, appraising look.

“Yes, ma'am,” he answered as he took a seat on the couch across from her. They both pointedly ignored the shredded cushion between them. It had been a victim of one of Scott's earlier fugue states.

“Good.” She smiled but only for a second before her face creased with worry. “How was the pack meeting?”

Isaac opened his mouth to answer but immediately closed it as he thought about the look on Scott's face a few moments earlier. Melissa may have been the respected adult figure in Isaac's life, but Scott was still his alpha and primary authority figure. He needed to be sure he wasn't being disloyal to Scott.

“Is it okay if I tell your mom about the pack meeting?” he whispered, too low for Melissa to hear even though she was clearly watching his lips move. It didn't matter since he mostly just wanted to get Scott's attention by using their 'special frequency' rather than hide the fact that he was asking.

“Yeah sure,” Scott answered as he shuffled around in his room upstairs.

Isaac frowned. Scott's tone was all wrong. It was terse and irritable. He wasn't making an effort to be pleasant, and Scott always made an effort to be pleasant. The trouble was, Isaac couldn't tell if Scott was displeased with him specifically, in a bad mood in general, or both.

“What's wrong?” Melissa asked.

“Well, just wanted to check on Scott. But anyway the pack meeting...wasn't great.”

Isaac spent the next several minutes telling her what they had discussed about the evil spirit possessions before filling her in on more details about Allison's attack on him and Aiden and the resulting aftermath. They were still chatting about it when Scott came downstairs, showered and dressed in his pajamas.

“We need to do the mountain ash now,” he said, glancing out the living room window. It was twilight. Iron Claw had never surfaced this early, but Scott had a point. They couldn't afford to take any chances.

Isaac cringed as they went upstairs and entered Scott's room. His bed was still pulled out into the center of the room and ringed by an incomplete circle of mountain ash, just as it should have been, but it reeked of dried blood. The blankets, pillowcases, and sheets had all been washed, and most of their stench removed, but they were covered in coppery brown stains. The carpeting under and around the bed was likewise discolored and stank of chemical cleaners, but the worst of the macabre smell emanated from inside the mattress and the pillows themselves. They were obviously beyond salvaging and needed to be thrown out.

Isaac turned to Melissa, surprised and appalled that she would let her son sleep in a bed like this. Her
face was already troubled and she frowned and nodded at him in understanding. “Once we get this Iron Claw situation figured out, Scott's getting a new mattress and bedding.”

“But the sheets and pillows?” Isaac shook his head. He knew there were multiple backup sets.

“I insisted,” Scott answered as he slid beneath the grisly covers. “No sense ruining any more.”

Melissa sighed and pursed her lips as she bent to close the protective circle.

“Wait!”

Isaac sprinted out of Scott's room and down the hall to his own. A few seconds later he was back beside Scott's bed with his own pillows in hand. “Please?” he asked, holding them out to his alpha.

“It's okay if they get messed up. I just don't want you to sleep on those.” He nodded at Scott's ruined ones.

Scott smiled softly and took the pillows from Isaac. He raised them to his face and took a long, deep breath. “These will help. Thanks.”

Isaac dropped his eyes and shrank slightly under the weight of Scott's approval. Then Melissa was rubbing his back, also obviously pleased with his actions, and Isaac felt overwhelmed in the best way possible.

“I'll order a pizza and we can eat it up here,” Melissa said as she stooped and completed the circle.

“That sounds great!” Scott answered with characteristic enthusiasm.

Isaac succumbed to the urge to grin at them both. Things were okay again.

While they waited for the pizza, Isaac showered. It was a relief scrubbing away the last vestiges of wolfsbane and strife from his skin. He felt good as he climbed out of the shower and towed himself off, looking forward to a...well, it sort of felt like a quiet family dinner, but it was presumptuous to consider himself part of the family, so he settled on calling it a quiet household dinner in his mind instead.

His equanimity faltered as he returned to his room and checked his phone for the first time since leaving the vet clinic.

Unknown: [guy walking emoji]?

Seven minutes later:

Unknown: We still on for tonight? [peach emoji][eggplant emoji]

Thirty-three minutes later:

Unknown: ?

Twenty-one minutes later:

Unknown: Isaac, seriously are you okay?

Twelve minutes later:

Unknown: I'm coming over if you don't answer me
Isaac's heart pounded and dread pooled in the pit of his stomach. Ethan couldn't come here. He couldn't. That would be horrible for so many reasons, terrible reasons, impractical reasons...reasons Isaac couldn't properly enumerate at the moment, but reasons; Ethan couldn't come over because reasons!

He stood in his bedroom, thumbs poised over his phone keyboard as he struggled to figure out how to answer, when the door bell rang. He yelped and tossed his phone on the bed as he bolted out of the room. He raced down the stairs, taking the last five in one giant leap, and threw himself in front of Melissa as she headed for the door.

“Isaac!” She threw up her hands, her pulsing quickening.

He instantly regretted frightening her, but at least she seemed more startled than outright afraid.

“I'll get it,” he said as casually as he could, inwardly cringing as he realized he was still naked except for the wet towel tied around his waist. It was a minor miracle it hadn't fallen off during his mad dash down the stairs. He re-secured it and opened the door, bracing himself to face Ethan.

“Hi, I have your piz...” A college-aged girl in a Beacon Pizzeria uniform stood in the doorway holding a red, insulated vinyl bag and staring open-mouthed at Isaac's torso. “...za.”

“Thank you.” His ears burned as he held out his hands.

She cleared her throat and looked away, lowering her eyes to the pizza bag and snapping it open. She passed Isaac the boxes without making eye contact. “That'll be $23.58.”

Melissa appeared in the doorway next to Isaac and passed the girl two bills. “Here you go. Keep the change.”

The girl mumbled a thanks and turned to leave, all but jogging away.

Melissa shut the door and glared at Isaac as she took the pizza boxes from him. “What is with you? Do you have a crush on the pizza girl or something?”

Isaac blinked at her for a few seconds before realizing the excuse he'd been given. “Uh yes. Yes, I do. She's so pretty, don't you think?” He honestly wouldn't have noticed if she'd had a second nose growing out of the side of her face.

Melissa's eyes softened and she gave him a gentle smile. “Then just ask her out, but this” --she waved the pizza boxes at him, indicating his barely dressed body-- “that's inappropriate. Don't play games with her. You're better than that, Isaac.”

“Sorry,” he muttered, feeling like a total creeper even though that had in no way been his intention.

“Go get dressed so we can eat,” she answered, heading for the kitchen with their food.

Isaac hurried back up the stairs, more concerned about responding to Ethan's text than dressing. As soon as he was back in his room he tapped out a quick message.

Isaac: *Hey sorry just got out of the shower. I'm fine.*

Unknown: *I'm at Deaton's*

*Oh crap, that's where he was going if I didn't answer.*

Isaac: *Sorry...I just saw your messages.*
Isaac giggled, relieved that Ethan didn't seem angry. Then he swallowed as he thought about the very real implications behind those pictographs.

Isaac: I want to but...Scott's mom's home tonight and I think she was worried about me. We just ordered food...tomorrow?

There was a delay before Ethan answered, and Isaac worried that he had blown his chances with Ethan for good – and seriously when was another guy ever going to be willing to have casual sex with Isaac? This sucked.

Unknown: K, tomorrow then. Stay [trumpet emoji] for me [winky face emoji]

Isaac laughed and grinned. He rubbed the tent that had formed under his towel with one hand as he typed back.

Isaac: Don't worry. I'm very [trumpet emoji]

There was another delay between messages and while Isaac waited he tapped Ethan's number, bringing up the options. He hesitated a few more seconds then sighed and went for it, clicking 'Create New Contact' and typing 'Ethan' into the name field. As he was completing the task his phone buzzed in his hand with another new message.

Ethan: Glad you're ok. Have fun with your fam

Isaac swallowed, uncomfortable with both sentiments and unsure how to take them. He was spared from over-thinking it as Scott shouted at him from down the hall.

“Isaac, hurry up! I wanna eat my pizza before Iron Claw gets it!”

Isaac laughed and yelled back, “Sorry. Be right there.”

He pulled on a t-shirt and a pair of sweatpants before hurrying to Scott's room.

Isaac did have fun with...Melissa and Scott that night. After they ate their pizza, they hung out in Scott's room watching Daredevil on Netflix until Scott inevitably tranced out. Once that happened, Isaac and Melissa went downstairs and watched a couple more episodes on the couch. The conversation was pleasantly casual and inconsequential with no talk of werewolves or homework or overnight shifts at the hospital, just periodic observations about what was happening on screen and tangential comments. When Isaac mentioned that he'd always wanted to visit New York City, Melissa said that she and Scott had never been before either and that the three of them should go one summer. Isaac tried to play it cool as he agreed that that would be fun, not wanting to get his own hopes up or let on how much it meant to him to be included in the theoretical plans.

“Okay, kiddo, I'm going to bed,” Melissa announced at the end of the next episode as she stood.

“What?! After that cliffhanger? But we have to find out if Matt gets away and what Fisk is up to now.”

Melissa laughed as she folded her blanket and draped it over the back of the couch. “You go ahead and find out without me. Just don't stay up too late. You have school tomorrow.”

“We could, uh, wait till your next night off if you wanted and watch it then?” Isaac suggested, hoping he wasn't being annoying or needy.
Melissa smiled affectionately at him and the toasty-sweet scent of happiness filled the air. “That would be great!” She leaned over and ruffled his hair, then kissed the side of his head before turning to leave. “Good night.”

“Night,” he answered, flipping through Netflix for something else to watch.

He didn't end up starting anything. Instead he glanced around the darkened living room. He sniffed the air and listened to the quiet rumble of the central cooling unit. It had all gotten so familiar at some point, so comfortable. The strong, steady heartbeats of the house’s other two inhabitants were equally familiar and soothing.

Eventually, Isaac stood and shut off the TV. It had been a long day and he was tired so he went to his room, his room. It had all his things in it and it was safe. No one ever woke him from a sound sleep to discipline him in this room. No one ever shouted at him or hit him here. He could just be by himself and enjoy the newfound stability of his life.

It was nice being home.

Chapter End Notes

Next chapter will feature Isaac and Ethan's first time. On that note, HUGE thanks to everyone who commented with ideas and feedback about how they wanted Isaac and Ethan's first time to go. It really helped and I'm optimistic readers will enjoy it.

Story News:
In the meantime, if you want a bit of Isaac/Stiles/Scott fluff and smut check out my smut miniseries, Everyone Experiments in College.

I’m also working on an Isaac & Jackson non-romantic drama and fluff family story called A Street Over and a World Away. The premise is that the Whittemores adopt Isaac after his father is arrested for domestic abuse.

Anyway, thanks a ton for reading and feedback is always greatly appreciated. Happy Thanksgiving everyone!
Killing Me Softly

Chapter Notes

I wrote and re-wrote this chapter a lot, so I really hope you guys like it. It's a long one, but I was determined not to break it or shortchange the experience.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Sex

Gay sex

Gay anal sex

Gay anal sex as a bottom...with Ethan...and his giant cock...in my virgin hole.

Oh good god, what have I gotten myself into? I should cancel. I should fucking cancel. I have to cancel.

There was no way Isaac was going to cancel and he knew it as he walked through town toward Ethan’s loft. He wanted Ethan far too much. He couldn’t stop thinking about him, couldn’t stop picturing him naked, couldn’t stop reliving the sensation of Ethan’s fingers on his wrist, couldn’t ignore the phantom scent of Ethan’s arousal. He sure as hell couldn’t get the image of Ethan’s damn, stupid, hot-as-fuck, glorious, evil, beautiful, terrible, fucking humongous cock out of his head.

He could hardly breathe. His palms were sweaty, his stomach was twisted in tight knots, and he was lightheaded…and it was all because of lust and eager anticipation for tonight’s activities, which was stupid because Isaac didn’t even know if he would like getting fucked. He had never put anything in his ass before except his own index finger, and that had only been a few times out of curiosity. It hadn’t done much for him either, even when he’d found what was presumably his prostate. He wondered if rubbing his own prostate was like trying to tickle himself, maybe he just wouldn’t get much out of it unless someone else did it to him.

Regardless, Isaac knew how stupid it was that he’d chosen Ethan to lose his gay sex virginity to – at all but especially as a bottom. Just from a physical standpoint it was ridiculous: Ethan was huge! It would have been like a vegetarian suddenly deciding to enter one of those free-if-you-can-finish-it giant steak-eating competitions. Isaac should have started with a nice little hot dog or something.

Why did Ethan have to be so well-endowed anyway? Weren’t megalomaniacs supposed to be compensating for something?

Then there was the personal absurdity of having his first time be with Ethan. Isaac still didn’t even trust Ethan – he had to be up to something after all – and he still hated a lot of things about Ethan, or at least about his past, but…Isaac also liked Ethan. It was scary how fast it had happened, and he very much wished he could undo it, but it was ridiculous at this point to pretend he didn’t enjoy spending time with Ethan, didn’t feel a little spark of excitement and happiness when he saw him.

Isaac couldn’t wait to touch Ethan, to finally get sexual with another guy, especially Ethan. He wanted his mouth and tongue all over Ethan’s absurdly well-defined abs and smooth, beautifully
sculpted chest. He wanted to suck on his big bulbous cockhead and get it all purply-red like it had been on Tuesday night right before Ethan had cum. And yeah, this time when Ethan came, Isaac wanted it in his ass. He hated how much he wanted it, but it was undeniable: Isaac wanted Ethan to claim him, to fill him with his cum.

Isaac practically moaned at the thought of it. He was such a mess.

He really shouldn’t have been allowed to make his own decisions anyway. He was terrible at it. He had fought hard for his independence and he desperately wanted it; he wanted to fix his life and start making healthy, responsible decisions…but he also didn’t. Pretty much anytime danger presented itself, Isaac was all over that bitch.

*Lie for years and hide all signs of abuse to protect my asshole father? –Absolutely, that seems like a great idea!*

*Agree to illegally work underage for him at a frickin’ cemetery? –Yep, anything to make Dad happy.*

*Drive heavy grave-digging equipment in the middle of the night while exhausted? –Well yeah, I gotta keep up my productivity.*

*Once inevitably trapped in the grave I ironically dug for myself, accept help from a brooding stranger with glowing eyes who happened to like hanging out in graveyards? –Sure, what could possibly go wrong?*

*Agree to be turned into a literal monster by said stranger with full knowledge that he also gets to control every aspect of my life? –Brilliant plan, one of my finest!*

Isaac wished he could claim to have improved his decision-making prowess after becoming a werewolf, but he really hadn’t. He had trusted Scott McCall primarily based of his soulful brown eyes and the tingly feeling he gave Isaac in the pit of his stomach when they talked. And sure, it had worked out – because Scott was just that awesome! – but Isaac had still done everything possible to fuck it up and sabotage his own life.

*Develop an obviously unrequited crush on your one and only friend? –Check.*

*Move in with hopelessly straight crush after Abusive Authority Figure 2.0 throws you out? –Check.*

*Betray your best friend and risk losing everything by dating his ex-girlfriend? –Check.*

*Bonus points awarded if ex-girlfriend also happens to be a werewolf hunter possessed by a psychotic evil spirit. –Check again!*

*New high score! (All-time low?)*

So yeah, of course Isaac had jumped at the chance to have sex with a literal serial killer. Oh, and no one knew where he was going to be and wouldn't even notice he was missing for a minimum of twelve hours because that's just how Isaac liked to roll in these situations.

This was all Ethan’s fault anyway. Why did he have to start being nice to Isaac? Why did he have to start showing signs of being redeemable? Of being an abusive person in Isaac’s past whom he might actually be able to please for once. And why the fuck did Isaac always have to try to please abusive people?
He didn’t even like Ethan and his approval didn’t matter – but FUCK, he really liked Ethan and his approval so mattered.

*Stop over-thinking this. It’s just a casual hookup. No emotions. No strings. We’re just using each other to get off.*

Isaac was a quivering mess as he turned down the block that would take him to Ethan’s loft. He was also horny as hell. Despite several very arousing experiences in the interim, like the night he had spent with Stiles, Isaac hadn’t cum since Tuesday night when Ethan had put on his strip show – *Crap, is this going to be a thing now? Only getting off with Ethan? Yeah, that’ll really help me not get attached* – and tonight was Friday night. That meant it had been three days since the last time Isaac had gotten off, not horribly long by some people’s standards, but Isaac had a very high libido combined with supernatural body fluid regeneration. Three times a day would have been way more appropriate than once every three days. His balls were so full they hurt.

He should have gotten off last night before bed, but Ethan had specifically told him to stay ‘Trumpet Emoji’ for him and…*fuck* Isaac liked doing what he was told. He had even made himself have another lucid sex dream that once again intentionally ended in frustration (and wow, if Isaac had thought Dream Stiles was a cruel taskmaster he was downright considerate and permissive compared to Dream Ethan). Of course, there had been a second purpose to his somnolent cum denial.

Isaac swallowed nervously as he walked into the lobby of Ethan’s building. He didn’t know whether he should feel disgusting or sexy about what he had done. Before bed the night before he had put on what he considered his sexiest underwear: a pair of snug, dark red, Emporio Armani trunks. As expected, the subsequent sex dream had caused him to drip precum like a faucet, drenching them in his pheromones. When he woke up that morning he took them off and wore regular underwear to school, but he had put the scented up pair back on after his shower that evening while he was getting ready for his…well it wasn’t a date of course – *meaningless sex plans?* – yeah, while he was getting ready for his meaningless sex plans with Ethan. He just hoped Ethan would be as into the smell of his arousal as he had been the last time.

As he boarded the elevator in Ethan’s building, Isaac was both annoyed and ecstatic to see that the back was lined with a mirror. He pressed the button for the seventh floor that would take him to Ethan’s unit then succumbed to the desire to check himself over one more time.

He had selected a dark green, fitted, button-down shirt, the scarf Stiles hated, his gray overcoat, and the jeans that Ethan had told him ‘make your ass look so good my cock throbbed.’ Dress shoes and a sleek black belt completed the ensemble. All in all, Isaac was confident that it was at least a stylish and well put together outfit, even if he didn’t want to get his hopes up about Ethan actually liking him in it.

A wave of anticipation roiled in Isaac’s stomach as the little yellow six above the door dimmed out and the seven lit up. A moment later the elevator chimed and the doors slid open.

Confusion and dread replaced anticipation as Isaac caught the sound of Ethan’s raised voice reverberating down the hallway, too low for his neighbors to hear unless they were standing outside his door, but plainly clear to werewolf ears.

“–that’s what I’m trying to do!”

“No, Ethan,” Aiden snarled back, “giving away one of our biggest bargaining chips to one of Scott’s fucking betas isn’t going to get us in his pack! Why would he need us if you’re showing them all our goddamn tricks?!”
The sound of furniture crashing against the floor accompanied Aiden’s tirade.

“Oh yeah, because we’re the only werewolves who know about scent masking.”

“We were the only wolves in Beacon Hills who knew about it.”

“Isaac needs to be able to do it.” Ethan’s tone was calm and resolute.

Isaac cringed as he realized they were arguing about him. He had stepped out of the elevator but was hovering around a bend in the hallway as he listened. Wanting to further reduce his chances of being detected, he used the newly acquired skill in question.

“Why the fuck would he need to be able to do it?”

“Oh come on, Aiden. Something bad’s obviously going on with their pack.”

“So WHAT?!”

“So I WANT–” Ethan’s voice dropped and he sounded hesitant when he continued. “I want him to be able to protect himself if he’s in danger, to use it to get away if he needs to.”

“Aww fuck, Ethan. You are so goddamn predictable. There you go again, putting the dumbass guys you want to screw ahead of our well being! Like what the actual fuck?! Did us becoming omegas because you couldn’t keep your dick out of Danny Mahealani teach you nothing?!”

“Danny didn’t have ANYTHING to do with that,” Ethan shouted. Isaac winced as the sound of Ethan hitting the wall thudded through the hallway.

“It’s YOUR FAULT WE’RE ALONE!” Aiden shouted back, this time so loud that their neighbors probably did overhear.

“I just didn’t want the darach to slaughter a town full of innocent people!”

“WHY THE FUCK NOT?!” Aiden screamed. “THEY WEREN’T OUR PROBLEM.”

Isaac had already zeroed in on Ethan’s scent. It hadn’t been anything but hot anger and pulsing frustration until now, but at Aiden’s last declaration it shifted to sour sadness and bitter disappointment.

“Get out,” Ethan said at a normal volume, his voice cold.

“GLADLY!” Aiden shouted in a fiery tone.

The sound of their front door opening and then slamming shut reverberated through the hallway accompanied by Aiden’s loud, heavy footsteps.

Isaac looked around but there was nowhere to take cover and if he went back and rang for the elevator, which a quick sound check told him was back in the lobby, it would never have time to arrive and depart again before Aiden reached him.

He steeled himself, released his scent, and forced a casual, confident expression onto his face as he walked around the corner and almost straight into Aiden.

Aiden growled and shoved Isaac against the wall the moment he saw him.

Isaac flashed his eyes and returned the growl, his claws already out but held low against his sides in
case someone came out of one of the other units.

“I oughta gut you where you stand and be done with it,” Aiden snarled, his murderous blue eyes glowing as he held up a hand and extended his claws to emphasize the threat.

Isaac didn’t answer, just winked at him and squeezed his scent away.

New fury lit Aiden’s face and he lunged forward into an attack.

Isaac had expected it and dodged left, snagging his claws into Aiden’s jacket and using his own momentum to throw him against the wall.

What Isaac hadn’t expected was how quickly Aiden recovered. Springing off the wall and spinning around in one fluid motion, he backhanded Isaac across the side of the head, sending him staggering against the opposite side of the hallway.

Isaac braced for impact as Aiden crouched to spring again, but before he could Ethan was between them. He easily caught Aiden as he lunged forward.

“Stop.” Ethan held onto Aiden’s biceps as he thrashed and snarled at Isaac over Ethan’s shoulder.

Isaac was already at Ethan’s side by the time Aiden got one arm free and turned his icy gaze on his brother, his claws poised to slash across Ethan’s face.

Ethan rolled his eyes and calmly addressed his twin. “Really, Aiden? You want to burn a bridge this big? I’m all you have left.”

Aiden frowned and hesitated before slowly lowering his hand, his claws retracting.

“I didn’t need you to interfere,” Isaac snarled, trying to pull Ethan out of his way. He hated that Ethan was apparently trying to protect him, hated how weak and helpless it made him feel. Ethan was not someone who protected Isaac. Ethan was his enemy...even if they were borderline friends at this point. “I can handle him myself.”

“It’s cute that you think so,” Aiden sneered before refocusing on Ethan. “Go fuck your little bitch. He reeks for it.” He glanced back at Isaac and grimaced. “Seriously, you smell like the inside of a very used jockstrap. It’s disgusting.”

“It’s delicious,” Ethan assured Isaac in a low, lusty voice.

Isaac outwardly ignored Ethan (and inwardly melted a little) as he opened his mouth to retort to Aiden’s comment, still spoiling for a fight. However, before he could say anything else Ethan turned and shot him a warning looking – apparently they were communicating with just looks now – and a moment later Ethan’s fingers were like iron bars across Isaac’s arm, even through his thick coat, as he steered Isaac away from Aiden and back up the hallway toward his loft.

Isaac reluctantly allowed himself to be led away. Even in his anger, part of Isaac knew he didn’t want Ethan coming to blows with his brother over him – that would have made Isaac seem way too important to Ethan.

He kept his senses carefully concentrated on Aiden as they walked to Ethan’s door, meticulously monitoring his every movement for any sign of a possible attack. There was none. Eventually Aiden rang for the elevator and left as soon as it arrived.

Isaac frowned as he walked into Ethan’s loft for the first time. It was stunning, luxurious even, and
Isaac found himself wondering for the first time where Ethan and Aiden were getting their money, but it also showed signs of the twins’ most recent dispute. The wall near the entryway was dented and cracked and Isaac could smell the residual tang of Ethan’s blood in the air.

*Had Ethan always intended to hit the wall or had he been aiming for Aiden and missed?*

The expansive living room featured an open floor plan that transitioned into a kitchen with a long bar. Two high-back barstools lay toppled and broken next to it, evidence of Aiden’s anger.

Isaac’s gaze was drawn to the room’s back wall. It overlooked the dining area and featured a floor-to-ceiling glass window with abundant moonlight streaming in. Isaac’s skin twitched just looking at it even though he wasn’t directly under the moonbeams yet. The dining room table in front of the window was set for two, prompting Isaac to cast a questioning glance at Ethan.

“You look amazing,” Ethan said just above a whisper as he ran his hands across Isaac’s back before helping him off with his coat, which he hung on a rack by the door.

Normally Isaac would have objected to Ethan touching him so much, or at least pretended to object, but touching was sort of the whole point of tonight’s activities, so instead of objecting Isaac took the opportunity to look Ethan over as Ethan likewise raked his eyes up and down Isaac’s body now that his coat was off.

Ethan was dressed in a simple yet stylish deep v-neck tee. It was blue, slate blue Isaac realized, and he knew it wasn’t a coincidence. Ethan looked exceptional in Isaac’s favorite color; the subdued blue of the shirt brought out the dark auburn tones in his hair, which was styled the same way it always was for school and which, admittedly, was reliably adorable. Once again Ethan wore the brown pants he’d worn on Tuesday that showed off his ass so spectacularly and Isaac suspected that hadn’t been a coincidence either. Surprisingly Ethan’s feet were bare, and even more surprisingly Isaac found it really cute and even strangely sexy. All in all, Ethan’s look was extremely simple, like he wasn’t trying at all, yet his every choice was systematically getting Isaac going.

Ethan’s warm hands gently gripped Isaac’s forearms where his sleeves were rolled up and his chocolate eyes, which had looked so innocent seconds earlier, were clouded with lust as he took long, deep breaths, his gaze trained shamelessly on Isaac’s crotch. “You smell so fucking good.”

Isaac enjoyed how earnest, even needy, Ethan sounded. His appearance may have been all cool and casual, but he was obviously as excited and into this as Isaac was, and that was a huge relief.

“So uh...your bedroom?” Isaac asked, a blush heating his cheeks.

The innocence was back in Ethan’s eyes, despite the smirk tugging at his lips, as he looked up at Isaac. “What about it?” he asked sweetly.

Isaac coughed and cleared his throat. Ethan was such an asshole. “Where is it?”

“Oh it’s right through there.” He gave a nonchalant wave of his hand, indicating a hallway that opened from between the kitchen and living room. A matching hallway occupied the exact opposite side of the room in a straight line, presumably leading to Aiden’s room.

Isaac turned to go in the direction indicated but Ethan stopped him, fingers blissfully familiar around his wrist.

“Where ya goin’?” Ethan inquired, his head tilted sideways and a broad, open smile on his face. He was the picture of boyish innocence and it would have been seriously adorable if Isaac hadn’t so desperately wanted him to cut the crap.
“Uh...” How was he supposed to answer that? *To get naked on your bed so you can fuck me.* Surely that would have gotten Ethan to stop acting so obnoxiously innocent.

Ethan chuckled and his hand strayed from Isaac’s wrist up to his bicep as he ushered him toward the kitchen. “You asked for dinner first.”

“Um, pretty sure I didn’t.” Isaac wanted something in his mouth, but it wasn’t food.

“Yeah, you did. Right after we caught the werecoyote and I took your belt off. Which, speaking of...” Ethan stopped Isaac and gently gripped his waist, turning him so that their bodies once again faced. Isaac’s breath hitched as Ethan’s fingers thrummed against his metal belt buckle while he opened it. A moment later, Ethan stripped the belt from Isaac’s waist with a single snap of his wrist and tossed it onto the living room floor. Isaac felt the heavy thud low in his gut. “There. Now that’s out of the way.”

Isaac swallowed and allowed himself the indulgence of holding Ethan’s bare forearms the way Ethan had held his moments earlier. The muscles were warm and hard, and the tiny hairs on the back of Ethan’s arms felt soft beneath Isaac’s fingertips. “You do know I was just kidding about that right? I don’t actually need dinner.”

Ethan shook his head and his playful expression turned serious as he resumed guiding Isaac toward the kitchen, breaking the dangerously close proximity between the fronts of their bodies. “Yes, you do. Food means a lot to you.”

Isaac stopped and pulled away, frowning. “Are you calling me fat?!”

Ethan rolled his eyes. “Yeah, Isaac, I’m calling you fat. Your narrow waist, taut abs, and hard chest are just so flabby. Geez, you’re such a lardass.”

Isaac scowled at him.

Ethan laughed. “Okay, if you really need to hear it, obviously your body is perfect and amazing. You’re built like a Greek god carved from granite.”

Isaac scoffed.

“No, that I actually meant.” He rubbed his hands appreciatively up and down Isaac’s sides and across his stomach. “Anyway, it makes you feel good when people give you food.”

Isaac furrowed his brow, trying to figure out what the hell Ethan was talking about.

“Think about your first happy memory with Erica.”

Isaac folded his arms and glared. It was not okay for Ethan to bring her up, but he answered anyway, surprised by what came out of his mouth. “Right after Derek turned us she made spaghetti in his old, burned out house. It was the first time we felt like a pack.”

Ethan nodded. “And when did you start to trust Boyd?”

Isaac frowned and an ache flared in his chest as he answered. “Derek had been training us hard all day, but then in the evening me and Boyd ditched and snuck away to a greasy diner by the interstate.”

“And with Derek?”
Isaac quaked with anger as he answered. “Right after we found out that you abducted Erica and Boyd, he made me an omelet and tried to calm me down.”

Ethan took a step back and dropped his eyes, the scent of remorse filling the air and — dammit, Isaac knew it was real.

“Anyway, food’s important to you,” Ethan said quietly, still not looking up.

Isaac tilted his head, trying to tuck his pain and anger away so he could consider Ethan’s statement. He thought back to how it had felt the previous week when Stiles had gotten him Mexican food, even though he wasn’t home but just in case he showed up, how happy it had made him Wednesday morning when Melissa had fixed him breakfast and left it in the fridge before he got up, how much it had meant to him when the sheriff had made him scrambled eggs on Thursday after his sleepover with Stiles, how content he had been at pizza-night the night before with his fam-household. Okay, so maybe food did matter to Isaac.

Ethan shrugged and placed an almost tentative hand on Isaac’s upper arm. “It’s because your dad quit making sure you ate after...” He cleared his throat. “After.”

That was true. After Isaac’s mom and Camden died, his dad had continued keeping food in the house, mostly leftovers of something he’d made or ordered for himself, but although Isaac had been allowed to eat it, the man seldom actually cooked or ordered anything specifically for him. On the rare occasions when he did have dinner with his dad it was usually a bad sign because it meant that he was going to ambush Isaac about something. Despite this pattern, Isaac had never stopped getting excited, always hoping that each rare family dinner would somehow end differently, somehow be like it had been in Isaac’s childhood.

Isaac glared at Ethan, his fingernails and teeth getting pointier but not fully erupting; Ethan knew all that and he was trying to exploit it.

“So basically you’re trying to use the knowledge you got by mind-raping me to create an artificially happy experience so you can manipulate me later?”

Ethan sighed and frowned back at Isaac. “Actually I was just going for a nice gesture, but thanks for the vote of confidence.”

Regret twinged in Isaac’s chest at the hurt expression on Ethan’s face. The pungent scent of Ethan’s distress was rapidly becoming one of Isaac’s least favorite scents. Crud. It was just Isaac’s luck that his former tormentor was turning out to have real feelings.

“Oh, okay then! So what’d you make?” Isaac asked with feigned cheerfulness. Ethan would see through it but maybe he’d go along with it.

“Ah, see I’m not trying to kill you anymore so I didn’t cook. I ordered tapas.” Ethan chuckled at his own joke and led them into the kitchen. “Aiden’s an incredible cook though. So if you ever get on his good side you’ll have that to look forward to.”

Isaac laughed and placed a hand on Ethan’s back as he opened the refrigerator. “Is anyone actually on Aiden’s good side?”

Ethan glanced at Isaac over his shoulder, mock seriousness on his face. “You’re right. We better stick to takeout.”

Isaac grinned, legitimately enjoying their lighter banter. “I’m actually a pretty good cook.”
Wait, did I just implicitly promise to cook for Ethan at some point?

“I know,” Ethan mumbled under his breath as he set two bags of food on the counter.

Isaac sighed. “You know, you don’t have to keep reminding me about all the terrible things you’ve done.”

Ethan shrugged. “Just want to make sure you know what you’re getting.”

Isaac pointedly ignored the implications behind that comment in favor of snatching up one of the bags, determined to keep the mood light. “What am I getting?”

Ethan laughed and bumped his hip against Isaac’s as he started unloading the other bag. “I ordered a variety. I hope they’re good reheated.”

Isaac felt a pang of guilt. He had texted Ethan twice to push back the time. The first delay had been because he kept freaking out, changing his mind about what he wanted to wear, and debating whether or not to just cancel. The second delay had been because he hadn’t anticipated how long it would take to get across town without a ride (no way was Isaac going to ask one of his packmates to drive him to Ethan’s) or the option of running through the woods (nasty, sweaty, and covered in leaves wasn’t the look Isaac was going for).

“Let’s see” Ethan picked up the receipt that was taped to one of the bags and read the list of items. “We have mushroom croquettes, duck confit tostadas, shrimp and scallops ceviche, bacon-wrapped dates, cauilflower and chayote cazuela, lobster bisque, and gazpacho soup.”

“Wow, that sounds...” pretentious, unnecessarily expensive, far too rich for a werewolf to actually enjoy “really good.”

Ethan chuckled as he started plating the food. “Give it a chance. I think you’ll like it.”

While the food was reheating Ethan went back to the refrigerator and pulled out a bottle of wine.

“Oh, uh, no thanks,” Isaac said, tidying up the empty takeout containers in an attempt to act casual. “None for me.”

“You don’t like sparkling grape juice?” Ethan asked with gentle amusement in his voice.

“Huh?” Isaac glanced up and examined the bottle more carefully. It was by Welch’s and the label read Sparkling White Grape. “Oh, uh, sure maybe a little then.”

Isaac’s cheeks burned. Of course Ethan would know alcohol made him uncomfortable thanks to his dad’s drinking problem. Mercifully, he didn’t say anything as he poured the beverage into two regular juice glasses.

Once the food was ready they took it to the dining room table, but before they sat down, Ethan surprised Isaac by peeling his shirt over his head and tossing it away. He stood in the moonlight, flexing his muscular body for Isaac.

Isaac’s eyes immediately tracked to Ethan’s abs. They were smooth and lean, etched deeply into his shimmery-in-the-moonlight skin, each ridge and valley exquisitely formed and precisely bisected by his long midline. Isaac couldn’t get over the fact that tonight he would be allowed to touch them, lick them, maybe even shoot his load on them. He had already gotten to see Ethan’s own cum pool into perfect little rivulets and make islands of those panels of hard flesh. Would Isaac be allowed to provide tonight’s milky sea?
Cum gutters. Ethan also had amazing cum gutters. Isaac desperately wanted to trace them with his fingers, his claws if he were honest, follow the sinewy, hard lines down to Ethan’s pelvis. *God, Ethan’s pelvis!* Just a hint of brown pubic hair peeked from the top of his pants, but didn’t climb any higher. Ethan’s torso was a smooth, blank canvas of muscles and flesh and Isaac made up his mind then and there that he was going to spray paint it tonight.

“What are you thinking about?” Ethan asked, one hand on his hip and his own thumb idly tracing along a V-line.

“How much I want to cum all over you,” Isaac answered honestly because maybe if he got Ethan going enough they could skip dinner and fuck now.

“Good. Now take off your shirt. It’s your turn to be objectified."

Isaac grinned and unbuttoned his shirt while openly staring at the bulging line of Ethan’s erection in his pants. Once Isaac’s shirt was off he stood proudly, flexed and posed with his hips angled to highlight his own arousal. He had become confident about his body since becoming a werewolf. It was usually what people liked the best about him at least people who liked guys’ bodies in the first place. Scott and Stiles didn’t like Isaac’s body, but that was okay. They actually liked him for other reasons. Anyway, since tonight was the second time Ethan had given Isaac a show, it was only fair that Isaac return the favor.

“Come here,” Ethan requested in a low voice.

Isaac stepped into the moonlight as he crossed the room to Ethan. His skin hummed and tingled, suddenly too sensitive. The moon was almost full, it would be full next week. Isaac was grateful he had learned to control himself. Lust was a potential trigger for any werewolf, but he had gotten off with Ethan under the moon once before, so standing with him inside by a window should be okay.

Isaac hissed as Ethan’s fingers hooked into the waistband of his jeans and he pulled Isaac roughly against his body.

“Feel that?” Ethan whispered.

Isaac felt many things. He felt Ethan’s hot breath ghosting across his lips, making them dry; Isaac licked them, and almost Ethan’s too in the process. He felt Ethan’s hands cupping his ass, his claws scraping over the denim pockets of his jeans as he squeezed. He felt the bare skin of Ethan’s chest and stomach pressing against his own, their hearts throbbing against one another’s rib cages. He felt the hard nubs of Ethan’s nipples pushing against his lower pecs. He felt his palms gripping Ethan’s burning-hot obliques, his thumbs digging into Ethan’s hips. He felt the moonlight caressing their skin, making everything ache and tingle. But most of all, Isaac felt his erection grinding recklessly, painfully, blissfully against Ethan’s through their pants.

“Feel what?” Isaac asked, voice strained.

“Everything.”

Isaac nodded and held Ethan in place as he ground his whole body slow and hard against Ethan’s, relishing the way it made Ethan shake and whimper.

Suddenly Ethan’s eyes were on Isaac’s lips and – *god yes,* Isaac wanted a kiss too. Ethan’s lips were beautiful, full and soft looking, almost pouty.

“No,” Isaac whispered, turning his head and ducking back, causing Ethan’s mouth to graze across his jaw instead. “That’s my one rule for tonight. No kissing.”
A chorus of emotions played out across Ethan’s face in rapid succession, too quick for Isaac to even label, but then Ethan was smirking up at him and still grinding their pelvises together. “Just one rule, huh?”

Isaac laughed, relieved that he wasn’t being asked to explain himself. “Pretty much. I guess I’ll tell you if something else comes up?”

“Sounds good.”

One of Ethan’s hands left Isaac’s ass and the next thing Isaac knew sharp fingers were fisted into his hair as his head was pulled back. He gurgled in surprise as Ethan’s mouth sealed over his Adam’s apple, and he flicked Isaac’s throat with his tongue while biting down. It wasn’t hard enough to break the skin and Ethan’s fangs weren’t out, but it was hard enough for Isaac to feel the sharp pressure, hard enough to send a thrill of danger coursing through his body, hard enough to make his knees week.

“Let me know if you don’t like something,” Ethan said, smirking again and pulling away, releasing Isaac completely.

Isaac practically whined at the loss but nodded. “That...That was definitely fine,” he admitted, still savoring the phantom sensations.

“Let’s eat before the food gets cold again,” Ethan said, taking one of the two set places at the end of the table.

Isaac wanted to protest, wanted to get back to not-quite-kissing and extreme grinding, but he took his place in the other seat, feeling like perhaps it was important to Ethan that they share a meal despite Isaac ostensibly being the one who cared about such things.

Isaac took one of the small portions of gazpacho soup. It was good, just a little too flavorful for his sensitive palate. Ethan seemed to be enjoying the bacon-wrapped date he was eating. The rich oils and nutty flavor coming from Ethan’s plate certainly smelled good, just...too strong. Isaac’s senses were on overdrive.

“Can we draw the curtains?” he asked, glancing at the huge glass window and once again feeling the pull of the moon on his skin.

Ethan laughed and shook his head. “Why would we do that? We’re werewolves. The moon feels amazing.”

“It-It hurts,” Isaac countered, frowning.

“It hurts because you’re thinking about, fighting it instead of just letting yourself feel it,” Ethan folded his hands behind his head and leaned back, bathing his bare torso in the moonlight. “It didn’t hurt the other nights this week when were out, did it?”

Isaac wanted to insist that it had, but that would have been an obvious lie. Ethan was right. He hadn’t been thinking about it and it hadn’t hurt, and considering that Isaac had been having fun going out at night with Ethan, maybe part of that did have something to do with the moonlight – honestly Isaac wanted to believe that more than he wanted to believe that Ethan was simply decent company.

“That’s why I wanted us to take our shirts off.” He smirked and leered at Isaac’s chest. “Well one of the reasons. But so that we could get more of it into our skin. It’ll make the sex better.”

“R-really?” Isaac shifted in his seat, still painfully hard...like Ethan’s biceps, and nipples, and
stomach.

Ethan nodded and lowered his arms, staring at Isaac with equally lust-filled eyes. “Let’s take off our pants too. I think we’re both feeling...restricted and that way even more of our flesh will be in the moonlight.”

Isaac watched open-mouthed as Ethan stood and stripped out of his brown pants, revealing his muscular, slightly hairy thighs and a pair of designer black bikini briefs that were wholly incapable of containing his sizable erection. The material was stretched and straining around his shaft, the fabric bowed outward away from his body, partially revealing the skin of his sack and his thick, brownish-auburn pubes.

Isaac’s nostrils flared. *Fuck, I can smell his dick and balls!*

“Much better.” Ethan sat back down, grinning at Isaac mischievously. “Care to join me?”

Isaac rose to his feet and toed off his shoes. His fingers trembled so hard he could barely open his pants, but eventually he managed to get them off. He stepped out of them and kicked them away, his eyes trained on the table as he stood under the weight of Ethan’s gaze.

“Goddammit Isaac. *Fuck.*” Ethan moaned, drawing Isaac’s attention. He watched as Ethan’s hand slipped under the table and the velvety dense scent of his arousal flared richer and fuller.

Isaac returned to his seat, watching Ethan with rapt attention as he took long, deep breaths and audibly moaned and whimpered, still visibly sniffing the air. His eyes were half-lidded and his head was lolled loosely to one side.

“I am gonna be so high on that in a minute. Dammit, I can’t wait to fuck you.”

Isaac licked his lips and stroked himself through his underwear. Ethan looked so blissed out, and it felt incredible knowing that he had done that to him. “You can, like, *right now.*”

Ethan’s hand returned from under the table and came to rest atop Isaac’s by his drink. “I want you to be high too. Come on, Isaac, all the smells, the tastes, the moonlight. Let go and enjoy it.”

Isaac swallowed and slowly pulled his hand away. He gave Ethan a shy smile as he sniffed the back of it, drawing Ethan’s pheromones deep into his lungs and holding them there for a few seconds before breathing out. God, he smelled good. Isaac wanted nothing more than to bury his face in Ethan’s crotch and choke on his scent – and his cock, definitely his cock.

“Now try this.” Ethan took a spoonful of the lobster bisque and held it up to Isaac’s mouth.

Isaac reluctantly opened, feeling ridiculous with Ethan feeding him. This was *not* a date. They were *not* a couple. They did *not* feed each other. He nevertheless allowed Ethan to stick the spoon against his tongue. The soup was good, but too rich and Isaac swallowed it down immediately to get it out of his mouth.

Ethan huffed. “Not like that.” He refilled the spoon and returned it to Isaac’s lips. “Don’t be afraid to taste the flavors.”

Isaac grumbled but dutifully accepted the food again.

“This time roll it around in your mouth with your tongue.”

Isaac laughed, mindful not to accidentally spit it out. He had expected Ethan to say something just
like that to him tonight, but not in this context.

The laughing fit distracted him and caused the bisque to coat his mouth as thoroughly as if he’d been trying. It burned as the spicy, creamy, savory combination overwhelmed him completely.

“No, no, you’ve got this. This is good.” Ethan placed his hand on Isaac’s jaw, partially distracting him and making the soup more palatable. “Focus on the cayenne pepper. I know it’s intense, but just go with it. Taste it.”

Isaac scowled but concentrated on the burn, allowing it to flare hot and sharp throughout his mouth. He wasn’t sure he’d even be able to taste anything else after this.

“Okay, now keep focusing on that, but focus on the creamy, rich notes too, the way they balance the spice.”

Isaac furrowed his brow and held the heat in his mouth as he allowed the rich, creamy flavor to tangle around it. They were indeed perfectly balanced and equally intense. His eyes widened. Whoa, this is really good!

Ethan grinned. “Now keep those and add the succulent weight of the lobster.”

Isaac whimpered around it and swallowed involuntarily. It was too good not to. He enthusiastically grabbed another spoonful for himself.

Ethan chuckled and touched Isaac’s wrist as he was about to eat the morsel. “This time do all that, but also feel the warm, tingling pull of the moonlight on your skin.”

Isaac excitedly tried that and – holy fuck that’s amazing! The moonlight sharpened everything.

As he took his fourth bite Ethan smirked at him. “And now, also smell how horny I am while you’re doing all that.”

Isaac choked as the crisp, clean musk of Ethan’s arousal as it overlaid everything else. It was a spicy, creamy, tingly, horny explosion in Isaac’s mouth, and he was suddenly very very hungry.

Ethan still wasn’t done.

“And feel my fingers on your face.” He gently stroked along Isaac’s jawline. The smallest hint of a claw on one finger added yet another sensation.

Isaac whimpered hard, swallowed, and gasped. He was trembling as he found his voice. “Jesus Christ, Ethan! What are you trying to do make me cum in my underwear?”

Ethan chortled and passed Isaac one of the bacon-wrapped dates with a knowing look. “It’s okay if you do, but we have a lot more pleasure in store if you don’t.”

They repeated the process with the other dishes and by the time they were halfway through the meal, Isaac was panting and breathing hard. It actually did feel like he was having sex now that he was feeling, smelling, and tasting everything to an explosive degree. This was the most pleasurable meal he had ever eaten in his life and it was all he could do not to climb over the table and sit in Ethan’s lap, anything to be closer to that delicious cock and the heavenly musk of his balls. Isaac was carefully keeping his hands out of his lap, but he was nevertheless slowly and steadily leaking precum – which Ethan kept praising in the most beautifully broken, lust-thick voice.

Isaac felt so good and so wanted. It would have been terrifying if he’d had the presence of mind to
realize the implications of Ethan making him feel like this, but he didn’t; he was drunk on the moonlight and high on Ethan’s pheromones.

“My claws are out,” Isaac realized as he almost scratched himself while taking a bite of the duck confit.

“Your fangs too,” Ethan informed him, hair now mussed somehow and chocolate eyes ringed in shimmery blue – fuck that’s pretty!

“They are?” Isaac’s mouth hung open as he tapped his fangs with his tongue. “Wow they are!” Ethan giggled, sounding every bit as high as Isaac felt. “You’re so cute. I wish I could kiss you.”

“Oh, you-you totally can.” Isaac waved a hand dismissively and leaned across the table. “I was just being uptight before.”

Ethan shook his head in a dopey-sweet way that reminded Isaac fondly of Scott. He kissed Isaac’s cheek instead, then carefully pushed him away again, his claws noticeable but not painful against Isaac’s shoulder.

“One rule, you said one rule. I didn’t getcha like this so I could take advantage of you.”

Isaac felt his eyebrows knitting together. “But you’re still gonna fuck me, right?”

“Oh definitely!” Ethan answered, looking horrified that there was even any question. “I’m gonna fuck you so good. You’ll be begging for it.”

Isaac didn’t doubt it; he was already close to begging. When he glanced back to stare at Ethan’s face – because he was now openly leering nonstop at Ethan’s handsome face, his muscular chest, or his sinewy arms while they ate – he noticed that Ethan’s fangs were protruding slightly from between his lips.

“Why are we all...” Isaac waved his hand in frustration trying to figure out how to phrase what he wanted to ask. Eventually he shrugged and opted to ask the way Stiles would have. “Sharp and bitey, and kinda glowy, even though we’re not mad at each other?”

Ethan cracked up, even slapping the table a few time before he composed himself “The moon and...everything.”

Isaac wasn’t sure what ‘everything’ meant, but it probably wasn’t important.

He gazed happily out the window at the bright, almost full moon and growled playfully at it as it sent a pulse of power and desire thrumming through him. It surged straight to his cock, making it throb with need. He grinned down at the wet tent in his underwear. The crimson material was a dark maroon where he leaked against it. He leaned back in his seat and shimmied his hips, waving his straining hardon in the air and making sure he had Ethan’s rapt attention before he started playing with it and moaning, polishing his cockhead and squeegeeing precum into his palm.

“Mmm, please?” Ethan asked, holding out his hand.

Isaac obliged him and placed his damp hand palm up in Ethan’s, quivering as Ethan pulled it to his face and licked it, nuzzling his nose against the wet spot.

“What about you?” Isaac asked, retracting his hand and sniffing the air with long, satisfying breaths. Ethan smelled so good and so turned on, but Isaac wanted it right in his face like Ethan had gotten.
Ethan shrugged. “I don’t really precum. A little bit sometimes, but it’s not a big thing for me.”

“I know,” Isaac answered. He would have been able to smell it if Ethan had been slick. “But your cock and balls and” –Isaac growled, aware of the heat pooling behind his eyes– “just everything.”

Ethan smiled and his hand disappeared under the table again. Isaac heard the cotton and elastic rumple and the soft splish of skin on skin as Ethan’s hand slid inside his underwear for the first time that night and he touched himself directly.

It was too hot to take, and Isaac likewise plunged his hand inside his straining trunks and fondled himself as he watched the pleasure flicker across Ethan’s face, listened as Ethan’s breath hitched and his heart rate quickened, reveled in the luxurious denseness of Ethan’s arousal cloaking the air.

They moaned wantonly at each other and masturbated with vigorous abandon. The warm pools of chocolate in Ethan’s eyes gradually waned as electric blue glaciers crept in from around the edges.

Eventually, Ethan stopped touching himself and slid his hand out of his briefs. The elastic of his waistband snapped tantalizingly against his pelvis. Then his hand was in front of Isaac’s face in offering.

Isaac growled and crushed it against his nose and mouth, a little too hard he realized as his nose stung from the impact and Ethan hissed as one of Isaac’s fangs nicked his palm. Neither of them cared and – fuck, Isaac was never going to get used to how unbelievably awesome Ethan’s sex pheromones were. They caressed his nostrils, clung to the back of his throat, and blanketed his lungs in erotic goodness. Just as he had done with the food, Isaac meticulously savored every rich note.

His head was cloudy and euphoric as he licked Ethan’s hand one more time then rubbed it all over his chest and throat, enjoying the sharp prickle of Ethan’s claws on his hot, moon-soaked skin. “You need to fuck me now.”

Ethan growled and stood, the brown was snuffed from his eyes completely as he rumbled back, “I need to fuck you now.”

It only took Isaac a couple seconds to stand and join Ethan on the other side of the table but it was enough time for Ethan to shed his briefs, leaving him completely nude.

Isaac gasped and reached for Ethan’s erection, but Ethan stopped him, grabbing his wrist.

“Bedroom.”

“Moonlight,” Isaac whined, nodding toward the window.

“The moon’s in the bedroom too,” Ethan answered, taking off at a sprint toward his room and dragging Isaac along behind him.

It wasn’t fair that Ethan ran ahead of Isaac...naked...with such a nice ass...while Isaac was so horned up he could hardly stand it but knew he wouldn’t get to fuck Ethan. Goddamnmit he wanted to fuck Ethan. Ethan’s ass bounced and jiggled, cheeks tantalizingly spreading just a bit each time he extended a leg, but never actually enough to satisfy Isaac’s intense curiosity or lust.

Isaac slapped Ethan’s ass as they paused outside his bedroom door while Ethan opened it. It was only a momentary touch and then Ethan was shoving Isaac into the room ahead of him, but Isaac memorized the way it felt: soft, warm skin over hard muscle, a satisfying, jiggly resistance. Why wasn’t Ethan a bottom again?

Oh.
Isaac’s brain reset as he Ethan slammed the door behind them and his attention refocused on Ethan’s cock.

He wrapped his hand around it and shoved Ethan against the wall, making him gasp and growl. This time Ethan wasn’t going to run off when Isaac wanted to play with his cock. Ethan tried to lean up, to grind their chests and bodies together, but Isaac slammed him back against the wall.

“Stay.”

No way was Isaac not going to look at that behemoth while he touched it. It was pornographically long and thick, as big as any Isaac had seen in adult films, but whereas a lot of porn actors with huge cocks never seemed to get completely hard, Ethan was like concrete, a plush concrete swaddled in a layer of velvety skin. It angled up and away from Ethan’s body, curving and pointing at Isaac with its giant reddish pink cockhead.

_Fuck, that thing is gorgeous!_

If Ethan’s cockhead was anywhere near as sensitive as Isaac’s, Ethan must have been in heaven with such a massive bundle of nerves on the end of his dick.

Isaac dropped to his knees and licked it, relishing the salty musk and the way the scent made his whole body pulse and hum with desire.

“Fangs, Isaac,” Ethan cautioned, gazing down at him with his own mouth and eyes still lazily wolfed out.

Isaac took a deep breath and willed his face back to its human form, his eyes cooling and teeth blunting. It was hard not to get pulled back under by the heavy lust blanketing the room, but he knew could do it; he had eaten out Allison numerous times without incident, and she smelled and tasted every bit as wonderful, just in a different way.

Isaac sealed his lips around Ethan’s hefty cockhead. His tongue flicked the slit as he rolled his lips back and forth over the thick, swollen rim of Ethan’s glans, caressing it. Isaac didn’t close his eyes; instead he greedily eyed the rest of Ethan’s thick shaft and studied his trimmed nest of pubes. _Christ_, Ethan smelled good and he was whimpering and moaning so enticingly, his claws scraping over Isaac’s scalp, making it tingle.

Even though Isaac knew he couldn’t handle it, he also couldn’t resist. He slid lower on Ethan’s cock until the plump tip was hitting the back of his throat – and _fuck_, he wasn’t even halfway down the shaft yet. He coughed and gagged, his eyes watering and his airways stuffed shut. He didn’t care; he couldn’t stop. Breathing be damned, Isaac wanted Ethan to fuck his face. He gripped Ethan’s strong, hairy thighs and pulled him forward, ignoring his own violent gagging and impaling his throat as he hoped Ethan would take the hint and use him the way Isaac needed in that moment.

“Whoa, whoa, Isaac, stop.”

Ethan clutched Isaac’s shoulders and yanked him to his feet despite his protests.

“No, I want~”

Isaac didn’t get to finish as Ethan picked him up by the waist, took several steps, then abruptly tossed him backward onto the bed.

Isaac whimpered and resisted the urge to bare his throat. He skin was humming and pulsing again. _Moonlight!_ He glanced backward at the wall behind his head. As with the wall in the dining room, it
consisted entirely of a floor-to-ceiling window with the curtains opened wide. No wonder the twins had picked this loft!

The bed dipped under Ethan’s weight, drawing Isaac’s attention back to him – holy fuck, why had Isaac’s attention ever left the gorgeous naked werewolf in the first place?!

Ethan’s claws retracted as he hooked his fingers into the waistband of Isaac’s underwear and he stripped them off his legs.

“FUUUCK!” Ethan growled, fangs out and blue eyes flashing dangerously as he raked his eyes over Isaac’s nude body.

Isaac felt the growl deep in his core and his body instantly went slack against the mattress. It was an alpha growl, despite Ethan no longer holding that status, and Isaac was so turned on by it that only his cock defied the implicit order to hold still. It throbbed and quaked in the open air, leaking another heavy bead of precum.

Ethan growled again – and if he kept doing that Isaac was going to start leaking more than precum – and rubbed his hands briskly up and down Isaac’s shaft, all over his balls, and along the insides of his thighs.

Isaac whimpered and spread his legs, eager to please the former alpha, especially as Ethan’s tongue replaced his fingers.

Isaac moan-growled and sunk his claws into Ethan’s navy blue duvet – oops! – as Ethan licked a wide swath along his inner left thigh from knee to groin, fangs threatening but sparing the delicate skin.

“Ooh, aah, uh-oh!” Isaac’s hands clenched and tore through Ethan’s blankets and sheets as Ethan’s tongue lapped over, under, and around his balls for a few seconds before he sucked them into his mouth. Isaac gasped, terrified of the sharp fangs against his delicate jewels, but Ethan had already retracted them and was also doing an admirable job keeping his regular human teeth out of the equation. It was all soft, wet pressure and frisky tongue action.

Isaac’s cock was drooling obscenely by the time Ethan released his balls and swirled his tongue around the base. Isaac whimpered and kneaded the bed as Ethan slowly edged higher up his shaft. He stopped about an inch from Isaac’s achingly swollen cockhead – that goddamn son-of-a-bitch! – made sure Isaac was looking him in the eye, then gently pressed the tip of Isaac’s dripping glans against his upper lip, smearing Isaac’s juices under his nose – never mind he’s awesome! We’re officially friends now – before sliding it slowly through his parted lips.

Isaac let out a long, satisfied sigh and slid lower on the bed, one leg twisting comfortably around Ethan’s butt and thigh. Just the skin-on-skin contact was sublime and there weren’t words to describe the mouth-on-skin contact Ethan was giving him. Isaac took deep, measured breaths, remembering to feel everything the way he had been doing all night. The soft, plush duvet beneath his body; the tingly, humming moonbeams on his face, chest, and stomach; the dense, rich erotic goodness of Ethan’s prolonged arousal; the light scrape of Ethan’s clawtips through his bush; Ethan’s other hand, warm and steady as he deftly stroked the base of Isaac’s throbbing cock; Isaac’s throbbing cock! He felt that most of all, pulsing and weeping in Ethan’s slick, hot mouth.

Isaac felt perfectly in control and blissfully relaxed at the same time. He succumbed to the moon, the pheromones, the pleasure, and got lost in euphoria as Ethan fellated him, completely losing track of time.
“I couldn’t do it,” Ethan said with a laugh when at last he pulled his head away from Isaac’s crotch.

“Couldn’t do what?” Isaac mumbled drunkenly. His mouth felt so nice stretched into the grin he had perma-plastered across his face.

“Deep throat you.” Ethan laughed again and stroked Isaac’s thigh. “Glad you didn’t notice.”

Isaac chuckled and sat up, wrapping his arms and legs lazily around Ethan’s waist and back. Touching him made Isaac’s skin tingle harder and he was just so irresistibly hot. Isaac trailed a hand across Ethan’s chest, lightly tweaking each of his nipples and rubbing his index finger over the ridges of muscle just beside and under Ethan’s pec – what were those muscles called? Isaac really needed to find out because he loved them.

“Hey I wanna show you something,” Ethan whispered, chocolate eyes glinting with excitement. Chocolate, ice blue, both at the same time – Isaac couldn’t make up his mind how he liked Ethan’s eyes best.

“How?” he answered, staring at Ethan’s erection. Shouldn’t we be fucking?

Ethan grasped Isaac’s chin between his thumb and forefinger and turned his head, physically adjusting Isaac’s gaze from Ethan’s lap to his own.

“Have you seen this?” Ethan asked, wrapping the fingers of his other hand around Isaac’s shaft and tilting it to and fro.

Isaac laughed and smacked Ethan’s stomach with the back of his hand – then groped his abs for good measure. “Yeah, it’s my dick. I see it every day.”

“But I don’t think you’ve ever really looked at it. In your memories it’s pretty average and basic.”

“So?” Isaac asked, feeling as close to self conscious as he had since they started dinner.

“So it’s not,” Ethan said emphatically, letting go of Isaac’s face so he could stroke Isaac’s cock with both hands. “It’s huge and very sexy. I mean really good looking.”

Isaac cheeks heated in a blush, and he recalled the compliments Scott had given him in the shower earlier that week. It had made him feel really good, but he had thought Scott was intentionally exaggerating to be his usual wonderful, supportive self.

“Get on your knees.”

Isaac did as he was told, and Ethan likewise shifted into a kneeling position in front of him.

“See.” Ethan edged forward and pressed their cocks together. He held them against each other in both hands.

“Uhn!” Isaac gasped and moaned, bucking against Ethan. Fucking, fuck, fuck that’s hot.

Ethan let go with one hand and stilled Isaac’s hips. “Yeah I like that too, and we’re gonna do that in a minute, but look at this first.”

Isaac glanced down curiously as Ethan tilted their erections in various directions, showing him the side-by-side comparison from different angles. His jaw dropped. The tip of his dick reached the base of Ethan’s cockhead, which was very big and long, meaning Ethan still had a good inch and a half or so on him, but damn. Ethan’s cock was also thicker and meatier but not by nearly as much as Isaac
had thought.

“Wow, I have a really nice dick.”

“You have a fucking incredible dick, Isaac,” Ethan said as he let go of their erections and gripped Isaac’s ass, grinding their crotches together.

They both moaned and growled. It hurt without lube but – fuck Isaac really liked it anyway. He didn’t understand what Ethan was doing as he kept edging them backward on the bed, but he went with it, and his compliance paid off as Ethan leaned past him, never breaking contact between their pelvises, and reached into his nightstand. He retrieved a bottle of lube and slathered it, messy and generous, all over their cocks. Once they were slick and gliding so good together, Ethan closed the cap and tossed the bottle to the other side of the bed for future use – So he can lube me up and fuck me soon!

Ethan squeezed and groped Isaac’s ass, his slippery fingers teasing Isaac’s crack as their cocks slid and ground against each other.

Isaac whimpered and nipped at Ethan’s neck. Then his throat. Then along his jawline. Then – Oh fuck me and my stupid rules.

Ethan’s eyes widened and he kissed back for a couple seconds before pulling away, a questioning look on his face. “But, your rule?”

“It was a dumb rule.”

“You must have had a reason.”

“It was a dumb reason. Make out with me.”

Ethan did. He surged forward and reconnected their lips, his mouth hot and aggressive and perfect against Isaac’s. It was all tongues and teeth and fangs and maybe first kisses were supposed to be tentative, but Isaac couldn’t for the life of him figure out why as he did his best to swallow Ethan’s tongue.

Then he was on his back and Ethan was on top of him; then Ethan was on his back and Isaac was on top of him, and their cocks and mouths did an extraordinarily good job staying connected through all of the tussling and playfighting.

Dammit! They were playfighting, laughing and whimpering into each other’s mouths, and Isaac liked it, loved it, wanted to make it his new hobby. Why weren’t they fight-fighting? Why was Ethan so much fun to mess around with? Why wasn’t Isaac nervous or angry or scared? Also, why wasn’t naked playfighting more of a thing? Did people know how good it felt?

“Turn around and get on your hands and knees.” Ethan whispered the command against Isaac’s lips.

And Isaac did, because of course he did.

Ethan slicked Isaac’s ass with lube, his fingers deft and surprisingly gentle.

Isaac moaned as Ethan’s first finger penetrated him. It was probably the hours of moonlight and arousal but this felt nothing like when Isaac had tried it on himself. This was electrifying and Isaac was keening and begging for more before Ethan even added his second digit. Then – oh god, Ethan knew right where his prostate was and he stroked it with assurance. Yep, tickling. Tickling is different when someone else does it.
Isaac reached down to stroke his cock but–

“NO.”

Ethan’s command rattled through Isaac’s bones and tugged at his beta instincts. He felt his cock trembling between his legs untouched.

_Ha, joke’s on you. That felt way better than actually jerking off would have._

The throbbing didn’t stop and Isaac knew he was dripping like a faucet all over the duvet beneath him. Ethan was right. Isaac needed to cool down not ramp up or he wasn’t going to be able to hold out until Ethan fucked him.

He took calming breaths, allowing himself to focus on the thick, rich, wonderfulness of their mingled arousal. _God_ it was a good combination. Whatever conflicts they’d had in the past, they literally had good chemistry together, at least according to Isaac’s nose. Isaac also savored the moon on his skin, the moon-mad euphoria in his brain, the full body and mind swirl of tingly happiness.

“Fuck me, fuck me, fuck me.” Isaac didn’t know he was chanting it until Ethan laughed and flipped him over.

Isaac lay on his back on the bed, legs spread wide and arms crossed over his head. Ethan sat back on his ankles between Isaac’s thighs, slicking his cock with lube and raking his eyes up and down Isaac’s body with clear, unbridled lust.

_So this is happening. Last chance to freak out._

Isaac didn’t feel remotely like freaking out. It was the moon. It had to be the moon. There was no other possible explanation for how he could have felt this relaxed while stretched out vulnerable and needy beneath Ethan.

“So hot,” Ethan murmured, more to himself than Isaac.

He leaned forward and closed his mouth over Isaac’s and Isaac bucked against his stomach, his wonderful, hard, ab-lined stomach. Ethan pulled away from Isaac’s mouth but kissed along his jawline, following it up to his ear. Isaac giggled and pressed his head against his bicep, blocking Ethan’s access, but then Ethan was kissing his bicep, then down his arm, then – whoa, into his armpit and that felt pretty nice.

Ethan’s mouth dropped further, licking and nipping at Isaac’s chest as he rubbed heavy hands across Isaac’s stomach. The bites and licks continued onto Isaac’s abs as Ethan’s hands drifted to Isaac’s inner thighs. He grazed Isaac’s navel with one of his fangs then lapped at the shallow depression with his tongue before playing with the tuft of hair below it. He tugged the thin hairs between his lips and nipped at the delicate flesh beneath, then followed the line down Isaac’s pelvis and into his bush, his tongue drooling, licking, and swirling all over Isaac’s thatch like it was the most delicious thing in the world. He buried his nose in it and took long, deep breaths.

When Ethan finally raised his head his electric blue eyes were lust-blown and unfocused, and he was holding his breath, getting higher on Isaac’s pheromones as he at last raised Isaac’s hips and lined his cock up with Isaac’s hole.

Isaac felt Ethan’s bulbous cockhead at his entrance. It was soft and pliable, the _only_ part of Ethan’s cock that was, and it easily felt three or four times wider than Isaac’s fingered-open hole.

Ethan gave Isaac a questioning look, still holding his breath. Isaac sighed and drew the scent of
Ethan’s arousal deep into his lungs. He held his breath too and nodded as he braced for what he knew would be excruciating at first.

It wasn’t.

Ethan eased forward at glacial speed and even when Isaac felt and heard the muted pop of Ethan breaching his outer ring all he felt was an intense pressure for a split second. Then it was gone before he could even label it as pain.

He involuntarily gasped, losing his lungful of lust, as thick black veins crept up Ethan’s pelvis, twined over and around his abs, formed a dense, criss-crossing net on his chest, and snaked ominously up his throat and neck before disappearing under his hairline.

It was...well actually hot as all fuck from a visual standpoint, but it freaked Isaac out, undermining the pleasant but unusual sensation of his inner walls spreading and stretching around Ethan’s girthy monster of a cock.

Ethan’s face was tight, pained. He slowly hissed out the breath he had been holding through clenched teeth as the lines of pain continued to thicken and darken.

“Ethan, no, don’t- don’t do that.” Not for me, please god not for me.

“It’s no big deal,” Ethan answered, voice strained and heart pounding despite his attempt to sound casual. “I always do this when I fuck someone.”

Isaac gasped, partly because Ethan slid against his prostate, but mostly from surprise at his words. “You always do this? With humans too? With Danny? How do they not...”

“Climb off my dick and run screaming into the night?” Ethan laughed, but it was tense, forced.

Isaac shrugged and tried not to enjoy it too much as Ethan’s never-ending cock kept filling him, increasing the pressure and force on his prostate by the moment. “Pretty much, yeah.”

“I always insist on doing it doggie or with the lights off, which I know isn’t fair because let’s face it, what guy wouldn’t want to look at all this while I fuck him?” –he waved his hand up and down his sculpted body– “but I figure they’re better off. Besides, once we’ve been going at it for awhile and they’re all nice and loose, I’ll change things up.”

“You’re an idiot.” Isaac laughed and slapped Ethan’s arm where it pressed against the bed by his side. “But seriously stop. You don’t have to do that for me. I’m a werewolf too.”

“Dude, it’s your first time,” Ethan answered as he finally bottomed out and began withdrawing at the same snail’s pace. It was a surreal experience for Isaac. He felt nothing bad and therefore no reason for Ethan to go slow, but it was obviously different from Ethan’s perspective.

“I don’t care, let me have it.” Isaac leaned up and stretched his fingers to stroke Ethan’s black-lined abs.

He got a quick, light drag of pain before Ethan braced himself on one arm and slapped his hand away. He cringed and hissed as the sudden movement made his cock stutter inside Isaac, and Isaac moan-growled. Fuck that was good!

“Stop,” Ethan commanded in the alpha voice that made Isaac quivery and needy, and this time Isaac actually had a cock in his ass at the time so – SATISFYING!
Isaac whined nevertheless, still hating the idea of anyone suffering for him.

“It’s already dissipating.” Ethan glanced meaningfully at his torso, which was covered in fewer and thinner black vines than a little while earlier. “You’re a werewolf so your healing is fast and your body is already acclimating.”

“So let’s share what’s left,” Isaac answered, impaling himself harder on Ethan’s cock as he sat up and wrapped his arms around him, their chests and stomachs pressed together.

“Isaac!” Ethan growled and hissed, lacing authority into Isaac’s name and trying to pry him off.

Isaac choose to ignore him. He wasn’t Ethan’s beta, but he was extremely turned on, so he fucked himself harder on Ethan’s cock, enjoying the intense pleasurable vibes that radiated throughout his ass and pelvis as well as the throbbing, painful ones that stung his stomach and chest; it felt like such a satisfying punishment for disobeying.

“Oh god,” Ethan growled and moaned into Isaac’s ear. He pulled Isaac closer, pinning him against his chest as he pistoned up into him.

“Yes fuck, fuck yes!” Isaac bounced up and down hard, more blinding pleasure exploding in his ass even as the ache dulled in his stomach and chest where they were sharing the pain. Isaac’s still-lubed cock slid blissfully back and forth between their rippling, hard, stomachs and Isaac knew this was the way he wanted to cum. He bucked harder, fucking Ethan’s stomach while Ethan fucked his ass.

By the time the black vines has shriveled and died completely, Ethan’s stomach was a sticky slick mess from Isaac’s precum.

“Do you want to cum, Isaac?” Ethan whispered in his ear as he gripped Isaac’s hips and slammed him up and down on his cock in time with his pistoning. Each thrust jolted Isaac’s prostate with little sparks of joy.

“Yes,” Isaac whimpered. He couldn’t take much more. Every nerve ending was primed and charged, humming with pleasure and kinetic sexual energy – from the moon, the scents, the tastes, the sounds, and most of all from Ethan’s powerful fucking.

“Then CUM!” Ethan growled into Isaac’s ear, infusing the command with power.

Isaac’s heavily lidded eyes shot open and he howled at the top of his lungs as his cock obeyed Ethan’s order. It erupted with a blinding white pleasure that engulfed his whole body and had him digging his claws furiously into the bed. It felt like his whole body was coming apart. All the throbbing on his skin from the moon, all the built up energy, everything rushed to his cock and blasted out of him.

He was still howling and spraying the tight space between their stomachs and chests with thick ropes of cum as Ethan’s howl joined his, reverberating through his bones and making everything more intense.

Ethan’s cockhead kept pummeling Isaac’s prostate as he unloaded in him, squeezing Isaac’s hips hard enough to leave deep bruises if Isaac could bruise. Isaac desperately clenched his ass and wiggled in Ethan’s lap, trying to somehow make it better for Ethan as he spurted milky jizz across Ethan’s tan throat, getting off hard on the knowledge that Ethan was seeding him, claiming him, drenching him with his cum.

Isaac’s orgasm didn’t seem to be going anywhere and fuck, he had never cum this long before. It gradually dropped in intensity, easing from a blinding hot pleasure to a trembling warm heat, but it
didn’t stop. Isaac was still spurting, like a low-pressure fountain, bubbling and gurgling all over their abs. It felt amazing, but it was alarming.

“It’s okay,” Ethan whispered, gently stroking Isaac’s sweat-slick spine. “I’m still cumming too.”

Isaac knew it was true. It felt like Ethan’s cock was plugging a whole reservoir of cum in his ass at this point. Every blissful thrust threatened to open the floodgate and – Uhnn, no! Isaac wanted to keep it inside as long as he could, at least until he quit cumming, speaking of which...

“How is it still happening?” Isaac mumbled, full-on nuzzling Ethan’s shoulder and neck as he lost himself in endorphins.

“Moon’gasm,” Ethan answered. He pulled back and kissed Isaac, his face still beautifully wracked with pleasure. “From all the moonlight and foreplay and general arousal. Isn’t being a werewolf great?”

Isaac whimpered and resealed their mouths. Being a werewolf was great. So was cumming hard against another werewolf and then continuing to slowly dribble against his gorgeous body while lazily making out with him.

Ethan accepted the kiss and eased Isaac down against the bed. Stretching out was a nice touch and certainly much more comfortable, but Isaac was disappointed to feel the hot, wet sloosh, of his cum dripping off Ethan’s body and onto his own before running down his sides and onto the bed. Isaac hadn’t even gotten a proper look at the vignette he’d painted. Oh well, Ethan’s torso was the ultimate blank canvas, and Isaac somehow doubted tonight would be the last time he’d have the opportunity to paint it.

After several lazy minutes of making out and once their orgasms had gradually ebbed into oblivion, Ethan pulled out, stroking Isaac’s hips as if to ease the loss, which in the throes of afterglow Isaac could admit was substantial. He took solace in the knowledge that Ethan had left quite a bit of himself behind inside him.

“Be right back,” Ethan said softly as he climbed off the bed and disappeared into his bathroom.

Isaac resisted the urge to whimper and ask Ethan to stay. Thanks to his ‘moon’gasm’ or whatever, he was clearheaded again and certainly not going to ask Ethan to cuddle with him.

He laughed to himself as he heard Ethan peeing, then the toilet flushing, and the sink running as he cleaned himself up. It all just seemed so human.

When Ethan returned he sat on the edge of the bed and passed Isaac a hand towel. But it was like trying to sop up the Colorado river with a wet-nap, especially when Isaac started...

leaking in a much less sexy way than he had earlier in the night.

Ethan chuckled as he saw the problem. “I won’t be offended if you want to go to the bathroom and get cleaned up.”

Isaac blushed because he sort of did and sort of didn’t want to do that, and sort of hadn’t and sort of had worried it would offended Ethan.

He was grateful that Ethan stepped out of the bedroom and went to the kitchen while he sorted himself out in the bathroom, not that the extra distance provided very much more privacy considering Ethan’s super senses, but it still helped somewhat.

When he was done, Isaac returned to the bedroom and sat self-consciously on the bed, contemplating
whether or not it would make things more or less weird if he put on underwear. They were the only article of his clothing that had made it to the bedroom and retrieving the rest was definitely going to be awkward either way.

Ethan walked back in, big soft dick swinging like he owned the place – oh wait, he sort of did – without any detectable trace of self-consciousness. He was carrying two glasses of ice water, one of which he passed to Isaac.

Isaac gulped it down and handed the glass back. “Thanks.”

Ethan nodded and drained his own, then crawled past Isaac into the center of the bed.

*Rude, he’s not even going to see me to the door.*

“Well, I guess I’ll get going.” Isaac stood.

“What? No, come here.” Ethan spread his arms and gave Isaac an expectant look.

Isaac sneered and laughed in response because Isaac could be a prick sometimes.

“What, you think just because we fucked now I want to cuddle?” His voice dripped with as much derision as he could muster.

Ethan glanced at Isaac’s chest – damn his heartbeat for giving him away!

“Seriously, come here. I want to teach you something else. You’ll like it.”

Isaac grumbled and sat on the edge of the bed. He hated how maddeningly useful – or pleasurable – Ethan’s lessons tended to be. He had a walk of shame to get to...lots and lots of shame.

“Come here,” Ethan said with a playful inflection, urging Isaac back to his arms.

Isaac scowled and settled back in against his side, definitely not feeling a tension ease in his muscles as their skin touched.

Ethan grabbed Isaac’s hand and placed it on his chest.

“You feel that?” Ethan asked, and Isaac realized he meant his heartbeat.

“Yeah, and I can *hear* it too, so this is unnecessary.” Isaac tried to pull his hand away, but Ethan held it firmly in place with his own on top.

“Now you can’t,” Ethan said with a laugh.

Isaac flinched as the sound disappeared. The vibrations under his hand also weakened but remained present; if they hadn’t, he would have sworn Ethan was dead.

“How?” Isaac asked, trying to make his tone pleasant again since Ethan was obviously about to teach him this trick and he desperately wanted to learn it.

“Are you familiar with your pericardium?”

“Only by reputation.” Isaac smirked at him and settled against his body. This seemed like it was going to be a long lesson.

“Jerk.” Ethan snickered. “Werewolves have special pericardial sacs around their hearts. We can
thicken them at will to the point of completely muting our heartbeats.” He wrapped his other arm around Isaac’s shoulders and snaked his hand up under Isaac’s arm until it rested over Isaac’s heart.

*Damnit, he’s totally using this werewolf lesson as an excuse to cuddle. Bastard!*

“Now you try.”

“I don’t know how,” Isaac answered, trying to ignore the way Ethan’s thumb traced lazy patterns across his chest, trying to pretend it wasn’t soothing an invisible ache.

“Focus on your heart, visualize it beating in your chest. Then focus on the space around your beating heart and try to fill it. You’ll feel a sort of thick, swelling sensation when you’re on the right track.”

Isaac took a deep breath and tried to do as he was told. It was difficult, more difficult than scent masking. He couldn’t find the space around his heart; it was hard to find a void, especially with Ethan’s fingers still idly caressing his chest.

Ethan tensed and sat up.

“What is it?” Isaac asked, sitting up next to him.

“Aiden,” he answered, worry etched across his face and the noxious scent of his distress filling the air.

Isaac coughed and hesitantly stroked Ethan’s back, anything to clear that dreadful odor from the room. “What’s wrong?”

“He’s upset. Very upset.” Ethan licked his lips and worried the bottom one between his teeth. “I think Lydia just broke up with him. He’s been expecting it.”

Isaac’s eyebrows drew up in surprise and a flood of delight washed over him. He masked his scent an instant later, but it was too late. Ethan was already scowling at him.

“I better go meet him.”

Isaac blinked at him. *What the fuck?*

“You guys fought right before I got here. He almost slashed your face. Now you’re, what, just gonna drop everything and go run and give him a hug?”

Ethan glared at Isaac, his face harder than it had been all night. “You wouldn’t understand.”

Isaac glared back and released his scent. Fuck being inappropriate; he was mad. “I understand that whatever happened to him, he got what he deserves.”

Fucking Aiden! Isaac hated that asshole. He ruined everything.

Ethan was angry and agitated as he sighed and closed his glowing blue eyes, but when he re-opened them, they were chocolate again and his face had softened. “Do you need me to stay?”

Isaac stared back at Ethan, conflicting impulses warring within him. Then he masked his scent and found the void around his heart. He let it swell and thicken, blocking out the throb in his chest.

“I don’t need you for anything,” he said coldly.

And just like that Isaac had learned how to lie to a werewolf.
Chapter End Notes

This was of course a major chapter for Isaac and Ethan and a huge turning point in their relationship. Predictably perhaps, that means that next chapter will feature Isaac and Stiles getting closer too.

Feedback is very much appreciated, especially since it was Isaac and Ethan’s first time!
Isaac felt sick as he jogged home cloaked in Ethan’s scent. It had permeated everywhere, soaked into his pores, mixed into his saliva, coated his lungs...Isaac couldn’t bear to think what it was doing deep inside him, where no one else had been, where Isaac himself had barely explored.

Isaac’s clothes made it worse. Ethan wasn’t on Isaac’s clothes; Ethan was on him. The clothes only trapped the scents closer to his body, made Isaac’s skin crawl as Ethan’s smell choked it. It wasn’t right; Isaac wasn’t right. Isaac had betrayed himself; he had betrayed his pack. An interloper, an enemy, had touched Isaac in places his packmates had never even seen.

Isaac couldn’t breathe. All he could think about were the terrible ways he had let Ethan violate him, encouraged Ethan to violate him. And fuck fuck fuck this wasn’t even Ethan’s fault. As much as Isaac wanted to blame him, he knew Ethan hadn’t done anything Isaac hadn’t asked for, begged for. Isaac was the one who didn’t have any self respect. Isaac was the one who had let his pack’s enemy inside him, physically and...

Isaac choked back a sob as he thought about the way he had acted with Ethan tonight, the way he had exposed himself, the way he had laughed with Ethan, cum with Ethan, cuddled with Ethan, let Ethan hold him and carry him and kiss him...fucking kiss him. They had tasted each other’s mouths. He had been raw with Ethan, fucking emotionally raw.

Isaac felt like he didn’t belong to himself anymore. He had given himself away to Ethan. Ethan. And yeah, Isaac fucking liked Ethan by this point but that didn’t make it okay. It just showed Isaac how screwed up he was to have let someone who had killed his packmates, destroyed Isaac’s original pack, get so close. Isaac felt like he had shit all over Erica’s and Boyd’s memories, like he had disgraced Derek in the worst possible way.

Scott. Isaac was supposed to be Scott’s beta, but Scott didn’t even know where Isaac was, didn’t know that Isaac was out fucking someone who represented the antithesis of everything Scott stood for while Scott was at home fighting his own literal demon. Why had Isaac left him? Isaac’s place was by his alpha’s side, not moaning under a former evil alpha. Former evil. Was there ever a former to evil? Ethan could never take back the things he had done, even if he was fucking sorry he had done them.

And Isaac had been so happy with Ethan tonight. Ethan had made him feel so good.

FUCK that was messed up.

Isaac had worked so hard to recover, to feel strong and confident and valuable after he had become a werewolf. Isaac had wanted so much to prove his father wrong, to prove that he wasn’t worthless and useless, wasn’t a pathetic waste of air. His self esteem was a work in progress and he thought he had been making progress but now...

Isaac’s fingers shook as he unlocked the front door of the McCall house, trying to ignore his father’s voice in his head.

You’re a worthless piece of shit, Isaac. You deserve to suffer. You deserve to feel worse than you do right now. You deserve every terrible thing that’s ever happened to you. You’re a burden, a fucking
Isaac closed and locked the door. He walked numbly up the stairs. It wasn’t true. Isaac knew it wasn’t true. His pack cared about him. He wasn’t a burden on Scott and Melissa. They wanted him here. They wanted him.

After a forty-five minute shower with the hot water turned all the way up, Isaac returned to his room. He debated throwing his clothes away entirely, but chided himself for being melodramatic and tossed them in the dirty laundry instead. He couldn’t afford to waste nice clothes and Ethan hadn’t gotten too much of his scent on them anyway.

Isaac tentatively sniffed his flushed pink arm. All he could smell was his body wash. It was okay. He would be okay. This was nothing compared to some of the things he had gone through. He just needed to distract himself.

Isaac’s stomach flipped in anticipation as he picked up his phone and saw he had a couple of missed messages from Stiles. He barely heard the little voice in the back of his head telling him he didn’t deserve a friend like Stiles. It wasn’t true. Isaac knew he had been a good friend to Stiles, that he made Stiles happy. They made each other happy. Isaac really needed to hang out with Stiles tonight.

Stiles: Are you busy? Or asleep?

Four minutes later:

Stiles: Nvm

Isaac checked the time. It had only been three minutes since Stiles’ last message, but it was after midnight and Stiles’ texts didn’t seem quite right. They weren’t as exuberant as they normally were. There were no exclamation points or silly jokes. Isaac wasn’t sure if he was projecting his own mood or not as he typed back.

Isaac: I’m not busy. What’s up?

Stiles: Nvm. It’s ok. Ttyl.

Isaac frowned. Something was bothering Stiles or he’d have told Isaac what he wanted in the first place.

Isaac: Nightmare?

Stiles: No...just sad.

Isaac’s stomach dropped. He typed three iterations of his response before hitting send. ‘What’s wrong? Do you want me to come over?’ He deleted that and tried again. ‘You want to talk about it? Can I come over?’ That wasn’t right either. Eventually he decided to keep it simple and decisive:

Isaac: I’m coming over.

Stiles: No...I’ll pick you up.

Isaac smiled softly. It sucked that Stiles was sad about something, but Isaac was really glad he was going to get to see Stiles tonight. He knew it wouldn’t have been a good idea for him to get lost in his head alone.

While Isaac waited for Stiles he packed a change of clothes for the next day. He could just go in his
pajamas to Stiles’ house. Isaac reconsidered as he caught phantom traces of Ethan’s scent on his skin. It had to be his imagination. There was no way Ethan’s scent could still be on him after so much showering and scrubbing. But...

Isaac stripped out of the pajamas he’d just put on and changed into the clothes he had planned to wear tomorrow instead. He felt devious but he knew that if he didn’t have pajamas Stiles would lend him some like he had done the last time. Isaac wanted that, needed to be wrapped up in his packmate’s scent tonight.

Isaac heard Stiles pull up a few minutes later and he hurried as quickly and quietly as he could down the stairs. It was unlikely that Scott would wake from his trance at this time of night, but Isaac still felt the need to be quiet. He opened the door for Stiles just as Stiles raised his key to the lock.

“Hey,” Isaac said softly.

“Hey,” Stiles answered.

Isaac hesitated for only a few moments before wrapping his arms around Stiles and pulling him in for a tight hug. It was selfish. The sour, almost rancid scent of Stiles’ sadness was clinging to him and Stiles’ posture was deflated, exhausted. Isaac should have been hugging Stiles to make him feel better. That had been his intention when he first embraced him, but as Stiles hugged him back and Isaac melted against him and nuzzled his face into the crook of Stiles’ neck, Isaac realized he wasn’t giving a hug but taking one. Isaac needed to be held by someone who was safe and good, someone who was pack, someone it was okay to care about.

“Are you okay?” Stiles asked, voice tinged with concern as he stroked Isaac’s back.

Stiles was so perceptive and Isaac was too broken and selfish to deny it. “No,” he whispered.

“Me either,” Stiles whispered back, melting against Isaac in the same way he was doing. Soon they would both be a pile of goo on the McCalls’ front stoop.

“I feel better now that you’re here,” Isaac admitted because he was still raw and vulnerable and he needed to give those feelings to someone he could trust, someone who wouldn’t hurt him, someone who hadn’t hurt him.

“Same,” Stiles mumbled, sniffing Isaac’s hair. Isaac wondered if that was something he had picked up from the pack, a symbolic gesture, or if Stiles’ human senses could also be soothed by a familiar scent.

Regardless, Isaac knew his own werewolf sense could be, so he openly took a long, deep whiff of Stiles’ wonderfully calming personal scent. He held it in his lungs, praying it would displace the intruder scent Isaac couldn’t seem to purge by himself.

“Let’s go,” Stiles whispered, finally releasing Isaac and turning around in the doorway.

Isaac followed him out and locked up.

“So what’s wrong,” Isaac asked gently once they were in Stiles’ Jeep.

Stiles sighed and didn’t look at Isaac as he started the vehicle and put it in gear. “Can we talk about it later, like maybe...”

A hint of embarrassment filled the air and Isaac made an educated guess. “In bed?”
Stiles laughed nervously and kept his eyes on the road. “Yeah. I didn’t mean it like- Just since you’re sleeping over and...”

“Sounds good,” Isaac answered, aware that this would normally be when he would tease Stiles. He didn’t feel like it.

“What about you?” Stiles asked, giving him a concerned glance. “What happened?”

Isaac took a deep breath, unsure how much he wanted to tell Stiles. Actually part of him wanted to tell Stiles everything, but that didn’t seem like a good idea. Stiles didn’t even know Isaac was bi; telling him he was freaked out about too much intimacy during sex with a guy would have been information overload. Besides, Stiles had his own problems. He didn’t need Isaac overwhelming him with his own.

“I did something I’m not proud of,” Isaac answered after a little while, deciding it was truthful if sparse on details.

“What’d you do?” Stiles asked, curiosity coloring his voice.

Of course Stiles would ask for details; Isaac should have known that.

“I trusted Ethan,” Isaac answered.

“And he betrayed you?” Stiles asked. The rubber of the steering wheel squeaked under Stiles’ hand and a flare of anger filled the cab of the Jeep.

“No, he didn’t,” Isaac said. “He didn’t at all. He was...really nice.”

Stiles shot Isaac a confused look, his brow furrowed. “That...doesn’t sound like a problem then.”

“But Stiles, I trusted Ethan. I don’t- I can’t-” Isaac raked a hand through his hair. He had thought Stiles would understand what he meant. “I trust you,” Isaac said softly, “and Scott, and Melissa, and Lydia, and still Allison despite everything...but that’s it. And Ethan doesn’t seem like a great place to start expanding."

Stiles shrugged and reached across to pat Isaac’s arm. “At least he’s the good twin.”

Isaac huffed out a humorless laugh. “Yeah, I guess.”

There was no guess about it. Ethan was obviously the good twin. That didn’t make it okay though.

“So, you feel like you shared too much with him and now you’re freaked out because he has more power than you’d like and he could use it to you hurt you?”

Isaac frowned. That was sort of the gist of it. “Yeah and Ethan’s just...not safe.”

Stiles was silent for a little while but as they stopped at a stop sign, he turned and gave Isaac a meaningful look. “I once started trusting a werewolf I didn’t think was safe...turned out he was and it was a really good decision.”

Isaac gave Stiles a quick smile before looking away. “I thought you hated Ethan?”

Stiles laughed and started driving again. “I thought you hated Ethan?”

Isaac glared at him but conceded the point. “Fine, but what changed your mind?”
“Malia. I went to visit her today after school. She’s low-key awesome. You and Ethan saved her, and none of us would have even known about her if it hadn’t been for Ethan.”

Isaac was surprised to hear Stiles had visited Malia and now he was the one who wanted details, but he’d ask about that later. Stiles was already continuing.

“But mostly you.”

“Me?” Isaac asked.

“Yeah.” Stiles frowned and took a slow turn onto his street, as though wanting to finish this conversation before they got out of the vehicle. “I was really scared while you were in surgery after Allison...anyway, while we were waiting Scott and Lydia told me how Ethan took care of you until Scott could take over. He gets like a million bonus points with me for that.”

“Hey, I was always going to be fine.” Isaac assured him, hand on Stiles’ shoulder because he sounded and smelled terrified just reliving it.

Stiles squeezed Isaac’s hand and pulled into his driveway. He didn’t say anything until he had turned off the Jeep and killed the lights. Then he turned in his seat and looked at Isaac. “Deaton said fixing your spine was touch and go. The wolfsbane could have made the injury permanent, like how Deucalion was blinded even though he was a werewolf when it happened.”

Isaac’s jaw dropped and his stomach sank. “I could have been paralyzed...forever?”

Stiles face had a quivery quality that Isaac found deeply unsettling as he nodded. “Or if your throat injury had been a little bit deeper…”

Isaac’s heart pounded and he felt nauseated all over again. A moment later Stiles’ arms were around him. He was trembling and clutching at Isaac desperately, and as Isaac hugged back he made a point of memorizing this feeling. It wasn’t that it it was a good feeling – it was horrible. Stiles was on the verge of tears; hell Isaac was on the verge of tears, and the stench of fear and sadness in the air threatened to send Isaac’s emotionally wrought stomach over the edge into full vomiting – but it reinforced what Isaac had told the doubts in his head earlier: I matter. My pack cares about me. Stiles cares about me. Even if I mess up and do stupid, selfish things, that’s not going to change. “I’m not a burden.”

Stiles gripped Isaac’s shoulders and pulled back, an earnest look on his face. “Of course you’re not. Not ever.”

Isaac’s cheeks warmed and he looked away. That thought wasn’t supposed to have left his head.

“I freak out for stupid reasons sometimes,” Isaac said, feeling like he owed Stiles some kind of explanation.

“Me too,” Stiles answered, rubbing the balls of Isaac’s shoulders. “Everybody does.”

“I need to borrow some pajamas again,” Isaac said as he reached behind him and opened the door.

“Okay,” Stiles answered letting go and getting out.

Once they were in Stiles’ room and Isaac had changed they climbed into Stiles’ bed. Isaac ignored the vulnerable feeling in his chest as he wrapped his arms around Stiles and pulled the smaller boy against his body. He had felt vulnerable pretty much non-stop for the last two hours, what was a little more?
“Do you wanna watch *Scream*?” Stiles asked, hand running along Isaac’s side. Their legs were tangled together and they were sharing the same pillow.

Isaac shook his head so Stiles reached over and switched off the light before settling back in against Isaac.

Isaac lay there in the dark, focusing on Stiles’ heartbeat and on syncing his own to it. This was what he needed. All he could smell was Stiles’ scent; all he could feel was Stiles’ body and the soft bed while Stiles always slept. It was perfect. The vulnerable feeling didn’t go away but it was now accompanied by an equally strong feeling of safety and security.

“Tomorrow’s the eight-year anniversary of my mom’s death,” Stiles whispered after a little while.

Isaac wasn’t sure if Stiles snuggled closer or if Isaac himself did. All he knew was that one hand was now on Stiles’ hip and their foreheads were touching as Isaac stroked the top of Stiles’ head with his other hand, fingers carding lightly through his soft hair.

“I didn’t tell Scott because he’d try to cheer me up,” Stiles said.

Isaac made a rumble of acknowledgment in the back of his throat. Scott would definitely have tried to cheer Stiles up.

“I don’t want to be cheered up,” Stiles said.

Isaac nodded slightly. He understood that. It sucked pretending to be happy when you weren’t. It even kind of sucked *being* happy when you weren’t ready to let go of the sadness.

“I know this is selfish, but...would you spend the day with me tomorrow? And just be sad with me?”

“Of course,” Isaac whispered.

Stiles’ fingers snaked under the t-shirt he had lent Isaac and skimmed along his back as he shifted closer. Isaac recognized this for what it was: a need to touch Isaac’s skin, to feel a physical affirmation of their bond. It wasn’t sexual, just intimate, and intimacy with Stiles wasn’t scary. Isaac was beyond willing to do this with Stiles to make him feel better.

He nuzzled against Stiles’ forehead first so that Stiles wouldn’t get the wrong idea. Then he gently pulled away and sat up. He peeled the t-shirt over his head and tossed it to the corner of the bed. Then as Stiles sat up too in question, Isaac lifted his arms and eased him out of his shirt as well, tossing it on top of the other one. He wrapped his arms around Stiles and held him close as they lay back down, their bare upper bodies pressed snugly together, warm flesh on warm flesh. Connected. Anchored.

“Better?” Isaac asked.

Stiles nodded and shifted lower on the bed until he could snuggle his face against Isaac’s chest, his lips on Isaac’s sternum, one arm pressed against the mattress and the other clutched tightly around Isaac’s back. Isaac tucked his chin over the top of Stiles’ head, one hand on Stiles’ back as his other arm stayed firmly in place around Stiles’ shoulders.

“We’re safe,” Isaac whispered, fingertips trailing along Stiles’ spine.

Stiles hummed in agreement.

Isaac closed his eyes and took deep breathes, syncing up with Stiles’ breathing just as he had done
with their heartbeats. As Stiles’s breathing slowed so did Isaac’s.

*Safe. Safe,* Isaac thought as he followed Stiles to sleep.

Chapter End Notes

The next update is a bit uncertain what with holiday stuff going on. I *think* there’ll be another update before Christmas, but don’t hold me to that. If not things should settle down and get back to normal after the new year (or maybe just after Christmas).

That said, I do intend to update my Isaac/Jackson family fic at least once more before Christmas and hopefully finish the third and final installment of my Isaac/Stiles/Scott smut fic (LOL, which is literally my most unpopular story ever and no one actually seems interested in reading it, but nevertheless...), so watch for those if they sound interesting. I’m eventually planning to get into a routine of updating “Making Up For Lost Time” about once a week and the Isaac/Jackson fic (“A Street Over and a World Away”) about every two weeks.

Anyway, feedback is always appreciated and I hope you folks all have an awesome holiday season!
Boys without Mothers

Chapter Notes

A/N: Not so fun fact: I always had this chapter in mind for the story, but it was additionally somewhat inspired by a couple of recent deaths in my and my partner’s families (not our mothers thankfully). So anyway, this is a sad one, but I think it serves to drive the plot forward and help Isaac cope with some of his unresolved feelings.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Eight Years Ago

Isaac sniffled as he buttoned his white dress shirt. When he got to the bottom of the shirt he found that he had a button leftover and the shirrtails were uneven. He was tempted to shove it into his pants as is, but he needed to look his best today so he unbuttoned the shirt with trembling hands and started over. His chest hurt and tears were stinging his eyes.

“Zac, you okay?” Camden asked from the doorway as he gave Isaac’s open door a perfunctory knock.

Isaac looked at his big brother and shook his head, allowing a loud sob to escape his lips.

“I know, buddy, come here.” Camden crouched down and spread his arms.

Isaac ran to Camden and threw his arms around him, burying his face in Camden’s shoulder.

“It’s O–” Camden stopped and rephrased his statement. “We’re gonna be okay,” he said as he rubbed Isaac’s back.

“But Mom...Mom’s never...” Isaac sobbed harder and clutched the back of Camden’s suit jacket in his fingers.

Isaac felt Camden’s chest expand as he took a ragged breath then picked Isaac up. He crossed the room and set Isaac on the edge of his bed. “Come on, Zac, let’s finish getting you ready.”

Isaac continued crying softly as his big brother re-buttoned his shirt and combed his hair. Camden didn’t usually pay this much attention to him and it might have been nice except...Isaac’s mom should have been the person helping him get dressed in his fancy clothes, and it made everything so much worse that Isaac was only wearing these clothes because...

Isaac trembled as he squeezed the edge of the bed. He didn’t want to lose control again in front of Camden; he didn’t want his brother to think he was a baby. But it was no use. A moment later the floodgate reopened and Isaac turned and tossed himself face down on the bed, sobbing.

Camden rubbed his back in silence until Isaac had composed himself. Then he re-fixed Isaac’s hair, helped him on with his jacket, and tied his tie. Isaac hated all these stupid, complicated clothes. They were too heavy and they made him too hot. Besides, Mom’s favorite color was orange. They should have been wearing orange clothes, not black.

After Camden finished Isaac’s tie he surprised him by wrapping him up in another hug. “Me and
Dad are always gonna be here to take care of you, Zac. Don’t worry, okay?”

Isaac sniffled and nodded against his brother’s chest, taking comfort in his words. If Camden said they were always going to be here for him, then Isaac believed it. At least Camden and Dad weren’t going to leave him. Maybe Cam would always be this nice to him like he was being today. Maybe Dad would learn how to make Isaac’s favorite foods and pick him up after school. Maybe the three of them could still be a happy family.

Isaac’s dad was already in the kitchen when they went downstairs. Isaac was glad to see he had shaved away the stubble that had uncharacteristically shown up on his face over the past few days and that he was dressed neatly in his own version of the black suits Isaac and Camden wore. He had been acting weird lately. He was grouchy and he had even yelled at Isaac and Camden a little bit over the last few days since Mom had passed away.

“Have you been up all night?” Camden asked. His voice was strange, like he was mad. Isaac didn’t understand why. Dad didn’t have a bed time. He could stay up if he wanted.

Isaac took a nervous step back against Camden as Dad looked up at them. The angry face he had been wearing recently was back. But this time he didn’t yell at them. Instead his face softened into a sad smile.

“Yeah,” he answered, breaking eye contact with Camden as he stood. “Couldn’t sleep.”

“I didn’t sleep good either,” Isaac said, looking up at his dad.

“Ya shoulda called for me, kiddo. I woulda com’n sat with you.” Dad bent and pulled Isaac in for a tight hug.

Isaac hugged back fiercely, relieved that his dad was acting normal again. He was talking a little funny, kind of lazy and slow, but Isaac figured he was just tired from staying up late.

“I love you, Daddy,” Isaac said, arms squeezing around his dad’s neck.

“I love you, Zac,” Dad said, still holding Isaac close. After a little while he let go of Isaac and stood, turning his attention to Isaac’s brother. He clapped a hand on Camden’s shoulder. “You boys look nice. Thanks for helping Isaac.”

Camden grumbled and frowned. Isaac couldn’t figure out what was wrong. Cam and Dad usually got along great.

Dad wrapped his arms around Camden’s shoulders and hugged him too. “I love you, Cam, and I’m proud of you, son.”

Camden’s frown eased and he slapped Dad’s back a few times as he mumbled, “Love you.”

But he didn’t hug Dad long and as he let go he grabbed one of the bottles of Dad’s grownup drinks from the counter behind him. He shook the empty bottle and tossed it into the kitchen trash. “I guess I’m driving to the funeral home.”

“Sounds good,” Dad said, a hand on each their backs as he guided them out of the kitchen.

Camden picked up his keys from the rack by the door and locked the house once they were all outside.

“Can I sit with you, Dad,” Isaac asked, the sharp ache in his chest returning as he thought about
where they were going.

“Of course, kiddo.” He opened the car’s passenger side door and got in, then picked Isaac up and set him in his lap.

Camden closed the door for them and went around to the driver’s side. Isaac usually liked when his brother drove. It was really cool that he could do that now. He had only started driving a couple months ago. However, Isaac couldn’t work up much enthusiasm as they rode somberly toward Dad’s cemetery and funeral home. Isaac had been there at least a million times but never for something like this. The next thing he knew tears were rolling down his cheeks.

“Dad, Zac’s crying,” Camden said, nudging their dad’s shoulder then squeezing Isaac’s before returning his hand to the steering wheel for a turn he was about to make.

“Huh? Wha?” Dad sat up straighter and looked around. “Oh!”

His hands had been resting loosely around Isaac’s stomach, but once he realized what was happening he tightened his grip with one hand and used the other to stroke Isaac’s hair and the side of his face as he cradled him against his chest.

“There, there, kiddo. I gotcha,” he whispered to Isaac in a soothing tone. “I need you to be a big boy today, okay? You’re a young man now and men don’t cry, even when they’re very sad. Can you be strong and brave for Mom?”

Isaac took a long, shaky breath and clenched his jaw, fighting back the tears. He could do this. He could be brave like Camden and Dad. He could do it for Mom. Isaac nodded against Dad’s chest, scared of breaking down again if he tried to speak.

“That’s a good boy,” Dad praised, smoothing Isaac’s hair and rubbing his shoulders. “Mom would be so proud of you.”

The funeral service was torture and despite his promise, Isaac crumbled and started crying several times, having to be consoled by Camden or Dad. Isaac was ashamed of himself for letting Mom down.

The hardest part was when Dad got up to talk about how much he loved Mom and how much she loved him and the family back. Isaac broke down completely and sobbed as loud as he had that morning at the house. Camden draped an arm around him and pulled him against his side. Isaac could feel his brother shaking and breathing heavy, but when he looked up, Camden’s eyes were still dry and a stony expression was etched across his face. Isaac realized he couldn’t remember ever seeing Camden cry. Cam was the strongest, bravest guy in the world – well except for Dad.

Isaac held his breath and tried to listen to what Dad was saying.

“–and she never had a harsh word to say about anyone. She was the perfect wife and an exemplary mother. Even when she got sick, right until the very last stages, every morning she would get up and make breakfast for her family. She would put on a smile and ask us what we had planned for the day, if I would be home for lunch, if the boys had practice or a club meeting after school, what we wanted for dinner. And she would still take care of the house; she would still do our laundry and run errands, even if she was nauseated or hurting. Even if she was having a bad day, she was always there for us. I don’t think a day went by when she didn’t let each of us know in a hundred different ways how much she cared.

“And when she got too sick to get out of bed...” Dad took a long breath and to Isaac’s horror when
he continued his voice was uneven and thick with emotion. Isaac knew he wouldn’t ever be able to stop crying if Dad broke down. “It was us she was worrying about, not herself, apologizing for missing Cam’s swim meet or not being able to read to Isaac before bed, asking about the grocery shopping and whether I knew where everything was.

“And on the morning she died, she...”

This was it. Dad’s voice was trembling and he was staring straight down instead of out at the room full of people. Isaac couldn’t take it. Nothing in the world was ever going to be okay again.

“She...She...”

THWACK!

Everyone gasped and Isaac and Camden both jerked back in their seats as Dad slammed his palm against the podium. The loud thud that echoed throughout the room was followed by complete silence as no one knew how to react. Then Dad’s head snapped up and he roared.

“FUCK CANCER!”

People laughed and clapped, calling out in support. Even Camden huffed out an amused breath and seemed to relax a little. Isaac couldn’t believe his dad had just cussed in front of everybody.

“On the day she died, Liz apologized to us for leaving. She told Camden how sorry she was that she wouldn’t be there for him on his graduation day, or his wedding day, or when he has kids of his own. She told Isaac she knew it wasn’t fair that he would have to grow up without her, without a mother’s love in his life, without that constant source of security and comfort. And she apologized to me” –Dad took another deep breath and squared his shoulders– “for leaving me all alone, for ending our journey together too soon.

“She made us promise to be happy, to be there for each other. And although I can’t be a mother to my boys, I can be the father they need. We will get through this. I’m promising today, in front of God and everybody, I will be there for Camden and Isaac whenever they need me. They won’t have to worry where their next meal is coming from, and they’ll never doubt that they’re my whole world, that I will always love them no matter what.”

Camden squeezed Isaac’s shoulder and Isaac nuzzled his face against Camden’s side. Isaac was proud of his family. He may have lost one of the most important people in his life, but he still had two others he could always count on.

And maybe by the time Isaac was Camden’s age, the ache in his chest would vanish and he’d even feel happy again. After all, he had a promise to his mother to keep.

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Present Time

Isaac awoke early the next morning to find Stiles still wrapped snugly in his arms and cuddled close against his body. He tried not to think about why it felt so good having their bare chests pressed tightly together, why he liked having Stiles’ legs slotted between his own, or why having Stiles’ head nuzzled against his throat made Isaac’s heart flutter. Isaac certainly didn’t want to acknowledge why his skin tingled at all the points of contact or why Stiles’ steady, familiar heartbeat made Isaac tingle on the inside as well.
But Isaac didn’t really need to think about it. He wasn’t stupid and this wasn’t the first time he had felt like this; he knew what these feelings were. Yet, if he didn’t put a label on them, he wouldn’t have to try to end them. He wouldn’t have to pull away from Stiles and put emotional distance between them for both their sakes. Isaac couldn’t do that, not today. Stiles needed him today. Stiles was hurting and vulnerable, and emotional distance was the last thing Isaac intended to give him. Isaac would do whatever it took to comfort Stiles, even if it meant destroying himself a little more when he inevitably did acknowledge to himself what these feelings were and the fact that Stiles could never return them.

So Isaac let himself nuzzle his chin against the top of Stiles’ head and allowed Stiles’ wonderfully soothing scent to envelop him. Isaac kept himself wrapped around Stiles, made sure he felt safe and comfortable as he slept. There were no complicated feelings to deal with, not today. Today they simply didn’t exist.

Well, Isaac’s complicated feelings for Stiles didn’t exist today, but he had no excuse to give himself a reprieve from trying to sort out what he felt for Ethan, especially since he had to think about something while he lay there with Stiles, and since Stiles-related feelings were explicitly off the table, that pretty much left that table wide open for pondering Ethan-related feelings.

Isaac hadn’t been able to lucid dream the night before, or maybe he hadn’t tried. Instead he had been a passive participant in his dreams, all of which had revolved around Ethan. And Isaac’s dreams had been cruel. In Isaac’s dreams Ethan hadn’t been involved in Erica’s or Boyd’s deaths. He hadn’t done anything horrible to Isaac or Isaac’s pack. It had all been Aiden; Aiden had done all the bad things the twins were responsible for. Thinking Ethan had been involved had simply been a misunderstanding. Aiden was bad, but Ethan was good. He was innocent and kind and there was absolutely no reason why Isaac couldn’t be with Ethan. There was nothing to feel guilty or conflicted about and – Fuck! Isaac had been happy in those dreams. Only waking up with Stiles’ in his arms had cushioned the blow of returning to reality.

Isaac thought about the night before, not just the sex, but the dinner too. Isaac had been right all along: Ethan had manipulated him.

Fuck Ethan for creating that good experience. Fuck Ethan for fucking me and being considerate about it. And fucking fuck that bastard for making me cuddle afterward. Fuck him for kissing me and holding me and teaching me how to enjoy the moon and super tastes. Fuck him for getting me happy and high, and fuck all his stupid werewolf lessons. Fuck Ethan for ever coming to Beacon Hills in the first place and ruining my life!

But Isaac didn’t mean it.

He had moved past resenting Ethan for being nice to him, for having a redeeming side. Ethan was hot and smart and fun and surprisingly sweet, and Isaac liked those things about him; Isaac liked him. What Isaac resented now was Ethan’s past. It wasn’t fair that the first guy Isaac had ever developed feelings for who could actually return them had to have such a dark past. Why couldn’t Ethan have always been the guy who hit trees and walls instead of people? Who went out of his way to help someone he didn’t even know regain her humanity? Who sided with the good guys against homicidal druids and generally did the right thing? Why did Ethan have to also be a fucking murder who kidnapped and tortured people?! How could those qualities even exist side by side? Isaac no longer hated Ethan for being good; Isaac hated Ethan for also being terrible.

Isaac sighed. Ethan didn’t matter today either. That was something else Isaac would have to deal with later, when his packmate and suddenly freakishly close ‘friend’ wasn’t mourning the death of his mother.
Isaac glanced past Stiles to the clock on his nightstand. It wasn’t quite seven in the morning and there was a good chance Stiles wouldn’t be awake for hours. Isaac wished he could go back to sleep, but he was frustratingly turned on by this point – and seriously he had just had epic sex the night before and pretty much drained his balls completely thanks to that prolonged “moon’gasm” as Ethan had called it. Was Isaac always going to be such an insatiable horndog?

Regardless, Isaac’s erection was raging against Stiles’ stomach like he hadn’t cum in days and it took all of Isaac’s willpower not to start grinding. Stiles just felt and smelled way too good in Isaac’s arms. Stiles’ skin was so warm and it made Isaac so tingly. They were pressed so tightly together and there was certainly no mistaking Stiles’ long hardness where it rubbed against Isaac’s thigh. Stiles couldn’t help his somnolent tumescence and it didn’t mean anything on his part. Isaac on the other hand would probably be going straight to werewolf hell if he gave in to his desire to caress Stiles’ body and gently rock against him until he found release.

Isaac was ashamed of himself. How could he be sexualizing Stiles on a day like this, especially while he was asleep and trusting Isaac so completely? Isaac’s damn werewolf sex drive was keeping him from providing the kind of innocent comfort Stiles needed and deserved. Feeling like a failure as a friend, Isaac carefully untangled himself from Stiles and slid out of bed.

While he was in Stiles’ bathroom, Isaac heard the sheriff’s alarm going off and the man rousing himself from sleep. A thought occurred to him. Stiles was mourning the anniversary of his mother’s death, but the sheriff had also lost his wife. At first Isaac wasn’t sure what to do with that realization. The sheriff was a friend of his pack and someone Isaac liked and respected, but Isaac didn’t delude himself into thinking he was in a position to offer any comfort to the man. It would be awkward for Isaac to even acknowledge that he knew what significance the day held. Nevertheless, Isaac wanted to do something.

Still second guessing himself, Isaac hurried out of the bathroom and to the Stilinski kitchen. He recalled the sheriff’s breakfast from the morning after his sleepover earlier in the week: pancakes and bacon with a pot of coffee. That was simple enough to make and well within Isaac’s capabilities.

As he worked on the meal, Isaac couldn’t shake the nagging feeling that he was being more of a nuisance than a help. What if the sheriff wanted something else that day or didn’t like the way Isaac prepared the food? What if he was mad about the mess or Isaac using up his groceries? Isaac took a deep breath as he poured the pancake batter into the griddle. It was too late to back out now.

“Mornin’ Isaac,” the sheriff said a few minutes later as he walked into the kitchen and looked around in obvious surprise but with no visible annoyance. He didn’t smell angry either. There was, however, a noticeable sour vein of melancholy lacing his usual scent.

“Mornin’,” Isaac answered, returning his attention to the bacon on the stove and trying not to shrink under the weight of the sheriff’s gaze.

“Bacon and pancakes,” the sheriff remarked, this time with a distinctly pleased quality to his voice.

“And coffee,” Isaac added, nodding toward the coffee pot, which had just finished percolating.

“Thanks,” the sheriff said, dropping a hand on Isaac’s shoulder as he stepped past him to retrieve a mug from the cupboard. After fixing himself a cup of coffee he plated the pancakes while Isaac removed the bacon from the grease. “I thought you preferred eggs and juice?”

Isaac shrugged, a flush of embarrassment heating his face. “I was thinking I’d make some eggs when Stiles woke up, but I just thought maybe you’d want, um...”
“This was very nice of you, Isaac. Thanks.” The sheriff patted Isaac’s back again then took the plates to the table. “So I guess Stiles told you what today is?”

Isaac nodded and took the same seat at the kitchen table he’d sat in a few days earlier. He had planned to go back upstairs to Stiles’ room and leave the sheriff in peace to eat his breakfast, but if he wanted to talk, Isaac would listen. “Yeah. I’m...sorry for your loss.”

Isaac frowned to himself, already regretting his statement. It was hollow and awkward, and Isaac himself had found it basically meaningless when people had said trite phrases like that to him after his parents and brother had died.

The sheriff grunted and took a sip of coffee in response. Then he glanced back at Isaac and asked, “Are you and Stiles hanging out today?”

Isaac nodded.

“Good. I usually take today off and we spend it together, but the feds are breathing down my neck about a smuggling ring that’s using Beacon Hills as a distribution point.”

“Oh.” Isaac’s curiosity was piqued. “You think it might be supernatural related?”

The sheriff laughed. “Not unless werewolves are known for selling knockoff handbags.”

Isaac thought it over for a second then shook his head. “I don’t think we are.”

“Anyway, I was worried about Stiles being alone today, so I’m glad he won’t be.”

Isaac looked up and made eye contact with Stiles’ dad. “I’ll take care of him.”

The sheriff smiled and nodded. They chatted for a little while longer, then Isaac excused himself to go back upstairs.

Isaac found Stiles still sleeping but much less peacefully than when he’d left. He was whimpering and tossing and turning in the bed. Even his scent smelled scared and agitated.

Isaac crawled back into his side of the bed and lay on his back. He carefully rolled Stiles over so that he was sprawled out across Isaac’s chest, but their lower bodies weren’t in direct contact. Isaac had already dressed for the day, but Stiles was still wearing nothing except a thin pair of pajamas bottoms. Sleeping almost naked with Stiles the night before had been undeniably awesome, but Isaac was grateful for the extra layers he now had on and for the lack of pelvic contact. Just holding Stiles’ shirtless form and once again being enveloped in his heavenly scent was causing a significant stirring in Isaac’s pants, especially when Stiles immediately calmed down and snuggled closer to Isaac, like Isaac’s mere presence solved all his problems. If only.

Isaac closed his eyes, torn between ignoring the flood of emotions coursing through his body or reveling in them. Stiles was supposed to be safe, but the way he was making Isaac feel was decidedly dangerous. Eventually Isaac gave up and took long, deep breaths of Stiles’ scent as he held the base of Stiles’ neck with one hand, stroking his thumb through Stiles’ hair as his other hand trailed lazily up and down Stiles’ spine and back and forth over his side and shoulders. Stiles whimpered again, but this time the sound was more of a contented, pleasured little half-moan, and Isaac found himself answering with a similar sound.

After a little while, Isaac’s head was swimming and a wide grin was plastered across his face. Meanwhile his chest felt so full and tight that he wasn’t sure if it would burst first or if the fly of his straining pants would be the first to succumb to the mounting happy pressure. It was sort of
ridiculous how linked Isaac’s cock was to his emotions, and it was getting him into a lot of trouble. He desparately wanted to feel these emotions for Stiles without them becoming sexual. Likewise, he hated the way emotions had entered the picture during his hookup with Ethan the night before. Everything would be so wonderfully simple if Isaac could just screw Ethan and lo– strongly care about – Stiles without mixing the two.

*I’m a guy,* Isaac thought as he drifted back to sleep, *I’m supposed to be good at compartmentalizing sex and feelings.*

Of course that hadn’t worked out so well with Allison, and Isaac still felt that ache keenly whenever he thought about their failed relationship.

Something was wrong a couple of hours later when Isaac woke up. Stiles’ soothing weight was no longer on his chest and Isaac could smell...

*Garlic?*

Isaac opened his eyes and sat up, looking around curiously. Stiles wasn’t in the room, but a quick sound check told Isaac he was nearby – the hallway – except his heart rate wasn’t right and neither were his footsteps. It was Stiles, but he wasn’t walking or pulsing like Stiles.

Isaac gasped as Stiles entered the bedroom carrying a large kitchen knife. Isaac had seen it in the sink at breakfast and based on scent it had been used in the preparation of Stiles and the sheriff’s dinner the night before.

“Stiles, wha–what are you doing?” Isaac asked as his packmate crept toward the bed, ominously carrying the knife with the blade raised.

Stiles stopped, looked directly at Isaac, and scowled at him. This was all wrong too, and not just because Stiles was *scowling* at Isaac – Stiles had scowled at Isaac plenty of times before, not recently but in the past – but this wasn’t even Stiles’ scowl. It was on his face but it was...different somehow. Something about his eyes was off too. They were open, alert, obviously seeing, yet somehow...cold and detached.

“S-Stiles?”

Stiles hesitated, looked at the knife in his hand, then back at Isaac. He shot Isaac another look of absolute disdain before letting the knife tumble from his fingers and onto the floor. A moment later Stiles’ whole body followed it, landing with a heavy thud.

“Stiles!”

Isaac jumped out of bed and scrambled to Stiles’ side. To Isaac’s relief the knife was next to Stiles but not under him. Isaac knocked it across the floor by the handle with the back of his hand as he knelt next to Stiles.

“Isaac?” Stiles groaned, sitting up and rubbing his elbow.

“I’m here,” Isaac said, wrapping his arms around Stiles and drawing the mild amount of pain from the fall out of his body.

“Did you throw me out of bed?” Stiles asked, his tone somewhere between confused and shocked. He was stiff in Isaac’s arms, not returning the embrace.

“Of course not!” Isaac snapped, pulling back and glaring at Stiles. “I wouldn’t throw you out of
bed.”

“Well then what-what happened?” Stiles asked.

Isaac shrugged. “I think maybe you were sleepwalking.”

“But why...” Stiles stopped and his eyes widened as he spotted the kitchen knife a couple feet away.
“Did I go get that?”

Isaac reluctantly nodded.

“What did I do with it?” Stiles asked, voice just shy of panicked.

“You just...carried it,” Isaac answered, *toward me with a murderous gleam in your eye.*

Stiles swallowed hard and sat back on his ankles.

“Lots of people sleepwalk,” Isaac said, hand on Stiles’ arm, “and you’ve been under a lot of stress lately. I think that can make it more likely to happen.”

Stiles sighed and frowned. “We both know this is more than that.”

“We don’t *know* that,” Isaac insisted, getting up and pulling Stiles up with him. “Come on, you go get dressed and I’ll fix us some food.”

While Stiles was getting ready Isaac returned to the kitchen and made a skillet full of scrambled eggs and some fresh bacon. He also poured himself a glass of juice and re-heated the coffee for Stiles. When it was hot, Isaac filled a glass halfway and then topped it off with milk and a little bit of sugar the way he had seen Stiles do the previous weekend.

The beverage was the first thing Stiles noticed as he entered the kitchen and sat down.

“Coffee milk,” Stiles said, voice already thick with emotion. He took a sip and set the glass back down with a faraway look in his eyes.

“I’m sorry. I know it’s not right.” Isaac said. Stiles had told him that real coffee milk was supposed to be made with coffee syrup, so Isaac’s attempt obviously wasn’t like how Stiles’ mother used to make it, but Isaac had no idea if the Stilinskis even still had coffee syrup on hand somewhere. Regardless, it was probably a poor substitute and a bad decision on Isaac’s part. “I’ll get you regular coffee.”

Isaac reached for the glass but Stiles pulled it away. “No, it’s good. I like it.”

They were quiet as they ate. It was an uncomfortable silence. Silences always seemed to make Stiles uncomfortable, but this one seemed to be taking a particular toll on him. He was somber yet clearly thrumming with nervous energy, and he kept looking up and opening his mouth like he was going to say something, but then not following through.

“Do you...want to talk about her?” Isaac asked, trying to keep his expression neutral so Stiles wouldn’t feel obligated.

“Is that okay?” Stiles asked.

“Well yeah, of course,” Isaac answered.

Stiles took a deep breath and then blurted everything out in a rush. “Her name was Claudia and she had brown eyes and dark hair. I look more like her than my dad. Oh! And you woulda loved the
way she smelled. She always smelled like cookies and...” –Stiles furrowed his brow– “and like a mom. She was the most understanding person ever, even when I made a mess or broke stuff, which I did a lot. She used to read to me every night before bed and she’d take me and Scott to the park every afternoon.” Stiles grinned and lightly kicked the leg of Isaac’s chair. “She woulda liked you so much. You have a similar sense of humor. She was always sweet to me, but she could be really snarky...like you.”

Isaac flashed an awkward smile and sipped his orange juice, unsure if Stiles just meant they were both snarky or if he meant they were both snarky yet also sweet to Stiles. The fond look on Stiles’ face hinted at the latter and Isaac found his stomach fluttering in response. Isaac decided he’d better stop being sweet to Stiles and go back to just snarky or else that look was going to be his undoing.

“She sounds like an incredible person,” Isaac said with a smile. He reached across the table and squeezed Stiles’ arm. Not being sweet can wait.

“She really was.” Stiles nodded and sighed. His scent was literally bittersweet now, and Isaac couldn’t decide if he liked it or hated it. Stiles cleared his throat. “I want to go visit her after we eat.”

Isaac narrowly avoided blurting out, ‘but she’s dead,’ before it dawned on him that Stiles meant he wanted to visit her grave. A wave of panic crashed over Isaac at the realization.

“Okay,” Isaac answered, fingers tightening around his fork.

Isaac’s response had sounded weak and strained to his own ears and he was unsurprised when Stiles gave him a curious look and frowned.

“I can go alone.”

“No,” Isaac said a little too loudly. Fuck if Isaac was going to let Stiles down because of one of the items on his laundry list of issues. “I want to go too.”

And yeah, that had sounded about as convincing as if Isaac had claimed he wanted to swallow a wasp’s nest while jiggling his junk in a beehive, but he meant it anyway.

“Do you wanna like, pick up flowers on the way?” Isaac suggested, mostly to shift Stiles’ curious attention away.

“Nah, mom hated cut flowers.”

“Really?”

“Yeah, she was an avid gardener, but she always used to say she liked them alive and in the ground, not dead in a vase.”

Isaac chuckled and grinned, legitimately amused. He very much agreed with that philosophy. Working at his father’s graveyard, one of the many things Isaac had found depressing were the week-old withered flowers he had to clear from the graves. They were uncomfortably symbolic of the withered bodies that lay beneath the headstones.

After finishing their late breakfast, Isaac and Stiles drove across town to the Beacon Hills Cemetery in Stiles’ Jeep. It was a gray, cloudy day and it looked like it might rain – because apparently the universe liked clichés. As they pulled up, Isaac took long, steadying breaths as silently as he could, hoping to hide his anxiety from Stiles.

“She’s over there,” Stiles said, coming around the front of the vehicle to Isaac’s side as he pointed.
Section five, thought Isaac. *It always floods when there’s a heavy rain. Dad was too cheap to have it properly excavated.*

“That’s a pretty section,” Isaac said as they walked toward it. He wasn’t lying, not exactly. It was overlooked by a nice line of trees and it had the healthiest grass on the property. “It’s even has wild flowers in the spring.”

Stiles glanced at him with knit brow for a moment before realization flashed across his face. “Oh crud, Isaac! You used to dig...your dad owned...Aww frick! I’m sorry. Do you wanna leave?”

“No,” Isaac said simply, speeding up his pace so that he could walk in front of Stiles instead of next to him. He didn’t care to see the pitying look on Stiles’ face. Isaac was embarrassed that his past had come up at all. Today had nothing to do with him. It was about Stiles and his family.

Isaac stiffened as Stiles jogged up next to him and bumped their shoulders and arms together. “Stiles, I...”

Isaac trailed off as Stiles suddenly laced their fingers together and looked pointedly away from Isaac.

“What kinda stone are tombstones made outta anyway?” Stiles asked, motioning with his free arm toward the rows of graves they were strolling past.

Isaac’s heart skipped a beat and he involuntarily gave Stiles’ hand a gentle squeeze. *Is this...? Do guys who are just friends hold hands with each other?* Isaac was sure they didn’t, but Stiles and Scott were his only real guy friends anyway and...yeah he probably couldn’t go by them. Besides Isaac and Stiles cuddled and slept together in the same bed sometimes. Isaac decided he shouldn’t read too much into Stiles wanting to hold his hand.

Stiles coughed. “Uh, I was thinking concrete. Are they just concrete?”

“Hmm? Ohh! Yeah, sometimes just concrete. The fancier ones are marble or granite. Sometimes other stuff too, like limestone or bronze. It just depends.”

“Cool,” Stiles answered casually.

Then because he was Stiles and he was incapable of actually being casual, he began swinging their arms back and forth as they walked. It would have been annoying if it hadn’t also been adorable or if Isaac hadn’t been enjoying the unexpected contact so much.

“So, do you like, own this place now?” Stiles asked, his glance briefly landing on Isaac’s face before it flitted away again.

Isaac shrugged. “I guess technically, but it’s sort of in limbo until I turn eighteen. Our old house too. I think maybe there’s supposed to be a state-appointed trustee or something, but I’m specifically trying to stay off the radar and fall though the cracks so I don’t have to go into the system. I don’t really know what’s going on with this place.”

Stiles turned and gave Isaac a longer look. His anxiety and concern were palpable now. “Can’t my dad help with that?”

“I think he might already be,” Isaac answered, not sure but voicing his theory. “I think he and Melissa are helping me not get noticed. Otherwise it seems like someone would have come for me.”

Stiles huffed. “Well that’s stupid. There’s gotta be an above board way for you to live with Scott and Melissa.”
Isaac swallowed around the sudden lump in his throat. The only way he could think of was if Melissa adopted him or became his legal foster parent or something, and Isaac didn’t dare hope for that. He didn’t deserve it. If he fucked up, she should be allowed to throw him out. It was only fair. Besides, he was a fucking werewolf. It wasn’t as though he couldn’t take care of himself.

“Can we not talk about this?” Isaac asked.

Stiles’ frown deepened but he grunted an affirmation and they fell silent. A little while later he was tugging Isaac up a pathway then down a row of graves. Isaac spotted Claudia Stilinski’s name just as Stiles voiced their arrival. “Here she is.”

As they stopped in front of her grave, Stiles released Isaac’s hand but leaned against his side. It was obviously what was expected of Isaac, so he wrapped his arm around Stiles’ waist.

Stiles was silent, wistful for a few moments, but then a chuckle escaped his lips and he turned to Isaac with a smirk. “Wanna hear something funny?”

Isaac nodded.

“You know how little kids get really excited about the ice cream truck? And just like take off toward it without looking where they’re going?”

“Yeah.”

“Well of course /I/ was always really hyper and excited about the ice cream truck, but one of the symptoms of Frontotemporal Dementia is a loss of inhibition, and often a craving for sweets. So the summer before she died, we drove my dad crazy. Every time an ice cream truck passed, we’d both just shriek and dart into the road. It’s a miracle we never got run over.”

Isaac laughed, imagining a young Stiles and his full grown mother flailing their arms and screaming for ice cream.

“You must have had a lot of fun.”

Stiles nodded and grinned at Isaac. “Yeah! You remember I told you she used to take me and Scott to the park a lot? I think she wanted to play as much as we did.”

Isaac was smiling with Stiles, but his face dropped as Stiles’ did.

“But...eventually she started having trouble talking and she couldn’t take care of herself anymore.”

“Oh Stiles, I...” Isaac trailed off as Stiles’ face started to quiver and his eyes shined with moisture.

Isaac slid his hand up from Stiles’ waist to his side and then his shoulder, squeezing and rubbing with his thumb. Isaac was terrified as Stiles turned and looked at him with heart wrenching vulnerability. His breathing had become erratic and tears were trickling down his cheeks.

As psyched up as Isaac had gotten himself about being there for Stiles today, he suddenly realized that he was absolutely unprepared and ill-equipped to handle this. Why had Stiles chosen to spend the day with him instead of Scott again? Scott could have handled this; Scott was awesome at feelings. Isaac on the other hand was shit at emotions and had never even comforted a crying person before.

There was a suffocating intimacy to the way Stiles’ grabbed the front of Isaac’s shirt and buried his face there as he wept. It was too vulnerable, too trusting. Isaac was a fake. Stiles obviously thought
they had reached this point in their relationship, that Isaac was a real human being with real
emotions, but Isaac wasn’t so sure. He had gotten good at being numb for so long, at keeping people
at arm’s length – and Jesus Christ, all Isaac wanted to do was push Stiles away from him and literally
hold him at arm’s length.

It didn’t feel any more right when Isaac stroked Stiles’ back instead and awkwardly tucked his chin
against Stiles’ head. Isaac had felt so much for Stiles all night and all morning, had performed these
very same actions with genuine affection. Yet now that they actually mattered, every one of Isaac’s
walls was firmly back in place and it was all he could do to fend off the claustrophobic sensation
tugging at the edges of his awareness.

“–and I’ll all-always re-remember that, ya know?” Stiles was saying between sobs against Isaac’s
chest.

Fuck, fuck, fuck!

Isaac was the worst human being or werewolf who had ever lived. “Yeah, of course,” he answered
lamely. *I was totally paying attention to your tearful confession. Why do you ask?*

After a couple of minutes, Stiles sniffled and pulled back. “You okay? You seem stiff.” He smirked
in spite of himself. “And not in the fun way.”

Isaac coughed and cleared his throat. “Fine. I just...”

*What? Lack empathy? Made a terrible mistake by thinking I could be a decent friend? Am in danger
of breaking a promise I made to your dad to take care of you?*

Stiles gave Isaac a watery smile and moved his hand to Isaac’s bicep, patting it consolingly. “This
brings back a lot of painful memories for you, huh?”

Isaac considered the question for a few moments, examined whether the overbearing weight
crowding against his walls, threatening to smoother him completely was just the intimacy with Stiles
or...

*Ohh.*

Isaac cleared his throat again and dropped his eyes, desperately wishing the numbness would come
back. He nodded weakly.

“Aww, Isaac.” Stiles initiated another hug, only this time it was Isaac being pulled against Stiles’
chest and somehow despite the height difference, Isaac found his face against Stiles’ shoulder. Stiles
held him for a little while then asked. “Do you want to go see them?”

Isaac shrugged, scared of how his voice would sound if he tried to speak. Stiles was somehow
comfortable crying in front of Isaac, but Isaac was pretty sure if his own composure slipped, eight
years of pain and feeling worthless would crash over him.

“Are they nearby?” Stiles asked, same gentle tone in his voice as he held Isaac.

Isaac hated it. *They* weren’t nearby; they were dead. Isaac was never going to see them again and
going to stand in front of their stupid, meaningless graves wasn’t going to change that or undo any of
the pain and regret that had characterized their lives.

“Not here,” Isaac snapped, his voice too angry and too loud.
Stiles flinched but didn’t let go. “Okay,” he said softly.

Isaac took a deep breath and swore he wasn’t going to break down. When he was sure it was a vow he could keep, at least in the short-term, he pulled back to look at Stiles. He had intended to change the subject, redirect the focus back to Stiles’ loss like it should have been, but then he saw Stiles’ face.

Stiles’ expression was still so open and vulnerable, so sad. Stiles would be grieving today no matter what. Yet, the way he was looking at Isaac, with a tender patience Isaac hadn’t received from anyone in who knew how many years, was enough to make Isaac reconsider. Isaac didn’t want to be fake, not with Stiles. He longed to keep the connection he felt with Stiles as genuine and honest as he could, and something about the look on Stiles’ face told Isaac that maybe that was possible, maybe there was room for his grief today too.

“Not here,” Isaac repeated, this time in the tone that Stiles deserved. “But um...we can go to my house if you want?”

Stiles’ eyebrows shot up and his lips opened slightly. “Are you sure? I thought...”

“There’re a lot of happy memories in my house too.”

Stiles nodded and squeezed Isaac’s arm before he turned back and looked at his mother’s grave again. He gave it his silent attention for a few moments, tears re-forming in his eyes, then he snorted and wiped at his face. “Let’s go.”

Isaac’s claws scrapped against his pants as they rode to his house. Stiles cast him an appraising glance when he first noticed but accepted Isaac’s casual assurance that it was fine. And it was. Isaac wasn’t about to lose control or even shred the thighs of his pants. His claws scraping lightly over the fabric was simply reassuring, a voluntary action he could have stopped if he had wanted to. Isaac liked his claws; he liked being a werewolf; he liked feeling strong; he even liked the danger. His life now was a danger he had chosen. He wasn’t a victim anymore. Isaac needed that reminder as he returned to his childhood home.

“You still carry a key?” Stiles asked, surprise evident in his voice as Isaac slipped it into the lock on the front door.

“Yeah, never felt like taking it off my keyring.”

Isaac still had a key to Derek’s burned out house too, and to his loft. He didn’t want to think about why he kept any of those keys when the only house key he actually used was for the McCalls’ front door. Isaac snickered to himself as they walked in and he hung all these keys on the key rack by the door.

“Let’s go to my room,” Isaac said, the sardonic smile on his lips widening as he realized this was the first time he had said that to a friend in this house since he and Matt Daehler were kids.

Stiles looked around with unabashed curiosity as they entered Isaac’s room. Isaac half expected him to start opening drawers and peeking into his closet.

Isaac sat on his bed and motioned for Stiles to join him. Once he had, Isaac nodded at a rocking chair in the corner next to the bed. “That’s where my mom used to sit when she read to me, or sat up with me when I was sick.”

Stiles swallowed and his fingers brushed over Isaac’s knee.
“And that’s Cam’s old poster,” Isaac said, eyes tracking to the beach volleyball scene on his wall depicting bikini-clad girls in motion. “He gave it to me when he left for boot camp.”

Stiles opened his mouth, a questioning look on his face, but whatever he was going to ask must have been inappropriate because he shut it again.

“And Dad made me that nightstand by hand when I was a kid. He had a workshop out back. He used to be really handy. He even let me pick out the plans for the one I wanted.”

“Uh, can I ask how your mom...”

“Cancer.”

“How old were you?”

“Eight.”

Stiles sighed and nodded, a frown on his lips. “That’s how old I was too.”

“That’s when my dad started drinking a lot. He pulled away from me and Cam. And he’d yell at us and...neglect us.” Isaac chest tightened. He had never labeled it out loud as neglect before. “But he never hit me or anything until after Cam di-died.”

Isaac bit his lip, embarrassed by the way his voice had broken as he spoke about his brother’s death.

“Were you real close?” Stiles asked, shifting on the bed so that their knees touched and he was facing Isaac directly.

“Me and Dad?”

“You and Cam.”

Isaac shrugged. “I guess. He was a lot older and sometimes he was a dick, but...he was always there when I needed him.” Isaac frowned. That wasn’t completely true. “He was always very responsible, always did what he was supposed to. It’s kinda ironic that he was the one who threw Matt in the pool. He was just clowning around. He never woulda done that if he’d known Matt couldn’t swim. And seriously, my dad and a whole swim team were right there. Matt was never actually in any danger.”

Stiles held up his hands. “I get it. You don’t have to tell me how crazy Matt Daehler was. He had like the stupidest evil revenge motivation in the history of villains. ‘I got wet this one time when I was a kid. People will die for that!’”

Isaac laughed.

“Anyway, by then Dad was already...”

“A dickweed?” Stiles said.

Isaac glowered at him. “Not a great parent anymore. So Cam was mostly taking care of us. That’s why I...”

“What?”

“It’s kind of awful,” Isaac admitted, dropping his eyes in shame. “I shouldn’t feel this way.”
“You feel how you feel, dude. It just is.”

Isaac tentatively re-established eye contact with Stiles. It was one thing for him to say that, but Isaac hadn’t told him yet.

“I kind of hate him for leaving.” Isaac clenched his jaw. This time the claws erupting from his fingers weren’t voluntary. “I mean, I get it...what eighteen-year-old wants to take care of a bratty, preteen kid and a drunken, middle-aged man? It’s just...we needed him. I needed him. And he left...and then he got himself k-ki...”

Isaac’s body shook and he dug his claws into his palm. “Anyway, it’s not okay for me to hate him or resent him now that he’s...” Dead! Camden is fucking dead. Just say it and stop pussyfooting around.

Stiles held Isaac’s arms at the elbow. “Hey.” He gently squeezed and jostled Isaac’s arms until Isaac looked at him again. “Do you still love him?”

Isaac frowned. He felt exposed but he answered anyway. “Well yeah.”

“Do you appreciate what he did for you before he left?”

“Yeah.”

Stiles nodded and let go of Isaac’s elbows. He slid his hands down Isaac’s arms until they found Isaac’s clawed hands. “Then it’s okay to have complicated feelings about him. And your dad. Your mom too if you’re angry at her for leaving you guys.”

Isaac shook his head. “I’m not mad at her. She” – he sniffled and fought back a sob – “apologized for that before she died.”

“It’s okay to cry about it, Isaac.”

Isaac shook his head again and closed his eyes. “No.”

“Yeah, it is,” Stiles insisted.

Isaac set his jaw, fangs out. He felt his eyes glowing with warmth under his eyelids. That was okay. They could glow, they just couldn’t leak. “Dad said it wasn’t okay to cry about it.”

Stiles scoffed and squeezed Isaac’s fingers. “Newsflash, your dad was wrong about some things.”

“I-I can’t,” Isaac said, reminding himself that he couldn’t clench his fists like he wanted to, not without breaking Stiles’ fingers or severely clawing his hands. Isaac’s whole body ached under the pressure to keep his eyes shut and his hands open – and seriously, Stiles shouldn’t have been so reckless around an agitated werewolf.

“Crying doesn’t make you weak or bad, Isaac. It makes you strong and brave.”

Now Isaac did open his eyes. His lip trembled as he asked, “What did you say?”

“It makes you strong and brave – honest. Acknowledging and dealing with your feelings is a good thing. You know, instead of bottling them up and climbing inside an actual bottle like someone else did.”

Isaac gasped, and then sobbed, and then sobbed again. He felt the glowing heat fade from his eyes, replaced by a cool wetness.
Stiles pulled Isaac forward against his chest and then eased them sideways until they were sprawled out horizontally on Isaac’s bed.

“I’m sorry. I’m so sorry,” Isaac repeated weeping into Stiles’ shirt as he was confronted with the loss of his family all over again, for the first time in eight years, didn’t try to push the feelings away. It made the pain fresh and terrifyingly overwhelming. Isaac couldn’t stop sobbing. He wasn’t sure he would ever stop now that he had started.

“Sshh, it’s okay. You have nothing to be sorry about. You’re a good person, Isaac. Just let it all out.” Stiles stroked his hair and cradled his head against his chest. “We have all day, all weekend.”

It was a surreal experience, crying in his childhood bed with Stiles holding him, surrounded by a million happy and horrible memories. Isaac wanted to take him up on that offer, wanted to spend all day crying with him. Crying hurt like hell, but he’d forgotten how satisfying it could be. Cathartic.

Right, there was a word for this. It didn’t do the feeling justice.

However, even orphans with werewolf stamina could only cry for so long before they cried themselves out and eventually Isaac did find himself calming down. He was vaguely aware that Stiles had been crying too and was also tapering off. Isaac was also aware that the last of his walls seemed to be gone, at least where Stiles was concerned. He didn’t think they would come back and – Fuck! how was Isaac supposed to put emotional distance between them now that all the distance had been closed?

“I think I want a Mocha Frap now. Whaddya say we hit up Starbucks?”

Isaac chuckled and sat up. “Seriously? Frappuccinos are the official beverage of your grief?”

Stiles nodded and grinned. “Yeah, too many happy memories associated with coffee milk.”

“I guess I could get a latte,” Isaac answered grudgingly. In reality the idea was quite appealing.

A little while later they were at the Starbucks they had previously gone to when Scott had insisted that Isaac apologize to Ethan for flipping out on him in the weight room. Isaac couldn’t believe how much had changed in that short amount of time. While Isaac’s feelings for Ethan were certainly still complicated, he couldn’t imagine losing his temper and attacking him like that again.

Isaac frowned as his thoughts lingered on Ethan. He was aware that he had unread texts from him, but he had been ignoring them all day so that he could focus on his afternoon with Stiles. He really needed to get Ethan out of his head. He could practically smell him just thinking about him.

“Isaac?”

Oh!

“Hey,” Isaac answered, turning in his seat to face Ethan. From over his shoulder he could see Stiles returning from the coffee bar with his drink. So much for keeping them separated. At least this time Isaac didn’t feel a wave of panic and an overwhelming urge to place himself between Ethan and his packmate. He supposed that was progress.

“What’s wrong?” Ethan asked, head tilted to the side as he looked Isaac over.

Isaac sighed. He really did owe Ethan an apology. “Look, I’m sorry I didn’t text you back. I just haven’t been paying attention to my phone today and–”

“No, not that.” Ethan sniffed the air, a worried look on his face. “You smell upset, very upset. Did
something happen?” He dropped his voice and raised his eyebrows. “Is this about last night?”

“Ethan,” Stiles said by way of greeting as he edged past him to get to the table.

“Stiles.” Ethan nodded at him and stepped forward to make room. Then he sniffed in Stiles’ direction. “You’re upset too.”

“What?” Stiles asked, opening his straw and sticking it in his drink.

“You both smell sad.”

Stiles shrugged and scooped some whipped cream from his drink into his mouth with the straw. “Not that it’s any of your business, but our moms died.”

“What?!” Ethan looked back and forth between them. He was so confused that Isaac actually laughed.

“It’s the anniversary of my mom’s death,” Stiles clarified, the teasing amusement left his face and he became somber again, but he didn’t seem like he was going to break down.

“And I just sort of...relived what happened to my mom and family,” Isaac added, deciding that if Stiles could be honest about this with Ethan, he certainly ought to have been able to as well.

“Oh.” Ethan frowned and looked around like he had just realized he was intruding on something private between the packmates. “I’ll go.”

“Thanks,” Stiles answered with a hint of sarcasm.

Ethan walked away, but he only took a few steps before he stopped and turned around again.

“Aiden and I lost our mom when we were just kids too. It’s a pain that never goes away. I’m sorry it happened to you.” He gave Isaac and Stiles each a lingering look and a small nod.

“Thanks,” Stiles said, this time with sincerity, as he nodded back. “Same here. Sorry that happened to you guys.”

Isaac was still taken aback. It made sense that the twins’ parents were probably dead, but he had never considered it before, never stopped to wonder if that was a loss he and Ethan had in common. Allison’s mother was also dead, and so was Lydia’s father. Hell, maybe they could all start a really depressing club at school.

“I'll text you later,” Isaac said casually before adding in a whisper only Ethan could hear, “I promise.”

Ethan left without saying anything else and once he was gone, though perhaps not quite out of earshot if he was still paying attention, Stiles said, “He really is the good twin.”

Isaac chuckled and smiled with something he knew was approaching fondness. “Yeah, he is.”

“Maybe if Scott and the others are cool with it, we should think about letting him in the pack,” Stiles said.

Isaac gaped at him.

“What? Doesn’t it really suck being an omega? I don’t particularly want Ethan to get strung up to a tree and cut in half like that omega Gerard made an example of last year.”
Isaac shuddered, not appreciating the imagery. “I don’t think that’s a thing that happens to all omegas. Gerard is just kind of a psychopath.”

Stiles shrugged. “Still.”

Isaac frowned. It no longer felt right arguing that Ethan shouldn’t get to have the safety and benefits of a pack but...just not Isaac’s pack. Stiles didn’t know what it felt like to lose a packmate, much less two of them, or to have the rest of his pack splinter and fall apart – and as much as Isaac hated it, it was largely Ethan’s fault.

However, Isaac didn’t want to explain all that, so he settled for a response he knew would end the debate. “I’m pretty sure Ethan comes as part of a packaged deal, and would you really be okay with Aiden joining?”

Stiles cringed and hissed through his teeth. “Good point.”

“Oh hey, guess what Ethan told me,” Isaac said, succumbing to his urge to gossip. He was still a teenager after all.”

“What?”

“Lydia broke up with Aiden last night.”

“Whaaaaat! Oh my god, that’s great! Why though?”

Isaac laughed. “Maybe she finally realized what he’s actually like.”

Stiles snickered. “Hopefully, but let’s not be too optimistic about her next guy. So far she’s gone from Jackson to Aiden.”

“Ugh! You’re right. At this rate her next boyfriend will be a literal hell beast.”

“Don’t say that out loud.” Stiles looked around in mock fear. “We don’t wanna tempt fate.”

They spent the better part of the next hour just hanging out chatting at Starbucks. Then they went back to Stiles’ house, had dinner, and binged the rest of *Scream* season two before Isaac reluctantly announced that he needed to go home. Stiles tried to convince him to spend another night, but Isaac felt like he needed to check in on Scott, even though it was after dark and he would probably be tranced out by now.

Stiles drove him home and they exchanged a lingering hug in the driveway. Isaac was in so much trouble. There was no way he could even pretend what he was feeling for Stiles was just friendship at this point.

Isaac returned to his room, plugged in his phone to charge, got a pair of pajamas, and then went to take a shower. He was still lost in thought as he reemerged from the bathroom fifteen minutes later with a towel wrapped around his waist and strolled down the hall to his room. He paused outside his door as he caught a whiff of nighttime air. His window was open...but he hadn’t left it that way.
His pulse quickened as he detected a familiar heartbeat and then a scent he would have recognized anywhere. He opened the door and stepped inside his room, completely unsure what to expect.

“Hello Allison.”

Chapter End Notes

I hope everyone is having a good holiday season and preparing to give a nice, loud FUCK YOU to 2016! (Unless you’ve somehow managed to have a halfway decent 2016, in which case, good on you! Please tell me your secret.)

As always feedback, criticism, and wild speculation about the story are greatly appreciated.
All I Ask

Chapter Notes

This chapter comes with an explicit content warning. This is a sex chapter between Isaac and Allison, and I realize that probably isn’t what most people are reading this story for (it is in the M/M section after all), so I apologize if that makes anyone uncomfortable. However, Isaac isn’t gay in this story – he’s bi – and I really think based on plot and characterization that it makes sense that Allison would want this and that Isaac wouldn’t refuse her.

Anyway, this will be the only straight sex chapter in the story, so if you don’t like it, please bear with it and maybe just read the beginning and end of the chapter, but skip over the middle part that contains the naughty bits? If you do read it though, I really hope you’ll enjoy it!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

All I Ask

By Adele

Let this be a lesson in love
Let this be the way we remember us
I don't wanna be cruel or vicious
And I ain't asking for forgiveness
All I ask is

If this is my last night with you
Hold me like I'm more than just a friend
Give me a memory I can use
Take me by the hand while we do what lovers do
It matters how this ends
'Cause what if I never love again?

Iron Claws and Fragile Hearts

Chapter 24: All I Ask

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His pulse quickened as he detected a familiar heartbeat and then a scent he would have recognized anywhere. He opened the door and stepped inside his room, completely unsure what to expect.

“Hello Allison.”
“Hi.” She was sitting on his bed, legs crossed and hands curled around the edge of the mattress. She looked up at him and smiled her nervous smile, bottom lip between her teeth as the rest of her mouth pulled up around it. It was adorable and he knew she knew that, which meant it was either genuine or she was flirting with him.

However, Isaac was an expert at decoding Allison’s moods and a quick scent test told him she really was nervous. It further revealed she was sad and exhausted, yet also excited about something.

“Are you just going to stand there smelling me or...” She swept her hair out of her face and back over the shoulder of her white knit blouse before patting the bed next to her in invitation.

Isaac shrugged. “You smell good” –he smiled a teasing smile of his own, enjoying the way they were already falling back into a familiar, flirtatious routine– “and it might be safer over here.” He winked at her.

She frowned and raised her arms away from her body before patting the sleek outline of her black slacks. “I’m not armed.”

Isaac smirked and dutifully stepped further into the room, closing the door behind him. “That isn’t what I meant.”

It was totally what he had meant.

“Then what did you mean?” she asked, a coy smile back on her face as she tilted her head at him.

Isaac swallowed, suddenly hyper-aware of his almost nude state.

“Just...pretty girl on my bed.” He gave her his best cheeky grin. “And here I am only in a towel. Seems dangerous.”

Allison giggled and her smile widened. “I’ve never known you to shy away from danger, Isaac.” She patted the space next to her again.

Isaac was at a loss for how to respond. He had thought they were just going to tease each other a bit and then she would tell him why she was here, but that wasn’t happening, and despite her assertions to the contrary he was still nervous she might be armed and in a possessed fugue state.

He took one more moment to look her over. He hadn’t had an opportunity to study her condition a couple of days earlier when Kate had been in control and she had attacked him and Aiden.

Everything had happened too quickly and Isaac’s singular focus before she had stabbed him had been getting between her and Aiden. So he couldn’t be sure how she was when she wasn’t herself. However, he had seen Scott in the throes of possession numerous times now, and after this morning Stiles too, and this didn’t seem like that.

Isaac cautiously sat next to her, trying to appear like he wasn’t being cautious. He did one more covert smell test, carefully scanning for any signs of wolfsbane. She smelled clean. He licked his lips and swallowed again. Actually she smelled...

“So what I can do for you, Allison?”

She giggled and gave his towel-covered crotch a pointed look, then glanced back to his face, her brown eyes crinkling around the edges and dancing with mischief.

Isaac coughed. “R-really?”
She shrugged and the barest hint of a blush darkened her cheeks. “Yeah. Is that okay?”

Isaac tried to hide his surprise behind one of his patented cocky smirks. He doubted it was successful.

She took a long breath and her face became serious. “I’m leaving.”

Isaac raised his eyebrows, alarmed as an important opportunity seemed to be slipping away. “W-Wait! I didn’t say no.”

She laughed. “I mean I’m leaving after– uh, I’m leaving tomorrow morning.”

“Where are you going?” Isaac asked.

“Mexico.”

“Mexico?!”

She nodded.

“Why?”

“Kate.” She frowned again and once more chewed lightly on her bottom lip. “You remember what Deaton told us the other day? To get rid of the possessing spirits we have to ‘undo their making.’”

“Yeah.”

“Well, I talked to my dad. He said when Kate was about my age she went down to Mexico to work one of her first cases. He said when she came back she was different, more intense, darker. Whatever made her, happened there. So it stands to reason that going and finding out what happened is the first step to undoing it.”

Isaac shook his head, brow drawing together in thought. “But we can’t. We don’t know anything about Iron Claw or whoever is possessing Stiles. Their undoing might need to be done here. Plus I think it’s dangerous for them to travel right now. And we can’t all just drop out of school and—”

“Isaac” –she placed a hand over his in his lap and squeezed– “I’m leaving. Just me.”

“Wha-What?”

“You’re right, It doesn’t make sense for the whole pack to go and it puts everyone at greater risk. Besides, like Deaton suspected, being around supernaturals triggers Kate. Just sitting here with you now, I can feel her trying to come to the surface and take control. I don’t want to put you or anyone else in anymore danger.”

Isaac half-grumbled, half-growled as he got off the bed and began pacing next to it. “But this is what packs are for. We take risks for each other. Scott and Stiles aren’t trying to...” Run away. Abandon us. Give up.

“I’m not a werewolf or a” —She waved her hand, clearly searching for the right word before shrugging and finishing— “Stiles.”

Isaac scowled at her. Was she saying she wasn’t part of the pack?

“I’m a hunter,” she said quietly, “and my family has a new code. We protect those who can’t protect themselves.”
“We can protect ourselves,” Isaac countered, eyes flashing gold.

“I almost killed you,” Allison said, dropping her gaze to the floor, “and Lydia. It’s just a matter of time until it happens again...until it isn’t an almost.”

“You–”

“The best way I can protect the pack is by leaving it.”

“When we need you?!” Isaac knew he wasn’t being fair, but he didn’t care. “When I need you?”

“I’m sorry.” She looked up and made eye contact with him. When she continued he recognized the all-too-familiar resolve in her tone. “My mind’s made up.”

“So then why are you here?” Isaac demanded, his voice sharp as his composure slipped.

His input didn’t matter to her; his input had never mattered to her. There were no discussions, not before she had decided they should break up and not now that she was leaving him in a more literal and possibly permanent sense. She was just like Derek and Cora, just like his brother, Camden. It didn’t matter what Isaac wanted or what he needed; they just ‘made up their minds’ and that was it. And maybe he’d see them again or maybe he wouldn’t. His new pack was supposed to have been different. Maybe it wasn’t. Maybe they would fall apart too.

“Because I’m selfish,” she whispered, guilt flooding her scent. “Because I’m scared. Because I don’t know if I’m going to win or if Kate will, and because if this is my last night in Beacon Hills I want one more happy memory to hold onto.” She met his eyes again. “I want one more night with you.”

“Allison–”

“I don’t want us to end on a bad note, Isaac. I don’t want to have any regrets, not with you.”

“And you think sex can fix that?” He frowned, an ache forming in his chest as he remembered the way he had felt after their breakup. “Is that all we ever were to you, sex?”

“Of course not.”

“Then what?”

“Isaac, I liked you for so many reasons.”

“Other than this?” He dramatically pulled the towel away from his waist and tossed it away.

Her eyes trailed up and down his body, as though confirming what he’d thought, and he found himself wishing he could cover up again.

“Yes,” she said, voice tight and the scent of desire dripping off of her as she finally raised her eyes to his face. “Other than that.”

Isaac scoffed. He hadn’t detected a lie, but all that meant was that she believed what she was saying. He supposed he should have been flattered, but all he felt was cheap, like his body was all she had ever valued. That was okay with most people, but it should have been different with her.

A low moan formed in the back of her throat as she got up and crossed the short distance between them. Her arms wrapped around his torso and she raised herself on tiptoes as she kissed him.

Isaac swallowed her moan and answered with one of his own as they writhed against each other, his
nude, rapidly swelling manhood sliding against the silky softness of her blouse. He automatically picked her up, one hand under her ass and the other sliding beneath her shirt to palm the small of her back.

Allison wrapped her legs around his waist, and now when they writhed and moaned his cock grazed over the sheer black fabric covering her crotch. He could feel her through the thin material, feel her heat and pliable softness caressing him through the crisp, plush fabric. He knew they were seconds away from saturating that fabric. His erection would leak with his arousal in just a few more thrusts. Her lips would spread and moisten, swell and drip for him.

Isaac was aware in the back of his mind that he’d had an objection a minute ago, that maybe this wasn’t what he wanted. But fuck it was all he wanted.

She sucked his top lip into her mouth, deepening the kiss. Her fingers scratched and trailed up and down his back, making the skin throb and burn, tingle and pulse, until at last one hand dug into his shoulder and the other clenched his hip at the swell of his ass. She used the new leverage to shift her weight, grinding down hard on his erection as she simultaneously squeezed his hip, encouraging his thrusts.

He grunted and panted into her mouth as he surged forward. She was wet now, so wet, and he was dripping against her too. His eyes sparked with heat and his nostrils flared as the mingled scents of their arousal consumed his senses. He swore he could taste her pussy on his tongue, even though that tongue was still in her mouth, swore he could feel her earthy, tangy goodness low in his gut.

She pulled her mouth away from his and released his body as she grabbed the hem of her blouse and yanked it over her head.

Isaac’s hand meanwhile glided across the smooth, hot flesh of her back as he repositioned his grip, supporting more of her upper body as he took the opportunity to look her over. God she was beautiful in that lacy white bra that accentuated the graceful curves and valleys of her chest so spectacularly. Isaac couldn’t hold himself back; his foreclaw tangled around the elastic strap on her back and–

“Hey! I liked that bra.”

“Me too,” Isaac answered, cheeky grin back in place as he raised and lowered her body in his arms, grinding her against him.

“It would have unhooked you know,” Allison said, pulling it free of her chest and tossing away.

“Faster my way,” Isaac answered.

He moaned, his eyes blazing as he studied her perfect breasts and pert, light brown nipples. They were swollen and hard, further broadcasting her arousal. He tried not to squeeze her body too hard as he thrust against her with renewed purpose. The damp fabric separating them pulled and dragged across his shaft, smearing her rich, wonderful juices all over him. He raised her higher on the next down thrust, and the head of his cock prodded her opening, poked the stretchy fabric over her folds and into her recess. His cockhead wept against her, crying out to be let in. It was all he could do not to thrust with every bit of his supernatural strength, not to let his throbbing, desperate erection tear through the layers of cloth that separated them and plunge into her silky, wet heat.

“How attached are you to these pants?” He smirked and extended the points of his claws, making his implication clear.
Her eyes widened adorably and she pushed against his arm in protest. “Don’t even think about it.”

Isaac stepped forward and gently but swiftly deposited her onto his bed. He’d play nice, but those pants had to go – now!

Allison moaned and raised her hips, helping him peel them off her body.

For all of two seconds, Isaac appreciated the erotic promise hinted at by her frilly red thong, the dark wet spot in the middle, the way it hugged her mounds and valley, the way it showcased her smooth inner thighs and lightly tanned skin. Then he yanked them down, unwilling to spend even another moment looking at red cloth, however lovely it was, when rosy pink flesh lay beneath.

“Oh my god! FUCK!” Isaac gasped and bit his bottom lip hard enough to draw blood, forgetting about his fangs as he looked at her and throbbed – not just his cock but his entire body. A tight, urgent desire coiled low in his stomach and he didn’t bother pulling the thong the rest of the way down her thighs. Instead he hooked it under his chin as he knelt on the floor between her legs and licked her succulent cunt.

“Oh, Isaac, yes!”

“Oh my god. Oh, oh oh,” he whispered into her lips as he burrowed his nose against the slick membranes. The glorious scent shot straight to brain, ratcheting his lust higher and making him lightheaded. The tip of his tongue slid inside her as he gently teased her clit with his nose.

“H-higher, lick me higher,” she pleaded, panting and pivoting her body down so that his tongue was against her engorged nub.

He worked his fingers along the outer edges of her flaps, pressing them against the sensitive skin of his lips as he massaged her clit with deft flicks of his tongue.

“Mmm, mmhmm.” She reached down and pulled his hair in the way he always liked and he rewarded her by carefully teasing back her hood and humming softly, sending gentle vibrations into her body.

While he worked her over, Isaac at last slid Allison’s panties down her legs and helped her out of them. Then he wrapped the balled up fabric around his cock and started jerking off with them. He moaned hard as the silky lace caressed his bloated cockhead.

“You wanna f-fuck me now,” Allison asked, voice shaky as her thighs and hips throbbed against the bed.

Isaac shook his head and redoubled his efforts on her cunt. He really wanted to get her off once with his mouth before they started. Besides, the longer he kept his face buried between her legs the higher he would get on her scent.

Isaac knew he needed to be careful, needed to stay in control of his body and not lose himself in lust and wolf out. He couldn’t risk hurting her, nor could he risk bringing out his wolf and possibly tempting Kate to the surface in the process. Yet it didn’t matter. Nothing mattered when she smelled this good, when they were both so thoroughly enjoying his mouth right where it was. Allison had been right: Isaac was never one to shy away from danger, especially when the stakes were this high.

Ten minutes later, Isaac’s perseverance paid off. He was drunk on her pheromones but still on the safe side of the human-werewolf line when she shrieked and clamped her thighs around his head.

“Fuck! Oh Isaac, yes, yes, YES!”
Isaac almost came in his hand as Allison ground herself harder against his face and everything flared tighter and so much wetter around his tongue and lips. He yelped and let go of his cock like it was hot iron, his balls throbbing and aching in protest as he denied them their release.

Allison was still moaning and panting, gyrating against him like his mouth was her personal sex toy – he was more than okay with that.

“Don’t stop. Oh god, Isaac, please don’t stop! Still close, so close. More! Oh please mooore!”

Her thighs finally eased up around his ears, but he could sense the hot, tight sexual energy still coiled around him. She was a powder keg ready to explode again and as much as his dick was screaming at him to use it to light her fuse, he just couldn’t tear his mouth away from her. She was so juicy and delicious, dripping down his throat, making his brain fuzzy and his vision blurry. He could cum whenever with or without her, but this was literally his last chance to eat her out and – god, he was just so fucking hungry.

He draped her sopping thong over his needy, quivering dick, then flicked his index finger back and forth against his thumb, triple checking that his claw was retracted. Satisfied that he wasn’t too lust-drunk to notice, he slid his finger inside her, making a beeline for her g-spot as he continued tongues her clit.

“Mmm, yeah, yeah! Oh your fingers, Isaac! Your long, sexy fingers! Mmm, a–another! Another please!”

After a quick check for claws on his second finger, he slid it into place alongside the first, tickling her walls as he flicked her harder and faster with his tongue.

Allison whined and whimpered, keening against him as he kept up his high intensity stimulation.

By now Isaac was gone, lost in his head, out of his head. The only conscious thoughts he had revolved around keeping his fangs and claws retracted and his tongue and fingers in sync. It hurt. His neck and mouth were sore and his hand was cramping, but it didn’t matter. It also felt indescribably good, like he didn’t have a care in the world, like nothing was more important than bringing Allison to a second orgasm. He was also utterly tingly and blissed out from her pheromones, not as high as he had been from the moon and super tastes on Friday with Ethan, but buzzed into peaceful oblivion.

That’s why he wasn’t consciously aware of anything leading up to Allison’s second coming, why the thighs clamped around his head took him by complete surprise as she moaned and screamed his name, why Isaac hadn’t even realized he was stroking himself with his other hand until it was too late, until an intense breaker of pleasure rolled over him in response to the sounds she was making and had him crashing forward against her crotch, against the bed, spraying the side of the mattress with his cum.

They were both still panting heavily when he finally lifted his face away from her pussy and looked up at her. “I, uh, accidentally...” If his cheeks hadn’t already been flushed hot from his exertion and the way her thighs had gripped him, he would have blushed.

She snickered and arched an eyebrow at him. “Are you going to get soft?”

He glanced down at his cum-tipped prick, then at her swollen, pink cunt. He throbbed with a still unsatisfied lust and his eyes blazed gold. “Not a chance.”

She smiled and looked at him through long eyelashes. “Then let’s do this.”

Isaac rose to his feet between her legs. He moaned as she sat up and drew the tip of his jizz-covered
cock into her mouth. She swirled her tongue around it, flicked his slit, sucked him clean. He caressed her head as she gradually took more and more into her mouth. She got about halfway down his shaft before she was pulling away and placing soft kisses against his abs.

“I have a condom in my purse.” She pointed toward the floor at the foot of the bed.

Isaac retrieved her bag and handed it to her, relieved that it hadn’t been at the side of the bed near him or else he might have shot his load on it without even noticing. Good god, that would have been embarrassing.

“Come here,” she said, tearing open the condom’s gold foil wrapper. She placed it over his tip and slowly unrolled it.

Once the condom was in place, he eased her back down onto the bed, hands on her shoulders, and climbed up onto the bed between her legs.

As he looked down at her, he felt a flood of emotions. He was going to lose her, not just as a girlfriend but as a friend, and there was nothing he could do to change that. This was truly his last night with her and there were so many things left unsaid between them, so many unresolved feelings, at least on his part.

He frowned, dropping his head to the side as he settled over her so that she wouldn’t notice. This wasn’t her fault. She had always been honest about what she wanted from him. He had always known he was nothing but a fun distraction to her. And it made sense. How could anyone care about Isaac after they had been with Scott? Isaac was a poor substitute for the boy she truly loved. It wouldn’t have been right for him to ruin their final night together by confronting her with one-sided feelings. She deserved to have some fun and end things on a good note like she wanted. After all she had done for Isaac, after all she had helped him overcome, it was the least he could do for her.

“You okay?”

“Great,” he answered with his best fake smile firmly in place.

He eased down on top of her, locking her lips with his and initiating a slow makeout session that quickly turned heated. Once they were both burning with desire, he reached between them and guided himself inside her slick opening.

She broke the kiss as her eyes rolled back in her head and she went slack against the mattress. “Oh my god, Isaac!” She panted and gasped as he rolled forward, gently but steadily sheathing himself within her until at last he had bottomed out. “Oh Isaac, I will never forget you—”

His breath hitched and his chest tightened with happiness.

“—r dick.”

He ignored the stab of pain and disappointment as he thanked her and praised her body too, returning the compliment.

Eventually he managed to turn off his feelings, get lost in lust again and focus only on the beautiful girl he was fucking – fucking, not making love to, never making love to. No guy in his right mind could object to that kind of arrangement right? And despite his many flaws, Isaac did consider himself sane.

After a few minutes, she locked her thighs around him and rolled them over on the bed so that she was on top. She rode him hard, reaching down to rub herself as she bounced up and down at a
quick, steady pace.

 Fuck she looked good like this, long hair cascading freely over her shoulders, face flushed and glistening, breasts heaving, nipples hard, long, sexy legs folded around his thighs.

“You’re so hot,” Isaac said between breaths, his pleasure intensifying as he raked his eyes over her body.

“So are you,” she answered, fingers tickling his shaft as she also teased her clit. She bit her lip, her dark eyes blown with lust. “I’m getting close again.”

“Yeah?” he asked, voice strained. He gripped her hips as he started thrusting up into her, chasing her tight heat. “Me too.”

They bucked harder against each other, until Isaac’s pubes were wet with her juices and she was moaning and panting so loud Isaac worried that even in Scott’s fugue state she would somehow wake him. Then she gasped and shuddered, collapsing forward across Isaac’s chest as she continued grinding back against him.

Her walls tightened and clenched rhythmically around him and Isaac felt himself flying toward edge. A few more stuttering thrusts of his hips and he was there with her, moaning and howling as he filled the condom inside her with seed.

Isaac was lightheaded as the endorphins crashed over him, filling him with a deep sense of well being and satisfaction as he enjoyed his final orgasm with his first lover.

Unfortunately the contended feeling was short-lived as she climbed off of him and gathered her clothes, explaining that she was going to the restroom to get cleaned up. Would she leave when she was done? Was the time they had left together best measured in seconds and minutes instead of hours?

While she was gone, Isaac disposed of the condom and toweled off his sweaty body with the discarded bath towel. He would need another shower before bed, but in the meantime he pulled on a pair of boxers and sat back down on his bed in the same space she had occupied when he entered the room.

He hated to violate her privacy, but eventually he couldn’t take the suspense and extended his super hearing to the bathroom down the hall. The water in the sink was running, but as he listened she shut it off and a few moments later the bathroom door was opening. She padded lightly back down the hall toward his room; her graceful, sure steps would have blended into the background if he hadn’t been focusing on them at the foreground of his attention. He looked away, trying to appear casual as she opened his door.

“Hey,” she said softly as she shut the door behind her and rejoined him on the bed.

“I don’t want you to go,” he blurted out. So much for being casual.

She frowned and placed her hand over his again in his lap. “I have to.”

“You don’t have to.”

“Isaac.” The warning was clear in her voice. They would argue if he pressed the point and she would leave anyway.

“Then I’ll come with you,” he answered, the notion popping into his head and out of his mouth
before he even considered it.

She arched an eyebrow in surprise and then laughed softly. “And leave Scott? Leave Stiles?”

Isaac’s heart sank. No. No, that was the worst thing he could imagine in that moment. He could never leave his packmates, never abandon Scott or Stiles at all, but especially not now, not when they needed him.

“I know,” she said, eyes gentle and sympathetic. She leaned over and placed a kiss on his cheek. “I’d never ask you to.”

“But...you’d want that?” He turned to her, hating the raw emotion in his voice as he asked, “You’d want me?”

She looked sad and guilt flared heavy in her scent. She placed a hand on his cheek and nuzzled her head against his – she had gotten quite adept at soothing werewolves. “Of course I’d want you, Isaac. Always.”

Isaac swallowed around the lump in his throat. Then why couldn’t she stay? How could she bear to leave the pack? How could she knowingly do this to them?

“Please stay. It’s dangerous for you to go alone.”

She pressed a chaste kiss to his lips and pulled back. “I won’t be alone. My dad’s coming too and we’re meeting up with another family of hunters, the Calaveras.”

“Do the others know you’re leaving?”

She nodded. “Lydia was with me when I decided.”

A twinge of consolation eased the heavy weight on Isaac’s chest at that news. He was pleased they had made up before it was too late.

“And I spent all afternoon with Scott...Stiles doesn’t know yet, but I’ll call him from the airport tomorrow.”

“You’re not going to say goodbye to him in person?” Isaac hadn’t meant the critical tone that crept into his voice as he asked that question, but he couldn’t help it. He was somewhat offended on Stiles’ behalf that he wasn’t going to get a proper farewell from Allison like everyone else.

She sighed. “I don’t think he’s too happy with me right now, after what happened with you, and almost with Lydia.”

Isaac wanted to argue, but he suspected she was right.

Allison squeezed Isaac’s hand again and smiled at him. “Stiles is very lucky by the way.”

Isaac tilted his head, completely confused by the non sequitur. “What do you mean?”

“You. The way you feel about him.”

Isaac’s jaw dropped. “W-we’re not...uhm...”

“I know. I wouldn’t have done this if I thought you and Stiles were already dating.” She gestured between them and gave a look at the bed. “But you like him, and that makes him lucky.”
Isaac scoffed and a different ache flared in his chest, an ache unrelated to Allison’s imminent departure. “Well, he doesn’t like me back so I’m not too lucky.”

Allison shook her head. “I wouldn’t be so sure about that.”

“You really think he might like me back?” He felt the grin on his face even though he knew better than to get his hopes up.

“I do but” –she frowned and hesitated before continuing– “I could be wrong. Stiles seems like an easy read, but he’s actually quite complicated.”

“Yeah, tell me about it,” Isaac answered, still at a loss for how to interpret all the signals he’d been getting from Stiles. He dismissed those thoughts, tucking them away for later as something else piqued his curiosity. “How did you know anyway? That I have feelings for Stiles I mean.”

Allison laughed again and brushed her shoulder against his. “Because I’ve seen the way you look at him. It’s the same way you used to look at me…and before me, at Scott.”

Isaac gaped at her, and a wave of self consciousness rolled over him. He was embarrassed that he had been so obvious.

She smirked at him and leaned close so that she could whisper into his ear. “You know, if I had thought he’d go for it, I totally would have said goodbye to you and Scott together.”

Isaac let out a strangled gurgle, his mind reeling with the implications of that statement and his imagination kicking straight into overdrive.

She giggled and moved to stand, but he placed a hand on her thigh and gave her a smirk of his own. He cast a meaningful look at the tent that was rapidly forming in the front of his boxers.

“What do you have to leave right now?”

She grinned at him and slid her hand into his lap. “Well, I guess I do have time for one more goodbye.”

Chapter End Notes

Spoiler/non-spoiler, this was Allison’s last chapter in the story (she’ll possibly be in or be mentioned in an epilogue); however, that in no way means that the story is drawing to a close – far from it! I have quite a bit planned that I’m really excited about. If anything I’d say we’re barely to the halfway mark, but that’s a very rough estimate. I’d be embarrassed by how long this is/will be if it were a novel, and I’d cut and combine quite a bit, but *shrug* I figure fan fiction is a lot more serialized by its nature, and I promise lots more excitement, plot twists and turns, explicit smut, and emotionally charged scenes as the story goes on. Hopefully some humor too…I always mean for this story to be much funnier than it is.

Anyway, on a different note, I strongly considered having Allison’s possession problem flare up during her encounter with Isaac – because we all know Aunt Kate would have enjoyed a spin on Isaac’s D – but I thought that might be a bit too twisted and traumatic for Isaac.
Anyway, please let me know what you thought of this chapter if you have the chance.
Isaac awoke to the sound of Scott calling his name. His eyes snapped open and he bolted upright, already worried. Scott was calling to him, not coming to his bedside like he normally did when he wanted to wake Isaac. Did this mean there was danger? Were they under attack?

“Mornin’,” Scott said from the doorway. “Sorry to wake you, but we need to go meet Lydia at the library. Stiles is coming to pick us up in a little while.”

Concern flared through Isaac as he raked a hand through his unruly morning hair. Scott’s words seemed calm enough and it didn’t sound like there was an emergency, but Scott’s posture was all wrong and there was a definite hint of discomfort in his scent.

“Is everything okay?”

“Sure, all good,” Scott said, turning and walking back up the hallway.

Isaac’s nerves were on edge as he climbed out of bed and set about getting ready as quickly as he could. Something was wrong. Scott was being awkward and distant. Isaac was still trying to figure out what he had done to upset Scott when he bent to retrieve his discarded bath towel from the floor on the side of the bed. He cringed as he caught a strong whiff of his dried semen on the mattress. A deeper breath had the scent of Allison’s arousal surging to the front of his consciousness. She was all over the bedspread. It was – *Mmm, fucking delicious!* – unmistakably *vaginal*. Now that Isaac was aware of it, his whole bedroom was blanketed in the pungent aroma of sex.

*Crap! No wonder Scott was embarrassed and angry at me.*

Isaac hurried through his morning routine, both so that he wouldn’t risk keeping Scott waiting and also because as much as he dreaded the impending conversation, he needed to apologize as soon as possible. He and Allison had never had sex at the McCall house before, out of respect for Scott. As nervous as it had made Isaac to always do it at Allison’s house, it was undeniably easier to hide sex from a human father, even a hunter, than to hide it from a werewolf ex-boyfriend.

Isaac was ready to plead for Scott’s forgiveness as he entered the kitchen, but instead he was brought up short by the sight and smell of their kitchen table heaped with hot, fresh diner food. Scott was sitting at the table, grinning at Isaac’s reaction. He had even fixed Isaac a plate: fried eggs, bacon, hash browns, and biscuits with a glass of orange juice sitting next to it.

“What’s all this?” Isaac asked.

Scott shrugged, still smiling softly and clearly proud of himself, but trying to downplay it. “I knew you’d be bummed with Allison leaving, so I wanted to surprise you.”

*Fuck*, that was so nice and it made Isaac feel like an even bigger bag of dicks for being so insensitive.

“Thank you,” Isaac said, giving his friend a tentative smile as he sat down. He took a few bites of egg and sopped up some of the yoke with a biscuit before continuing. “Scott, I’m really sorry about...uh, you know.”
Scott’s eyebrows drew together and he shook his head. “I don’t think I do. What are you talking about?”

Isaac frowned, briefly wondering if Scott was intentionally trying to embarrass him by making him say it outright. He dismissed the thought. Of course Scott wouldn’t do that.

“What you, uh, smelled when you came to wake me up.”

“Ohh.” Scott fussed with his glass of juice but didn’t take a sip. “That’s none of my business. You didn’t do anything wrong.”

“But, I did!” Isaac insisted. He didn’t want Scott to let him off the hook for this. Scott always gave him a pass and he didn’t deserve it. He deserved to be punished. “I had sex in your house, Scott.”

Scott laughed. “Well I’m not, like, your parent or anything. I don’t have a ‘no sex in my house’ rule.”

“But...with Allison.”

Scott shrugged and looked uncomfortable again. “That’s between you and Allison. It’s not like I didn’t know you guys were doing it while you were together.”

“You know you can be mad at me, right? I won’t fall apart.” Isaac was irritated that Scott seemed to think he needed so much emotional coddling. It was beside the point that the notion of Scott actually being seriously disappointed in him was devastating. He could have survived it (well maybe).

“But I’m not mad at you,” Scott answered, clearly inviting Isaac to check if he was lying. He wasn’t and Isaac instantly felt better. “Yeah, it’s a little awkward, but I’m just glad you and Allison got to...” Scott scrunched up his face. “Uhm, I don’t think there’s a way to finish that sentence without being creepy or weird.”

Isaac chuckled, feeling about as good as it was possible to feel on the day after someone important to him had walked out of his life. He truly didn’t deserve an alpha, a friend, like Scott.

“Thank you,” Isaac said softly, looking at Scott, then down at his breakfast, then around the room in general – at the roof over his head, “for everything.”

Scott smiled back and they resumed eating, this time chatting about lighter topics until Scott brought up what he had said when he had woken Isaac.

“So, good news. Lydia’s at the library and she has a lead on the Iron Claw situation.”

“Really? What did she say?”

“Just for us to come meet her. Stiles should be here soon.”

Isaac nodded and went back to his food. A few minutes later, however, he glanced up at Scott thoughtfully. “Are you okay? I mean, just, in general...with Allison leaving?”

The cheerful expression faded from Scott’s face, replaced by a somber look, and Isaac got the sense it was more reflective of Scott’s true mood that morning. “No, it really sucks and I’m disappointed. I tried to talk her out of it yesterday but...”

“Yeah, same here. There’s no arguing with her when she’s made her mind up about something.”

Scott nodded and stood, picking up his empty plate and glass and heading for the sink. “It hurts
losing a member of the pack. It...it feels like a failure as an alpha.”

Isaac turned to him, his chair scrapping across the kitchen tile.

“Scott, you’re an amazing alpha.” Isaac met his eyes and held his gaze. “I’d be dead without you, and Beacon Hills would be a disaster area.”

Scott gave him a smile but leaned back against the kitchen counter, posture still deflated. “It just feels like the pack is falling apart. Not just Allison but me and Stiles too...If I didn’t have you and Lydia it would be hopeless.”

Isaac stood and gripped Scott’s shoulder, trying to send comfort and strength through their packbond. “But you do have us, and we’re not going anywhere.”

The tension eased from Scott’s body and some of the anguish in his scent lightened. He covered Isaac’s hand with his own and squeezed his fingers before stepping forward and wrapping his arms around Isaac’s torso.

Isaac returned the hug enthusiastically, as a weight he hadn’t realized he was carrying lifted from his body. Isaac took long, slow breaths, drawing Scott’s scent deep inside his lungs and holding it there, reveling in the security and strength of their bond, glowing under his alpha’s approval.

“I love you,” Scott said softly near Isaac’s ear.

The words choked the air out of Isaac, made his blood run cold and his muscles tense. It had been years since anyone had said that to Isaac and – goddamn it, it was terrifying!

Isaac pulled away, eyes wide and mouth hanging open. “I-I-I–”

Scott slid his hands to Isaac’s upper arms and gave them a reassuring squeeze, still smiling affectionately at him. “It’s okay. I know.”

“Scott, I...” Isaac’s throat closed, denying him access to anymore words.

“I know,” Scott repeated, brown eyes warm and earnest. He pulled Isaac in for another hug and rubbed his back before letting go. “Stiles is here,” he said, strolling out of the kitchen.

Isaac hadn’t heard Stiles arrive. He couldn’t hear anything but the sound of his own heart pounding in his chest. He sank back into his chair as he tried to work out what he felt. It was no use. If he opened that emotional door a hurricane would sweep in and flood everything, and Isaac only had a few seconds until Scott was back with Stiles, not nearly enough time to weather that storm. Instead, Isaac closed his eyes and focused on stacking mental sandbags in front of the door, desperate to keep the flood at bay until he could deal with it properly.

When he re-opened his eyes, Stiles was standing in front of him making a silly face, mouth open and tongue out as he wiggled his hands by his ears.

“Aahh!” Isaac jumped back, almost toppling over in his chair.

“Gotcha!” Stiles declared with a triumphant grin as he sank into the chair next to Isaac’s.

“What can I say? Your face is terrifying.”

Stiles folded his arms and gave Isaac an exaggerated pout. “Good morning to you too.” His eyes narrowed on the foil wrappers and styrofoam containers from the diner and he snapped an accusing
finger at Scott. “You bought breakfast and didn’t save me any!”

Scott shrugged and gave him an innocent look. “Didn’t know you were coming over.”

“You should always assume I’m coming over.”

“He has a point,” Isaac interjected, eager to put the awkwardness behind him.

Scott chuckled. “That was a rookie mistake on my part.”

“And now I’m the one who has to pay the consequences,” Stiles said, shaking his head.

“We can hit a drive through on the way to the library if you want,” Scott said.

“Nah, I already ate,” Stiles answered, grinning at him.

“You’re impossible,” Isaac said, getting up and taking his dishes to the sink.

“I’ll take that as a compliment.”

“You would,” Isaac answered. They were smiling at each other, their tones a lot more playful than they would have been a few weeks earlier.

“Come on, Lydia’ll scream at us if we’re late,” Scott said with a wink.

Isaac and Stiles both groaned at his terrible joke as they followed him out of the kitchen.

“So, uh, Allison called me from the airport this morning,” Stiles said a little while later as they climbed into his Jeep, Scott taking his usual place in the passenger seat and Isaac in the back. “How are you guys doing?”

Concern rolled off of Stiles in thick waves as he looked at Scott and Isaac in turn.

“We’re sad,” Scott said.

Isaac nodded, reluctantly admitting that the statement did indeed apply to him. It hurt that Allison had left, and maybe it was supposed to be comforting sharing those feelings with Scott and Stiles, with his friends and pack, but Isaac couldn’t help wishing that just for today they could all be a little more closed off with their emotions. Isaac didn’t want to acknowledge any of his feelings today. After his first time with Ethan, his grief-fest with Stiles, his last time with Allison, and now Scott’s declaration that morning, Isaac was beyond done with emotions for the weekend. He just wanted to be an empty shell until he went back to school tomorrow, and hopefully back to some semblance of a routine life.

“I had another nightmare last night,” Stiles said as he finally backed out of the driveway.

Fuck! So much for not feeling anything else; now Isaac was worried about Stiles again.

“What happened?” Scott asked, tone soothing as he placed a hand on Stiles’ shoulder – because naturally Scott had an endless reserve of emotional strength and never shied away from his feelings like Isaac.

Isaac wasn’t (too) envious. He was mostly just grateful that Scott was there to manage the situation.

“It was bad,” Stiles answered, voice tight. “I basically went Crazy Kate 2.0 on you guys and burned down your house.”
“Whoa,” Scott said. “We were both there?”

“Yeah. Lydia and Allison too, and your mom and my dad. I locked everyone in, surrounded it with mountain ash and...listened to your screams. I really thought everyone was dead. When I woke up it...it didn’t feel like a dream. It felt like a memory, like I must have just gone home and gone to sleep when I was done.”

Scott squeezed Stiles’ shoulder and Isaac knew it was torturing him not to be able to hug Stiles while he was driving. “We’re gonna fix this.”

“Yeah, of course,” Stiles said. He didn’t sound sarcastic, just defeated.

“We will,” Isaac insisted, reaching his hand into the front seat to grip Stiles’ other shoulder.

“Of course,” Stiles repeated. It didn’t take werewolf senses to know he didn’t remotely believe it. Isaac desperately hoped Lydia had some good news for them on the Iron Claw front.

Lydia was excited as she met them at the library doors, her scent pulsing with spicy, tangy energy. It made Isaac’s nose tingle and reassured him that whatever she had found was a big deal.

Isaac had to wait a little longer for answers, however, because the first thing she did was ask him and Scott how they were doing with Allison’s departure. Isaac appreciated the concern, he really did, but he wanted people to just leave him alone about it already.

“How are you holding up?” Scott asked her.

*Right, fuck! Lydia also lost her best friend.* God, Isaac sucked at this whole emotional support thing.

He stood awkwardly in the background while his three packmates consoled each other, accepting their concern and mechanically returning it, but mostly just praying for the moment to end. Eventually it did.

“So, I found something intriguing on some old microfiche,” Lydia said.

“Micro- sorry what?” Scott asked.

“Microfiche,” She repeated.

“Is that like a little fish?” Isaac suggested.

“I think it’s something that’s a little pink,” Isaac suggested.

“No see, I thought it was like a little injury,” Stiles said.

Lydia sighed. “It’s a little photograph, of old newspaper editions. Like an archive.”

“Ahhh!” the boys all declared in unison.

“Anyway, when the Argent bestiary came up dry on references to Iron Claw, I decided to go through the library’s local historical records, stacks, and archive.”

“And you actually found something?!” Stiles asked.

Lydia rolled her eyes at him. “Try not to sound too surprised.”

“No, it’s not that. I always knew you could do it. I’m just surprised it came from a dusty old
newspaper at the library.”

“Well, like I said, it’s on microfiche, not a physical newspaper.”

“And that’s a little picture?” Scott asked again for confirmation.

Lydia laughed. “Yes. It’s essentially a type of microfilm. It comes on flat sheets instead of in a reel.”

“Like in a spy movie?! This is so cool,” Stiles declared.

“Come on, let’s go read it,” Lydia said.

“Ooh, do we need a special spy gadget to decipher it?” Stiles asked hopefully.

“Just the library’s old microfilm readers will do the trick.”

Stiles face fell in disappointment.

They followed her to the back section of the library and into a small research room. Set up along one wall was a long table with three ancient-looking pieces of equipment that sort of resembled weird hybrids of voting booth machines and old CRT computer monitors. She led them to the one in the middle and they all crowded around the screen. The article was already pulled up.

The Werewolf Mayor of Beacon Hills
By Ezra Crane

October 31st, 1992

My forefather, Isaiah Thomas Crane, founded the town of Beacon Hills in the mid-1800s and went on to become its first mayor. However, family lore and word-of-mouth accounts posit that old Grandpa Isaiah may have had a deadly trick up his sleeve that allowed him to succeed where others had failed: Lycanthropy. In other words, gentle readers, Beacon’s Hills’ first mayor may also have been its first werewolf.

The year was 1853 and the lands that would eventually become Beacon Hills were smack in the middle of the route south that miners took upon entering California in the days of the great Gold Rush. For years settlers had tried to no avail to establish homesteads in the hills surrounding our fair city. Attempts were thwarted by the notoriously dangerous local wildlife and the frequent animal attacks that plagued the area.

All that changed when Isaiah Crane set his sights on the land. Crane hoped to develop Beacon Hills into a trading post and profit from the steady flow of fortune seekers into and out of the area. As history shows, Crane was successful and Beacon Hills soon became a thriving community. So what was his secret?

Try six-inch iron claws protruding from each of his fingers. When Grampy Isaiah told people to talk to the hand, they listened! And if they didn’t, he could back up his prodigious digits with razor sharp fangs and preternatural strength. You see friends, Founder Crane had a bite that was much worse than his bark.

Speculation first emerged about Crane’s beastly second nature when his business rivals and political enemies started turning up around town with their chests sliced open. However, even allies weren’t spared from the wrath of Crazy Crane’s clashing claws
and murderous maw. Members of Crane’s inner circle – his wolf pack as he was fond of calling them – often wound up disemboweled or torn limb from limb following a dispute with the maniacal mayor. Word-of-mouth accounts also tell of Irascible Isaiah’s eerie eyes glowing a fearsome fiery red whenever he lost his temper.

For his part, Crane stoked the flames of controversy and embraced the nickname bestowed on him by the terrorized townies: Iron Claw!

Just remember, boys and girls, not all monsters wear masks. Happy Halloween and be sure to visit the Beacon Hills Cryptozoological Society for more terrifying tales of creatures that lurk in the dark.

Isaac glanced up from the article to see if the others were finished. Stiles was sitting with a dumbfounded expression on his face and Scott was still reading.

“Is this for real?” Scott asked a little while later. “How have we never heard of this Ezra Crane guy or his crypto society?”

Lydia shrugged. “I don’t think anyone takes him seriously. I researched him to see if he had written anything else about Iron Claw. He hasn’t, but his other article titles include” –she pulled a list out of her pocket– “The Yetis That Stalk Beacon Hills Forest; The Vampire Butcher of Beacon Hills; Is the Beacon Hills Preserve a Portal for Fairies?; and 5 Tips to Keep Poltergeists from Ruining Your 4th of July Party.”

“What were the five tips?” Stiles inquired.

Lydia waved her hand dismissively. “I don’t know. I’m not having a 4th of July party.”

“So he’s a whack-job?” Isaac stated.

“Seems like it,” Lydia said, “but if he’s a descendant of Iron Claw he may know something useful.”

“Does he still live here? Is he even still alive?” Isaac asked.

“Yeah,” Stiles said, “and more importantly are those tips applicable to Labor Day cookouts and Super Bowl parties too?”

“Stiles!” Scott swatted his chest with the back of his hand.

Lydia gave Stiles an exasperated look and answered Isaac. “Yes, I checked. He’s still runs the so-called, ‘Beacon Hills Cryptozoological Society.’”

“That’s a real place?” Stiles’ face lit up and he bounced in his chair. “Oh my god, can we go?!”

“I think we better,” Scott said.

“I looked up the address,” Lydia said. “It’s outside of town on the south side of the preserve.”

“Hey, maybe we can find that fairy portal too!”

“Stiles!” They all groaned and Isaac threw a tiny wooden pencil at him, which had been sitting on the table by a small pad of paper for notes.

Since she had the most space and also knew the address, they all took Lydia’s car to the Beacon Hills Cryptozoological Society. Stiles rode in the back with Isaac. He was being absolutely obnoxious today, cracking jokes non-stop as they drove across town. However, Isaac was pretty sure
he knew why he was doing it: he was trying to take their minds off Allison leaving, and as much as Isaac hated to admit it, it was kind of working. Isaac was having a nice day with his pack and everyone seemed optimistic that they would get the answers they needed about Iron Claw. It sucked that Allison was gone, but it was heartening that the rest of the pack was together and making progress on a major problem.

Isaac’s good mood faded, however, as they turned off the main road and down a narrow, grass-covered path. The dense growth of trees gave way to a clearing and as they continued along the winding path that served as a long driveway, the Cryptozoological Society’s headquarters came into view. It was unnerving, a large, two-story house that looked older than any other structure Isaac had seen in Beacon Hills. It was built entirely of wood on a raised foundation with a large, wrap-around porch. There was barely any peeling white paint left on the outsides walls of the house. Instead the majority of the facade consisted of cracking, grayish brown wood. Out on the front lawn an old-time sign, hanging from a wooden post, read *Beacon Hills Cryptozoological Society*.

“I don’t like this place. It feels wrong,” Scott said as they parked near the front steps.

“Wrong how?” Lydia asked, unhooking her seatbelt.

“It...” Scott grumbled. “I don’t know how to describe it. It’s like it’s pushing and pulling on me at the same time. Like a weird moon slash anti-moon combination.”

“Yeah,” Isaac said, “it’s making me nauseated and dizzy, and my spine’s tingling.”

“Do you want Stiles and me to go in alone?” Lydia asked.

“No, we should all go,” Scott said, glancing into the backseat at Isaac, who nodded in confirmation.

“I-I feel something too...but I like it,” Stiles said, licking his lips and glancing nervously out his window at the house.

“Like it how?” Lydia asked.

“It’s...almost magnetic.”

“Maybe I should go in alone,” Lydia said, looking around the car at the others.

“No, I’ll be fine,” Stiles said.

“Stiles, are you sure? Is this from...your possession?” Scott asked.

Stiles licked his lips again. Then a look of determination crossed his face. “I dunno, but I’m not letting it control me.”

“Isaac?” Scott asked.

“Let’s go,” Isaac answered. Whatever was going on in that house, he wanted everyone to stay together, to face it together.

Isaac’s head swam as they got out of the car and climbed the stairs onto the weathered, old porch. The boards under their feet creaked and whined, further adding to the sense of dread pooling in Isaac’s stomach. He almost jumped when Lydia rapped on the thick wooden door.

No one answered.

“Well...it’s business hours,” she said, nodding at the paper sign taped to the door. She twisted the
handle and it opened with another loud creak as a bell chimed over her head.

“Hello,” she called into the house.

She walked in, followed by Scott and Stiles, with Isaac bringing up the rear. As soon as he approached the door, he was bowled over by an intense cocktail of mostly unpleasant scents. Wolfsbane, mountain ash, and mistletoe topped the list of offensive smells and set Isaac on the defensive. However, also present were pungent but more harmless odors like garlic, silver, salt, honey, red wine, wax, vinegar, leather, and a range of dried herbs Isaac couldn’t identify.

Isaac looked around as he stepped through the door. They were in a small foyer type room with a prominent wood and glass combination display case and counter occupying most of the back wall. An antique, metal cash register sat on one side with the case itself housing a bizarre, seemingly random collection of small items for sale, their prices penciled in. Off to the right of the counter a wide staircase ascended. The side walls were lined with dusty wooden shelves containing an array of variously sized jars, bowls, and pots. A cacophony of noxious odors wafted out of the receptacles, including most of the scents Isaac had previously identified plus a variety of other, subtler smells that were overwhelmed by their more pungent brethren.

Along the left and right walls, between the shelves, were open doorways. Partially visible to the left was a sitting room or perhaps library, with a threadbare, avocado green carpeting, floor-to-ceiling bookcases, and a well-worn antique sofa and armchairs. It was through this door that the source of the physical effects Isaac felt seemed to be radiating. His body throbbed and itched, simultaneously attracted to yet repulsed by the room. Through the doorway on the right sat a room with a wood floor, a table and some cabinets visible through the doorway. The enticing scents of pasta, cheese, and bread, spilled from the doorway, indicating the room was either a kitchen or dining room.

While Isaac was still investigating the other rooms from a distance with his super senses, an old, hunched man appeared, painstakingly descending the stairs.

“Greeting and salutations! Hello and hi!” the man said in a raspy voice, a broad smile on his wizened face. He was wearing a brown and orange cardigan over sagging tan slacks and orthopedic shoes. He leaned heavily on a four-prong cane as he hobbled down the stairs.

“Hi there, I’m Scott,” Scott said, smiling at the man. “These are my friends, Lydia, Stiles, and Isaac.” He pointed at them each in turn.

The old man set his cane down as he finished his descent. His smile widened and he clapped his hands, the sound dull and muted as the dry, withered skin of his palms glided and scraped together. “How delightful! Seekers of the truth at such a young age. Your parents must be very proud. Oh forgive me!” He tapped his bald pate with one hand. “I’m remiss in introducing myself. I’m Ezra Crane, president and founder of the world-renowned Beacon Hills Cryptozoological Society!” He swept his hands expansively through the air, wobbling precariously on shaky legs as he indicated their surroundings.

“Nice to meet you,” Scott said.

Isaac could sense Scott’s trepidation and was well aware of the way he kept his body between Ezra and the rest of the pack. The old man certainly seemed harmless enough, and there were no other heartbeats or signs of life in the house, but Isaac found himself stepping forward too, keeping Stiles and Lydia shielded behind him as he pressed his shoulder against his alpha’s.

“So, werewolf, vampire, or yeti?” Ezra asked, brow raised.
“What?!” Isaac demanded, drawing closer to Scott. He had to resist the urge to extend his claws.

Ezra grinned. “Those are our most popular cryptids. They’re the ones people are always here to research.”

Isaac breathed a sigh of relief and Scott relaxed against him.

“Werewolf,” Lydia said, amusement evident in her tone as she stepped forward. “We’re here to learn more about werewolves.”

“Ah, good choice!” Ezra clapped his hands again and bowed stiffly to Lydia. “Point of fact, one of my ancestors was a werewolf.”

“Oh really? Tell us about him,” Stiles said, smirking.

“His wolf name was Iron Claw. He...” Ezra trailed off and smiled graciously at them again. “You know what? It’s rather a long story. Why don’t you step into my parlor and I’ll make us all a nice pot of elderberry tea?” He motioned toward the room on the left.

Isaac tensed, his sense of foreboding deepening. He didn’t want to go in that room and judging by the expression on Scott’s face, neither did he.

“Great!” Stiles declared, jauntily strolling through the door, followed by Lydia.

“I’ll be right there. Make yourselves at home,” Ezra said cheerfully, then walked through the door on the right, into what Isaac assumed was the kitchen.

Isaac sighed and exchanged a look with Scott before they cautiously followed their friends into the parlor.

Stiles was thrumming with energy as he darted around the room, picking up the knickknacks that decorated the shelves between and in front of the rows of books.

“Stiles, stop. You’re going to break something,” Lydia said, trying to tug him away.

“These are druid artifacts,” he stated, holding up a wooden knife.

A chill ran up Isaac’s back. Stiles shouldn’t have known that, not unless the dark druid occupying his body was feeding him the information.

“Put that down. Now,” Isaac said, joining Lydia by Stiles’ side and grabbing for the handle of the knife.

Isaac yelped and yanked his hand away, causing the knife to tumble to the floor. It felt like he had just grabbed a tray from an oven without oven mitts.

“What happened?” Scott asked, rushing across the room to meet them. He placed one hand on Isaac’s shoulder and took Isaac’s burned hand with the other, immediately leaching some of the pain away.

“It’s carved from mountain ash,” Isaac said, recognizing the distinctive odor as he let himself nuzzle the side of his body against Scott.

Lydia crouched and, after tapping the handle with a finger to make sure it was safe for her to touch, retrieved it.
Isaac involuntarily skittered back, putting more distance between himself and the weapon that seemed designed specifically to kill him.

“I’m sorry. I would have said something if I’d known you were gonna try to grab it,” Stiles said, wrapping an arm around Isaac’s other side and placing his hand over Isaac’s and Scott’s. It didn’t physically accomplish anything; he couldn’t ease the pain like Scott, but Isaac found it soothing nonetheless.

Lydia placed the knife back in its stand on the shelf. “Let’s go sit down before he gets back.”

They settled into the furniture in the center of the room. Lydia and Scott sat on a small, cream-colored sofa with cherry wood trim while Isaac and Stiles sat across from each other next to the sofa in matching floral print, wingback armchairs, leaving two additional armchairs in the set next to them unoccupied. Their seats were arranged around a large, oval-shaped, oak coffee table with smaller, darker wood end tables setup between the armchairs and next to the sofa.

The table to Isaac’s right, between him and the empty chair next to him, held a large glass candy dish brimming with wrapped hard candy. The table on Isaac’s opposite side, between him and Lydia, held a wooden statuette of a pair of wolves tussling on the ground in combat, while the table between Scott and Stiles was occupied by a similar style statuette of two bears in a standoff. Judging by the smell, the statuettes seemed to be carved from mountain ash like the wooden knife had been.

On the table on Stiles’ other side was a black jewelry case displaying an amber-colored amulet on a silver chain. Meanwhile, the oval coffee table was cluttered with more knickknacks, including candles of various shapes and sizes, some of them radiating an unsettling supernatural aura, copper and brass statuettes depicting more woodland scenes, silver bowls and bronze chalices, and an array of stones and rocks. Moonstones, Isaac realized, alarmed by the overwhelming urge he felt to pick them up and rub them all over his body.

Stiles had just picked up the smallest bronze chalice, which was barely finger length, when Ezra came doddering into the room, a silver platter clattering with a tea service in his hands and his cane hooked over one arm.

Scott got up and rushed across the room to help him. He relieved Ezra of his burden and held out one arm for him to brace against while he readied his cane.

“Thank you, Scott,” Ezra said, surprising Isaac by remembering Scott’s name. “Ah, Stiles, I see my imp’s chalice has attracted your discerning attention.”

“This is for imps to drink out of?” Stiles asked, turning the tiny vessel over in his hands.

“No, don’t be silly, child! It’s for drowning them in.” Ezra winked as he followed Scott to the table. “It’s to be filled with fairy blood. The bronze disorients imps and also acts as a power conduit for druid magic.”

Stiles nodded and looked at it with more focused attention than Isaac would have liked. A few seconds later, however, he set it back on the coffee table in front of him and his attention flitted to the amulet on the small table next to him. “What about this? This feels powerful.”

“Feels powerful?” Ezra quirked an eyebrow at Stiles as he sank into the armchair next to Isaac.

Stiles coughed and hastily picked up the amulet by its chain. “It’s heavy I mean. Bet ya’ could really clock someone with this if you swung it at ‘em.”

Ezra guffawed at him, slapping Isaac’s shoulder boisterously as he laughed his raspy, hacking laugh.
“Heavens no! That’s a ritual amulet. It’s worn by druids to augment and enhance their natural power when they’re performing ceremonies or casting spells.”

Lydia and Scott were looking at Stiles with the same intense apprehension that Isaac felt. A moment later, however, Lydia smiled sweetly at Ezra and changed the subject. “I think you were going to tell us about your werewolf ancestor. What was his name?”

“Iron Claw, well Isaiah Crane legally, but he’ll forever be Iron Claw in the annals of cryptozoological history.” Ezra smiled enigmatically and began pouring the tea into cups, milking his audience’s attention and drawing out the suspense.

“So how did he get the name Iron Claw?” Isaac asked, taking the bait. He didn’t care what games Ezra played as long as he told them what they needed to know.

“That’s a good question, Isaac!” Ezra said, patting Isaac’s hand then passing him a cup filled with tea. “Pass that to Lydia, would you, my boy?”

Isaac did as he was told and waited while Ezra filled another cup and handed it to Stiles to pass to Scott, then filled two more cups for Isaac and Stiles and finally one for himself. Isaac sniffed his suspiciously, legitimately worried it might be poisonous to werewolves.

“It’s elderberry,” Ezra said pleasantly, nudging Isaac’s arm with his elbow. “Try it. You’ll like it.”

“Does elderberry have any special proprieties?” Stiles asked with feigned nonchalance as he eyed Scott’s cup.

“It soothes the sinuses and promotes a healthy immune system,” Ezra answered before taking a long, slurping sip from his cup.

Isaac shrugged and took a hesitant sip before Scott had the chance, wanting to protect his alpha if the beverage did prove dangerous. However, Ezra was right; Isaac did like it, and it didn’t set off a coughing fit or make his blood pressure spike or plummet, so he decided it was okay. He took another, longer sip, enjoying the hot, sweet berry flavor.

“Would anyone care for some Werther’s Originals?” Ezra asked, picking up the candy dish on the side table between him and Isaac and holding it out in offering to the group.

“I don’t like Werther’s,” Stiles said, shaking his head and holding up a hand.

Lydia and Isaac also declined the offer, but Scott accepted one and unwrapped it. “So about Iron Claw...,” he said, popping the candy into his mouth.

“Right,” Ezra said, setting the candy dish back down after taking a few for himself. “Now, let’s see, what can I tell you about my great, four times over, grandfather? Well, the first thing of course is that he was a werewolf lord.”

“A werewolf lord?” Isaac asked.

“Yes, he commanded all the other werewolves in his pack.”

“I thought that was called an alpha,” Scott asked carefully, acting unsure of the term.

Ezra chuckled again. “Hollywood, my boy, Hollywood. Real werewolf leaders are called lords.”

“I’ll remember that,” Scott answered, a smile teasing at the corners of his lips.
“Iron Claw was a werewolf lord and he got his name from his eight-inch long, iron claws.” Ezra raised his hands in the air, fingers bent like claws to illustrate his point.

Isaac frowned, recalling that the article in the newspaper had said six-inch long claws. Was this a story Ezra embellished every time? Did he even have any actionable info?

“He stood at over ten feet when he shifted into monster form.” Ezra waved his hand over his head, indicating Iron Claw’s epic stature. “He was covered in black fur and his eyes glowed a sinister blood red.” Ezra tapped the corner of his eyeglasses. His own eyes were a pale, cloudy blue, not at all intimidating. “His entire mouth was lined with razor-sharp fangs.” Ezra opened his mouth and made a biting motion as he let out a childish growl. Isaac had to fight to keep from laughing. “Rumor has it, he slaughtered his entire pack and absorbed their power.”

Isaac let out a surprised gurgle. That last part sounded real.

“How did he get his iron claws? Were they natural?” Lydia asked. Isaac was pretty sure it was a trick question, because of course they weren’t.

“Ah, an astute question, Lydia. Early on in his career as a rampaging beast, when he would kill someone, friend or foe, he would raid their bodies or their homes for metal, sort of like a trophy of the kill. Eventually he had all the iron and steel from his plundering melted down and reforged into menacing nine-inch claws. Then he made a doctor surgically attach the iron claws to his fingers. He then used his werewolf powers to absorb them into his very bones.”

“Wow!” Scott leaned forward in his seat, genuinely captivated.

“Indeed!” Ezra answered, clearly delighted with the way everyone was hanging on his words. “He was still a werewolf peasant when all of this was going on.”

“A werewolf peasant?” Isaac asked.

“Yes, all werewolves are either lords or peasants. He was just a peasant then.”

Well damn! Apparently Isaac was just a peasant too.

“Anyway, when he killed his pack’s lord he became the new lord and absorbed the power directly into his iron claws!” Ezra clapped his hands together again. He seemed ready to spring out of his seat he was so worked up. “Then every time he killed another member of his pack, or one of their enemies, he absorbed that power into his claws too. Over time the claws sharpened and reformed, becoming even more deadly with every kill.”

“So you might say his claws are what made him who he was?” Stiles asked meaningfully, looking at the others.

“Yes, quite right.”

“Did anyone ever defeat him?” Lydia asked.

“No, he was much too powerful to be defeated. Instead he founded Beacon Hills and went on to become its first mayor. He had quite an impressive political career actually and got very rich from the great California Gold Rush.”

Out of the corner of his eye, Isaac happened to notice Stiles setting his empty teacup on the coffee table. However, as Stiles withdrew his hand his fingers wrapped around the tiny imp’s chalice and he palmed it as he dropped his hands in his lap, completely obscuring the artifact from view.
Ezra was still speaking, oblivious to Stiles’ actions. “Point of fact, this used to be Isaiah Crane’s house. It was a grand mansion by the standards of the day; although, I admit it has faded into something a bit more humble over the intervening century and a half. Nevertheless, I’m proud that it’s been in my family all these generations and of course it makes the perfect site for the glorious, world-famous Beacon Hills Cryptozoological Society! You know, I founded the BHCS?”

“What a magnificent achievement!” Stiles declared with just a hint of a patronizing tone in his voice. As he spoke, he idly slipped his hands, and by extension the imp’s chalice, into his pocket.

Ezra smiled at him. “Would you like to hear about the vampire butcher of Beacon Hills? He was my late wife’s third cousin.”

“You know, actually, I’d love some tips for keeping poltergeists away from outdoor gatherings if you have any?”

Ezra’s eyes lit up and he climbed to his feet. “I wrote an article about that very topic a few years back. Let me see if I can find it.”

Once Ezra had shuffled out of the room in search of his article, Isaac cleared his throat and addressed Stiles, preempting whatever Lydia had been about to say. “Dude, what’s with your sticky fingers?”

“Huh?” Stiles furrowed his brow and then rubbed the fingers of one hand against the opposite wrist, checking them. “My fingers aren’t sticky.”

Lydia and Scott were also giving Isaac confused looks.

“You put the imp’s chalice in your pocket,” Isaac said.

“No, I didn’t,” Stiles answered, his body betraying no lie.

“Check your pocket,” Isaac insisted.

Stiles slid his hands into his jean pockets and gasped. “Holy crap! I did.” He pulled the object out and set it on the table where it had been. His eyes were wide and his scent was heavy with distress. “I seriously don’t remember doing that. I promise.”

“We believe you,” Scott said, patting Stiles’ arm with his hand. “Right?” He prompted, glancing at Lydia and Isaac.

“Right!”

“Of course!”

“How did this happen? What did I do?” Stiles asked Isaac.

“You just picked it up when Ezra wasn’t looking and slid it into your pocket.”

“Did it look like I was doing it on purpose?”

“I mean...sort of. You were being stealthy. But I believe you. It must have been...”

“My darach,” Stiles finished, frowning and dropping his eyes to his lap. “It makes sense right? It’s a druid artifact and all.”

“What about druid artifacts?”
Isaac gasped as his gaze snapped to Ezra, who was standing just a few feet away from where they were sitting. The others seemed as startled by his sudden presence as Isaac.

He shuffled the rest of the way to his chair and sank down again, a couple of yellowed, crinkled pages in his hand. He passed them to Stiles. “There, this should help ensure your next backyard gathering is free of vengeful spirits.”

“Thank you,” Stiles said, not meeting his eyes. He smelled ashamed, and Isaac realized he probably felt guilty for almost stealing from Ezra.

“So, about the vampire butcher,” Ezra said. They tried to protest but he insisted on recounting a fanciful tale about an undead purveyor of fresh meat who operated his shop in the 1960s while murdering hippies in his spare time. Isaac had no idea if any of it was true, only that Ezra believed it.

Eventually, the group was able to make a gracious escape, gently declining Ezra’s offers to buy magical trinkets at half price from the gift shop in the vestibule.

“Oh crud, I forgot my cell phone,” Stiles said as they were getting into Lydia’s car. “I’ll be right back.”

While they were waiting, Isaac checked his messages. He had three texts from Ethan. Isaac had texted him as promised the night before after Allison had left. Things were unexpectedly normal between them, whatever normal between them even was. Regardless, Ethan wasn’t sexting him non-stop so Isaac counted it as a win (a crippling defeat?).

Ethan: What do you think of my new wheels? [motorcycle emoji]

The next message was a picture of Ethan sitting astride a motorcycle wearing a helmet with a tinted visor. If Isaac was honest, it was fucking hot.

Ethan: I’ll give you a ride later...And also, you can test drive my bike [winky face emoji]

Isaac snickered and tapped out a response.

Isaac: You’re such a dork! ...but you’re on.

Lydia huffed at her own phone just as Stiles returned to the car and took his seat in the back with Isaac.

“What’s wrong?” Scott asked her.

“Ethan texted me,” she said.

Isaac’s head snapped up. “Ethan texted you?”

“Yes,” she answered.

“What about?” Stiles asked, fastening his seatbelt.

“He’s trying to make me feel guilty about breaking up with Aiden.”

“Ethan wouldn’t do that!” Isaac blurted out. Everyone turned and looked at him with surprised faces. “Or, you know, maybe he would.” Isaac shrugged. “How would I know?”

Lydia sighed. “Maybe you’re right. He might just want me to be aware of the situation.”
“What is the situation?” Scott asked.

“Apparently, Aiden doesn’t deal well with rejection,” Lydia said.

“Shocker,” Stiles said.

Lydia started the car and turned around in the driveway as she spoke. “According to Ethan, he’s spiraling. Ethan’s trying to keep him preoccupied but it doesn’t sound good.”

“Like preoccupied by making Aiden go with him to buy a new motorcycle?” Isaac asked as the pieces fell into place and he realized what had motivated Ethan to finally replace the bike he’d ruined after his breakup with Danny.

Lydia huffed out a laugh. “Yeah exactly.”

Isaac held up his phone, showing the others the picture Ethan had sent him, but not the texts themselves.

“It’s so weird that you and Ethan text now,” Stiles said to Isaac.

“I text with him sometimes too,” Scott said with a casual shrug.

Stiles gasped. “Seriously?! Am I the only one in this car who doesn’t text with Ethan?”

“Evidently,” Lydia answered, smirking at him in the rearview mirror.

“You’re not missing much,” Isaac said, hoping the teasing remark wouldn’t translate as a lie Scott would notice.

“I dunno, Ethan’s kinda fun to text with,” Scott said with another shrug. “He’s funny with emojis.”

“Yeah, he is,” Isaac admitted. He kind of missed Ethan, which was stupid since he had just seen him the afternoon before.

“Well somebody gimme his number. I’ll start texting him too,” Stiles said.

“NO!” Isaac glared at Stiles. Something about Ethan and Stiles potentially becoming friends bothered Isaac. He already hated that Ethan was communicating with Lydia and Scott. Ethan was not supposed to get to know his packmates.

“Fine, geez.” Stiles held up his hands defensively.

“So why did you break up with Aiden?” Scott asked Lydia.

She drew in a long breath and let it out slowly. “I just realized you guys were right...he’s not a good person. He was going to let Allison kill Isaac the other day. And I found out Ethan had told him about Malia, but he didn’t do anything to try to help her. He’s selfish and...I don’t want to date a bad guy anymore.”

Scott didn’t say anything as he placed a hand on her shoulder. Isaac likewise reached into the front and brushed his fingers against her arm. Even Stiles had the sense of diplomacy not to cheer or openly express his delight, which was palpable in his scent.

After a few minutes in companionable silence while they rode through the woods back to town, the conversation turned to what they had learned about Iron Claw. They all agreed that the key to defeating him sounded like neutralizing his iron claws, which would be a challenge considering he
was in Scott’s body and as far as they knew had never actually manifested with said iron claws.

Eventually, Scott changed the subject again.

“So I need to talk to you guys about something,” he said.

“What?” Lydia asked.

“A possible new pack member,” Scott answered.

“You mean to replace Allison?” Stiles asked.

Isaac felt a stab of pain and glared at him. Lydia and Scott smelled irritated too.

“Not to replace Allison, just in general. It doesn’t have anything to do with her actually,” Scott said.

Isaac frowned and braced himself. He hated this so much. There was only one person he could think of who Scott might be considering letting into the pack, and as Isaac had said to Stiles the day before, he was pretty sure that person came as part of a packaged set with an outright lunatic, someone Lydia had just taken steps to distance herself from. Isaac would fight tooth and nail to keep this from happening if he had to.

“Malia.”

Isaac’s mouth opened in surprise. Okay, not who he was thinking.

“Oh yeah, definitely. She needs a pack,” Stiles said, grinning. “I really like her!”

“I like her too,” Lydia stated. “She’s a little rough around the edges and she needs to learn control, but I think it’s the right thing to do.”

“Isaac?” Scott asked.

“I... really don’t know. I haven’t even seen her as a human yet.”

“You haven’t?” Lydia sounded surprised.

“Haven’t really had the chance,” he answered.

“Then I want you to meet her as soon as possible,” Scott said. “The full moon’s coming up, so it would be good if we could decide before then, but she can’t join unless you’re okay with it.”

“Uh... I think it’s your decision,” Isaac answered.

“No, we all have to be on the same page with this,” Scott said.

“We could stop at her house,” Lydia suggested.

Scott hesitated for a moment and Isaac smelled guilt in his scent. “I kinda need to study and work on some homework this afternoon before Iron Claw takes over.”

“Me too,” Stiles said. “Well the homework part, not the Iron Claw part. I was thinking I’d stay over tonight since Dad’s working late tonight. Maybe we can get a pizza and study together.”

“Sounds good,” Scott answered.

“Well, I kind of want to research spirit possession while it’s fresh on my mind anyway. I need to
determine if the possessing spirit can physically manifest their original body,” Lydia said. “Maybe we can visit her tomorrow after school so Isaac can meet her.”

Isaac sighed. He was as caught up on his homework as he wanted to be and he didn’t actually have any other plans this afternoon. He’d probably just end up annoying Scott and Stiles if he hung out with them at home. Besides, he was the only one who actually needed to meet Malia and decide what he thought about her joining the pack. It would have been so much easier and less stressful if the others went with him, but it wasn’t necessary.

“I can meet her today if you want to drop me off,” he said to Lydia.

“You don’t mind?” Scott asked, seeming pleased with Isaac’s decision.

Isaac shrugged. “I met her as a coyote. How much worse could she be as a human?”

Isaac would have been lying if he said he wasn’t nervous ten minutes later as he knocked at Malia’s front door. Her dad answered, clearly not pleased to have company.

“Hi, I, uh, came to visit Malia.”

He scowled and didn’t invite Isaac in as he called for his daughter.

When she showed up she pushed past Isaac and onto the front porch. She led him to a wooden porch swing and looked at him expectantly until he sat down next to her.

“I’m Isaac,” he said.

She visibly sniffed the air in Isaac’s direction, all but leaning in and smelling his neck. “You’re from the forest. You’re the horny, slow wolf!”

“Slow?” Isaac asked, offended. He definitely didn’t want to know why she considered him the horny wolf.

“You couldn’t catch me,” She said simply. “I would have gotten away if your mate hadn’t been waiting to pounce on me.”

“My what?!?”

“Ethan,” she said. “He and his brother came to visit me yesterday. I think his brother wants to have sex with me.”

“He said we were mates?!” Isaac demanded, ignoring the other information.

“No, I just assumed that because I heard you guys messing around in the woods, and because of the way you acted around each other.”

“We’re not mates,” Isaac said.

“Then is Stiles your mate? I was very confused when the three of you were together.”

“No, I-I don’t have a mate,” Isaac answered.

Malia shrugged and gave him a simple look. “I think you could have either one of them if you wanted.”

“I very much doubt that,” Isaac said.
Malia shrugged again, this time with only one shoulder. “Okay then. Does Aiden have a mate? I think I might want to take him up on that sex offer.”

“Uh, he just got out of a relationship,” Isaac answered. And fuck, he never could have guessed that morning that he’d end up sitting on a stranger’s front porch discussing Aiden’s relationship status.

She nodded. “Oh good.”

“With Lydia,” Isaac added.

“Oh.” Malia’s face fell. “That’ll make things more complicated if I join the pack won’t it?”

“Probably,” Isaac agreed. “Did anyone mention you joining the pack?” he asked, surprised.

“No, I just assumed. I mean you and Ethan captured me and made Scott turn me back. Why would you do that if you weren’t going to let me join your pack?”

“Ethan and I aren’t in the same pack,” Isaac answered.

She leaned back in the swing, rocking them back and forth. “This is very confusing. But okay, I’ll join Ethan’s pack. That way I can have sex with Aiden.”

“They’re omegas. They don’t have a pack.”

She kicked off harder and swung her legs. “Do you guys ever go deer hunting?”

Isaac laughed at the non sequitur. “No, we don’t.”

“Do they?”

“I don’t think so.”

“You’re all very boring and complicated.”

“You’ll get used to it,” Isaac answered, smiling at her. She was pleasantly easy to talk to, probably because she had no concept of social conventions.

“I’m worried about the full moon,” Malia said after a little while. “I kind of go wild on the full moon. Lydia offered to spend it with me, but I don’t think she could keep me under control.”

Isaac’s anxiety rose at the thought of Lydia spending the full moon alone with Malia and he found himself kicking off against the porch to distract himself as they swung back and forth.

“I bet you and Ethan could handle me.” She smirked and waggled her eyebrows. “Or Aiden.”

Isaac laughed, but grew serious a little while later. “Do me a favor and please don’t mention me and Ethan or me and Stiles together as a couple, okay? That’s not how it is and I’d be embarrassed if people got the wrong idea.”

“Okay,” she answered. Then her face lit up. “Ooh, if you and Stiles aren’t a couple, do you think I could get him to have sex with Aiden while I watch?”

Isaac coughed and choked. When he regained the ability to breathe he said, “Stiles definitely wouldn’t be into that. Neither would Aiden.”

“Dammit! Oh well, maybe they’ll take me deer hunting.”
Isaac spent longer than expected talking to Malia. Eventually they got into a discussion about their families and Malia admitted she had accidentally killed her mother and little sister on the night of the full moon eight years earlier. It was a gut wrenching conversation and all Isaac could think to do to comfort her was place a hand on her back and try to soothe her the way he would have a packmate. It felt oddly right when she accepted the gesture and cuddled against his chest.

By the time Isaac left Malia’s house it was nearing sunset and he was sure of the answer he would give to Scott about Malia joining the pack.

Isaac considered calling Stiles to come pick him up, or maybe even Ethan so he could see his new motorcycle, but instead Isaac decided a leisurely walk by himself would be nice. The past few days had been a whirlwind of emotion and activity and Isaac appreciated the opportunity to be alone with his thoughts, without any sense of urgency or anywhere he needed to be as he strolled home.

It was fully dark and he was just turning onto his block when Lydia called him.

“Hey,” Isaac said cheerfully as he answered the call.

“My! Are you at home?!” Lydia sounded panicked and had blurted the question out in a rush.

“Not yet, almost. What’s wrong?”

“It’s Stiles.”

Isaac’s heart leapt to his throat. “What about him?”

“He’s in danger, serious danger...Isaac, it feels like he’s going to die.”

Chapter End Notes

I hope you guys enjoyed this chapter and don’t mind the cliffhanger. It was a bit plot heavy and sets the groundwork for several future chapters, so please let me know what you think if you have a chance.

Also, I’m shit at naming my stories and have never been happy with the “Making up for Lost Time” title. I’m considering changing it to “Iron Claws and Soft Hearts.” Feedback and opinions on that would be very welcome. Also, do you think it would confuse readers? I feel like the ‘Iron Claws’ part would make it pretty obvious this is the same story, but I don’t want people to accidentally lose track of the story.
Heads up, there's a good bit of violence and some fairly graphic descriptions in this chapter.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Iron Claws and Fragile Hearts

Chapter 26: Broken

It was dark and Isaac was just turning onto his block when Lydia called him.

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“No yet, almost. What’s wrong?”

“It’s Stiles.”

Isaac’s heart leapt to his throat. “What about him?”

“He’s in danger, serious danger...Isaac, it feels like he’s going to die.”

Isaac gulped, drawing as much air as he could into lungs as he hung up the phone and shoved it into his pocket. He sprinted down the sidewalk at supernatural speed, racing toward the McCall house.

Isaac blinked in confusion as the driveway came into view. It was illuminated by an outdoor light and teeming with what seemed to be thousands of small, jittering black blobs – insects. The buzzing hum of their wings was discernible over the thundering of Isaac’s feet on the pavement.

Isaac veered off the sidewalk, cutting through the grass and making a beeline for the house. The bugs were in the grass too. Some crunched under his feet as he ran while others jumped and swarmed around his legs. Grasshoppers, he noted as he spared a glance at the creatures clinging to his pants.

Stiles’ Jeep was in the driveway, blanketed by as many swarming pests as were occupying every other square inch of the property. Isaac deviated from his course enough to bolt by the vehicle, scanning to make sure Stiles wasn’t inside. He wasn’t.

Isaac already had his keys in his hand as he closed in on the front door – No! Fumbling with the lock and knob would take too long. His hand closed in a fist around the keys as he slammed into the door, punching a hole through the center. He let out a rumbling growl, his wolf taking over as he tore with clawed fingers through the panels of wood and into the house, accompanied by a barrage of grasshoppers.

Isaac ignored the throb and burn in his hands and arms as well as the wet trickle in his palm from the keys puncturing his skin. He growled and tossed them away as he snapped his head back and forth, searching for his vulnerable packmate. His instinct was to run through the house until he located
Stiles, but he forced himself to stop and search by sound and smell instead. *Upstairs. Scott’s room.*

Isaac barreled up the stairs and down the hall. “Stiles! Stiles!”

Isaac screeched to a halt as he entered Scott’s room. Stiles was standing just outside the mountain ash circle in the center of the room that surrounded Scott’s bed, where Scott was lying, tranced out atop his bloodstained bedding. There was a glint of steel as Stiles turned and faced Isaac, a long kitchen knife in his hand.

“Stiles?” Isaac asked, a chill running up his spine as he noticed a glowing yellow stone hanging from Stiles’ neck. It was the druid amulet they had seen that afternoon in Ezra’s parlor. The artifact was humming with power, emitting an ultrasonic whine Isaac was sure would have been inaudible with human ears. Isaac’s fangs extended and a quiet growl erupted from the back of his throat.

“Not now, pup, wait your turn.” The voice was Stiles’ but the cruel and sneering tone wasn’t. “Your alpha dies first.”

Not-Stiles raised his other hand, the one not holding the butcher knife, fingers spread and palm up. The glow and hum from the amulet intensified and all at once Isaac’s legs shot out from under him, sending him crashing face first to the floor.

Isaac yelped as his chin slammed against the ground and his fangs ripped through his lips. He hissed and spat out blood along with a few pieces of flesh as he climbed back to his feet. He was nauseated and lightheaded from the pain and hot blood gushed down his chin and throat, soaking his shirt. Yet none of it mattered, not when Stiles was stepping over the mountain ash barrier and lifting the butcher knife with both hands over Scott’s chest.

“Stiles no!” Isaac screamed and hurtled forward, aware in the back of his mind that his action would be useless but unable to resist the instinct to protect Scott.

Isaac shrieked as he crashed against the electrified mountain ash barrier. He fell backward, slumping to the floor and watching helplessly as Stiles plunged the knife toward Scott’s chest.

In a flash of motion too quick even for Isaac’s preternaturally keen vision, Scott’s arms shot up and he caught Stiles’ wrists in his hands. There was a sickening crunch as opposing momentum collided and Stiles’ human arms snapped against werewolf strength.

Isaac heaved and swallowed back bile as Stiles’ agonized scream and Scott’s alpha roar split the air and ripped through Isaac’s body.

Scott sat up, still clutching Stiles’ wrists in his hands. Stiles had gone limp against him and the bed, held up only by Scott’s hands as he trembled and sobbed. The knife had fallen harmlessly against the mattress next to Scott and the amulet was no longer glowing. There was no doubt that it was Stiles, not the darach, pleading with Scott to let go.

Scott didn’t let go. There was another series of panic-inducing crunches as Scott crumpled Stiles’ wrists in his hands like he was balling up paper.

“SCOTT STOP!” Isaac screamed, hurling himself against the mountain ash barrier, rabid to get through and pry Scott away from Stiles.

Scott turned his blazing alpha-red eyes on Isaac and growled, the sound long and ferocious, like he meant to tear Isaac in half when he was done with Stiles.

“Iron...Claw,” Stiles whispered, struggling to get the words out between gasping breaths.
Of course it was Iron Claw, but he was in Scott’s body. Isaac just had to get through to his alpha and bring him back. He took a deep breath and howled as loud as he could, infusing it with the essence of pack.

Iron Claw snarled at Isaac and adjusted his grip on Stiles, holding him by the throat as he raised his other hand menacingly. He locked his fiery crimson gaze on Isaac and the corners of his mouth curled into a smile as claws erupted from his fingertips.

_Oh god, he’s going to kill Stiles in front of me._

“Wait!” Isaac shouted, fighting back the rising terror in his gut. “You need him.”

Iron Claw hesitated and tilted his head at Isaac, loosening his grip enough to allow Stiles to take a few gasping breaths.

Isaac’s mind whirled to come up with a solution in the few additional seconds he had just bought.

_Why does Iron Claw need Stiles? Why does Iron Claw need Stiles?!
_  
_“He can let you out. I can’t. But _he_ can.” Isaac swallowed, ignoring the way Stiles was already shaking his head. He played a hunch. “Besides, killing him won’t do you any good. You need werewolf power. Like mine.” He flashed his golden eyes at Iron Claw. “Come and take it.”
_  
_“Isaac no!” Stiles shouted with more strength than Isaac thought he had left. He smelled so broken and hurt. The scent of his suffering was all Isaac could smell.
_  
_“It’s okay. I have a plan,” Isaac said, forcing fear out of his voice and confidence in its place. _Try not to get slaughtered until you can grab Stiles and run away_ was a plan, right?
_  
_Iron Claw shook Stiles and dangled him over the edge of the bed so that the toe of his shoe was near the mystical barrier. Iron Claw wouldn’t be able to use Stiles or an object to break the ring; it had to be done consciously by a non-supernatural.
_  
_“Isaac...”
_  
_“Do it, Stiles, trust me.”
_  
_The seconds seemed to crawl to a stop as Stiles extended his foot and pushed the mountain ash away. As the grains parted, the shield of energy evaporated. Isaac was more keenly aware of the process than ever before as the repulsive force of the field was replaced by a dark magnetism, a void surrounding Iron Claw and making all the tiny hairs on Isaac’s body stand on end.
_  
_Iron Claw roared. The blast shook the whole house and transformed Isaac’s bones into overcooked spaghetti. The roar became a growl as Iron Claw twisted his open mouth and sank his fangs into Stiles’ shoulder.
_  
_“NOOOO!”
_  
_Isaac lunged forward, this time sailing over the incomplete ring of dust and gouging his claws into Scott’s – Iron Claw’s! Iron Claw’s! – face. He tore deep gashes across his cheeks and brow and dragged his claws over his eyes, confident that he had at least temporarily blinded him.
_  
_Iron Claw howled and flung Stiles and Isaac away from him with shocking strength.
_  
_Isaac crashed against Scott’s bedroom wall with enough force to knock the wind out of him and
leave him in a dazed heap on the floor. He was snapped back to the crushing reality of the situation a moment later, however, by the sound of Stiles screaming next to him. He was thrashing violently on the floor, his swollen, mangled arms flailing and smacking against the gushing, bubbling wound on his shoulder. The odor of burning flesh hung in the air.

“Gaaahhh! Nooo!” Stiles sobbed and bit his lip. “Ohhh god, no, nooo, NOOOO! JUST FUCKIN’ KILL ME!”

Isaac scrambled to Stiles’ side but his screams abruptly died with a harsh, hacking gurgle. He went completely still.

“Stiles!”

As Isaac’s fingertips grazed Stiles’ neck, pain erupted in the backs of Isaac’s thighs and he was knocked forward on top of Stiles.

Isaac turned and shifted into a crouching position, hunching over Stiles protectively and growling as Scott – Iron Claw – swung at him. Isaac raised his hands to parry the blow but was startled by the force behind it. He succeeded in defending his face, but the impact sent him sprawling sideways against the floor.

Scott roared again and raised a clawed hand to smash Isaac’s skull.

Isaac had just enough time to roll out of the way but was forced to roll away from Stiles.

Isaac sprang to his feet, adrenaline pumping. He slashed at the side of Iron Claw’s body – Scott’s body, his instincts protested – shredding the t-shirt he was wearing and clawing deep enough to scrape ribs.

There was another growl and what felt like a battering ram slammed against Isaac’s hip, propelling him into the air and hurrying against the opposite wall.

Every bone in Isaac’s body would have been broken by the impact if he were human, but he wasn’t. He ignored the stabbing torrents of pain and climbed back to his feet. As Iron Claw charged toward him, Isaac darted sideways and sprinted out of the room.

It was a relief when, as anticipated, Iron Claw thundered down the hall after Isaac, leaving Stiles alone. If Isaac could just lead him outside and somehow evade him, maybe they could all still survive this.

That didn’t happen. As Isaac reached the landing at the end of the hall, claws slashed across his back, knocking him off balance and sending him careening down the stairs. Isaac cried out as every step assaulted a different part of his aching, exhausted body.

The back of Isaac’s head slammed against the floor as he came to rest on his back at the base of the stairs. He panicked as his vision blurred and his ears were assaulted by the buzzing of grasshoppers. They were all over him in an instant, crawling in his hair, on his face, down his shirt. In his panic, he slashed his own chest as he swatted at them with claws still extended.

When Isaac’s vision cleared, Scott’s face peering down at him from the head of the stairs was the first thing he saw. It was bloodied where Isaac had attacked him, but it was already healed and Isaac didn’t know what felt worse, the fact that he had done that to Scott, or the fact that it had barely slowed him down. He locked eyes with Isaac and let out a rumbling, howling laugh as he leapt from the top of the stairs all the way down and directly on top of Isaac.
Isaac shrieked as one of his legs broke under the weight of Iron Claw’s impact. He whimpered and the blood ran cold in his veins. It was over. He couldn’t get up, couldn’t get away or fight back. In another few minutes he and Stiles would both be dead and a monster would be on the loose.

Iron Claw growled in Isaac’s face. Scott growled in Isaac’s face. Scott’s face was the last thing Isaac would see, furious and hateful, so completely not Scott. Iron Claw reared back, arm raised and claws still dripping with blood.

Suddenly, there was a percussive pop and an electrified buzz as two wired darts blasted against Scott’s chest. The alpha howled and convulsed as current poured into his body.

Isaac swatted grasshoppers away from his face and peered to the side. It was the sheriff! He was standing in the smashed-open doorway, a taser clutched in his hands and a resolute look on his face.

A few seconds later Scott’s unconscious body fell to the ground on top of Isaac.

“Are you okay?” The sheriff knelt beside Isaac and rolled Scott off of him. “Lydia called me.”

“Stiles—” Isaac coughed and gagged as a grasshopper jumped into his mouth.

The sheriff helped Isaac sit up as he spat the bug out, the action making him aware of his gaping, torn lips for the first time since the injury had happened.

“Upstairs. Stiles is upstairs.” Isaac wiped at his oozing face with one hand and pointed with the other.

The sheriff climbed around Isaac and rushed up the stairs.

Isaac’s voice was broken as he called after him, aware every second might count. “Call an ambulance.”

The sheriff looked stricken as he pulled his phone from his pocket. A few moments later, Isaac heard the 911 dispatcher answer in the background as the sheriff dashed down the hall, calling for Stiles in a voice that made Isaac’s chest hurt.

“Isaac?” Scott groaned and tried to get up but collapsed to the floor again, his muscles incapacitated from the taser. “Why does everything hurt?...And what’s with all these grasshoppers?”

“Shut up,” Isaac barked, his reaction visceral.

Scott gasped and hauled himself to a sitting position, fear dripping off of him as he asked in a slow, scared voice, “Why do I taste Stiles’ blood in my mouth?”

“Because you bit him!” Isaac roared. He slapped himself in a frenzy, crushing bugs beneath his clothes as he glared at the other boy. “You bit him, Scott! You bit him!”

“Is he...?”

“I don’t know!” Terror stabbed Isaac’s chest at the uncertainty. Was Stiles dead?

“I don’t know,” Isaac repeated more quietly. He closed his eyes and listened, desperately searching for the sound of Stiles’ heartbeat. Warmth flooded Isaac’s body and he quivered with joy as he found it, weak but audible. Only...

Isaac’s eyes snapped open as he heard something else next to Stiles’ heart, something humming and whining, too high-pitched for human ears. The warmth drained from Isaac’s body.
“What’s that?” Scott asked.

“Druid amulet.” Isaac’s words were clipped, his lips pressing back together as soon they were out. He was still trembling but with rage now, nauseated with worry, and physically and emotionally wracked with pain. If he wasn’t careful he was either going to scream at Scott, throw up on him, or dissolve into a sobbing mess in his arms.

They were silent for a few seconds then Scott spoke, voice heavy with guilt. “So he’s going to turn...because of me.”

“Or die,” Isaac answered, tone more hostile than any he had ever used with Scott, even when they were briefly rivals after Isaac had first been bitten.

Scott sighed, his anguish and distress cloaking the room. He dropped his eyes to the ground, but reached for Isaac’s broken leg as he seemed to notice it for the first time.

“Don’t touch me!” Isaac snarled and leaned over, blocking Scott’s access with his hands since jerking his leg away might have re-injured it and slowed the healing. He needed to be able to walk when the ambulance arrived.

Scott looked up at him, face tortured with emotions. “I need to help. You– you’re hurt...you’re bleeding and broken.”

“Yeah, you’ve done enough.”

“Isaac–”

“Scott.” Isaac could sense that Scott was close to breaking down completely and that was not okay. Isaac was not going to sit here and comfort Scott after what he had done. “If you want to do something to help, go upstairs, get back inside your mountain ash, and ask the sheriff very nicely to re-close the circle.”

Scott nodded, looking every bit like a kicked puppy as he stood on shaky legs and carefully stepped over Isaac, unavoidably crunching grasshoppers in the process.

Fuck! The house was as fucked up and broken as the people inside it.

“Oh christ!” The declaration came a few moments later from a young paramedic who was peering through the wrecked front door. “Don’t try to move, kid. We have a stretcher coming.”

“Not me, I’m fine,” Isaac said, waving the guy off and motioning up the stairs. “My friend’s unconscious. He needs help.”

“We’ll check out your friend in a second but we need to get you stabili–”

Isaac fisted the front of his shirt and yanked him close. “Go take care of my friend. Now.”

The paramedic nodded, wide-eyed as Isaac released him. A few moments later a stretcher was pushed through the door and a second paramedic appeared behind it.

“Upstairs, Lauren,” the first paramedic said.

“What about him?” she asked, pointing at Isaac.

“He’s...uh, fine for now. A lot stronger than he looks. It sounds like his friend is more urgent.”
“I am fine,” Isaac assured the second paramedic, giving her what would normally have been his sweet smile. The effect was probably undermined by his split lip and all the blood covering his mouth and throat.

Isaac dragged himself out of the way and hobbled to his feet against their protests. Since his broken leg had been his most severe and debilitating injury, Isaac’s super healing had prioritized that over healing his slashed back, lingering mouth wound, and countless other scrapes and bruises. It didn’t feel broken anymore, just very sore.

Isaac could feel the skin on his back starting to knit together as the paramedics went upstairs with their equipment. He was lucky. Injuries inflicted by alpha claws sometimes took a very long time to heal. However, there was a definite psychological component to it, and the headspace Isaac was currently in – angry, worried, and jittery with adrenaline – didn’t seem to be standing in the way of his healing. It may have had something to do with pack, Isaac pondered as he heard the paramedics attending to Stiles. His packmate needed him to heal so he healed. He had to be ready to leave when they got back downstairs with Stiles.

Isaac hurried down the front hall to the laundry room. He was relieved to find a basket of clean clothes sitting on top of the dryer. He rifled through it and found one of his shirts and a pair of pants, then carefully wrapped them up in a towel so he wouldn’t bleed on them. He could get cleaned up after he got to the hospital. In the meantime he took off his shirt and shook the bugs out, then grabbed a second towel to wipe away the squishy bits and dab up the worst of his wet blood before putting the ruined shirt back on.

He was just coming back up the hall when the paramedics descended the stairs with Stiles on the stretcher. The sheriff followed along behind them, a stoic expression on his face. It was belied by his heart pounding and the fear smothering his scent.

Isaac fell in place behind the sheriff as they all left the house, grasshoppers still jumping and springing near, and occasionally underneath, their feet. Isaac had to hand it to the paramedics, this must have seemed freaky as hell but they remained calm and professional. As the paramedics loaded Stiles into the ambulance, Isaac and the sheriff attempted to keep as many of the grasshoppers as possible from hitching a ride to the hospital.

“Do you know what all this is about?” the sheriff whispered to Isaac, indicating the hopping menaces.

Isaac shrugged and frowned as he whispered back, “Darach stuff I think.”

They both cast apprehensive glances at Stiles. A high-pitched whine was still emanating from the amulet on his chest, but it was barely glowing now and might have been passed off as a trick of light reflecting on an unusual stone. Isaac didn’t want to risk it. He climbed into the ambulance and crowded around the paramedics to get to Stiles.

“Sir, you need to sit down,” Lauren said, her face stern. Isaac was amused as the male paramedic by contrast gave him a wide berth and radiated anxiety.

“Just a second please,” Isaac said before wrapping his arms around Stiles’ unconscious body and hugging him, carefully avoiding jostling his bitten shoulder or broken arms. As he pulled away he discreetly tucked the amulet under the folds of Stiles’ flannel shirt. “Thank you.”

Lauren smiled at him but nodded toward an empty seat along the wall of the vehicle. Isaac took it without further protest and the sheriff climbed in and sat in a seat along the opposite wall. A little while later they were on their way, with Lauren monitoring Stiles’ condition and the other paramedic
reluctantly crouching in front of Isaac to examine him.

“I thought you were hurt worse than this. Where’d all this blood come from?”

“Uhh...” Isaac thought about saying it was Stiles’ blood, but unless he had bitten Stiles that wouldn’t jibe with all the blood on his mouth and throat.

“I already took his statement,” the sheriff said, tone resonating authority. “Leave the boy alone. He’s been through enough.”

The paramedic grumbled under his breath and continued his examination, finding no wounds to treat. Even Isaac’s lips were no longer beyond the scope of something a good tube of chapstick could handle.

“Makes no sense,” he muttered, rejoining his partner at Stiles’ side.

Isaac texted Melissa to give her a heads up that they were coming and also updated Lydia, who responded immediately to say she was on her way to meet them. A few minutes later Stiles was being wheeled into the emergency room. His wrists were so severely damaged that he needed emergency surgery to try to restore blood flow to his hands.

Melissa met them in the lobby of the emergency room. Her heart sped up and her mouth gaped as she looked at Isaac.

“I’m fine,” he said.

She threw her arms around him anyway and pulled him into a tight hug, and Isaac worried he’d get blood (or bug guts) on her clothes.

“Why aren’t you in the ER too?”

“I’m fine really. I can even get a note from the paramedics if you don’t believe me.” He smirked at her, trying to lighten the mood.

“Scott?”

“Also fine.”

“...Stiles?” Her voice was tight and her heart skipped a beat.

“I was hoping you could tell me,” the sheriff said. “They’re working on him now. Can you get an update?”

“I’ll see what I can do,” she said.

Melissa left and all Isaac could do was shift around nervously in his chair, trying to think of something to say that might calm Stiles’ dad. All Isaac could offer were assurances that Stiles’ heart was still beating. He’d been focusing on the sound since he’d been wheeled away.

“Can you hear what they’re saying?”

Isaac licked his lips. They still tasted raw and metallic but were otherwise intact. “His hands are bad.”

“How bad?”
Isaac swallowed. He didn’t want to be the one to give this information to Stiles’ dad. He didn’t want to hear it at all.

“They have a special surgeon coming but...”

“But?”

“Uhm.”

“Isaac, spit it out!”

Other patients in the ER turned and looked at them – but fuck them! This was a hospital. People freaked out sometimes.

“They’re saying the nerves are unresponsive and the tissue’s dying. It may be too late.”

“No...No.” The sheriff shook his head. “He’s going to be fine. He’s going to become a werewolf, right? That’ll heal him.”

“Maybe.” Isaac didn’t know if Stiles’ dad was aware of the alternative, of what happened when a bite didn’t take.

They were interrupted as Melissa returned, but she didn’t have any information that Isaac hadn’t already gotten by eavesdropping. All they could do now was wait.

“Let’s go get you cleaned up,” Melissa said to Isaac as she scanned his disheveled appearance, eyes lingering on the clean bundle of clothes in his hands. “That was good thinking. Otherwise, I’d have stuck you in one of our backless hospital gowns.”

The sheriff laughed as Isaac scowled at her. He nevertheless eagerly followed her down a hallway to the main part of the hospital and into an unoccupied room. It had a shower and Isaac was so pleased about that fact he wanted to hug her again – but he didn’t. He was still covered in blood and bug guts after all.

When Isaac was done cleaning up and changing, he rejoined the sheriff in the emergency room. Lydia was there now too and a little while later, Melissa came back with another non-update about Stiles. He was still in surgery.

While they were all together Isaac took the opportunity to fill everyone in on what had happened. The sheriff assured Melissa he’d have an officer go by her house and seal off the front door as best they could until it could be fixed. Isaac apologized for breaking it but they all agreed it had been for the best since it had given the sheriff and the EMTs quicker access to the house, not to mention served the original purpose of getting Isaac to Stiles and Scott faster.

They ended up waiting for almost four hours, during which time Isaac and Lydia went to the hospital cafeteria. Eventually a doctor informed them that Stiles’ emergency surgery had been a success and that they had restored blood flow to his hands; however, he would need several additional surgeries to further repair the damage and it was likely he would permanently experience some degree of numbness and limited dexterity.

The sheriff took the news better than expected, and Isaac suspected it was because he was still counting on Stiles becoming a werewolf and healing. Isaac didn’t have the heart to tell him that a second option existed, and Melissa and Lydia also remained silent on that point.

Melissa took them to Stiles’ room soon after. Isaac was alarmed as he neared the room and heard the
high-pitched buzzing of the druid amulet. Sure enough when they entered the room, Isaac spotted it still around Stiles’ neck, though the actual stone and amulet part were resting on the clavicle of his uninjured shoulder rather than down over his chest.

Stiles’ injured shouldered, where he’d been bitten, was covered in a thick, square bandage. Isaac smelled the antiseptic and medication the hospital had applied to the wound, but beneath those scents the stench of burning flesh was still present and Isaac also heard a squishing, bubbly sizzle coming from the injury site. It turned his stomach. He was grateful he couldn’t see it.

Both Stiles’ arms were covered fingers-to-shoulder in a complicated snarl of splints, tape, and casts with metal rods poking through here and there. His arms were immobilized up and out from his body, affixed to a traction system over his bed.

Everyone gathered around Stiles’ bed and took turns carefully hugging his still unconscious form, patting and squeezing his uninjured torso while avoiding his arms.

“We have a problem,” Melissa said after everyone was done. She reached over and tapped the faintly glowing stone near Stiles’ head.

“Yeah, I was gonna say – why is he still wearing that thing?” Isaac asked. The whining hum was already setting his teeth on edge, but he knew he was the only one who could hear it.

“Look.” She picked it up and moved it freely around Stiles’ neck and over his chest. Then she started to lift it over his head but abruptly stopped.

“Why’d you stop?” Lydia asked.

“I didn’t,” she said, motioning for Lydia to take it. “It did.”

Lydia’s eyes widened as she too tried to lift it over Stiles’ head and also stopped. “It feels like it’s a part of his neck.”

Isaac tried next, turning the amulet to and fro and attempting to pull it over Stiles’ head from different angles. Whichever three or four inches of the amulet’s silver chain were the last to be in contact with Stiles’ skin, whether that was over his throat or on the back or sides of his neck, seemed to bind mystically in place. It felt like Isaac would rip Stiles’ skin, maybe his whole head off, if he kept pulling.

“Let’s cut it or break it,” the sheriff said during his turn at trying to remove the enchanted amulet from his son’s body.

“No!” Lydia rushed forward and placed a hand over the sheriff’s on the chain. “We shouldn’t. I just know that’s a bad idea.”

“Like it could kill him?” Isaac asked, recognizing the look in her eyes.

She nodded. “I think so.”

The sheriff cautiously laid the amulet back on Stiles’ good shoulder. “I’m surprised the doctors didn’t try to take it off.”

Isaac was curious about that too. They had removed all the rest of Stiles’ clothing.

“I discovered it first,” Melissa said. “I told everyone it was a religious item and that you’d sue if it was removed from his body, even for a moment. Since it wasn’t directly in the way and could be
repositioned as needed, everyone just worked around it.”

“You know Stiles isn’t religious about anything but video games and sci-fi movies, right?” the sheriff said with a laugh.

Melissa shrugged. “If anyone asks, he’s into neo-druidism.”

Isaac cringed. That hit a little too close to home.

“The best lies contain some truth,” Lydia remarked.

“So how long until he wakes up?” the sheriff asked Melissa.

She exchanged glances with Isaac and Lydia. They were clearly all thinking the same thing.

“The anesthesia should wear off in about the next thirty or forty minutes,” Melissa answered.

Isaac frowned to himself and eyed the glowing, humming artifact around his packmate’s neck. Stiles wasn’t going to wake up, at least not in forty minutes.

Chapter End Notes

Fun fact, grasshoppers that swarm are basically just locusts. So technically the McCall house was under assault by darach-induced locusts, but I felt like Isaac would probably just call them grasshoppers.

I really hope you guys enjoyed this chapter. I’m trying to hone my ability to write action and suspense, so feedback and criticism on that are most welcome. As well as of course general feedback and opinions always being very much appreciated.
Wait, What Happened?

Chapter Notes

I’m not sure exactly what disclaimers to put on this chapter without ruining it with spoilers, but just in general it has some very adult and somewhat kinky content, as well as just a fairly dark tone. Bottom line: Isaac’s not in a good place emotionally right now, but it gets better.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Iron Claws and Fragile Hearts

Chapter 27: Wait, What Happened?

Isaac woke up around noon on Monday feeling miserable. As expected, Stiles had not yet regained consciousness and Isaac, Lydia, and Stiles’ dad had spent all night sitting by his bedside. Eventually Lydia had gone home around daybreak and shortly thereafter Melissa’s shift had ended and she had insisted that Isaac come home with her. Stiles’ dad had stayed, saying he would just go straight to work from the hospital when it was time.

Isaac felt awful for the sheriff. He had spent all night expecting Stiles to wake up and had been in a perpetual state of worry and disappointment. Now he was planning to work a full day after all that. Isaac wanted to suggest that he take time off, but it really wasn’t his place and he also suspected the sheriff intended to use work to distract himself from Stiles’ condition. Isaac himself had still wanted to go to school that morning for the very same reason. However, Melissa had insisted that he get some sleep and since Isaac only had one exam that day, an English test in the afternoon, they had decided he would go for a half day.

Isaac tried to pull himself together as he showered and got ready. It wasn’t easy. His pack was falling apart and the most important relationship in Isaac’s life was broken. When Isaac and Melissa had gotten home that morning, Scott had called for Isaac as soon as he walked through the remnants of the front door. Isaac hadn’t responded and he hadn’t accompanied Melissa to Scott’s room to let him out of the mountain ash circle. Scott had been practically hysterical as he asked his mother about Stiles that morning and he had left for the hospital almost as soon as he was free from the mystic circle.

Almost as soon as he was free.

First, Scott had tried to see Isaac. He had knocked on Isaac’s door, pleaded with Isaac to let him in so they could talk...Isaac couldn’t do it, couldn’t find the will to even acknowledge Scott. Instead he had masked his scent and hidden his heartbeat until Scott had given up and left. Isaac couldn’t bear letting Scott hear or smell how upset he was, how angry he was. It was a relief that he didn’t have to, that he had learned these new skills from Ethan and that Scott was the kind of person who would respect Isaac’s need for space, who wouldn’t just barge into Isaac’s room and demand to talk...even though he had every right, even though Scott was Isaac’s alpha and Isaac was living in his house.

Derek certainly wouldn’t have backed off or put up with Isaac hiding from him. He would have yelled at Isaac, kicked him out, maybe kicked his ass. Isaac’s father wouldn’t have put up with it either. Isaac wouldn’t have been able to walk straight for a week if he had pulled a stunt like that
with his father. But Scott wasn’t like them. He wasn’t abusive. He didn’t take his pain out on Isaac. He didn’t make weak, selfish choices.

When Isaac returned to his room after his shower he found a note from Melissa taped to his bedroom door telling him that an exterminator would be coming to handle the grasshopper problem and that a repairman would be coming to fix the front door and that he shouldn’t freak out if he heard them. She also called his attention to some leftovers in the fridge and gave him permission to take her car to school as long he had it back in time for her shift that night.

Isaac frowned and his stomach tightened. Melissa was taking care of him even under these circumstances, even with her house wrecked and her son possessed, even with Isaac treating her son like crap. Isaac was an asshole. He didn’t deserve to be anywhere near the McCallss.

After getting dressed, Isaac forced himself to check his phone. As feared, he had several messages from Scott. He was relieved, however, when the messages didn’t directly address what had happened the night before or the fact that Isaac was freezing Scott out. Instead, the texts were short updates about Stiles – because of course Scott would keep Isaac in the loop – saying that he still hadn’t woken up and that the doctors had no medical explanation for why.

Isaac knew why. It was because Stiles was hexed by a dark druid artifact and may or may not have also been in the process of turning into a werewolf. Isaac and Lydia had tried to call Deaton the night before, hoping he might have some insight, but he hadn’t answered.

Isaac reluctantly texted Scott back asking if he had tried Deaton. Isaac hated how happy it probably made Scott that he was responding, not because Isaac didn’t want to make Scott happy, but because it was too easy to pretend last night hadn’t happened and because it felt dishonest, like Isaac was also pretending all the crap he was feeling wasn’t there and that he and Scott could just move on from it; they couldn’t.

Isaac also had a couple of texts from Ethan, but before he could check them Scott was already responding, telling Isaac that Deaton was out of town on some druid wilderness retreat and Scott didn’t think he had cell service.

Isaac read Ethan’s messages next.

Ethan: *So uh, you and your whole pack are absent today...should I be preparing for the next apocalypse? [pair of nervous eyes emoji]*

A few minutes later:

Ethan: *Srsly tho...Let me know if I can help.*

Isaac didn’t respond. He didn’t feel up to joking back and he sure as hell wasn’t going to tell Ethan what was happening.

Isaac ate a small plate of the leftovers and went to school. He arrived about fifteen minutes before his English class would start, and spent ten of those minutes cramming for the test in the car. The exam went better than expected. Concentrating on it helped Isaac block out the mess of anxiety and guilt he felt about the situation with his pack, and he felt confident that he had done well. Unfortunately, as soon as he was finished with the test and without a distraction, his emotions spiraled out of control again.

By the time class was over, Isaac was trapped in a cycle of blaming himself for not being able to protect Stiles and hating himself for being such a dick to Scott.
However, as Isaac was on his way to his next class he caught a familiar scent that flooded his senses and temporarily distracted him from his grim mood.

_Ethan_

Isaac stepped out of the flow of foot traffic and turned around. Ethan was coming out of a classroom at the end of the hall. Isaac heard the change in his heart rate as he detected Isaac’s presence and his head snapped up. They locked eyes and Ethan smiled, bright and genuine the way he had on Friday night when they’d had sex – and _fuck_! now their sex was all Isaac could think about. He was still thinking about it as Ethan crossed the hall and came to stand next to him.

“I thought you were absent,” Ethan said, clearly delighted that Isaac wasn’t.

Ethan wrapped his fingers around Isaac’s wrist in that way that had become blissfully familiar now, and Isaac gasped, unprepared for the flurry of emotions it evoked. The sharp distress Isaac had felt since he’d woken up suddenly abated and a tremor of relief shook its way through his body.

“I just got here,” Isaac answered, struggling against the terrifying impulse to lean over and nuzzle against Ethan’s chest. All he wanted in that moment was to be wrapped up in Ethan’s arms.

Isaac chalked it up to distress about his pack. He felt like he was coming untethered from them, losing the supernatural bonds that usually kept him grounded and calm. He had lost Allison completely. She had ripped herself away from the pack wholly and abruptly, leaving a gaping hole where she should have been. The situation with Stiles was even worse. He was in a coma, maybe dying or maybe losing himself to an evil spirit, leaving his pack bond with Isaac suffused with pain and uncertainty. Most devastating of all, however, were the feelings of alienation, anger, guilt, and fear that surrounded Isaac’s link with Scott, with his alpha.

Isaac wondered if this was a taste of what it felt like to be an omega, to lose all links to a pack. Isaac wanted to drape himself around Ethan and beg for reassurance, but maybe that was selfish, maybe this was how Ethan felt all the time. Then Isaac remembered _why_ Ethan was an omega. He was bad. He was Isaac’s enemy. He was an enemy of Isaac’s pack. It didn’t matter if Isaac’s feelings had changed, Ethan hadn’t.

Isaac looked around nervously. His pack may have been absent, but this was high school. People talked. He couldn’t afford to be seen all but holding hands with Ethan, whispering to him and smiling like an idiot.

“Locker room,” Ethan said, apparently correctly interpreting Isaac’s concern.

Or had he? Maybe Ethan had simply smelled Isaac’s arousal. Maybe he wanted to take Isaac somewhere private so they could mess around.

Isaac found himself hoping that was exactly what was happening as he followed Ethan, almost but not quite walking with him, eyes raking over Ethan’s broad, muscular back and narrow hips, memorizing the way his ass moved as he walked.

“What happened?” Ethan asked, spinning around and facing Isaac as soon as they were in the locker room alone.

“What do you mean?” Isaac asked, disappointed by the look of concern on Ethan’s face, by the way he wasn’t pushing Isaac against the nearest locker and ravishing him.

“Dude, you’re a mess.”
Isaac huffed and folded his arms. Real nice. Isaac was lusting all over Ethan and Ethan was just standing there judging him. This had been a bad idea. They weren’t friends; they could never be friends. Even being fuck buddies was probably too complicated given their history. Isaac needed to stop making bad decisions where Ethan was concerned. Ethan was a murderer. He was dangerous. He was...suddenly standing in Isaac’s personal space – and fuck! Isaac liked it every bit as much as he had been expecting.

The bell rang, signaling they were late for class. Neither of them reacted.

“What happened?” Ethan asked again, quieter this time as he reached out and unfolded Isaac’s arms, as though physically tearing down the wall Isaac had just put up between them.

It worked. Isaac’s chest fluttered as he got lost in Ethan’s warm chocolate eyes. His hands tingled where Ethan’s fingers held them, reminding Isaac just how good Ethan’s touches could be. And god his smell! Isaac drew it deep into his lungs, letting it soothe away the constricting net of anxiety that had been knotted around his body since the night before.

“I had a bad weekend.” Isaac answered, stepping closer until his arms were pressed between the fronts of their bodies and he could feel Ethan’s body heat on his skin. Isaac didn’t want this. He didn’t want to feel calmer being close to Ethan. He didn’t want Ethan’s attention to feel this good. But it was too late. Ethan already had this power over him and Isaac didn’t have the strength to fight it in his vulnerable state.

“What happened?” Ethan murmured a third time, releasing Isaac’s hands and pressing his palms over Isaac’s hips instead. He gently guided Isaac backward until Isaac was against a locker, until the front of Ethan’s body was a grounding force holding Isaac in place, holding Isaac together.

“Stiles is in the hospital.”

“Fuck! What happened?” Concern flared across Ethan’s face and Isaac didn’t need to check if it was genuine. It was. Ethan cared what happened to the people Isaac cared about. Fuck. That was such a bad sign.

Isaac smirked at him. “You are capable of saying other things, right? Because so far this conversation kinda sucks.” Or, you know, maybe it’s the best one I’ve had since my alpha tried to kill me last night. One or the other.

Ethan smiled playfully and shook his head. “What happened?”

Isaac sighed. “I can’t tell you.” Before he thought about it, his hands slid around Ethan’s waist, a subconscious gesture to ease any sting from his words, to make sure Ethan didn’t pull away. Isaac needed to stop. Ethan wasn’t supposed to make him feel better. They weren’t supposed to care about each other’s feelings.

“Okay,” Ethan answered, hands traveling up Isaac’s sides. He glanced at Isaac’s lips.

“And Allison left.” Isaac licked his lips just in case. He couldn’t bring himself to kiss Ethan, but there was no way he had the strength to hold back if Ethan kissed him.

“Left?” Ethan cocked an eyebrow and pulled back slightly.

“Yeah...maybe for good.”

Ethan’s scent flared with happiness and just like that the spell between them was broken and Isaac shoved him away.
“You prick! That’s not good news!”

Ethan held up his hands and backed away, giving Isaac his space. “She almost killed you and my brother. Sorry if I’m not her biggest fan.”

Isaac glared at him, trying to ignore the way Ethan had lumped Isaac in with his brother – which actually it was legitimately offensive being lumped into anything with Aiden, but also – what the fuck?! “Is there anything I can do?” That damn concerned look was back on Ethan’s face.

Isaac opened his mouth to say no, but jumped as the locker room door was suddenly flung open and their new cross country teammate, Liam Dunbar, stormed into the room, anger boiling off of him. “Goddamn mother-fucking asshole!” Liam slammed his fist against his thigh and glared a moment later as he turned and noticed Isaac and Ethan. The acrid burn of rage billowing off of him intensified, underlaid with just a hint of embarrassment. “What the fuck are you two doing here?”

Isaac’s muscled tensed and he had to fight to keep his claws retracted. He was already on edge and Liam’s fury was infectious. “We were just leaving.” Ethan’s hand landed on the center of Isaac’s back and Isaac calmed down as he let himself be guided toward the door.

Isaac wanted to stay and pick a fight with Liam, or at least accept the one Liam seemed to be trying to pick with them, but Liam was human and Isaac was a ball of unhappy aggression right now. He might seriously hurt Liam if he didn’t walk away. “I hate that kid,” Isaac muttered once they were in the hallway.

Ethan laughed. “Aww come on. He’s really cute, and so much fire coming from such a little guy...I dunno, it’s just sexy.”

“Yeah sure, he’s hot as fuck, but he’s a restraining order waiting to happen.” Ethan laughed again and changed the subject. “I guess we better get to class.”

“Well...we are already late.” Isaac tilted his head and shrugged, giving Ethan his best flirty smile. “And I thought you wanted to help.”

Ethan smiled back and lust sparked in his scent. “Oh I definitely want to help. What can I do?”

Isaac leaned close and whispered in Ethan’s ear. “Me.”

Isaac knew it was a lame, cheesy line, but it had the desired effect. Ethan half-sighed, half-moaned, and his hand landed on Isaac’s ass.

“At school?” Ethan seemed surprised, but open to the idea.

Excitement hummed through Isaac’s body. That was certainly a scenario to consider in the future but...

“Your place.” Isaac gave Ethan’s crotch a pointed look then re-established eye contact before continuing. “I wanna get really loud.” After listening to make sure they were alone, he crowded close to Ethan and reached down to grope him through his pants. “I wanna have to get really loud. I want you to make me howl.”
Ethan cleared his throat and placed his hand over Isaac’s on his fly, increasing the pressure and grinding back against it. “Did you also want me to walk to the parking lot with a raging boner?” He sounded more amused than annoyed.

“That sounds like your problem,” Isaac responded, squeezing until Ethan yelped and flashed blue eyes.

Isaac smirked at him and let go, watching with open interest as Ethan reached into his pants and adjusted himself before they continued down the hallway toward the exit.

The school was between Ethan’s loft and the McCall house, so Isaac accepted a ride from Ethan, preferring to leave the car at school to hide the evidence that he wasn’t there, that he was with someone he really shouldn’t have been with.

It was a surreal experience riding on the back of Ethan’s new motorcycle with him, hands wrapped around his waist and body pressed close to his. Isaac couldn’t help the memories that bubbled to the surface: him half-dead and clinging to Braeden on the back of a different motorcycle as Ethan and Aiden pursued them, intent on killing him. A couple of months ago Ethan would have killed him, and now Isaac had just asked to go home with him and get fucked.

“I’m sorry,” Ethan said, hand squeezing Isaac’s as they stopped at a red light.

“What?”

“I know what you’re thinking and I’m sorry.”

Isaac swallowed and shook his head. Once he’d succeeded in clearing it of images of Ethan and Aiden rampaging after him in mega-alpha form, he lay it against Ethan’s shoulder and closed his eyes.

There was no real point in holding that past murder attempt against Ethan right now. Scott had tried to kill Isaac just last night. Allison had tried to kill Isaac on a couple of occasions. Derek and Isaac’s father had abused Isaac if not actively tried to kill him, and it seemed likely that if Stiles survived his coma he’d try to kill Isaac at some point too. People Isaac cared about simply had a tendency to hurt and almost kill him. It was par for the course. Ethan was in good company.

Ethan’s arm was around Isaac’s waist as they rode the elevator up to Ethan’s floor. Isaac didn’t resist, just pressed his face into the crook of Ethan’s neck and let Ethan’s scent ease some of the anguish thrumming through his body. Isaac knew it was messed up being like this with Ethan, but he didn’t care. The last time they fucked, Isaac had been ashamed of himself because he still had self respect. That was destroyed now and Isaac knew he didn’t deserve to be with someone good after the way he had treated Scott, after the way he had let Stiles’ down, after the way he had never been enough for Allison. At this point he barely deserved Ethan.

“What happened?” Ethan asked once they were inside his loft and Isaac was leaning against the wall, Ethan’s hands on his forearms.

“I told you,” Isaac answered, eyes trained on Ethan’s fingers. He had the urge to ask Ethan to scratch him. He could feel the pain of the last few days bubbling beneath the surface of his skin. Maybe Ethan could let it out.

“No, you didn’t.” Ethan lifted his hand, cupping it against the side of Isaac’s throat. “Your spirit’s broken and you smell guilty as fuck. What happened?”

Isaac swallowed and forced himself to meet Ethan’s eyes. “I-I was really mean to Scott.” Isaac
whispered the next part. “I think I ruined our friendship.”

Ethan’s eyes widened at the news but then softened as he stroked his thumb along Isaac’s jawline. “I’m sure you didn’t. Scott will forgive you.”

“You don’t know that,” Isaac muttered, pulling his neck away from Ethan’s hand. “You don’t know what I did.”

“I know you, and I know Scott. He’ll forgive you.” Ethan’s hands were on Isaac’s shoulders now, squeezing to emphasize his point.

“Maybe I don’t want him to forgive me!” Isaac snapped, shoving Ethan back. “Maybe I don’t deserve it.”

“Isaac–”

“I don’t deserve any of them, Ethan!” Isaac waved his arms, refusing to let Ethan touch him. It would ease the ache and Isaac didn’t want that. He wanted to hurt.

“Isaac, come on, you–”

“Are we going to fuck or not?”

Ethan stopped and surprise flitted across his face. “You don’t seem horny.”

“Don’t tell me how I seem!” Isaac pulled his shirt over his head angrily and threw it on the floor. “Do you want me or not?”

“Well yeah, but–”

Isaac growled and tore open his pants, pushing them and his underwear down to his knees. “I said, do you want me or not?”

“I do! I do!” Ethan licked his lips and rubbed himself through his pants as he stared at Isaac’s waist. “But you’re not...”

Isaac glanced at his soft dick and waved his hand dismissively. “Doesn’t matter. We only need yours and it looks like that’s not gonna be a problem.”

Ethan raked his eyes over Isaac’s body and smirked. “Definitely not gonna be a problem.”

Isaac toed off his shoes and socks and peeled his pants and underwear the rest of the way off his legs. Ethan started undressing too, but Isaac didn’t wait. He strode out of the living room and into Ethan’s room. He climbed on the bed and got on hands and knees, his ass in the air facing the doorway.

“OH FUCK!” Ethan blurted out a few seconds later when he walked into the room.

Isaac glanced over his shoulder. Ethan was standing in the doorway, stark naked and stroking his long, thick cock. Desire and fear pooled in equal parts in Isaac’s stomach, but he refused to back down. He shook his ass provocatively and smirked at Ethan in challenge. “Are you gonna just stand there jerking off or are you gonna come fuck me?”

Ethan let out a strangled gurgle and didn’t even try to tear his eyes away from Isaac’s hole as he answered. “W-w-we” –Ethan swallowed, struggling to get the word out. His heart was racing and his lust was so thick in the air, Isaac swore it might start raining– “should slow down.”
“I don’t wanna slow down.” Isaac frowned and buried his head against Ethan’s comforter. He popped his ass further back and flexed his hole a few times as he reached between his legs and pushed his limp cock and balls back so that they would be in view too.

“Fuck,” Ethan muttered, finally walking to the bed. He slapped Isaac’s ass hard enough to make it sting and rubbed a finger over his hole before sliding his hand down the rest of the way to fondle Isaac’s cock and balls. “You’re still not–”

“And it still doesn’t matter. I just wanna get fucked. I don’t even care about cumming.” That wasn’t strictly true. Isaac was specifically hoping not to cum, but he didn’t feel like explaining that to Ethan.

“You certainly are a bossy bottom considering this is only your second time,” Ethan teased, groping Isaac a few more times and slapping his ass again before going to his nightstand and pulling out the lube.

Isaac took a deep breath, eyeing Ethan’s fucking huge cock again and steeling his resolve. “Not too much lube and don’t you dare take away the pain.”

“Ohh!” Ethan closed the drawer and sat down on the bed next to Isaac instead of taking his place behind him. “I get what’s happening now.”

“Then why the fuck are you sitting there?” Isaac flashed gold eyes at him.

“Because I also get a say in whether or not we act out your little punishment fantasy.”

“But wouldn’t you enjoy it?” Isaac asked, a smirk teasing his lips.

“Well...yeah, I would,” Ethan answered, the barest hint of a blush coloring his cheeks. “But that’s sort of the problem. I’m working on not hurting people. Literally getting off on it probably won’t help.”

“It’s different when it’s consensual.”

“I’ve only had consensual sex.”

“I meant the hurting, not the sex.”

Ethan frowned and Isaac could sense his conflict, his desire to go along with it straining against his inclination to say no.

“Come on, man. It’s what I need right now,” Isaac said, hoping to tip the scales.

“You don’t even know if you’ll like it,” Ethan pointed out.

“You’ve seen my fantasies,” Isaac countered.

“Yeah, fantasies. Some things are better left as fantasies.”

“So we’ll stop if I don’t like it,” Isaac answered.

Ethan licked his lips and nervousness pulsed in his scent. “What if I can’t stop?”

A smile broke across Isaac’s face and his cock throbbed, stirring for the first time since he had taken off his clothes.

“That’s not supposed to turn you on.”
“Yeah, it’s pretty fucked up,” Isaac agreed.

Ethan sighed and closed his eyes. When he opened them again a look of resolve was etched on his face. “I can stop. I promise I can stop.”

“Don’t have to convince me.”

Ethan’s hands shook slightly as he popped the lid on the lube and squirted some in his palm. Isaac could smell how much Ethan wanted this as he slathered the liquid all over his cock.

However, Isaac’s own anxiety spiked as he eyed the behemoth again. “Sh-should we have a safe word?”

“The safe word is stop. So don’t say it unless you mean it,” Ethan answered. “Slow down is also an option.”

Isaac nodded and crawled forward on the bed as Ethan got in place behind him. Isaac was surprised when Ethan’s lubed finger breached him a moment later and began working him open.

“What are you doing? The whole point is...”

Ethan laughed and slid a second finger inside, roughly scissoring Isaac open and making him whimper. “Don’t worry. I’m a big boy and this is a small hole. It’ll still hurt.”

Isaac wanted to complain when Ethan kept loosening him and slicking his hole with lube, but he didn’t have the resolve. Ethan was a big boy and Isaac remembered the thick vines of black pain that had snaked up Ethan’s torso the first time they’d fucked, when Isaac had been thoroughly worked open and completely relaxed.

The preparations were over a few moments later and Ethan was looming over him, the fronts of his thighs pressed against the backs of Isaac’s. He pulled Isaac up by his shoulder and spoke quietly into his ear. “You are safe, Isaac. I swear this stops the second you want it to.”

Isaac nodded and Ethan nuzzled against the side of his head for just a moment before abruptly shoving him down against the bed. Isaac tensed as Ethan’s slick, bloated cockhead pressed against his tingling hole. It felt too big to fit and Isaac felt a flush of excitement as he realized Ethan would make it fit.

“RELAX!” Ethan roared, latent alpha authority ringing in the command.

Isaac whimpered and went slack.

“GAAHHH!” Isaac screamed out in surprise as Ethan shoved inside. It felt nothing like it had the other night and black spots formed in Isaac’s vision as a sharp, burning ache crashed across his body and filled him with fear.

“RELAX!” Ethan roared again, gripping Isaac’s hips and relentlessly grinding forward until he bottomed out.

Isaac collapsed against the bed. His human instincts told him to tense and struggle against the rough intrusion, but his wolf instincts insisted he obey the powerful command to stay limp. Isaac knew Ethan was doing him a favor. Tensing and struggling would have made it worse; going slack allowed him to accommodate Ethan’s girthy beast more easily. It was also fucking hot feeling this submissive. Isaac’s ass was on fire and a cold sweat had broken out across his face, but he was lying there surrendering to it because that was what he had been told to do.
“How does it feel, Isaac?” Ethan asked, snapping his hips cruelly.

“It-it h-hurts,” Isaac answered between panting breaths.

“Do you want me to stop?”

The question had started in the same harsh tone Ethan had used for the first question, but Ethan’s voice softened on the word ‘stop’ and his willingness to do so was obvious. Isaac felt a tremor of unexpected emotion break around the pain: security.

“Please don’t stop,” Isaac pleaded, grinding back against him.

Ethan pulled out until just the thick flare of his coronal ridge was hooked in Isaac’s quivering ring then he slammed in again, hard and fast.

“FUUUCKK!” Isaac screamed, fisting the comforter and arching his back. “OH FUCK!”

“Your voice.” Ethan moaned and Isaac heard his heart rate speeding up.

“Wha-what about it?”

“I hear the...” Ethan growled and blunt fingers dug into Isaac’s hips like steel bars as he rabbed fast and rough inside Isaac.

“It hurts, it hurts, it hurts,” Isaac chanted, letting his voice go wild as he realized the effect it was having on Ethan, on both of them, how into it they were both getting.

Isaac’s body went slack again as he felt himself being consumed. He lost track of what Ethan was saying after that, could only focus on the way he was pounding into Isaac and squeezing his hips with strength just shy of bone crushing.

It felt so fucking right. Every snap of Ethan’s hips felt like atonement for Isaac’s many short comings. The pain he had caused Scott, the pain he held inside as a result, Ethan was fucking it out of him with brutal precision and it was beyond a relief.

Meanwhile the terror Isaac had felt non-stop about Stiles’ situation was finally muted, less than a background noise against his own whimpers and groans and Ethan’s growls and moans. Isaac’s inability to protect his pack, the way he let everyone down, the way he always let everyone down, it was coming out now in noisy sobs.

Suddenly the pain vanished and Ethan was pulling Isaac sideways on the bed, drawing him backward into his arms.

“Whoa, Isaac, whoa! It’s okay.”

“Why’d you stop?” Isaac asked in a hoarse voice, realizing his face was wet against Ethan’s bicep. Fuck Stiles for making crying a thing Isaac did now.

“I think we went too far,” Ethan whispered, his other hand rubbing gentle circles on Isaac’s hip.

Isaac glanced down at it and saw the pain snaking up Ethan’s fingers and back over his wrist and arm. He also noticed that his own cock was ramrod hard now and dripping precum against the bedspread. He ground backward on Ethan’s cock, which was still buried inside of him. Now that it didn’t hurt, it felt really fucking good.

“We didn’t go too far,” Isaac whispered, ignoring the other sensations as he caught a whiff of
Ethan’s distress, of the guilt wafting out of his pores. “We really didn’t. I was...I was lost in it. In a- in a good way.”

“But you’re...” Ethan’s bicep flexed under Isaac’s head as his thumb awkwardly stroked Isaac’s cheek, indicating his tears.

Isaac growled and tried to pull away, feeling embarrassed, but Ethan held him in place, shushing him and nuzzling his chin against the top of Isaac’s head.

“That’s not from you,” Isaac answered, injecting a defensive tone into his voice as he struggled to find a delicate balance between the fragile vulnerability and the confounding security he felt in Ethan’s arms. “It’s...I just needed to get that out, okay?!?”

“Yeah okay. It’s out now,” Ethan answered, hand trailing up Isaac’s hip to his stomach. Isaac’s hips still felt sore, but not enough for him to complain, especially since he had literally asked for it. “For the record, we coulda just talked you know?”

“Right, because I just can’t wait to run and share my deepest feelings with you.” The comment came out even more sarcastic that Isaac had intended.

Ethan laughed and stuttered his hips, gently this time, sending waves of pleasure coursing through Isaac’s body. “It’s not like this is intimate or anything.”

“Shut up,” Isaac mumbled hating the way he involuntarily snuggled back as he said it.

They were quiet for a couple of minutes then Ethan propped himself up on the arm that had been under Isaac’s head and reached over Isaac to grab the lube.

“What are you doing?” Isaac moaned as the movement had Ethan’s cock gliding back and forth inside him, grazing over his prostate.

“See if you can figure it out,” Ethan remarked with a smirk, keeping Isaac impaled as he sat up and squirted lube all over Isaac’s cock, then pulled out just enough to add more to his own erection before sliding blissfully back inside.

“Awww fuck nooo, d-don’t,” Isaac whined as Ethan’s slick palm teased his cockhead and he ground into Isaac with long, slow thrusts. “Stop. Stop.”

Ethan stilled his hips and pulled his hand away, but his voice was incredulous in Isaac’s ear as he asked, “Seriously? This you’re not into?”

“I like it, a lot, but I don’t wanna get off...I mean you should fuck me until you cum but...” Isaac bit his bottom lip, aware of how fucked up what he was about to say was. “Don’t make it too good for me.”

“What?”

The guilt Isaac felt about Scott and the anguish he felt about Stiles surged back to the surface. “I don’t deserve it okay?!”

Ethan’s arms tightened around him and his voice was an infuriating mix of kind yet insistent. “Of course you deserve it. You deserve to feel good, Isaac. Let me make you feel good.”

“You don’t know what I did.”
“Then tell me.”

“I can’t.” A sob slipped out of Isaac’s lips before he could stop it. He really wanted to tell Ethan. He wanted to tell him everything, but he couldn’t without divulging pack secrets.

Ethan sighed and Isaac could feel the frustration in his muscles. “Well I promise whatever it is, you still deserve sexual pleasure and agency over your own body. That’s like a basic human right.”

“I rejected my alpha,” Isaac said giving Ethan the gist without the details.

Ethan shrugged against him. “I killed mine.”

Isaac barked out a sharp laugh at the flippant response. He almost kept protesting but that comment really had put things into perspective.

“You’re right,” Isaac said, grinding back on Ethan with intent and placing Ethan’s hand back on his cock. “Make me cum.”

Ethan moaned into his ear and nipped the delicate lobe between his teeth. Isaac started to tell him that he wasn’t into that, but then Ethan bit harder and Isaac realized that he was.

Isaac wiggled and bounced against Ethan’s cock and hand, yipping and whimpering as Ethan’s mouth shifted lower and he bit and sucked rapidly-healing marks along Isaac’s neck and throat. Isaac braced his feet on the bed and raised his hips, bouncing harder on Ethan’s cock and grinding his prostate on it so hard that black spots fogged his vision again, only this time Isaac was beyond relaxed and loose and there was no pain, only head-swimming pleasure.

Isaac turned in Ethan’s arms, baring his throat completely and going as slack as he had before, succumbing to his need to submit to the other werewolf.

Ethan lapped and nipped at the underside of Isaac’s throat, then his mouth shifted, fangs dragging delicately over Isaac’s skin as he moved to Isaac’s shoulder. With a deep roar he snapped his hips hard one last time and bit down.

Isaac howled as sparks shot up and down his spine and he erupted in Ethan’s hand, spraying cum all over the bed and his own chest and face. He didn’t stop howling. It felt like the howl was the only thing keeping him conscious as all the emotions and sensations of the afternoon gushed out of him.

When it was finally over, Isaac closed his eyes and nuzzled his head against Ethan’s, aware that Ethan was still whimpering softly and pumping Isaac full with his cum. Isaac wanted to stay with him, wanted to see him through this moment, but he couldn’t. A heavy, bone-deep fatigue swept over Isaac and he drifted off, listening to the sounds of Ethan’s pleasure as his own aftershocks rolled over him and lulled him to sleep.

Chapter End Notes

I hope you guys enjoyed this chapter. Feedback is always greatly appreciated.

Also, I recently finished by Isaac/Stiles/Scott smut serial, “Everyone Experiments in College”. It’s absolutely filthy and full of fluff. I think you guys might like it.
Isaac woke up comfortably disoriented. Disoriented because the first thing he realized was that he wasn’t in his bed at the McCall house, but comfortable, so comfortable that he couldn’t be bothered to open his eyes. The sheets were silky and crisp against his bare skin, the blanket on top plush and fluffy, adding a cozy softness that Isaac could feel through the sheets. The mattress was incredible; every muscle in Isaac’s body had melted into it, perfectly cushioned and utterly relaxed.

Indeed the only hardness touching Isaac’s body was beneath his head and shoulders, which were resting against something warm and firm, something with a steady, soothing heartbeat that made Isaac feel safe and further discouraged him from opening his eyes and leaving his wonderful little cocoon of comfort.

Ethan.

Isaac recognized the distinctive thrumming rhythm of Ethan’s heart and involuntarily inhaled, instinctively drawing his scent into his lungs – no wait, it was already there, pillowing his insides with the same silky warm comfort as the bed.

“Hey,” Ethan said softly from just a little higher on the bed, a smile in his voice as his thumb brushed against Isaac’s shoulder and Isaac realized Ethan’s arm was around him.

Isaac’s head was on Ethan’s chest and the greeting rumbled through him like a deep massage.

“Hey,” Isaac murmured back, rolling onto his side and cuddling closer.

A tiny voice in the back of Isaac’s head protested that he wasn’t supposed to snuggle with Ethan, but he silenced it, refusing to think beyond the fact that being with Ethan felt good and that his skin was tingling for even more contact. Waking up with Ethan was the best Isaac had felt since...well since waking up with Stiles.

Isaac draped his leg over Ethan’s and stroked lazy fingers over the relaxed, but still deliciously taut, ridges of his stomach. The shift in position made Isaac aware that a thick, soft towel had been placed under his hips and that a wet slickness was on his hole. Isaac blushed as he realized Ethan’s semen was slowly seeping out of him and suddenly the bleachy-rich tang of pheromones was all Isaac could smell.

Ethan’s arm tightened around Isaac’s body under the covers and his hand palmed Isaac’s asscheek in a way that was somehow more intimate than overtly sexual. Isaac languidly rocked against Ethan’s thigh in response, relishing the way the tiny hairs there tickled his lazy, swollen semi. There was no urgency about it; it just felt really nice.

Isaac trailed his hand down from Ethan’s navel, over his hard, lean lower abdomen, and onto his pelvis. His thumb and forefinger played in the dense, close-cropped carpet of Ethan’s pubes while he fondled and rubbed Ethan’s plump, soft dick and hefty balls with his palm and other fingers. The response he got was satisfying. Ethan moaned softly and caressed Isaac’s ass. Within seconds he had hardened completely in Isaac’s hand, creating a comically large tent under the blankets. Isaac’s hand slipped lazily off Ethan’s shaft and returned to twirling fingers in Ethan’s pubes and fondling his balls, only massaging the root of Ethan penis closest to his body. Ethan didn’t seem to mind if the
deep contentment in his scent and the steady thrum of his heart were any indication.

“How long was I asleep?” Isaac asked. Daylight was still streaming in through Ethan’s huge, floor-to-ceiling back window, so Isaac knew he hadn’t been asleep long, despite how well-rested he felt.

Ethan shrugged and dipped his thumb into the cleft of Isaac’s ass. “Maybe thirty or forty minutes?”

They didn’t speak for a while after that – Ethan was good at silences, another thing they had in common – just enjoyed the easy sexual intimacy that had developed between them, the first Isaac had ever experienced with a guy. He couldn’t believe it was okay for him to just idly play with Ethan’s penis like this, or that he was so comfortable with Ethan’s hand on his naked ass.

“You cleaned me up,” Isaac commented eventually as self consciousness intruded on the moment and he noticed the distinct lack of stickiness all over the front of his body and face where he had ejaculated on himself.

“Well yeah.”

The way Ethan said it made Isaac feel less embarrassed, like it wasn’t a big deal. He wondered if Ethan had ever needed to do that for Danny.

Isaac’s hand crept back up Ethan’s torso, this time coming to rest on Ethan’s chest next to Isaac’s face. He extended his foreclaw, teasing the soft skin around the hard panels of his pecs, but careful not to scratch him.

Ethan giggled and squirmed as he grabbed Isaac’s hand, crisscrossing their fingers and playing with the tip of Isaac’s claw with the pad of his thumb.

Isaac sighed and admitted to himself that getting Ethan to hold his hand had been his intention all along.

“Why did you change?” Isaac asked a few minutes later.

Ethan made a noise of confusion. “Uhm...I didn’t? I’m still naked.”

Isaac chuckled and raised his head, craning his neck back so that he could look at Ethan’s face for the first time since waking up. “I meant in a more general sense.”

“Oh you mean...”

“You’re not a bad guy anymore.” Isaac smiled around the words, liking them on his tongue.

Ethan grinned back and looked so proud and happy that Isaac had to duck his head again, unable to handle so much raw emotion.

“Lots of reasons.”

Isaac shrugged and nestled back in under Ethan’s arm. “I don’t have anywhere to be right now.”

Ethan took a deep breath and his scent changed from content to melancholy.

“Aiden and I had a rough time after our family was killed.”

Isaac winced at the vulnerability in Ethan’s voice. It wasn’t the way Ethan usually spoke and Isaac realized he was making a conscious decision to be less guarded with Isaac. It made Isaac simultaneously want to ask more about what had happened but also want to respect Ethan’s privacy.
“Our old pack did it, and we were just kids at the time but...they started abusing us too.”

Isaac squeezed Ethan’s hand and rumbled his sympathy in the back of his throat, surrendering to the twang in his chest that came with the mention of child abuse instead of tamping it down with a cavalier comment the way he usually did if someone tried to bring that topic up. It was Ethan’s experience too, so if he wanted to confront it head on, so would Isaac.

“Deucalion showed us how to merge and defeat them, but that didn’t come without a price.”

Isaac rumbled again, but this time in anger at the mention of a price – it was a price *Isaac* and his pack, and who knew how many other innocent people, had to pay.

“I’m not excusing what we did.” Ethan’s tone was defensive now and Isaac thought he might have been about to shut down, but when he continued his voice was soft again. “You just need to understand that for a very long time my only real priority was protecting myself and Aiden. I did some really shitty things to do that...and that’s on me.”

“So what changed?”

“Like I said, lots of things. For one, Deucalion killed Ennis. So even if I didn’t give a damn about being a better person, *which I do*” –Ethan said it like he thought Isaac was going to call him out, but to Isaac’s surprise he found he didn’t doubt it in the slightest– “I’d still have been looking for an opportunity to get me and Aiden away from him because obviously we were in danger too.”

“That makes sense.”

“And...” Ethan drew in a ragged breath and Isaac felt his chest tighten, his heart rate stutter in anguish. “I wanted to protect Danny.”

Isaac opened his mouth, searching for something to say, but Ethan went on.

“And Lydia of course.”

“Lydia?” Isaac hadn’t realized protecting Lydia had been one of Ethan’s motivations.

“Yeah, it’s...complicated. I don’t even know her that well personally, but when Aiden and I used to mer-merge...” Ethan took another ragged breath and Isaac squeezed his hand, waiting patiently for him to continue. “Sorry.” Ethan voice broke on the word and this time he did shut down, pulling his hand away and tensing under Isaac.

Isaac sat up and looked at Ethan. His face was stony, which was a relief because based on his voice and erratic breathing the alternative wasn’t something Isaac could have handled. “We don’t have to continue this conversation.”

Ethan shook his head and closed his eyes. Isaac recognized the action as something Ethan did to calm himself. Sure enough when he reopened his eyes, he looked peaceful again, peaceful and a bit embarrassed. “I miss being able to merge, *a lot.* Our relationship has sucked since we lost the ability...I guess we were using it as a crutch. We didn’t have to actually talk because we could just read each other’s minds. Now it’s like we don’t know how to talk at all without fighting.”

“Uhh...” Isaac shifted uncomfortably on the bed and looked away. Was Ethan actually trying to open up to him about trouble in his relationship with Aiden? That seemed *way* too personal for them to discuss. Besides, weren’t the twins supposed to put up a united front against Isaac and his pack?

Ethan laughed humorlessly and grabbed Isaac’s arm, tugging him back down against the bed and
against his chest – and okay yeah, Isaac felt like a dick for letting Ethan’s confession fall awkwardly between them.

“Anyway, I knew firsthand how Aiden felt about her, so yeah, protecting her was important to me.”

“But didn’t he threaten Danny?” Isaac felt obliged to point out the double standard.

“He wouldn’t have hurt him. He wouldn’t have done that to me.” Ethan didn’t doubt it at all. Isaac did, but Ethan clearly didn’t.

“So you betrayed Deucalion and Kali to protect you and Aiden, because you wanted to be a better person, and to keep Danny and Lydia safe?” Isaac asked, summing it up.

Ethan sat up, pulling Isaac up with him and wrapping his arms around him. He placed his chin on Isaac’s shoulder and spoke sweetly into his ear. “There are still two more reasons.”

Isaac shivered. He didn’t like this. Ethan was being too sweet, too affectionate. He desperately wanted him to go back to smug and sarcastic, to *stop* being so emotionally open with him. This was Isaac’s fault. He should have put the brakes on as soon as he woke up. Better yet he shouldn’t have fallen asleep at all.

“Is one of them me?” Isaac asked, terrified that he already knew the answer.

“Yeah,” Ethan whispered, nuzzling the space behind Isaac’s ear.

Isaac swallowed and reminded himself that shoving Ethan away and running out of the room would be a major dick move.

“But why?” Isaac squeaked out instead.

Ethan stiffened and let go, scooting away on the bed until they were no longer touching. At the same time his scent disappeared and his heart went silent. Isaac had gotten his wish. All of Ethan’s walls were back up.

“I invaded your mind.” Ethan’s tone was as carefully neutral as it had been when they were first getting to know each other, emotionless. “You’re kind of an awesome person.”

Isaac couldn’t help the bitter laugh that slipped out of his mouth. “No, I’m not.”

“Yeah, Isaac, you are.” Ethan allowed insistence to slip into his tone, but otherwise kept it flat.

Isaac glared at him. This wasn’t fair. Ethan didn’t get to say stuff like that to him after everything.

“Then why did you keep torturing me?” Isaac shouted, hands clenching, digging claws into his palms. “Why did you keep trying to kill me when I got away, huh? And why the *fuck* did you go through with killing my packmates?”

“Isaac, I–”

“NO!” Isaac jumped out of the bed, wishing his clothes weren’t in the living room. “Do you have any idea how much it hurts to lose a packmate?”

Ethan’s eyes turned blue and he answered around fangs. “Yeah, I know *exactly* how much it hurts.”

“Then why would you do that to me?” Isaac’s eyes were burning. He hoped to god it was with gold.
“You should leave,” Ethan answered, voice as cold as his eyes.

“Yeah I should.” Isaac sealed off his scent and thickened the void around his heart, making it as silent as Ethan’s. “And I shouldn’t come back.”

Ethan closed his eyes. When he reopened them they were lumps of dark chocolate, no anger, no warmth, and absolutely no sign of doubt.

“No, you shouldn’t come back.”

Chapter End Notes

I’m really curious to see how this chapter will be received.

Hehe, and did anyone notice that Ethan still has one reason for turning his life around that he didn’t reveal in this chapter? Any guesses?
Being naked put a serious crimp in Isaac’s plans to storm dramatically out of Ethan’s loft. The effect was undermined as he hopped around on one foot trying to pull on a sock while looking for his discarded shirt.

Ethan was already dressed in a pair of shorts and a t-shirt and leaning against the doorway of his bedroom, watching Isaac as he fumbled around the living room. His expression was impassive, but Isaac was certain he was laughing at him on the inside.

“I’ll drive you back to school.”

“Fuck you. I don’t wanna be anywhere near you.”

“You don’t mean that.”

Isaac growled, furious that Ethan was not only correct, but that he knew he was correct thanks to the way Isaac’s fledging abilities to mask his scent and hide his heartbeat had just fizzled out, betraying his emotions right when he wanted to hide them the most.

A moment later Ethan’s scent and heartbeat also flashed back into the open. “I’m sorry I ever hurt you. I would take it back if I could.”

“I don’t need to hear your heartbeat to know that, jackass.” Isaac pulled his shirt over his head and picked up his shoes, unwilling to take the time to put them back on in the loft.

“Isaac, I’m trying–”

“I know that! I know you’re trying.” Isaac sighed and forced himself to make eye contact with Ethan, unsurprised when he was met with gentle, tortured brown irises that made his chest hurt. “It makes me feel like crap the way I keep rubbing the past in your face all time. I know you’re sorry, and I know you’re not that guy anymore. But...I just can’t help it.”

“We can–”

“No, Ethan, we can’t.” Isaac’s voice broke and he took a deep breath, fighting the instinct to put his shoes down and let Ethan make up with him. Good god, he wanted that. Being with Ethan made Isaac feel wanted and happy...except when it made him feel miserable and worthless. “This is too hard, for both of us. Just stay away from me, okay? Please.”

Conflict played itself out over Ethan’s face and it looked like he was going to argue, but he closed his eyes and nodded instead. When he reopened them he walked further into the room and grabbed his keys off the counter.

Isaac held his breath, wishing Ethan would mask the anguish and remorse dripping from his scent before it tore Isaac’s chest in half.

Ethan wrapped his hand around Isaac’s wrist and Isaac whimpered and set his jaw as he realized this was the last time Ethan would do that.
“Take my bike.” Ethan pressed the keys into Isaac’s palm and rubbed his thumb over Isaac’s fingers as they closed around the cold metal. “I’ll get Aiden to take me to pick it up later. Just leave the keys in the seat.”

Isaac pulled away, even though all he wanted to do was kiss Ethan’s stupid beautiful mouth and tell him they could make it work; they couldn’t and Isaac knew it. He walked to the door, fighting to keep his emotions in check as he looked back one more time. Ethan was staring at him, making no attempt to hide the pain on his face. Isaac was an asshole. Ethan hadn’t been anything but good to him since that night in the weight room.

“I’m sorry too, Ethan. I’m really fucking sorry.”

Ethan nodded and re-closed his eyes. Isaac rushed out of the loft before he reopened them, before Isaac had to confront the source of the salty, sour scent beading in the air and threatening to destroy his fragile resolve.

Isaac cursed werewolf hearing as he hurried down the hallway, ignoring the cold sweat on his skin and the way his hands shook as he pulled his phone out of his pocket.

He found three new texts from Scott as he rode the elevator down to the lobby of Ethan’s building, but he didn’t check them; he couldn’t check them. Everything hurt and he couldn’t begin to face the wreckage of his relationship with Scott while he was still swimming in the flotsam of his relationship with Ethan.

He texted Lydia instead, asking for updates on Stiles in case Scott was trying to tell him something important. He was sliding the key into the ignition of Ethan’s motorcycle when Lydia texted back.

Lydia: He’s still unconscious. Deaton is back in town and coming to the hospital soon.

Isaac wanted to go straight to the hospital but he had to go to school first and pick up Melissa’s car and he knew he would also have to shower when he got home because...because Ethan was still inside of him and Scott would have been able to smell it and that was not an added complication he could handle right now.

Isaac wished he didn’t like it so much, the way his hole tingled and tightened, desperate to hang onto Ethan’s cum for as long as possible. It was the last piece of Ethan he would have, and fuck it he wanted it for as long as he could have it. He didn’t feel dirty and ashamed the way he had last time. He wasn’t sure if that was because he had accepted that Ethan wasn’t a bad person, or if it was because he had actually done something to keep this from happening again, to win back some of his self respect.

Self respect sucked. Isaac was not a fan. 1/10 would not recommend.

When Isaac got home with Melissa’s car he found the driveway swept clean of dead grasshoppers—they were piled up in the grass off the edge of the pavement, but it was start—and a new front door had been installed on the house.

Isaac’s stomach lurched as he discovered his key no longer fit the lock. What if this was Melissa’s way of telling him he was kicked out? He totally deserved it for being so terrible to Scott and wrecking the house, but what was he going to do now? Would she let him have his stuff back? Was he still in the pack? Oh god, was he an omega now? He’d never be able to—

The door opened and Melissa appeared in the doorway. “Isaac, there you are! I was just about to call and make sure you were okay. Here’s your new key.”
Isaac blinked at her as a key was pressed into his palm for the second time that day.

Melissa stepped aside and gave Isaac an expectant look when he didn’t move. “Well are you coming in?”

Isaac ducked his head and stepped past her – and immediately gagged, his eyes burning and watering. The house was clean and void of grasshoppers, but it smelled like poison.

Melissa patted Isaac’s back and laughed. “Sorry, I should have warned you. I have the windows open airing it out. The exterminator said it was safe for people, and I assume that means werewolves too, but let’s leave for the hospital as soon as you’re ready.”

“I need to, uh, take a shower.” Isaac’s cheeks warmed in a blush as he thought about the fact that he was chatting with her while still in an I-just-had-sex state. He kind of didn’t see how she couldn’t smell it all over him, even as a human.

“K, let me know when you’re ready.” She strolled back into the living room.

Isaac hurried through his shower, trying not to sacrifice thoroughness in his need to get ready and get to the hospital to find out more about Stiles’ condition. It helped that he had to rush, that he didn’t have time to think about how he was purging Ethan from his body for the last time.

He sniffed his wrist when he was done, hating that it didn’t smell like anything but his body wash. Fucking self respect.

A little while later Isaac was sitting in the passenger seat of Melissa’s car as she backed out of the driveway.

“Stiles and I had a conversation—”

“What?!” Isaac’s head snapped up and he gaped at her. “He’s awake?! You talked to him?”

“—yesterday,” she continued, giving Isaac a look that was half sympathetic, half amused. “Stiles and I had a conversation yesterday before I went to work.”

“Oh.”

“He said you were worried about being placed in the system.”

“What?” Isaac frowned, feeling a stab in his chest that felt a lot like betrayal as he remembered the conversation he and Stiles had had on Saturday at the graveyard when Stiles had asked Isaac if he owned it now and Isaac had explained that he didn’t know because he was trying to keep a low profile.

“He said you froze up when he asked why you couldn’t live with me and Scott in an official way.”

Isaac’s throat closed and his heart pounded. He couldn’t believe Stiles had violated his trust by talking to Melissa about this.

“I don’t”—Isaac cleared his throat, fighting for air—“don’t expect that. I don’t know why he brought that up.”

Melissa took a sharp breath and pulled the car over onto the side of the road, her scent thick with emotion: sadness, anxiety, guilt, sympathy.

*Great, she’s back to pitying me like she used to when I first moved in.*
Melissa was silent for a few moments then turned and gave Isaac a serious look. “You should expect it. You have a right to expect it.”

Isaac scoffed and dropped his eyes to the dashboard. “No, I don’t. You certainly don’t owe me anything.”

“Yes, I do.” She turned in her seat and placed a hand on his shoulder. “You’re not Scott’s friend crashing for a few nights anymore.”

Isaac looked up at her, a new ache in his chest. “You mean because me and Scott…aren’t friends anymore?”

“Oh of course you’re friends!” Melissa swatted his shoulder.

“I hurt him,” Isaac whispered, shame bubbling in his gut.

“Yes, and he hurt you, and I’m sorry both those things happened, but that doesn’t mean you’re not friends. You’re pack for goodness sake. Take the time you need and then talk to each other.”

Isaac nodded but only because it was how he was supposed to react. He wanted to believe she was right, that he and Scott could get through this, but he didn’t know if that were true.

“Anyway, what I meant is that I don’t just view you as Scott’s friend and beta anymore.”

“You don’t?” Isaac asked, hearing the tremble in his voice.

“No, Isaac, I view you the way I view Stiles.” She squeezed his hand. “As part of the family...as another son.”

“R-really?!” Isaac was aware of the way he was grinning, all teeth and open mouthed, the way he only smiled when he felt – joy, pure and simple joy.

“Really,” she answered, grinning back.

Isaac wasn’t sure who hugged who first, all he knew was that they were embracing each other and laughing, and Melissa smelled like her cosmetics and faintly of exterminator poison, but she also smelled like Scott and the house, their house, and like Isaac, and most wonderfully of all like herself, crisp and spicy with notes of honey and vanilla. It gave Isaac a feeling of security, made him feel tethered to something that wasn’t about pack or the supernatural, but instead felt like family, the good kind, the kind he had with his parents and brother before everything had gone wrong.

Melissa sniffled and pulled back, and Isaac realized she was crying. However, there was no mistaking the silky-sweet scent of happiness pervading the car or the bright expression lighting her face, so Isaac didn’t worry.

“Tomorrow I’m going to find a family law attorney who can guide us through the adoption process.”

“Are you sur...” Isaac trailed off, the question dying on his lips. He grinned again, his chest fluttering as a surge of warmth washed over him. “You are sure.”

“Completely.”

“I’ll try to be good,” Isaac said, meeting her eyes as he made the promise.

“Just be yourself.” She squeezed his hand and smiled at him one more time before checking the mirrors and pulling back out into traffic.
“Shouldn’t we talk to Scott about this?” Isaac asked a little while later.

“And of course we will, but we both know there’s basically zero chance Scott won’t be overjoyed when he finds out.”

Isaac laughed and let himself bask in the warm glow that came with knowing she was right. The fact that he and Scott had some issues to work through suddenly didn’t seem as overwhelming, or even as important. They were going to be family. Of course they’d have some issues to work through, but they would work through them because that’s what healthy families did, and Isaac had no doubt they were going to be a healthy family.

I don’t deserve this.

Isaac rejected the idea as quickly as it came. It felt almost disrespectful to Scott and Melissa to think it.

Yes, I do.

“I’m really happy.” Isaac said it almost shyly, trying it out on his tongue. It seemed incomprehensible given everything that had happened in the last three days, hell in the last three hours, but he meant it.

“Me too.” She smiled at him and Isaac didn’t need to check if she meant it.

They separated when they got to the hospital with Melissa going to prepare for her shift and Isaac going to check on Stiles. As Isaac turned down the corridor to Stiles’ room, Scott was walking toward him with Deaton.

Sadness hung around Scott in a thick cloud and his shoulders seemed to sag under the weight of it. When he saw Isaac a small smile flickered across his face and his pulse thrummed with excitement. However, the effect was short-lived and by the time Scott and Isaac reached other other, Scott’s face was drawn with sadness.

“You waited until I was leaving to come.” It wasn’t an accusation, just a disappointed observation.

“I...not on purpose. It just happened that way.”

“Right.” That was as close to bitter sarcasm as Scott ever got.

“What about Stiles?” Isaac addressed the question to Deaton, unable to cope with the anguished look on his alpha’s face. “How is he?”

Deaton opened his mouth to answer but Scott spoke first. “We have to go. I have to be home by sundown before anyone else gets hurt. Lydia will fill you in.”

“Scott.” Isaac placed his hand on Scott’s shoulder, alarmed by the jolt of fear that ran up his arm and down his spine in response. He felt an instinct to recoil, to pull his hand away and leave, but he pushed that impulse aside, determined to ease some of the ache radiating off of Scott.

Isaac fought past a tangled snarl of emotions seeking the underlying pack bond he had with Scott, with his alpha, with his best friend. Isaac could feel the connection, strong and vibrant, but buried beneath the surface of recent turmoil. It was a bond founded on trust and tapping into it required Isaac to open himself to Scott to endure the assault of terrifying memories that flashed through his mind: images of glowing red eyes taunting Isaac as bloody claws poised to slash his throat open; a deafening roar blasting through the air as fangs ripped into Stiles’ shoulder; the sickening squelch of flesh rending and bones breaking; Stiles’ agonized screams pulling Isaac apart from the inside out;
the crippling certainty of death coiled around Isaac’s chest; anger; pain; helplessness; betrayal – it all crashed over Isaac in a violent flood, leaving him weak-kneed and barely able to stand.

But Isaac did stand against it because he owed Scott that and so much more, because despite what his instincts were telling him, none of the pain and violence had been Scott’s doing. Memories of Scott – the real Scott, not the monster trying to steal his body – whirled through Isaac’s consciousness as he focused on their bond: Scott’s face, open and earnest, expressing concern about Isaac’s safety even before they were pack; fevered images of Scott as a beta fighting the alpha Ennis in this very hospital to protect Isaac; the grounding echo of Scott’s voice in his head as he called Isaac back from numerous bad dreams and waking nightmares; Scott’s warm, dry fingers on Isaac’s cold, wet skin as he took Isaac in without conditions or expectations, giving him a new home after Derek had thrown him out; Scott’s arms around him the day before as he whispered that he loved Isaac; Scott’s scent swaddled around Isaac like a blanket time and time again as he gave Isaac reassurance; security; peace; affection – it all hummed through Isaac, reminding him that trusting Scott wasn’t a challenge; it was instinct.

Scott’s hand was over Isaac’s on Scott’s shoulder as comfort and strength gushed through their pack bond in both directions. Isaac closed his eyes and whimpered under his breath as a sharp, crushing weight eased from his chest. He could feel a similar burden lifting from Scott’s body, and when Isaac opened his eyes he felt them glowing with heat. Scott’s eyes flashed red for a split second, completing the gesture, and Isaac instinctively dropped his eyes and tilted his head, baring his throat to his alpha.

Scott’s other hand, the one not still clutching Isaac’s fingers to his shoulder, went to the side of Isaac’s neck, the pad of his thumb rubbing lightly over the exposed flesh of Isaac’s throat. “You never have to submit to me, Isaac. I would never try to control you.”

“I know that.” Isaac met Scott’s eyes again, they were warm and happy, full of the boundless kindness and light that Isaac had only ever seen in Scott’s eyes, the kindness and light that had originally drawn Isaac in and given him hope for the first time since he was a child. Trembling with emotion, Isaac surged forward and wrapped his arms around Scott, whispering words that he hadn’t spoken to anyone in years, “I love you.”

Isaac heard Scott’s heart catch in his chest and he nuzzled his nose and mouth against Isaac’s throat, scenting him as he rubbed his back. “I love you too.”

Deaton coughed and Isaac’s cheeks blazed hot as he remembered that the druid even existed.

“Scott, we need to leave. We’ll have to hurry to get you home by nightfall.”

“Right,” Scott called to Deaton. He squeezed Isaac one more time before letting go. “Will you come with us? I know we’re okay now, but we still need to talk about what happened.”

“I, uh...” Isaac looked toward Stiles’ room, indecision roiling through him. There wasn’t really anything he could do for Stiles and Scott was right, they did need to talk, but Isaac could hear the slow beat of Stiles’ heart and the unnatural buzz of the mystic amulet around his neck. He was desperate to go in and check on Stiles with his own eyes.

“Oh yeah, of course. We’ll talk tomorrow.”

Scott turned to leave, but Isaac stopped him one more time.

“Scott...thank you. For everything.”
“Dude, thank you. I feel about a million percent better.”

A few moments later Scott and Deaton had disappeared around a corner of the hallway and Isaac had to resist the urge to laugh and bounce on his toes. A million percent better was a conservative estimate of how Isaac felt after his back-to-back conversations with the McCalls.

Isaac’s spirits deflated considerably, however, when he walked into Stiles’ hospital room a little while later. Lydia was sitting in a chair by Stiles’ bedside. Their packmate’s arms were still raised above his body and covered in casts and rods, bound rigidly to the traction system over his bed. His shoulder where he’d been bitten by Iron Claw was bandaged, but the wound was gurgling and seeping through the gauze, filling the room with the odor of rancid, burning flesh.

The smell combined with the emotional reaction of seeing Stiles like this proved too much of a jolt to Isaac’s system. His eyes widened and his stomach spasmed hard. He barely had time to get to the hand-washing sink before he was vomiting into it.

“Isaac!” Lydia rushed to his side and patted his back.

Isaac coughed and gagged harder, wincing as some of the vomit went up his nose. It felt like it was going to come out of his eyes. His throat burned and his nostrils throbbed against the acidic chunks lodged in his sinuses.

“Here,” Lydia said, voice soothing as she handed Isaac a sheet of coarse tissue from the hand-drying dispenser over the sink.

Isaac forced down another wave of nausea and took the tissue. He turned away from Lydia and blew his nose, then accepted another long sheet of tissue from her that he used to wipe his face. He turned on the sink and let the water rinse away the smaller chunks of vomit before using more tissue to clean the sides of the sink and fish out the bigger chunks so that he could throw them away in the trash. When he was done he blew his nose again, wiped his face some more, vigorously washed his hands, and gurgled with cool water before turning back to his packmate.

“Are you okay?” She asked, hand on his arm.

Isaac nodded and looked away, for a moment losing the context of pack and friendship, and unable to think beyond how he had just embarrassed himself in front of one of the hottest, most popular girls in school.

“I’m sorry.”

Lydia huffed a small laugh and stroked his arm. “I’m sure that was worse for you than it was for me.”

Isaac frowned and got another tissue, which he used to dab his watering eyes. He cleared his throat against the burn as he tried to think of something to say to diffuse the awkwardness.

Lydia squeezed his arm. “Sit tight. I’ll go get you a bottle of water and some crackers from the vending machines.”

“Oh, you don’t have to do that!”

“It’s okay. I wanted to stretch my legs anyway.”

As the door clicked shut behind her, Isaac’s attention refocused on Stiles. Isaac slid into the chair Lydia had occupied and placed his hand on Stiles’ chest over the hospital gown. His heartbeat was
wrong. It was too slow, slower than it should have been even while he was sleeping. Isaac’s fingers trailed up to touch the skin of Stiles’ collarbone. It was cold and damp with sweat. The Bite wasn’t healing; Stiles’ body was obviously rejecting it. Stiles was...

“You can’t die,” Isaac choked out in a broken voice, his fingertips trailing over Stiles’ clavicle, trying to find pain to leach away. There wasn’t much, just the stiff ache of cramped muscles, not the intense burn that must have been blazing over Stiles’ shoulder. Isaac’s fingers grazed across Stiles’ throat to the amulet. It was warm, too warm for the ambient temperature of the room, and glowing softly. He eased it away from Stiles’ injured shoulder and gasped as black bolts of pain darted up his fingers and Stiles grimaced and groaned in his sleep. Isaac released the amulet, setting it back down almost on top of Stiles’ shoulder. The pain ebbed away from his fingers and Stiles’ face relaxed.

“Is this thing helping you?” Isaac rubbed Stiles’ cheek with the back of his hand. “Is it...what’s keeping you alive?”

Isaac’s chest hurt. He was useless. He couldn’t even take Stiles’ pain away as effectively as the stupid, probably evil, artifact could.

Isaac swept the short, sweat-damp bangs away from Stiles’ forehead and took a long breath, feeling selfish as he spoke. “Give in to it, Stiles, please. The Bite or the amulet, one of them, but please don’t fight them both. I can’t lose you; we can’t lose you. I never” –Isaac licked his lips with his too-dry tongue. Where was Lydia with that water?– “told you how much you mean to me.”

Isaac hoped it wasn’t creepy as he got up and placed a kiss on Stiles’ forehead. “I-I’m sorry I failed you.”

Isaac pressed his head against Stiles’ and whispered to him, chest aching, “Please become a werewolf, please. It’s—it’s really not that bad. But” –Isaac leaned back and stroked the hair over Stiles’ ear– “but if you can’t be a werewolf, let the darach in. We’ll get you back. I swear, Stiles, we’ll get you back. Just don’t...”

Isaac sat back down and covered his face with his hand. He took deep breaths to compose himself. He could hear Lydia’s footsteps at the end of the hall. He needed to calm down before she got back. He had already embarrassed himself enough.

When she got back a few moments later, she handed Isaac a cold bottle of water and a pack of Cheez-Its and pulled up another chair from against the wall before Isaac had the presence of mind to get it up and help.

“Thanks,” he said after taking a sip of water and finally washing away the acidic burn in his throat. He tore open the Cheez-Its realizing for the first time how hungry he was. He hadn’t eaten since he’d had the leftovers Melissa had left for him before his half-day at school.

“Deaton says we should know something within the next few days.”

Isaac arched his eyebrows at her, encouraging her to continue.

“The full moon is tomorrow, Wednesday, and Thursday night. If he becomes a werewolf he’ll wake up then, probably Wednesday night at the height of the full moon. If not...well the full moon also intensifies druid magic, so he’ll...”

“He’ll what?”

Lydia shrugged. “Deaton’s not sure. Maybe” –She sighed, visibly steeling herself– “die if his body can’t handle the combination of the Bite and the druid amulet both affecting him during the full
moon. It’s also possible the amulet will overpower the Bite and heal him, but Deaton’s not sure what that would mean for him if it happens.”

Isaac nodded and turned his head to look at Stiles. It was as bad as Isaac had thought. Werewolf, darach, or dead – those was pretty much Stiles’ only three options.

“I don’t get why he can’t just turn like I did...like everyone else.”

She sighed and moved her chair so that she could lean her head against Isaac’s shoulder. “He’ll be okay.”

“How do you know?” Isaac asked, wrapping his arm around her.

“He has to be. He’s...”

“Hmm?”

“My anchor,” Lydia finished.

Isaac gave her a reassuring squeeze and looked at her, ignoring the flare of something jealous and possessive that he knew was completely inappropriate toward his packmate and the girl Stiles had always had feelings for. Stiles and Isaac could only ever be friends. Stiles couldn’t return Isaac’s feelings. If Stiles survived this ordeal and he and Lydia could be together, then Isaac had to be happy for them or he’d be the shittiest friend and packmate in the history of werewolfism.

“I didn’t know you felt that way about him.”

“He’s a constant in my life. I don’t think I could have gotten through the last year without him.”

“Is...is that why you broke up with Aiden?”

Lydia laughed and sat up, giving Isaac an incredulous look. “No, Stiles had nothing to do with Aiden and me. And I didn’t mean I felt that way about Stiles.”

“But you said–”

“He’s my emotional anchor and, actually, my best friend. That’s more important than dating.”

Isaac felt something akin to relief, which was stupid and selfish considering that Lydia’s explanation only meant that Stiles couldn’t have a romantic relationship with the girl he had been in love with his entire life, not that there was any chance for Isaac with him.

“I told you why I broke up with Aiden...he’s just not a good person, and I’m tired of being with bad guys. I guess someone like Stiles, or Scott, or you would be a better choice, but–”

“Me?” Isaac tilted his head and looked at her sideways, wondering why she would include him in a list like that.

“Yeah.” She smiled at him and slipped her hand into his. “Someone good and kind and honest.”

“Me?”

Lydia laughed. “Of course you.”

“But I do bad things, and I always mess everything up, and I lie a lot, and I’m kind of a selfish asshole.”
She squeezed his hand and frowned at him. “You don’t really believe that do you?”

“I guess you don’t know what I’m really like. I try to be a good person but...” Isaac trailed off, remembering the way he had hurt and rejected Scott the night before. He was beyond relieved that Scott was willing to forgive him, but he knew he didn’t deserve it. He thought about the way he had fucked up with Stiles, allowed Iron Claw to mangle him and give him a bite that might kill him. Hell, just that afternoon he had been a giant dick to Ethan pretty much solely for the crime of Ethan caring about him. Isaac knew the truth about himself: he was a toxic person, and if he had the guts to do it and didn’t think it would also hurt them, he would pull away from the pack and Melissa, not let them get closer to him.

“You know it’s common for abuse victims to have a low self esteem.” Lydia’s thumb was stroking Isaac’s knuckles as she held his hand and when she caught his eye, she gave him a look he found himself unable to break.

“I don’t...I-I’m just...I’m being realistic.” He pulled his hand away and took a sip of water. His throat was dry again and his face was burning.

“You’re not though and that’s the problem. Isaac, maybe you should talk to someone who–”

She was interrupted as Isaac’s phone began to ring. Isaac pulled it out of his pocket. He was unsurprised to see who the caller was, but his heart sank as he realized he didn’t have anything good to report.

“It’s Stiles’ dad. He must want an update,” Isaac said to Lydia before accepting the call. “Hello.”

“Isaac, are you busy?” the sheriff asked.

“I’m with Lydia. We’re at the hospital with Stiles.”

The tone of the sheriff’s voice changed as he asked, “How is he?”

Isaac’s gaze snapped back to Stiles’ unconscious, frail form. He wasn’t sure how much of what Lydia had just told him he should say. It was mostly just speculation and he knew it would upset the sheriff. Eventually he settled for a noncommittal response. The sheriff could pull more details out of him if he really wanted to hear them. “About the same.”

There was a disappointed sigh before the sheriff continued. “Listen, I wanted to try to keep Lydia out of this under the circumstances, but I need you to come down to the police station. We’ve got a” –the sheriff dropped his voice– “werewolf problem, and since Scott’s out of commission in the evenings...”

“What can I do? What happened?”

“We just arrested those former alpha twins.”

“What?!”

“They were in a bar fight, a very bad one. Five guys are in the hospital because of it.”

“Ethan...” Isaac couldn’t believe what he was hearing. “Ethan?!”

“He and Aiden are in custody.” The sheriff’s voice was low again as he continued. “But we need to figure out what we’re going to do with them, and I can’t even tell them apart. So–”
I’m sorry I missed last week’s update. I generally try to update this story at least once a week, and aim for twice a week if at all possible, but last week I updated my Isaac & Jackson AU family fic “A Street Over and a World Away” instead. It was the turning point of that story, so if you’re following it please go check it out. I also started a new fluff and humor mini-series called “Liam Dunbar: Cuddlewolf Extraordinaire” and so far he’s gotten cuddly with Isaac & Scott in the first installment and Mason in the second installment. Stay tuned for a possible new smut story or two coming soon as well.

I’m going to try to have the next chapter of this story out within a week and I really hope you guys are enjoying it. Things are about to heat up considerably in terms of plot/action. As this chapter mentioned, tomorrow and the two nights after it are the full moon and quite a lot is going to be happening.

Feedback, comments, and criticism of all kinds are always welcomed and encouraged. What was your favorite scene? I tried to make sure each one packed an emotional punch this chapter. So I'm curious to see if that worked.
A ball of anxiety formed in the pit of Isaac’s stomach as Lydia drove them to the police station. Ethan wasn’t supposed to send people to the hospital anymore. That had been the old Ethan, the Ethan Isaac hated. This Ethan, the guy he had slept with that afternoon, was supposed to be kind and trustworthy.

Trust. Isaac had trusted Ethan, and goddamnit Isaac was sick of putting his trust in people who ended up violating it. It didn’t matter that Ethan hadn’t done anything to Isaac or his pack – well actually that mattered a lot and it was the only thing keeping Isaac from flipping out, but – that wasn’t good enough; Ethan was supposed to be done pulling shit like this. He was supposed to be making up for his sins, not committing new ones.

Isaac couldn’t help wondering if–

“He did this to get even with me,” Lydia said with a sigh as she parked in front of the police station.

“What?” Isaac blinked at her.

“Aiden hurt those people to make me feel bad about breaking up with him. I know it.”

Isaac took a deep breath and gave her what he hoped was a reassuring smile. “Let’s wait and see what the sheriff says.”

As soon as they walked in, the sheriff took them to his office and closed the door behind them. He leaned back against his desk and gave Lydia a sympathetic look as she and Isaac sank down onto the couch that was lined up along the wall.

“I was hoping to avoid involving you in this,” the sheriff said to her.

Lydia pursed her lips. “I assume he did this because of me.”

The sheriff shook his head. “He did this because he’s a very troubled young man. It doesn’t matter how he’s rationalizing it.”

“Are the people he attacked going to be okay? Did he bite or claw them?” She grimaced and a mist of rancid disgust swirled around her.

“No, he used his fists. I think he wanted to appear human.” The sheriff frowned and sat back on his desk. “Other than the unnatural strength.”

“And the victims?” She pressed, voice tight and thick. A stretchy net of anxiety replaced the disgust wrapped around her.

“They’re going to be okay.” The sheriff glanced at a stack of folders on his desk but didn’t pick any up. “They were tough guys. A biker gang. They all have records of violent crime.”

Isaac licked his lips and balled his hands, bracing himself. “Did Ethan say why he did it?”

“He’s the one you found Malia with right?” The sheriff gave Isaac a small smile. “We weren’t sure at first so we took them both in, but I just finished reviewing video footage and witness statements.
Ethan didn’t attack any of the victims. He broke up the fight. We had a unit nearby, but it was already over when we got there.”

The sheriff leaned back and grabbed a remote control from the corner of his desk, which he used to turn on the screen in his office. A moment later grainy surveillance footage began playing, and Isaac breathed a sigh of relief as he realized the twin he was looking at wasn’t Ethan. They watched as Aiden walked up to a group of bikers at a pool table and seemed to have a heated conversation with them for a few seconds. Then one of the bikers swung at Aiden but missed. A split second later, Aiden punched him hard enough to drop him to the floor. The other bikers tried to retaliate, but Aiden fought them off, bashing several in the process and hurling others off camera. About a minute into the fight, Ethan ran on screen and pulled Aiden away from a guy whom he had pinned against the side of the pool table and was wailing on. Ethan and Aiden struggled for a bit, with Ethan yelling something at the bystanders and waving them away and Aiden knocking down the ones who ventured too close. After circling each other and trading several blows, Ethan managed to grab Aiden’s arms and say something to him that apparently calmed him down enough to stop fighting. A few moments later a pair of uniformed officers bustled on screen and arrested the twins. Ethan held Aiden’s arms still as they cuffed him. Then footage ended and the screen went black.

Isaac was grinning by this point. “Ethan didn’t do anything wrong!”

“No, he didn’t. Just Aiden,” Lydia answered, hurt and disappointment on her face.

Isaac realized his smile was inappropriate under the circumstances and schooled his expression back into one of neutrality. However, he couldn’t help the rush of relief, of pride surging through him. He was proud of Ethan, and despite his decision to end things with Ethan and to keep his distance, he kind of wanted him to know it.

“We’re going to drop the charges against Ethan,” The sheriff said, “but I need one of you to confirm I’m letting out the right twin. It’s one thing for a set of twins to pull the trading-clothes trick to get out of classes at school, but I’m sure as hell not risking letting the wrong one out of jail. We also need to decide what we’re going to do with Aiden. He’s volatile right now, and it’s hard to explain to my deputies why an unarmed, eighteen-year-old kid without a record is dangerous enough to warrant maximum security protocols. If that’ll even be enough.”

“Let me talk to him. Maybe I can reason with him,” Lydia said.

The sheriff frowned. “I don’t think that’s a good idea.”

Isaac nodded his agreement. He didn’t like the idea of Lydia confronting a violent, angry Aiden.

“I think I can get through to him,” Lydia insisted. “We have nothing to lose. He wouldn’t hurt me, but even if he wanted to he can’t; he’s behind bars. Besides, you said you needed one of us to identify which was which.”

“I can do that,” Isaac answered.

“We can both go.” Lydia crossed her arms and set her face with determination. Isaac was unsurprised when the sheriff sighed and gave in.

“Fine, let’s get this over with,” the sheriff said, pushing off from his desk and leading them out of the room.

As soon as they walked out of Sheriff Stilinski’s office, a deputy standing at the front desk cleared his throat and covered the mouthpiece of the phone he was holding. “Sheriff, the feds want to talk to
you about that smuggling ring.”

The sheriff grunted and scowled at his deputy in response to the news, a new cloud of stress forming around his already exhausted body. Isaac discreetly appraised Stiles’ father while the man seemed to struggle with an internal conflict. He skin was suffused with the scent of stale anxiety and his blood pressure was too high. Isaac was worried on Stiles’ behalf about the sheriff’s health and found himself irritated at the nameless federal agent who was bothering the distressed, overworked man.

“Fine, I’ll take it in my office.” The sheriff glanced at Isaac with an unspoken question.

“We’ll be fine till you get there,” Isaac answered, stepping closer to Lydia and subconsciously posturing his body in a protective stance around her before he realized what he was doing. She huffed and took a half-step away, but the gesture apparently satisfied the sheriff’s concerns.

“Parrish, take these two to see those twins we arrested for that bar fight” – the sheriff cleared his throat and made sure he had his deputy’s full attention before continuing – “and leave them alone with the suspects.”

“Leave them alone?” The deputy repeated, brows raised in surprise.

“Yes, they may need to discuss something private and I’m giving them the go ahead.”

The deputy frowned and looked uncertain but nodded his compliance at the sheriff. He put the call with the federal agent on hold, grabbed the keys from a hook on the wall, and approached Isaac and Lydia as the sheriff returned to his office.

Isaac’s stomach fluttered as the attractive young deputy caught his eye and smiled at him.

“I’m Deputy Parrish.” He said to Isaac before turning his head and directing his sparkling green gaze and disarming smile at Lydia.

Isaac heard her breath catch as they made eye contact. Apparently Isaac and Lydia had similar taste in guys — *oh wait, hooking up with twins was probably an indicator too.*

“Lydia,” She extended her hand with a graceful flourish and Isaac recognized the coy smile on her cherry red lips. Parrish’s pulse stuttered with interest and even Isaac found his eyes lingering a beat longer than usual on her pretty face.

Parrish turned back to Isaac once he finished making Lydia’s acquaintance, and Isaac twisted his mouth into his best cheeky smirk and tilted his head in that way that he had learned best showed off his strong jawline and prominent cheekbones. “I’m Isaac.”

Deputy Parrish gave Isaac’s hand a friendly squeeze and re-established eye contact with him for a moment as he smiled, but his scent and pulse gave no indication of attraction the way they had with Lydia.

*Can’t blame a guy for trying.*

“Follow me,” Parrish said as he turned and led them to a door that opened into a narrow corridor.

While they walked Isaac took the opportunity to enjoy Parrish’s broad shoulders and perky ass, and if the tilt of Lydia’s head and the gradually thickening scent of her silky-sweet arousal were any indication, so did she — *and god, was it always this warm in the police station?*

At the end of the corridor was a heavy steel door, which Parrish unlocked with the keys he’d
brought.

As soon as the group walked into the cell block, they came face-to-face with Ethan and Aiden.

“I’ll be right out here if you need me,” Parrish said, directing the comment mostly to Lydia, who murmured her understanding. A moment later Parrish had left, pulling the door shut behind him.

“Isaac,” Ethan said softly, his face showing equal parts surprise and pleasure.

Isaac resisted the urge to rush to his cell and instead forced himself to stroll at a dignified pace.

“Hey look, Ethan, both our bitches came to see us,” Aiden said, tone cocky and smirk infuriating. “I guess we just had to get their attention.”

Lydia stiffened at the barb, but then glanced at Isaac in obvious confusion.

“Shut it.” Ethan rumbled a quiet growl at Aiden but never took his eyes off Isaac. “It’s not what you think.”

“I know,” Isaac answered under his breath, too low for Lydia to hear, though unfortunately there was no way to exclude Aiden from the conversation. Isaac gave Ethan a hint of the proud smile that had formed on his lips when he watched the surveillance video. “You didn’t do anything wrong.”

Ethan’s face lit up, bright and happy, and suddenly Isaac’s head got foggy.

The moment was broken as Aiden slapped his palm against the bars, making the other three people jump.

“Bail me outta here, Lyds, and I’ll show you a real good time.” He hooked his fingers in the bars over his head, flexing his biceps and gazing at her with roguish chocolate eyes.

“Why did you do it, Aiden?” Lydia asked folding her arms and staring back at him with a cold glare.

“Why did you hurt those people?”

“Like I said, get your attention.”

“You have it now, so what do you want to say?”

Aiden’s smile was smug and, if Isaac were honest, sexy. It made Isaac want to punch him in the face.

“You said I was a bad guy.” Aiden shrugged and his face took on an almost innocent quality. “But I was behaving better than I had for years.” His eyes flickered icy blue and his smile turned predatory.

“You wanna see what I’m like as an actual bad guy, Lydia?”

“Stop.” Ethan sighed and frowned at his brother.

“Stop?” Aiden laughed and chills ran up Isaac’s spine. “I’m just getting started.” He locked eyes with Lydia and made the next statement a vow. “Next time I hurt someone it won’t be a bar full of thugs.”

“Fucking stop!” Ethan shoved Aiden, his eyes flashing blue in warning. “What do you think you’re gonna accomplish, huh? You think she’s gonna like you with even more blood on your hands? You think that’s gonna win her back?”

“Yeah, and what about you?” Aiden asked, returning the shove with one of his own. “What did you accomplish with your reformed monster act? He dumped your ass.” Aiden waved an accusing hand
at Isaac and spit the next words like a curse. “Just like Danny.”

Lydia grabbed Isaac’s arm, eyes wide and lips parted.

“I’ll explain later,” Isaac whispered.

Ethan let out a frustrated growl and slapped the bars between them. “I’m not trying to be a better person for Isaac or Danny. When are you going to understand that?”

“Who then Scott?” Aiden laughed at him, this time sounding almost genuinely amused. "You still think Scott’s going to let you in his pack?” Aiden waved his hands sarcastically. “Mister I’ve-never-killed-anyone, there’s-always-another-way, true-alpha McCall? Yeah, I’m sure you’ll fit right in with your knack for violence and murder.”

“We don’t have to live like that anymore, Aiden. We’re free. From our old pack, from Deucalion. We can–”

“What? What can we do, Ethan? Tell me how we can move on. How we can forget all the crap we’ve been through. Or how we can ever make them” –Aiden rattled the bars with one hand, fingers pointing accusingly at Isaac and Lydia– “view us as anything other than evil assholes they’re too good for.”

“Perhaps if you actually stopped being an asshole that would be a start!” Lydia shouted at Aiden as she stepped in close, too close.

Isaac panicked and darted his arm into the small space between Lydia and the bars Aiden was standing behind.

“Really, Lahey? You think I wanna hurt her?” Aiden asked, brows arched in amusement.

Isaac reassessed the threat. Lydia was scowling at him and Ethan seemed unconcerned. Maybe he had overreacted.

“You on the other hand–” Aiden snarled and clawed hands shot from between the bars and wrapped around Isaac’s arm.

Isaac gasped and tried to pull his arm away, but Aiden was faster, yanking Isaac forward with enough force to slam his head against the bars. The impact was disorienting and Isaac’s legs buckled as Aiden raked claws up and down his arm before settling over his forearm. With his claws dug in deep and a devastating amount of force backing them up, the former alpha twisted his hands in opposing directions.

Isaac screamed as the bones in his arm snapped and for a horrifying second it felt like the broken end was going to be ripped completely off. But an instant later Aiden’s fingers were gone. Isaac looked up in a daze in time to see Ethan punch Aiden in the throat. Then he picked him up by the waist and hurled him against the concrete wall that lined the back of their cell.

Aiden hit the wall with a thud and a crunch that Isaac was sure signaled some of his bones were now also broken. However, Aiden quickly rolled onto his side and sprang back to his feet, claws and fangs extended and eyes glowing electric blue. “There we go.” Aiden growled, sharp and primal. “Now you’re finally being yourself.”

Ethan’s claws thwipped out and he threw his head back, fangs extending as he roared.

“Whatcha waitin’ for?” Aiden flexed his neck and Isaac realized the angle of his shoulder was
wrong, that one arm was hanging limp by his side. His shoulder was out of socket. “Come at me, bro!”

Ethan’s muscles tensed as he poised to lunge, but at the last second he whirled around instead, once again facing Isaac and Lydia.

“I’m really sorry he did that, Isaac,” Ethan said, features gentle and already human again.

Isaac was kneeling on the floor, trembling as Lydia crouched next to him and rubbed his back. His arm hurt and his head throbbed, but in a far off, detached kind of way. Isaac was familiar enough with the sensation to realize he was in shock. Soon he would feel nauseated and lightheaded and then the pain would be excruciatingly close. He was already getting cold and black spots were forming in his field of vision.

“C’mere,” Ethan requested, hand extended plaintively through the bars but unable to reach. “Let me help. Please.”

Lydia gave Isaac a questioning look. He nodded, so she helped him to his feet and forward the short distance to be within Ethan’s reach. Then she gave them their privacy, walking to the other side of the cell where Aiden was.

Ethan’s fingers grazed over the rapidly swelling injury site, leaching pain away as he frowned. “We need to set the bones.”

Isaac nodded and held his arm directly against the cold steel bars, giving Ethan all the access he could. In the corner of his awareness, Isaac heard Lydia and Aiden talking in heated tones, but their conversation was drown out before Isaac could begin to understand it as Ethan reset the bones and Isaac cried out at the sharp pain.

A second later Aiden also yelped and Isaac knew he had popped his shoulder back into socket. Ethan turned his head and whimpered softly, clearly distressed by his brother’s suffering. Isaac’s mind raced, struggling for at least the hundredth time to make sense of their relationship.

However, it was clear from the way Ethan was murmuring encouraging words to Isaac and redoubling his efforts to ease Isaac’s pain that he was Ethan’s main priority right now – and okay yeah, Isaac did like the way that made him feel. He just didn’t want Ethan to get the wrong idea.

“I’m fine now,” Isaac said once the nausea had passed and he felt clear-headed again. His arm still hurt a lot, but it was healing, and it wasn’t as though this was the first time an angry werewolf had broken it. At least this time it was an enemy and not his own alpha who had done it.

“Shh, not yet,” Ethan whispered, keeping one hand in place against the injury but stroking Isaac’s shoulder with the other.

“Really, I’m okay,” Isaac insisted, self conscious from the glances Lydia and Aiden were occasionally casting them.

“Please don’t leave yet.”

Isaac’s mouth went dry, and when he looked up into Ethan’s gentle brown eyes he spoke without thinking. “Come with me. They’re dropping the charges against you.”

Ethan opened his mouth but Aiden’s voice, cold and hateful, cut him off.

“Yeah Ethan, why don’t you go on ahead and go?”
He strolled closer in the cell and Lydia returned to Isaac’s side.

“Maybe they’ll lock up someone new to keep me company.” Aiden’s lips curled over his fangs and his eyes twinkled with blue mischief. “If nothing else I’m sure I’ll have some fun with the cops.”

“Obviously I can’t go,” Ethan said with a smirk at Isaac, somehow taking the implicit threat much less seriously than Isaac and Lydia.

“You can’t babysit him forever.” Isaac threw Aiden the most contemptuous glare he could manage. God, he hated Aiden!

Ethan sighed. “I left him alone for like five minutes at the bar to go to the restroom and look what happened. Oh, and uh...is everyone going to be okay?”

Ethan looked an adorable mix of confused and uncertain, and Isaac was pretty sure expressing concern about strangers his brother had beaten up was a wholly new experience for him. Isaac brushed his fingers over Ethan’s on his arm. “Yeah, they’re all going to be okay.” He lowered his voice and gave Ethan his proud smile again. “Thanks to you.”

Ethan’s face brightened again and Isaac could practically feel electricity sparking between them, but before either of them could speak they were interrupted.

“Ethan’s good at pretending to care isn’t he?” Aiden asked with a teasing lilt in his voice. Then his face hardened and he muttered under his breath. “Even fools me some of the time.”

“Fuck you!” Ethan snarled at brother, rage bubbling under his skin.

The sound of the sheriff’s footsteps coming down the hallway had Isaac pulling away from Ethan.

“What happened?!” The sheriff asked as he entered the cell block and his eyes went straight to Isaac’s arm, which was still clutched to his chest and covered with sticky, half-dried blood.

“Aiden needs to be declawed.” Isaac shot him another contemptuous smirk.

The sheriff’s hand landed on Isaac’s shoulder and his other hand hovered in the air over Isaac’s arm. “Are you okay?” he asked, tone serious and brow raised in a paternal concern Isaac had almost forgotten could exist.

Isaac cleared his throat and looked at the ground as he answered but let himself lean into the touch. “Fine.”

“Ethan?” the sheriff asked after squeezing Isaac’s shoulder one more time then patting his back.

Ethan’s head snapped up and Lydia nodded to the sheriff in confirmation.

“You’re free to go.”

“Wait,” Ethan said as the sheriff stepped forward with the keys to the cell. “I can’t leave him.”

“But you always do,” Aiden muttered, too low for human ears. He shot Isaac a hot glare as he realized Isaac had overheard.

“Has his bail been set?” Ethan asked, ignoring his brother’s comment.

“Not yet, we’re waiting for the judge.”
“Can I stay until it is? Then I’ll go get the money and take him home.”

“It might be a lot. He sent five guys to the hospital.”

“I’ll take care of it.” Ethan pursed his lips and glared at Aiden. “Then we’ll see about getting those guys to drop the charges.”

The sheriff cleared his throat.

“Legally of course!” Ethan rushed to add.

“How are you going to do that?” Isaac asked.

Ethan shrugged and laughed without humor. “This isn’t the first time we’ve had to clean up a legal mess...though it is the first time I’ve had to do it without Deucalion. We’ll cover their medical bills and offer a little something extra.”

The sheriff looked at Ethan thoughtfully for a moment then said, “They probably don’t want to be involved in a criminal case anyway considering their records. So you may not need to offer that much extra, and I’ll encourage the D.A. not to prosecute given the circumstances.”

“You mean because it’s his first official offense?” Isaac asked.

The sheriff scoffed. “Because he’s a werewolf and the system isn’t setup to handle him.”

Aiden’s smug expression seemed to prompt the sheriff to continue.

“Of course if he offends again, I can always call Chris Argent to discuss another system of justice.”

A growl rumbled in Aiden’s throat and he opened his mouth, but before he could speak Ethan’s fingers clamped around his wrist and he gave him a warning look that silenced him.

“I’ll keep him in line,” Ethan said.

“You’ll try,” Aiden muttered too low for the humans.

Isaac and Lydia left the police station soon after that with Isaac awkwardly telling Ethan to text him with updates or if he needed Isaac’s help. Ethan was quietly delighted with Isaac’s offer and Aiden seethed with spicy-hot rage. All in all, Isaac liked both reactions, but he reminded himself that this was an exception and that he and Ethan were not going to hook up again or even become friends. Ethan was just someone he cared about in a non-romantic, non-platonic way. That was a thing right?

“So you and Ethan?” Lydia asked, turning to Isaac as soon as they were back in her car. She made no move to start the engine. “You. And Ethan?”

Isaac scrubbed his hands over his face and into his hair, tugging in frustration. “Yes. It’s...complicated.”

“No shit.”

“We’re done now,” Isaac told her, making eye contact.

“But apparently still on good terms,” Lydia remarked.

Isaac’s cheeks heated in a blush as he thought about the way Ethan had comforted him in front of Lydia and Aiden. “Ethan’s...nice. He was just” –Isaac coughed and stared out the passenger side
window, wishing this conversation could be over but knowing he owed her an explanation—“being nice.”

Lydia’s hand brushed across Isaac’s arm. “So you really did like him?”

Isaac turned back to her and gave a slow nod, frowning because it was true.

“Well, it certainly is complicated, but why did you break up with him then?” she asked.

Isaac took a deep breath and let it out slowly. “It’s too complicated. I like him, but I also still kinda hate him, and...I dunno, there’s just too much baggage.”

Lydia hummed in understanding and squeezed his arm again. “It’s hard to break up with them. They’re—”

“Hot,” Isaac finished with a nod and smirk.

“Very hot,” Lydia agreed. “And they can also be sweet and fun to be with, at least Aiden can.”

“Oh Ethan can too,” Isaac assured her.

She paused for a moment, reluctance clear in her body language. Isaac raised his brow and nodded, encouraging her to continue. “Did this start while you and Allison were still...?”

“Of course not!” Isaac couldn’t stop the glare on his face or the indignation in his tone.

“I just had to ask.” She gave him a pretty smile and tossed her hair back. “Girl code, you know?”

Isaac snickered. “Yeah okay.”

Lydia started the car and backed out of the parking space as another thought occurred to Isaac.

“Did you know I was...?”

“Bisexual? Yes of course, sweetie. I have eyes. I’ve seen the way you look at Scott” –she smiled and her eyes danced with amusement as she finished– “and Stiles. Ethan caught me off guard though.”

“He caught me off guard too.” Isaac laughed. “And I’m over Scott by the way.”

“I know.” She gave him another smile as she turned out of the parking lot, but this one was laced with concern. “And Stiles?”

Isaac laughed, loud but without humor. “I really like Stiles.”

“Then you should tell him when he wakes up.”

“Well that’s...complicated too.”

Lydia quirked an eyebrow at him. “Oh? Did Stiles also abduct and torture you? Or kill anyone you care about?”

Isaac folded his arms and huffed. “Okay, it’s complicated in a different way.”

“Just don’t make it more complicated than it needs to be,” Lydia answered in a tone that left no room for argument.

Isaac was silent for a few minutes, but as they turned into his neighborhood he spoke again. “Can
you do me a huge favor and not tell anyone?"

“About you and Ethan?”

“Yeah,” Isaac said with a nod, “or about me liking Stiles.”

“Of course I won’t say anything. I wasn’t going to.”

Isaac smiled at her and gave her a hug once she stopped the car. “Thanks.”

“Wow! I do believe Isaac Lahey is becoming affectionate.”

Isaac chuckled and opened the car door to get out. “It’s something new I’m trying out.”

“I like it. It looks good on you,” she answered as Isaac climbed out of the car. He was about to slam the door when she continued. “But sweetie?”

“Hmm?”

“That shirt doesn’t. Don’t wear it anymore.”

Isaac huffed and folded his arms. “Ethan seemed to like it well enough.”

“On the contrary, I’m quite certain he wanted to get you out of it.”

“Good night, Lydia,” Isaac said crisply, more grateful that she had told him than genuinely offended.

“Good night, Isaac.” She laughed, light and melodious as Isaac closed the car door.

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Isaac woke up the next morning with a deep sense of foreboding about the full moon that evening. He knew Iron Claw’s influence over Scott would be at its strongest under the full moon. Meanwhile, he also had to worry about Stiles’ condition, which Deaton had said could take a major turn for the worse some time over the next three nights while the moon was at the peak of its cycle.

He tried to put these fears aside, however, as he went downstairs that morning and found Melissa and Scott in the kitchen speaking in animated tones. They both greeted Isaac warmly and Melissa fixed him a plate of breakfast: cheese-covered scrambled eggs, hash browns, toast, and orange juice.

“Okay, Mom, Isaac’s here. What’s the big announcement?” Scott asked between bites of hash browns as he looked at Melissa expectantly.

Isaac gave her a small smile and scooped egg onto his toast. He had a pretty good idea what she was going to say.

“Well, Scott, I’m happy to tell you that we’re officially getting a new addition to the family.

Scott gasped and dropped his fork to his plate with a loud clink. “What? Oh my god! I didn’t even know you were seeing anyone! Wow, and to think, you gave me the safe sex talk.”

“Scott.”

“When is this happening? Do you know if it’s gonna be a boy or a girl yet? Can me and Isaac help pick out names? Oh wait, we’re gonna need a nursery.” Scott turned to Isaac and gave him a serious look. “Maybe you should move into my room so we can convert yours.”
“Scott!”

“Well I guess I could move into Isaac’s,” Scott said, taking in their dumbfounded expressions, “or the baby can share with one of us, but–”

“Scott!” Melissa gave him a stern look. “If you’ll let me answer some of your questions, this is happening right away, it’s going to be a boy, we’re going to call him Isaac, and no, there’s no need for anyone to change rooms.”

Scott tilted his head and furrowed his brow. “Wait, won’t it get confusing if we call him Isaac?”

“Scott, your mom’s trying to tell you that” – Isaac looked at her one more time for confirmation. She nodded– “she’s adopting me.”

Scott’s jaw dropped and he looked back and forth between them. “Seriously? Oh my god, this is so awesome!” He jumped out of his chair and threw his arms around Isaac, pulling him in for a tight hug.

Melissa joined them, wrapping an arm around each of them and initiating their first group hug as a family.

“You know the best part?” Scott asked, trying and failing to keep a straight face a little while later as they separated.

“What’s that?” Melissa asked.

Scott giggled as he answered. “Isaac’s already potty trained, and he can get through the whole night without crying.”

Isaac chuckled and patted Scott’s hand. “If we’re being honest, that depends on the night.”

After breakfast Isaac and Scott went to school. Isaac couldn’t help frowning as they parked Scott’s motorcycle in its usual place and Isaac noticed the absence of Ethan’s and Aiden’s bikes. Ethan had texted Isaac in the middle of the night to let him know that Aiden’s bail was taken care of and that they were home, but he hadn’t said anything about whether or not they were going to be at school that day.

“What’s wrong?” Scott asked, putting away his helmet and slinging his school bag over his shoulder.

“Nothing.”

Scott frowned and a small tendril of disappointment wafted into the air. He was clearly going to let it go at that as they turned to walk up the sidewalk to the school, but Isaac reconsidered his own response. Things between him and Scott were off kilter. They still hadn’t discussed the Iron Claw incident and as a result there was an undercurrent of tension between them. Yet at the same time their brief but meaningful interaction at the hospital the night before combined with the – Isaac swallowed and felt a flush of excited happiness – family breakfast that morning had them radiating a steady, thick affection toward each other. Basically things were tensely affectionate right now, and Isaac didn’t want to make anything more complicated.

“I’m worried about Ethan,” he said, bumping shoulders with Scott as they walked through the school’s main doors. “And Stiles. And the full moon. Oh and Malia. And of course” – he finished in a muted voice, using what he had always thought of as his and Scott’s special channel of communication– “you and Iron Claw.”
Scott didn’t look at Isaac but their shoulders brushed again and he answered just as quietly in the grounding rumble that was quintessentially Isaac’s alpha. “We’re going to get through this. I promise.”

Isaac sighed and let Scott’s words untangle the knot of anxiety that was trying to form in his stomach. The response was simple and if anyone else had said it to him it would have been meaningless, maybe even maddening. But Isaac’s alpha had just made him a promise and their bond was thrumming with security and trust the way it was supposed to. If Scott said they were going to get through this mess then they were, and, for the moment at least, Isaac couldn’t not believe that.

Chapter End Notes

This chapter was sort of the calm before the storm that will be the three-day full moon.

Feedback is always appreciated.

**Tagging Question**

On a separate note, if you have a chance, I’m interested to hear what people think about story tags, both as readers or as other authors.

I finally decided to go ahead and include Lydia and Melissa in the character tags, but I’m always hesitant to include a lot of characters because personally as a reader, too many character and relationship tags often put me off a story if I’m just looking for a particular pairing or a story focusing on a particular character/characters. So for that reason I usually don’t tag my stories with background/minor relationships or minor characters.

On the other hand I try to include as many “additional tags” about themes/content as I can because as a reader those typically attract and give me a good idea whether or not I’m going to enjoy the story. Sometimes I’ll even be looking for a particular type of content and be willing to read it with any set of characters/pairing, or even any fandom I’m familiar with, as long as the story contains that thing.

So I’m curious if I’m just weird this way. When you guys are looking for new stories, do you find stories with a lot of characters and relationships appealing or do they discourage you? How do you feel about the additional tags? If you’re also an author, what’s your approach to tagging?

What tags made you decide to read this story? Did any almost put you off?
Okay folks, strap in! This chapter is going to be a rough ride. It's the most action-packed chapter thus far, as well as the second-longest chapter thus far. There's full on gore and horror too so reader discretion is advised and all that. But I am rather proud of how this chapter came out, so I hope you like it. If I weren't basically doing a double-length story, this would definitely be slightly re-written to be the climax of the book, so you should see several themes and threads converge (but obviously not all since we are only about halfway through). Anyway, before we get to the action and violence, there is some humor and fluff in the first half.

“Hey, you’re on the lacrosse team, right?”

Isaac inwardly cursed and turned to face Liam Dunbar, who was tapping his shoulder and already buzzing with impatient irritation. It was Isaac’s bad luck that Liam had ended up standing behind him in the lunch line, and he had been hoping that Liam wouldn’t speak to him. The boy was literally a hot mess, and Isaac wanted nothing to do with him. Sure he was (very) fun to look at, but Isaac had never seen him when he wasn’t in a terrible mood.

Isaac hated the way Liam smelled. Liam’s surface level scent was unoffensive enough, a standard blend of the artificial spice and musk common to men’s deodorant, body spray, hair gel, and soap along with the chemical bite that always accompanied such products. Liam’s selection was fine, and Isaac didn’t really mind the fragrance of cosmetics. They were on everyone after all, and Isaac hadn’t even been consciously aware of what a prominent role they played in people’s scent profiles until he had encountered Malia in the woods with Ethan and been encouraged to search more deeply for her scent. That was when Isaac had first caught the scent of humanity without any of the artificial trappings. That particular werewolf lesson and Ethan’s subsequent one teaching Isaac how to isolate flavors and experience them more richly, had also helped him learn to isolate and savor the distinct, individual components of scents. And Liam’s underlying, personal human scent, beneath the chemicals, was really nice. It was crisp and masculine with a savory zest and a creamy richness. Like virtually everyone else at the high school, Liam also smelled heavily of sex pheromones and latent arousal. It was delicious, and Isaac very much wanted to smell Liam fully aroused. But Liam wasn’t aroused, at least not sexually, and it was this third tier of scents, the ones signifying physical and emotional states that made Liam so nauseatingly repellent.

Liam was a noxious blend of stale and fresh anger, pent up frustration, adrenaline and stress, impatience and irritation, arrogance and insecurity, and a hefty dose of general life dissatisfaction. It smelled like someone had poured a bottle of hot sauce into a cup of burnt coffee, added some sour milk, then left the entire concoction sitting in the sun until it rotted. It made Isaac’s stomach churn and his skin twitch.

“Yeah, I’m on the lacrosse team,” Isaac answered and I swear I just threw up a little in my mouth.

“I need someone to practice with me tonight,” Liam said.

“But it’s off season.”
“Yeah so?” Liam’s brow dipped lower over his eyes and knit together as one corner of his lip lifted, forming a derisive, taunting scowl that ruined his should-have-been-cute features. It was the kind of glare designed to make the person receiving it feel worthless and pathetic. Isaac had seen that look on entirely too many faces in his life and it struck a nerve.

“So I’m not wasting my night practicing with some moody underclassman months in advance of any actual game.” Isaac returned the scornful glare and laced his tone with condescension. Fuck Liam and his bad attitude. Isaac was done taking other people’s shit. Besides, it was the full moon that night and he had a dozen different things to worry about.

“Grrrugh!” Liam growled and a vein bulged in his neck as his clear blue eyes grew stormy with anger. “Coach said I can’t use the field by myself!”

“Not my problem.”

“You know what? Your class fucking sucks! You guys are supposed to be the leaders on our team, but the team captain over there” –Liam waved an angry hand at Scott, who was seated several yards away at their usual lunch table– “blew me off too, and so did that other guy.” Liam’s hand flicked to the side, indicating Danny, who was sitting next to Scott.

“Your captain is Scott, that’s Danny, and I’m Isaac, which you obviously didn’t bother to find out before you asked us for a favor. But guess what? We all have our own lives and they don’t happen to revolve around you.”

“You’re an asshole!” Liam barked between clenched teeth, his whole body quivering with rage. “Hope you have fun sitting on the bench while I start next season, Isaac.”

Liam huffed and growled as he left the lunch line and strode out of the cafeteria.

“You okay?” asked Scott’s quiet voice from the table.

Isaac grumbled under his breath and answered. “Yeah. He’s just lucky he didn’t talk to me like that during the full moon.”

“Dude, you have awesome control. He’d have been fine.”

Isaac smiled at the pride in Scott’s voice and took the compliment, letting it soothe away his anger. Isaac didn’t particularly want to smell like a cup of rotting pepper coffee.

A few minutes later Isaac had gotten his food and was taking a seat next to Lydia and across from Scott and Danny. Isaac’s encounter with Liam had reminded him to check his own attitude and so he tried not to be annoyed by Danny’s presence, even though he and Scott and Lydia needed to plan for tonight’s full moon and Danny joining them for lunch was an inconvenience.

“So you’ll never believe this, but I heard our exes got arrested last night,” Danny said to Lydia, propping his elbows on the table and resting his chin on his hands as he leaned forward.

“I know,” Lydia answered.

“You know?” Danny frowned slightly and sat back.

“Yes, the sheriff called” –she hesitated for a second but her face and voice gave nothing away that a human would pick up on– “me last night.”

Isaac silently thanked her for her discretion.
“I forgot you had an in with the Stilinski’s.” Danny said. Then he looked around with a furrowed brow. “Where is Stiles anyway? I haven’t seen him for a couple days.”

“He’s sick.”
“New Mexico visiting family.”
“Regional packing competition!”

Danny looked back and forth between them with wide eyes and an open mouth.

Scott cleared his throat and fussed with the cuff of his sleeve the way he always did when he lied to someone he liked. “Stiles is in New Mexico visiting family and competing in the regional packing championships, but he’s sick so we’re not too optimistic about his chances.”

“Yeah, plus he forgot his lucky suitcase so...” Isaac shook his head and inhaled through his teeth.

“Well at least he’ll have family there to cheer him on,” Danny answered with his signature amused grin, the one that never gave anything away, even to werewolves.

“How did you find out about Aiden and Ethan’s arrest?” Lydia asked, earning a relieved smile from Scott as she changed the subject.

“I’ve been talking to this new guy, Mason. A friend of his who also goes here is the sister of a cop. She saw them and recognized them while she was at the station bringing her sister something.”

Danny’s face creased with worry. “What happened anyway? Is Ethan okay? I’ve been dying to text him but I don’t know how to bring it up.”

_Hey boo, sorry I broke your heart. So jail, huh?

“Aiden started a bar fight.” Lydia answered, the residual distress in her voice prompting Isaac to lean his arm against hers. “But they’re both fine, and I think they’ve been released.”

“Figures Ethan would get caught up in the drama too. For a good guy he makes bad choices.”
Danny’s voice was full of bitter resentment, and it stirred something protective in Isaac.

“Yeah imagine that, having your brother’s back in a bar fight. What an idiotic choice.” Isaac took an irritated bite of his sandwich and didn’t look up to see Danny’s reaction.

“Uh, anyway, tell us about this guy Mason you’re seeing,” Scott said to Danny in his trademark cheerful tone.

Isaac zoned out after that, mostly ignoring the conversation in favor of checking his phone. The sheriff had sent them an update about Stiles, but the only news was that there wasn’t any. His condition was stable but unchanged. Isaac also texted Ethan to check on him. He was out making the rounds, trying to smooth things over with the guys Aiden had hurt. Isaac resisted the urge to tell him to be careful. He was a werewolf and they were already injured. Of course he’d be fine.

After Danny got up to go talk to Mason, who, based on his heart rate and scent, was quite interested in Danny, the three packmates finally had a chance to plan for the full moon. Lydia volunteered to spend the night with their newest pack member, Malia, and keep her as calm as possible during her first full moon since becoming human again. Isaac hated this idea and Scott radiated worry. They didn’t know Malia very well yet, but what little they did know clearly indicated she would have control issues. However, they didn’t have much choice. Isaac would need to spend the night keeping an eye on Scott since Iron Claw would be at his strongest.

That still left them shorthanded.
“We need someone to spend the night with Stiles. He could—” Isaac cut himself off with a sharp
cough, choking on the words that had formed in his mouth.

“He won’t!” Scott and Lydia said in unison.

Isaac nodded. Stiles couldn’t. It was unthinkable.

“His dad’s going to be there all night,” Scott said. His face darkened as he continued. “I uh told him
about the increased risk tonight. He’ll definitely be there until sunup. My mom’s working another
overnight shift, so she’ll be there too. Stiles won’t be alone.”

“But we won’t be there,” Isaac said, shoulders tensing and stomach twisting.

They were silent for a few moments. Then Lydia spoke.

“I wonder if Allison’s going to be okay.” Lydia folded her napkin and dropped it onto her tray. “We
don’t know how the full moon will affect Kate. If it’ll make Iron Claw and the darach stronger then it
stands to reason it could give Kate more influence too.”

“Not necessarily,” Scott answered, voice strained but optimistic. “Iron Claw was a werewolf and the
darach was a druid. They’re affected by the moon for specific reasons. Kate was just a hunter.”

“Actually she was a werewolf at the end too. That’s how she ended up bound to the nemeton and
able to possess Allison,” Isaac pointed out, because Scott might have been an optimist, but Isaac was
a realist. That didn’t make him feel any less like an asshole when Scott’s face fell and a fresh burst of
anxiety wafted from his pores.

The worst part was none of them could even check in with Allison. She had gone radio silent after
entering Mexico. They had reassured each other that she just wanted to make a clean break and focus
on her mission, but Isaac couldn’t shake the feeling of dread that smothered him whenever he
thought about it.

After school they went to visit Stiles in the hospital. Isaac wished he could be optimistic like Scott,
but a part of him felt like he was saying goodbye to Stiles. He sort of wanted to mention that
possibility to Scott and Lydia too, so that they might also have the opportunity to gain some closure,
but it would have been pointless. If Stiles didn’t survive the full moon none of them, including and
especially Isaac, were going to be prepared and no amount of time to say goodbye would change
that.

All too soon they had to leave to make their full moon preparations. Lydia accompanied them to the
McCall house and sealed Scott in his mountain ash circle, then left to meet Malia at the school. Malia
wasn’t even enrolled at Beacon Hills High yet, but the pack had decided that since Malia’s dad
didn’t know about werewolves that it would be safer and easier if she told him that she was spending
the night with Lydia. It was the truth, he just didn’t need to know that instead of being at Lydia’s
house, they would be in the school basement. Besides, what father would actually want to hear the
details of his daughter’s wild night chained up in a basement with her new friend and surrounded by
lines of magic powder?

“Isaac?” Scott said a few minutes after Lydia had left.

“Hmm?” Isaac looked up from where he was sitting at Scott’s desk working on homework.

“We need to talk.”

Isaac cocked his head at Scott. He was sitting cross-legged on his bed within the supernatural circle,
fussing with the sleeve of his shirt.

“Are you planning to lie to me about something?” Isaac asked with a nervous laugh. It would be awkward if Scott had been planning to lie to him and he had just called him out on it.

“What? No, of course not. Besides, I couldn’t do that even if I wanted to.”

“Well actually once you learn how to mask your scent and hide your heartbeat you will be able to. I need to get Ethan to teach you. Or I guess I could try to teach you. Or you could just ask Ethan yourself. Or–”

“Isaac. We need to talk.”

Isaac sighed and gave up on his plan to spend the next twelve hours rambling so that Scott couldn’t get a word in. It was a dumb plan that Isaac had never been cut out for. Stiles on the other hand could have pulled it off perfectly.

“I know,” Isaac answered, squaring his shoulders and bracing himself for the inevitable.

Scott laughed and pushed his sleeves up his arms. “It’s stupid for us to be this nervous. We’re going to be fine. We are fine. We just need to clear the air.”

“Okay.”

“So, uh, I guess I’ll go first?”

Isaac nodded and Scott continued.

“Let me just start by saying, I don’t think I could have lived with myself if Iron Claw had—Scott’s voice tightened around the next word—‘killed you or Stiles. You guys are like my brothers.’”

Isaac fought against the urge to put up his walls or say something to lighten the moment. He also resisted the desire to look away and to mask his scent and heartbeat. It’s okay to be vulnerable with Scott. Scott won’t hurt me.

“But you really hurt my feelings the other night and kind of...” Scott caught Isaac’s eyes with his own and Isaac was wrong: the look Scott gave him hurt a lot. “You kind of destroyed me.”

“Scott—”

“Let me finish.” Scott took a long breath before continuing. “Waking up suddenly like that with my muscles burning and convulsing from the taser, on the floor with bugs crawling all over me, and—and Stiles’ blood in my mouth, your blood on my claws...”

Isaac’s chest trembled as he watched Scott’s face twisting and straining at the memories, and Isaac was pissed that Scott was trapped behind a wall of mountain ash. He wanted to hug him so bad.

“I was...” Scott swallowed and took a sip from the water bottle he had brought to bed. “I was so fucking terrified. You were bleeding and your leg was broken, and I thought we were going to lose Stiles completely. Everything was so messed up and I felt so helpless.”

“Scott—”

“And you were mean to me, Isaac. You were really mean.” Scott’s face crumpled as silent tears trickled down his cheeks. He finished in a whisper, “I was miserable and you made me feel even worse. You of all people, Isaac. You.”
Isaac felt gutted, and his pain and embarrassment made him want to run out of Scott’s room. He didn’t. Scott was hurting too, and this time Isaac was going to do the right thing.

He rushed to the mountain ash ring and crouched down so that he and Scott were closer to eye level, but low enough that Scott had the dominant position. “Scott, I’m so sorry. Like I would do anything...”

“I know.” Scott extended his hand toward Isaac but lowered it again near the edge of the circle. “I completely forgive you, and I feel like such a selfish jerk that I even told you all that. I know it must have been even worse for you. I-I just needed you to know how I felt, but I’m sorry. I shouldn’t have—”

“No, Scott, thank you for telling me.” Isaac lowered his head, not in submission but in shame. “I fucked up. I need to face the consequences.”

Isaac meant it. It hurt like hell being confronted with the pain he had caused Scott, but he was relieved if getting that off his chest had unburdened Scott in any way. He also appreciated that Scott hadn’t just given him a free pass like he always seemed to do in the past. It meant Scott believed Isaac was strong enough to handle it. The only trouble was—

“You were right,” Isaac said. “That morning in the kitchen when we first found out about Iron Claw, you said I would freak out if he did something to me and it felt like it was coming from you...and you were right. I did.”

“That’s not your fault.”

Isaac shook his head. “I-I wasn’t mad at Allison when she attacked me. I understood that she couldn’t help it and wouldn’t have done it on purpose.”

Surprise and then offense flitted across Scott’s face. “You know I wouldn’t do it on purpose either right?”

Isaac laughed because that was a really stupid question. “Yeah, of course I know you would never do anything to hurt me on purpose.”

“I wouldn’t,” Scott answered solemnly.

“I know,” Isaac repeated. “And with Allison, or Stiles, or someone else, knowing they couldn’t help it and don’t mean it is enough, but with you...it’s just very different with you.”

“Because I’m your alpha?”

“Maybe? I mean I guess. But also because...” Isaac frowned as he realized he didn’t have the words to explain what he meant.

“Because?”

Isaac racked his brain for a way to express what he felt.

“You’re not my werewolf anchor.”

“I know. Your dad is.”

“But you’re my human anchor.”

A goofy smile spread across Scott’s face and Isaac felt an immediate trill of happiness. “What do you
mean?” Scott asked.

Isaac gave Scott a shy smile and realized Scott was the only person he could say something like this to aloud. “Like when I think about my dad and my childhood, that helps me hold onto my humanity, but when I think about you, you make me feel like humanity is worth holding onto.”

“Isaac, that’s...wow.”

Isaac laughed and tried to lighten the mood.

“No pressure, but if you hurt me, I don’t think I’ll ever be able to trust anyone again.”

Isaac sucked at lightening the mood.

“I-I won’t. I swear I won’t.” Scott said.

Isaac smiled. It was nice to hear but it wasn’t necessary; Scott had implicitly made that promise months ago and he had reaffirmed it regularly ever since. Scott wouldn’t intentionally hurt Isaac. It was one of the fundamental laws of nature around which Isaac organized his life.

Scott’s face was set with fear and anxiety as he continued. “But Iron Claw...”

“Iron Claw isn’t you and I need to get that through my head.”

“Yeah,” Scott nodded, wide eyed. “You really do. Please remember that.”

Isaac nodded back. It was a lesson that had been playing on repeat in his head for the last three days.

“You were right too though,” Scott said after a little while.

“What?”

“That day when I said maybe you should stay with Lydia so Iron Claw wouldn’t hurt you. You said someone needed to keep Stiles and my mom safe. You were right.” Scott made eye contact with Isaac and held it. “You saved Stiles’ life the other night. Iron Claw would have killed him. I really need you to keep protecting people from him, Isaac.”

“I will,” Isaac answered, staring back at Scott and giving a single small nod. “Whatever it takes. No matter what.”

Scott’s face brightened and the atmosphere in the room followed suit. “Let’s watch Netflix and try to relax while we can.”

“Sounds good. Your mom and me are ahead of you on Daredevil, but I’ve been wanting to check out Jessica Jones.”

“Yeah, Jessica Jones is pretty hot. I can see why you’d wanna check her out,” Scott remarked with the crooked grin on his face that always formed when he made a joke. “I bet you’ve been checking out the Daredevil guy too though.”

Isaac chuckled. “That definitely might have happened.”

“It must be so much fun being bi.”

“Kinda is,” Isaac agreed with a nod.
“You should tell Stiles,” Scott said, becoming more serious.

“W-why?” Isaac’s stomach turned over and his heart skipped a beat. He hoped Scott would attribute it to general anxiety about coming out.

“Uhh...” Scott fussed with the cuff of his pajama pants. “Just seems like something he should know. I mean you guys are pretty close so...”

“Yeah, but...” Isaac frowned, his cheeks heating in a blush. “I don’t really like to talk about my sexuality. Not just the guy part of it. The girl part too. It’s just awkward talking about who I wanna bone. I mean, don’t get me wrong, I think stuff, like a lot, but unless I’m with someone I’m actually, you know, doing that type of stuff with” –like Allison or Ethan– “I don’t like to say it out loud.”

“I get that,” Scott answered.

“I like to flirt though,” Isaac added, “and if the person is receptive, then we can go from there, but if the person isn’t interested, I don’t wanna make things weird or make other people around me uncomfortable hearing about it.”

“That’s very respectful,” Scott said with a pleasant nod, “but it’s okay to talk about sex stuff with you friends. I mean if you want to. You always can with me, girls or guys.”

“I appreciate that.” Isaac hesitated but felt compelled to explain further. “You know, you and the rest of the pack are like the first friends I’ve had since Matt back when we were kids.” Isaac laughed. “And in hindsight he was kinda always a big ball’a crazy, so I guess I’m not that great at friend stuff like talking about crushes, or people I wanna bang or whatever.”

Scott smiled at him. “Well you’re really great at most friend stuff, and that’s not an important one, so don’t worry about it.”

“Thanks.” Isaac’s chest fluttered and he smiled back. Scott was such an awesome friend. Isaac wanted to make Scott happy by taking him up on his offer and saying something sexual, so before he had time to run it through his mental filter he blurted out, “I used to really enjoy picturing you when jerking off.”

Scott choked and embarrassment flooded his scent.

“That wasn’t an appropriate comment,” Isaac noted, burying his face in his hands in shame.

“No, uh, I mean...thank you I guess. I jus– Wait, uhm, what do you mean you used to enjoy picturing me?”

Isaac looked up. “Huh?”

“Like, you don’t anymore?”

Isaac shook his head. “Oh no, I don’t anymore.”

“Oh.” Scott frowned. “Do I not...look as good?”

“What? No! You’re still super hot. I just stopped because I wanted to get over you.” FUCK!

Scott’s brow rose. “Oh. So you had an actual crush on me? I just thought it was a lust thing.”

“I, uh, it-it was both. But I’m over it now. The crush that is. The lust I still– Well uh you’re very...” Isaac cleared his throat. He was pretty sure he was going to burst into flames any moment now.
“That’s good that you’re over it. The-crush I mean because I can’t–”

“I know you can’t.”

“But the lust, it’s fine if you...I mean it doesn’t bother me. I just can’t...”

“No, I got that.”

“I just–”

“Scott, can we please stop talking about this?” Isaac asked, not trying to hide the pleading tone in his voice.

Please, god yes!” Scott answered, breathing a relieved sigh.

Isaac laughed and rubbed his forehead. “See, this is why I don’t talk about sexual stuff with friends!”

“Well it was a good first try.”

“Was it? Was it, Scott?” Isaac folded his arms and looked at the wall. “Because I’m pretty sure we’re both completely mortified.”

“Okay well...it was a first try. You’ll get better.”

“The bar is pretty low,” Isaac answered with a final laugh at his own expense.

Isaac and Scott settled in and managed to get through the first episode of Jessica Jones, but it wasn’t easy. Isaac was good at control, but that didn’t make the moon’s pull any less insistent. It didn’t ease the tender, throbbing ache that was consuming him from head to toe, pushing and pulsing beneath his skin, trying to yank his claws and fangs to the surface. His eyes twitched and spasmed with the effort to keep them blue. His mind was in a constant state of low-grade panic about Stiles and fitful foreboding about Iron Claw, as well as absolute, maddening uncertainty about Allison. It was almost refreshing when his thoughts would loop through the anxiety cycle and land on worries about Lydia and how she was doing with Malia. At least that situation would probably be okay. Lydia was always well-prepared and capable and Malia was just a regular old werecoyote, not the vengeful spirit of a psychotic monster. Needless to say, Isaac would probably have to re-watch the first episode of Jessica Jones if he actually wanted to understand the show.

The second episode had barely started when Isaac’s hypervigilance detected a change in Scott’s heart rate and emotional scent. Quick as he was to register it, Isaac barely had time to turn his head before a bloodcurdling snarl pierced the air. Isaac leaped out of his chair and spun his body to face the undead threat.

Iron Claw was wolfed out, his glowing red eyes hateful and predatory as they bore into Isaac, penetrating him to his core and sending ripples of cold terror radiating from his gut. The murderous alpha bared his fangs and snarled, and Isaac was instantly transported back to a few nights ago, to the sounds of Stiles agonized screams and the crunching of bones and tearing of flesh. Iron Claw pounded Scott’s clawed hands against the mountain ash barrier, making it spark and buzz. Then he threw his head back roared.

The blast of alpha dominance tore through Isaac like a tidal wave. The last time Iron Claw had roared, Isaac had been rooted in place, frantic to protect Stiles at any cost. But Stiles wasn’t here tonight and Isaac was a beta wolf standing alone against a furious, powerful alpha. Isaac’s instincts took over and before he could stop himself he transformed and ran from the room, raced down the hallway, and leaped from the top of the stairs all the way to the bottom in one long bound. Isaac
barely had the presence of mind to open the front door instead of tearing it off the hinges.

He was halfway down the block when he managed to reign himself in.

_Not a slave to the wolf. Not a victim. Not a monster. Remember the past. Remember who you are. Remember who you are._

Isaac pressed the heels of his palms into his eyes and focused on his anchor.


Isaac opened his eyes and let out a slow breath as he took a moment to appraise himself. He was barefoot and claws were protruding from his toes. It was strange seeing his feet like this. Isaac hardly ever extended his hindclaws. It was a fast way to ruin a pair of shoes or mess up someone’s floor. The claws on his hands were out too, and his mouth was agape, lips pulled back to accommodate his fangs. His eyes glowed with heat and a tap of his finger told him that even his ears were pointed.

This was unacceptable. Isaac was in public, in his own neighborhood. He couldn’t be seen like this.

Scott. Scent memory flared in Isaac’s nose. Scott’s blood. Scott’s ruined bedding after Iron Claw had spent the night bloodletting him. Isaac had to get back to the house and protect Scott from his demonic captor. He couldn’t physically do anything with Iron Claw inside the mountain ash, but he could at least keep an eye on him and try to improvise if something happened.

Isaac had to refocus on his anchor as he turned to walk back home. His skin throbbed and ached harder than it had indoors now that it was directly under the glow of the full moon. It didn’t just ache, it _hurt_, and it hurt so much more as Isaac forced his supernatural side back beneath the surface. How had it been pleasurable when he and Ethan had fucked under the moonlight?

Isaac hissed a sharp breath as his cock went from shriveled to ramrod hard with preternatural speed and force, tenting the front of his gray sweatpants obscenely. It felt like his erection was trying to rip its way out of the soft cotton and make him find someone or something to put it in for relief.

_Okay, new rule: no more thinking about sex during full moons._

Isaac hobbled back to the house, cock throbbing and claws trying to tear themselves out of every one of his digits. He didn’t even try to fight his fangs or eyes, just kept his head turned away from the neighbors’ houses and listened for approaching cars.

Once Isaac was safely back inside the McCall house and spared from the direct glare of the moon, he did a quick sound check to make sure Iron Claw wasn’t up to anything too terrible. He was snarling and slamming himself against the mountain ash barrier, but Isaac didn’t smell blood, so he allowed himself a few minutes to regain his composure and get rid of his boner. Regrettably getting rid of his boner meant ignoring it and doing math in his head until it went away. He couldn’t risk masturbating and getting lost in a moon-fueled lust all night.

_“COME HERE!”_  

Isaac yelped and cowered against the front door. If he hadn’t just lost his erection, that sure as hell would have done the trick. Isaac had never heard Iron Claw speak before, much less shout, and it was terrifying hearing so much rage and darkness in Scott’s voice.
“COME HERE!” Iron Claw laced the command with mind-shattering alpha authority.

Isaac scrambled up the stairs and back into Scott’s room in a blank daze, frantic to obey the wolf who sounded like his alpha.

“Release me,” Iron Claw ordered, hands raised by his sides.

“I. Can’t.” Isaac said, struggling to breathe around the traitorous reply. It felt like his body was trying to tear itself apart from the inside as it reminded him of his strong, very strong connection to his alpha and punished him for disobeying.

“RELEASE ME!”

Another blast of alpha power slammed into Isaac’s body, rendering him limp and whimpering on his knees.


Iron Claw growled and slammed the flat of his hand against the mystic wall. It rippled and glowed but didn’t budge.

Isaac took a deep breath and stared back at Iron Claw with defiant amber eyes.

“And I wouldn’t.” He ignored the way his ribs tried to fold in on themselves. “You are not my alpha.”

“Claw yourself.”

Isaac’s right hand involuntarily poised over his left arm to rake claws across his skin, but something held it back.

Scott would never hurt me.

The corner of Isaac’s mouth twisted into a smirk as the earthquake splitting him from the inside out went still.

“See, now you don’t even feel like my alpha.” Isaac retracted his claws and rubbed the pad of his thumb over his human fingertips to prove his point.

The red glow of Iron Claw’s eyes intensified and a plume of pure rage flooded the room. He struck the mountain ash barrier again with the palm of his hand.

“You can’t get out,” Isaac said, rising back to his feet and giving Iron Claw a taunting grin. “You are helpless.”

Iron Claw threw his head back and roared.

Isaac braced himself and, although it ripped through him like an icy wind, refused to react.

“Helpless!”

Iron Claw raised his hand and stared at it for a moment, seething with fiery rage. Then he roared directly at his fingers.

Isaac opened his mouth to taunt Iron Claw again but his words turned into a gasp as Scott’s claws started changing. They gradually thickened and darkened, going from an opaque orange to a steely
gray. Then they elongated, growing until they were at least eight inches long.

Iron Claw gave Isaac a chilling snarl then raised his other hand and growled, holding the animalistic note until his second hand had also sprouted terrifying, unnatural iron claws.

“Oh god.” Isaac took a nervous step back as Iron Claw thrust his enhanced claws into the mountain ash barrier.

There was a sizzling pop and the whole barrier began to light up and flash. It screeched and whined with mystic energy then dimmed, then flickered, then–

“Aww fuck!” Isaac turned around and bolted out of the room as the barrier dissolved.

Isaac knew he had to think fast as he barreled down the hallway and leaped over the railing around the stairs, landing on all fours in the living room. Isaac couldn’t let Iron Claw go on a murderous rampage, but ‘fortunately’ he was sure that he would be Iron Claw’s main target. Iron Claw would need to absorb werewolf power to complete his transformation and fully cross over. Killing Isaac would be his top priority.

Alphas were faster than betas and Isaac had only had a second or two lead on Iron Claw as he landed in the living room. He was still on all fours when he sensed Iron Claw reach the end of the landing above him. Images of Sunday night raced through Isaac’s head. Iron Claw had jumped off the stairs and landed on Isaac, crushing his leg and disabling him.

Acting on faith that Iron Claw would try the same strategy again, Isaac rolled onto his back and raised his arms and legs, claws jutting out of his hands and bare feet.

An instant later Iron Claw crashed down hard on top of Isaac, impaling himself on Isaac’s extended limbs with a squishing thud. Hot blood trickled down Isaac’s feet and hands as Iron Claw growled and snarled at him; however, before he could land a swipe with his deadly claws, Isaac wrenched his fingers out of Iron Claw’s stomach, rolled back on his hips, and used his powerful leg muscles to hurl Iron Claw against the opposite wall of the living room.

Isaac was on his feet a split-second later, racing to the back door. He needed to lead Iron Claw away from populated areas, and the rear of the McCall property abutted the sprawling Beacon Hills woods. It was Isaac’s only chance to contain the situation and keep anyone from getting maimed or killed.

Isaac slammed the back door shut behind him and yanked Melissa’s wrought iron patio table in front of it. It wouldn’t slow Iron Claw down for long, but every second counted.

Isaac let the shift take him and channeled the power of the moon into his muscles, tearing off through the backyard and into the woods at breakneck speed. The sound of Iron Claw smashing through the door reached Isaac’s ears just as cold, muddy water swept across his ankles and calves, saturating the legs of his sweatpants. He was in a small stream that wound a couple of miles in either direction through the forest. On instinct Isaac pivoted to follow it, hoping the water might obscure some of his scent.

Scent. What the fuck was Isaac doing? He could mask his scent.

He hunched forward as he ran and slashed his clawed fingers through the muddy water, rinsing away as much of Scott’s blood as he could. There would be no point in masking his personal scent if Iron Claw could track the blood.

The sound of snapping branches signaled that Iron Claw was close, but by then Isaac was already darting out of the stream and into a tight tangle of trees, using them for visual cover. After a moment
he managed to focus enough to seal off his scent and hide his heartbeat. It was difficult while running and especially while under the full moon, but Isaac had been practicing every day since Ethan had taught him these skills.

There was still a problem. Isaac simply couldn’t outrun Iron Claw; it was biologically impossible, and just as Isaac could hear Iron Claw thudding through the underbrush, the sound of his own feet crunching through the woods made his efforts at stealth useless. He had to hide.

His eyes landed on a low-hanging limb and he poised to leap for it as he ran close, knowing that once the tree quit rustling he would be almost invisible to Iron Claw’s senses unless he happened to investigate that specific tree.

At the last second a lesson from another werewolf stopped Isaac from jumping for the branch.

“Look before you leap, Isaac,” Derek had said several months ago, thinking his attempt at humor was far more clever than it was. “Use all of your senses. Will that limb hold you?”

It wouldn’t. The scent of damp, rotting wood surged to the front of Isaac’s consciousness. He would have fallen.

He passed that limb untouched and kept his eyes peeled and his nose on high alert for a better alternative, which he found a few trees deeper into the woods. Once he was sure it was a good choice, he bounced into the air, closed his hands around it, and used momentum to swing back around. He stuck the landing with a surefooted grace that surprised him, finding the maneuver easier to perform barefoot than it had been each time in the past in shoes.

He immediately crouched low on the limb and wrapped an arm around the tree trunk, gripping the limb itself with his other arm and dissipating the kinetic energy in the long branch, stilling it and quieting the leaves.

Isaac tried not to panic as Iron Claw bounded into view a little while later and ran directly under his tree. He held his breath and focused on keeping his scent covered and his heartbeat silent.

Iron Claw never paused, just sprinted into another clutch of trees and out of view.

Isaac resisted breathing a sigh of relief. He couldn’t risk it. Instead he continued holding his breath and kept himself undetectable until he could no longer hear Iron Claw in the distance. He barely pulled it off. He had no idea how long he had been masking his scent and he knew that the whole chase had probably taken less time than it seemed, but it felt like Isaac had been holding in his scent longer than ever before.

_Woo hoo possible new record. Apparently the imminent threat of a gruesome death is an effective motivator. Who knew?_

Yet Isaac wasn’t out of the woods yet – if Derek could make bad puns in Isaac’s head, so could he – because Iron Claw would only look for Isaac for so long before giving up. That should have been a good thing but it wasn’t since it meant Iron Claw would then go looking for other victims. Isaac couldn’t let that happen. It was his job to protect people from Iron Claw. He had to figure out a way to trap him until morning. But Isaac knew he couldn’t do that alone. He needed his pack and right now pack meant one person: Lydia.

By supreme good fortune Isaac’s phone hadn’t fallen out of his pocket. It had gotten twisted up in the fabric instead, sealing itself in a secure, if uncomfortable, pouch against Isaac’s thigh and well above the waterline of the stream. Isaac performed one more check to make sure Iron Claw wasn’t
around then called Lydia.

“Isaac, is everything okay?” Lydia asked as she answered on the second ring. Isaac heard the clink of chains and Malia growling in the background.

“No,” Isaac responded, keeping his voice low just in case. “Iron Claw’s iron claws came out and he tore right out of the mountain ash.”

“Are you okay?”

“Yes, I led him into the woods and managed to hide, but I don’t know where he’s going next and we have to figure out how to stop him.”

Lydia was silent for a second, then drew a tense breath. “Oh god, he’s going to come here.”

A ferocious snarl from Malia punctuated her revelation, adding to the jolt of panic that lurched in Isaac’s stomach.

“How do you know? Are you having like a banshee premonition?”

“No, it’s just logical. You got away, so he’s going to turn his attention to the other were-creature in his pack: Malia.”

“WHAAAT!” Malia’s chains clinked furiously and Isaac could hear the metal creaking and straining.

“He doesn’t know where she is!” Isaac answered, raising his voice and hoping Malia could hear it through the phone.

Lydia didn’t answer right away, and Isaac heard the sound of her footsteps clicking against the concrete floor, then a door opening and closing. She didn’t want Malia to overhear whatever she was about to say. It might even work given how loud Malia was being and how wild she sounded.

“Of course he knows where she is. Scott knows where she is,” Lydia whispered.

“You think Iron Claw knows what Scott knows?”

“He does. All my research indicates the person being possessed blacks out and can’t access the spirit’s knowledge, but the spirit is always present in the possessed consciousness, biding its time to take over and yes, cognizant of what’s happening around it.”

Isaac’s gut reaction was to feel violated. Iron Claw knew things about him that Isaac was only comfortable with Scott knowing – but that obviously wasn’t the most important point right now. Lydia and Malia were in danger.

“Can you move her?” Isaac asked.

“Not if I want to keep both my arms.”

“I’ll be right there. We’ll take her somewhere and then figure out how to capture Iron Claw.”

“Isaac...we don’t stand a chance against Iron Claw.”

Fear and then certainty washed over Isaac in rapid succession. He knew what he had to do if they were all going to make it out of this mess alive.
“I’ll call Ethan.”

Lydia was silent for a beat and then spoke in a voice heavy with resignation. “Make sure he brings Aiden. We’ll need them both.”

Isaac blamed the full moon for the growl that rumbled in his throat at the notion of asking Aiden for help but he managed to calm down and acknowledge the request before hanging up.

Isaac was already out of the tree and sprinting back toward the McCall house – toward his house, he reminded himself, taking comfort in the grounding feeling of family and belonging – by the time he called Ethan.

“Isaac? What happened?”

Isaac’s dick fucking throbbed at the sound of Ethan’s voice saying his name, raw and primal under the full moon. Lust coiled tight and demanding around Isaac’s body, and he swore he could feel the phantom sensation of Ethan’s fingers on his skin.

“Isaac?”

Isaac shuddered and moaned before answering. “Sorry.”

“...do you need...sex?” Ethan asked, and Isaac almost ran into a tree.

“So much. I need so much sex right now,” Isaac replied, forcing a laugh and trying to paw through the dense cloud of desperation numbing his brain. Rage, lust, and other base drives were harder to overcome during the full moon, and being outside under it talking to someone he had a sexual history with wasn’t helping. “But that’s not why I called. I need your help.”

And help really wasn’t a euphemism for Ethan’s huge, thick cock, so why was Isaac picturing it and salivating?

“Is it Scott?” Ethan’s voice took on an anxious edge that made Isaac focus.

“Oh, yeah. How did you know?” Isaac didn’t wait for a response, just tried to figure out an efficient way to explain things to Ethan. “Anyway look, I know this is a lot to take in, but Scott’s—”

“Possessed by the ghost of an evil alpha,” Ethan finished in a rush. “Yeah, I’m up to speed. What do you need?”

Isaac’s jaw dropped and a tingle of confusion accompanied the chill that ran up his spine as he splashed through the cold water of the stream near the edge of the woods. “How could you possibly—”

“We’ll talk later. Where are you? Are you safe? I’ll come get you.”

“No. I need you to meet me at school. Lydia and Malia are there in the basement. We think he’s on his way to kill Malia.”

“Lydia’s in danger?” Aiden’s voice was muffled and barely human. Isaac could hear the fangs and claws in it.

“We’re on our way,” Ethan said.

Isaac hung up as he bounced onto the patio table and through the splintered back door. It would take too long to run to school and he would have had to take an indirect route to remain hidden in the
woods. Besides, he needed to beat Iron Claw there and to do that he would need to drive. Fortunately an unused vehicle was sitting in the driveway and had been since Sunday night.

Isaac found Stiles’ keys sitting in the decorative bowl on the coffee table in the living room where he usually left them when he was visiting. Isaac’s cock pulsed with interest as he caught Stiles’ scent on the keys.

*Great, I’ll probably cum in my pants in the Jeep.*

He didn’t, but by the time Isaac got to school his knuckles were white around the steering wheel with the effort it took to keep from touching himself. It didn’t help that Stiles’ gym bag was in the backseat. It was sealed, but there was no mistaking the fragrance of one of Stiles’ used jockstraps from cross country the previous week – and why couldn’t Isaac think that was gross like a normal person? Why did he want nothing more than to bury his nose in it until morning? Good god Stiles’ balls smelled good.

Isaac was half-high on Stiles’ pheromones as he parked the Jeep behind the school for quicker access to the basement. He would have been outright high if he hadn’t exercised every bit of self restraint he had and reminded himself over and over that *fucking lives* hung in the balance and he needed to stop being such a slave to his instincts, full moon or not. Isaac tucked his erection into the waistband of his sweatpants and pulled his t-shirt down over his crotch, which had gotten spotted with precum even through his underwear.

As Isaac dashed through the parking lot a gust of wind rolled in carrying a distinctive scent that made Isaac stop in his tracks: rotting pepper coffee.

New anxiety roiled in Isaac’s stomach as he remembered something that had gotten lost in his dread about the full moon: at lunch Liam had asked people to practice with him that night. Coach had said he couldn’t use the field alone, but what if he had successfully convinced someone to join him?

Isaac cursed as he turned his head and realized there was a glow coming from around the side of the auditorium that led onto the lacrosse field, indicating the stadium lights were on. He sprinted over and peered onto the field, immediately spotting Liam on the end closest to the woods with a heap of lacrosse balls at his feet as he took shot after shot, making every one from a different angle and into a different spot of the net.

Isaac ran onto the field. He had to get Liam to leave right away.

Liam frowned at him as he approached and leaned the edge of his stick against the ground. “What are you doing here?” he shouted as Isaac got near. “And why are you so filthy?”

Isaac glanced down at himself. His white t-shirt was streaked in dirt and torn in several places. His gray sweatpants likewise featured smears of mud and dirt, along with numerous small twigs and brambles snagged in the still-wet legs. Isaac’s feet were caked in mud and his hands and forearms were splattered with it. At least Liam probably wouldn’t notice the long, bulging outline of his barely concealed erection under all the distracting mess.

“I went for a run through the woods. Look you have to--”

“But you came from the parking lot and I heard the sound of your car a while ago.”

“You have to leave,” Isaac said, ignoring him and stepping in close enough to grab his elbow.

Liam yanked his arm away, hand balling into a fist. His scent flared with fresh rage, briefly overpowering the stale tang, and a muscle in Liam’s jaw twitched as he answered, “You fucking
leave. I was here first.”

“You’re not supposed to be here alone,” Isaac said, clamping down on his wolf and vigorously reminding himself that he had to protect Liam, not tear him in half. Maybe the friendly reminder about coach’s rules would get him to leave.

“I’m not alone, jackass, and you’re not supposed to be either. So why don’t you just go to the other side of the field and we can stay out of each other’s way?”

Isaac had to admit that was a surprisingly reasonable response considering that Liam was physically quaking with anger and seemed ready to explode. It didn’t matter. Liam was harmless, and Isaac was about three seconds from picking him up and carrying him off the field. Maybe he could find somewhere safe to lock him away until morning.

“I’m not here to prac–” Isaac snapped his head toward the woods, hand hovering in the air next to Liam’s arm. He heard the telltale crunch of leaves and twigs and the thud of running footsteps – one set of footsteps. It wasn’t the twins.

“You are so fucking weird, man!” Liam shouted, taking a step back.

“Ssshush!” Isaac’s dirty hand sealed over Liam’s mouth as he tried to pinpoint Iron Claw’s location and figure out an escape route.

Liam grabbed Isaac’s wrist and twisted it back hard and fast, causing Isaac to yelp and jerk it away.

“What the hell?!? Don’t fucking touch me!” Liam landed a hard shove to Isaac’s chest then his fist was sailing toward Isaac’s eye.

Isaac caught the punch easily and for a split second as the moon overpowered him, Isaac growled and squeezed Liam’s fist with the intention of crushing it as his other hand rose, clawed fingers prepared to slash the boy’s face.

Holy fuck! What the hell am I doing?!

“I’m sorry!” Isaac blurted, terrified of what he had almost become as his human hands traveled to Liam’s shoulders and he looked him over with a panicked intensity to ensure he was still intact.

“Wha–wha? WHAT?!” Liam’s heart was racing and his bulging blue eyes looked ready to fall out of his skull. “Your fingers! And your eyes! And your teeth!”

“We have to go!” Isaac shouted, pulling Liam forward to toss him over his shoulder and run.

Just then Iron Claw sprang out of the tree line about a dozen yards away and Isaac knew it was too late. He was too close to outrun. Isaac had no choice but to hold him off while Liam got away.

Isaac shoved Liam away as abruptly as he had pulled him forward.

“RUN!”

Isaac dropped into a crouch and roared at Iron Claw before bolting away perpendicular to the alpha. It would be easy for Isaac’s faster, stronger enemy to head him off, but he had to put as much space between them and Liam as he could.

Isaac skidded to a halt a few seconds later as he realized Iron Claw wasn’t charging toward him. He turned his head and his heart sank in horror as he saw Iron Claw approaching Liam with a predatory
gleam in his eye. The boy was frozen in place, leaning heavily on his lacrosse stick as the monster stalked toward him at a slow but steady pace.

“Liam run!” Isaac shouted. Then he roared at Iron Claw again, trying to bait him. “You don’t want him. He’s useless to you. You need me.”

Iron Claw made a sound that was an approximation of a chuckle – if chuckles were soul crushing.

“WANT BOTH!”

Iron Claw bounded forward, his saber-like claws raised and fang-lined jaw open so wide it had to have been unhinged. He was about two seconds from shredding the still stationary lacrosse player.

“Liam, fucking RUN!” Isaac screamed as he raced to converge on the pair. He wasn’t going to make it.

At the last second Liam’s other hand closed around his stick and he swung with a powerful chopping motion. The blow connected with the side of Iron Claw’s head and sent him tumbling to the ground, Isaac was sure more from surprise than force. A moment later Liam jabbed the butt of his stick into Iron Claw’s gapping maw, connecting with a hard clatter and a squishing wet pop that knocked out one of his fangs.

Liam’s stick was poised for another blow, but Isaac was already tackling Iron Claw, colliding with him hard enough to send them both down in a rolling heap and raking his claws across Iron Claw’s sides and back.

When they stopped rolling Isaac was on top, and he thought he somehow had the upper hand. He didn’t. Before he could launch another attack, Iron Claw’s eponymous weapons sank into Isaac’s lower back, tearing open his flesh and muscles and clashing against but not breaking his spinal column as he was ripped wide open from center to sides.

The pain was devastating and stole Isaac’s breath away in a heartbeat. An instant later he was flung off of Iron Claw like a wet newspaper. He crashed in a heap on his side, fighting for air and already slipping into shock.

Isaac didn’t see what happened next, but a few seconds later he realized the screams in his ears weren’t his own and managed to turn his head. Iron Claw had Liam on the ground, mouth locked around the side of his abdomen and dagger-like claws dragging lazily across Liam’s thighs, chest, and arms, as though torturing him purely for sport.

Isaac was dizzy from the blood loss and terrified by how saturated the ground around him seemed. He took a shuddering breath as he tried to get back up, desperate to do anything he could to protect the mauled human from further agony.

It was no use. Isaac’s elbows slipped in blood-soaked mud as he put weight on them and he crashed back down against his gaping, mangled back, re-injuring what little muscle and flesh regeneration his body had managed in the short amount of time. Forget fighting Iron Claw, at this point Isaac was fighting just to not pass out.

Isaac didn’t hear the twins arrive and barely had the mental clarity to realize they were there at all. One minute he just noticed that Iron Claw was no longer hovering over Liam’s body and then he slowly turned his head until he caught sight of the battle. It took Isaac another couple of minutes to comprehend who Iron Claw was fighting.

Ethan and Aiden were good fighters, better than any omegas or betas should have been. They were
fast as hell and despite no longer being able to merge they fought as a cohesive unit. One twin would
cover the other’s attack, keeping Iron Claw occupied while his brother darted in and wounded the
alpha before darting back out just as fast. Shield and sword, shield and sword, they alternated the
roles like a single well-trained warrior. They always seemed to know where the other would be and
their attacks were dynamic and varied enough that Iron Claw seemed unable to anticipate their
moves. They were harrying the beast, trying to wear him down so they could go in for the kill.

It was futile of course. Iron Claw’s body was supernaturally superior and if the legends were true, the
twins certainly weren’t going to rattle the combat-seasoned alpha. It was a miracle they had managed
to evade his debilitating attacks thus far. As Isaac watched it gradually became more and more
apparent that Ethan and Aiden weren’t succeeding in exhausting their adversary; he was gradually
draining their stamina. Their assaults became less precise and they were now struggling to parry and
defend against Iron Claw’s powerful blows. At any moment Iron Claw would finally land a crippling
strike on one of them, and as he soon as he did the other would fall without his backup.

But the full moon was a powerful force for a werewolf and around the same time Isaac realized
Ethan and Aiden’s defeat was inevitable, he also realized something else: he wasn’t going to die, at
least not from these injuries. Two would fall to Iron Claw, but would three?

Isaac sprang to his feet and charged into battle, snarling and sinking his claws and fangs into Iron
Claw’s back the next time the twins exposed it.

Isaac was certain the twins hadn’t expected his re-entry into the fight, but they capitalized on the
moment well with Aiden diving in for his own frenzied assault while Ethan blocked and guarded for
the other two.

“Stay back,” Ethan whispered, pivoting in to slice Iron Claw’s thigh as Aiden shielded him.

“Shut up,” Isaac answered, his barefoot jutting out to claw their opponent’s ankle.

“Would you fuckin’ pay attention?” Aiden snapped, narrowly sliding out of an aborted attack as
Ethan didn’t cover him.

The battle was now tipping in their direction, but Isaac was having trouble keeping up, both because
he was injured and because he couldn’t coordinate attacks with the twins the way they could with
each other. He reluctantly did stay back, diving in for opportunistic attacks when he could and
offering relief defense a few a times.

Things spiraled out of control the moment Iron Claw hooked his blades into Aiden’s hip. Ethan got
him loose quick, but the damage was done. Aiden was hobbled and Iron Claw exploited the
weakness, letting the beta and omegas shred his torso so that he could pin Aiden against one of the
metal and concrete stadium light poles and crush his hip. Isaac heard the large, slow-healing bone
shatter and knew their chances of defeating Iron Claw had just been crushed along with it.

Aiden crumpled to the ground against the now bent and cracked pole and Ethan’s combat efforts
shifted exclusively toward protecting his brother, which ironically, he couldn’t do very effectively
without his brother. Isaac tried to fill the gap, but he and Ethan quickly got tangled up and a moment
later Iron Claw slashed his rapier claws across Ethan’s face, blinding him, slicing off part of his nose,
and tearing his cheek and mouth wide open.

Ethan let out a half-shriek before stoically swallowing down the rest of the pain – and a lot of blood
– and Isaac saw red in every sense. He sprang forward, intent on retaliating with a brutal attack on
Iron Claw’s face. It must have been predictable because within a half second he was impaled on long
claws and flung end over end against the abused light pole next to Aiden.
Isaac’s already fragile lower back exploded in a flash of searing pain and then went horrifyingly numb, as did his hips and legs. He managed to right himself and look back just as Iron Claw knocked Ethan off his feet and then in a whirl of motion slammed his head against the ground.

Time slowed down as Iron Claw raised his arm over his head to deliver the fatal blow to Ethan. Isaac frantically tried to pick himself up but it was no use; he was completely paralyzed from the waist down.

At the same moment a spine-chilling snarl erupted from Aiden’s mouth and the injured werewolf lunged to his feet. There were several cracks and crunches as his hip and leg shattered in new places and he immediately began to topple forward but somehow went with it, staggering in an upright position on crunching bone as he crossed the short distance to Iron Claw and his brother.

Iron Claw turned his head just as Aiden gouged claws into his face and snapped it back again, exposing his throat. With another gut-churning snarl Aiden sank his fangs into Iron Claw’s jugular.

“NOOOOO!” Isaac screamed and threw feeble clumps of dirt at Aiden. Iron Claw’s jugular was Scott’s jugular.

Isaac felt Aiden’s bite in his soul, tearing at his pack bond with Scott, shredding it open and leaving it raw and quivering.

Aiden pulled his head back, jaws still clamped shut, and ripped Scott’s throat out.

Isaac felt like his intestines had been replaced with icicles as he watched Scott crumple to his knees, blood gushing and spraying in a macabre fountain all over Aiden and Ethan and even covering Isaac’s worthless legs and feet.

Aiden looked smug as he crumpled to the ground with Scott, unable to stand on his own but grinning with blood-drenched lips and laughing like a maniac. Aiden was fucking thrilled with himself for his latest murder. For his latest...

...murder?

Scott’s head rolled to the side and moonlight glimmered on his savaged throat. That was when Isaac realized his bond with Scott wasn’t gone. It was still raw and quivering, but getting stronger by the moment. Isaac listened and realized he could hear the sound of Scott’s arteries and veins stitching back together.

“He’s not—”

Isaac didn’t have time to finish as Iron Claw’s crimson eyes reopened and he swung his arm at Aiden, knocking him over like a bowling pen.

Iron Claw’s gaze landed dead on Isaac and he lurched forward, crawling over Aiden and making a beeline for Isaac.

Isaac had a pretty good guess why. Iron Claw was seriously wounded. He needed to kill someone and drain their power now and since Isaac was pack and the twins weren’t, he would give him the most bang for his buck.

Isaac tried to move, but his spine still hadn’t healed. All he succeeded in doing was hauling himself up by his arms against the stadium light pole, moving his vital organs slightly but barely out of reach of the knee-walking alpha. It wouldn’t even inconvenience him much considering those claws gave
his reach an extra eight inches.

Isaac closed his eyes just as the tips of Iron Claw’s blades pierced his stomach at an upward angle, heading straight for his heart.

They stopped.

Isaac opened his eyes and gasped. Ethan was back on his feet and had both hands wrapped around the arm Iron Claw was using to impale Isaac. His face looked like something out of a slasher flick and there was no way he could see, but he was grunting with determination, gradually drawing Iron Claw’s arm back.

The trouble was Ethan was using both hands against the alpha, and that left one of Iron Claw’s free. Iron Claw growled and impaled Ethan’s stomach.

But Aiden was already back on his knees, locking his hands around Iron Claw’s wrist and prying it away from his brother’s torso.

The twins were actually winning this tug-of-war. Cold steel claws were easing out of Isaac’s gut a fraction of an inch at a time, but they were receding. Yet Isaac and the twins had almost won before and Isaac knew better than to think this time would be any different. Iron Claw was already snapping at Aiden’s face with his jaws, hindering his movements, and any second he could sink a bite that would end things once and for all.

Isaac’s hand scrabbled over the light pole as he tried to pull himself higher and release the pressure on his own. That’s when he saw it: a crack in the thick, outer plastic casing. Isaac craned his neck, blinking up into the glaring stadium bulbs. He had no idea what the wattage was, but it was high and there were at least twenty bulbs. A system like that had to take a lot of electricity, electricity that was coursing up the pole a few inches from Isaac’s fingers. If a taser could take down Iron Claw and bring Scott back then...

“This is gonna hurt,” Isaac announced to the others as he smashed the plastic casing open with his fist.

An instant later his fingers wrapped around wires and it felt like every nerve in his body turned white hot and exploded. There was a chorus of screams and the smell of charred meat, then everything went black.

Chapter End Notes

Whew! Our boys really fought tooth and nail didn’t they?

I’m proud of Isaac this chapter. He was a cleverwolf and brave. I hope it felt like a smooth evolution and development.

Any predictions about what’s going to happen next? Or what you hope/hope doesn’t happen next? Do you think everyone’s going to make it? I admit I was teasing a lot of character deaths in this chapter.

As far as the Stiles’ coma plot line, that gets resolved one way or another around tomorrow night this time (story time) at the height of the full moon. That’s still multiple
chapters away even though it's only a day away story time.
The Boy and the Wolf

Chapter Notes

Heads up, the beginning of this chapter features some gory descriptions. The end of this chapter features...well I won’t spoil it but brace yourselves. The full moon isn’t done screwing with our characters.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“It’s okay. It's me,” Scott’s voice whispered into Isaac’s ear as he gradually regained consciousness. “You’re safe.”

Gentle arms were around Isaac’s body and his head was nuzzled against Scott’s throat. It reeked of blood and the skin felt delicate and thin under Isaac’s face, but the steady, familiar pulse and the underlying scent of Isaac’s alpha eased his fears and left him calm as he opened his eyes, calm but...

“Everything hurts,” Isaac said in a gasping, sharp breath, finding that everything included his throat, which felt dry and tight. His skin blazed with heat from head to toe, throbbing under the moonlight even as it burned from the residual scorch of electricity. Every muscle in his body felt weak and tense at the same time, exhausted and overused. His stomach felt hollowed out and his back felt delicate enough that if he turned wrong it would snap. There was no doubt that feeling had returned to Isaac's legs, but that feeling was unilaterally terrible, an explosion of tingling stabs that felt like the pins-and-needles sensation but dialed up to a hundred.

“I'm sorry I...I can’t really help,” Scott answered, voice thick with guilt as he rubbed Isaac’s arms but didn’t leach any pain. “I’m still weak and...”

He didn’t need to finish. Isaac could practically feel the pain buzzing beneath Scott’s skin. He experimentally took a sip with the cheek that was pressed against Scott’s throat.

“Don’t!” Scott was frantic as he pulled back and held Isaac at arm’s length. “You can’t. Not right now. It’s too dangerous.”

Isaac gave a faint half-nod, lightheaded and near passing out again. The jolt of Scott’s pain had tipped his precarious system out of balance.

Isaac turned his head as Scott eased him back down against his shoulder. The twins were a couple feet away, sitting on the ground with their arms wrapped around each other. Isaac couldn’t see Ethan’s face because it was obscured against Aiden’s chest, but the way Aiden was stroking fingers through Ethan’s hair told Isaac the damage must be bad. Aiden didn’t seem any better off. One entire leg of Aiden’s pants had been ripped away at the hip, exposing his mangled leg. It was hideously swollen and discolored. Isaac could tell the twins had tried to align Aiden’s bones, but there were so many broken pieces that they had only managed a rough approximation. Jagged edges were visible beneath the broken, purple skin.

“Ethan?” Isaac called, pushing the name out through raw, cracked lips and tasting blood.

Ethan raised his head and--
“It’s okay! He’s going to heal.” Scott rubbed Isaac’s back as he dry heaved against Scott’s shoulder, the violent convulsions threatening to tear Isaac’s gut open again.

Ethan’s face...wasn’t really a face anymore. His nose was slashed down to the bone at a diagonal angle with the tip severed. His left eye was a mass of swollen, shredded skin, bloody and singed black around the edges with the eyeball obscured beneath the mound of raw flesh. Ethan’s right eye looked to have been punctured and was in the process of healing. It was a cloudy yellow and red orb leaking blood and pus onto a matrix of a burnt, gel-like substance that had congealed just beneath Ethan’s eye socket. Ethan’s cheeks had been torn wide open to and below his mouth, turning his lower face into a patchwork netting of bloody flaps with several big chunks missing.

Ethan made a wet, reverberating sound that Isaac recognized as an attempt at speech, but he lacked the musculature in his face to control what was left of his lips and the air mostly slipped out through the rifts in his cheeks before ever reaching the front of his mouth.

Aiden cupped the back of Ethan’s neck and drew Ethan’s not-face back against his chest. He rubbed Ethan's back and stroked his hair as he glared at Isaac with hateful, glowing blue eyes.

Ethan accepted the comfort and gave Aiden a lingering hug before pulling away again. Aiden rumbled in protest as Ethan crawled toward Isaac and Scott, careful to avoid jostling Aiden’s leg, the position of which he seemed to somehow sense despite not being able to see it.

Ethan reached out with one arm and Scott took it, guiding Ethan to them and inviting him into the embrace he and Isaac were sharing.

Isaac was grateful, both to Ethan for reaching out and to Scott for accepting him. Ethan wouldn’t have gotten hurt if it hadn’t been for Isaac and Isaac desperately needed to hold him and reassure himself that Ethan would be okay, that he wouldn’t wind up permanently disfigured for coming to Isaac’s aid.

Isaac nuzzled his nose against Ethan’s ear, which thankfully was still intact, and rubbed Ethan’s back as he whispered, “I’m sorry, Ethan. I’m so sorry. You’re so”—Isaac paused and emphasized the next word as much as he could—“good and you don’t deserve this.”

Ethan made another sputtering hack and Isaac wished he would stop trying to answer. Ethan pulled back and his hand trailed up Isaac’s arm to his neck, then to his face, cupping it as he rubbed the pad of his thumb over Isaac’s cheekbone and stared at him with mutilated, unseeing eyes.

Isaac didn’t doubt for a second that the action was meant to be comforting, but it was fucking horrific. At least Isaac could control his nightmares because this sure as hell was going to haunt them.

Ethan’s mouth flaps vibrated and an unintelligible garble rattled out through the torn fissures as the fingertips of his other hand brushed against Isaac’s throbbing, healed-over stomach where Iron Claw had impaled him.

“I’m okay. You saved me,” Isaac told him, hands gently gripping Ethan’s shoulders. He forced himself to gaze unwaveringly into the gruesome remains of Ethan’s face. “You’re gonna be okay too. We’re all gonna be okay.”

Ethan let go of Isaac’s cheek and held his arm back toward Aiden, waving it and gurgling.

Aiden growled but more in acceptance than anger. He braced his hands on the ground and dragged himself toward the other three. Scott eased forward, guiding Isaac and Ethan back to meet Aiden so that he didn’t have to move his shattered leg very much.
Ethan was still pressed between Isaac and Scott as Aiden wrapped his arms around him and Scott draped an arm around Aiden’s shoulder in response. The four of them were now in a weird group hug/cuddle session, and Isaac spent the first full minute of it just trying to tamp down his urge to rake his claws down Aiden’s back where he had reluctantly placed his hand in order to close the three-person circle around Ethan.

“We need to take our shirts off,” Scott announced.

Isaac let out a barking laugh at the unexpected comment and Aiden growled again. Ethan thankfully didn’t make an audible response.

“I’m serious. We need to increase the amount of moonlight we’re absorbing,” Scott said. “The full moon is probably the only reason any of us are alive. The extra body contact will promote healing too. Even if we can’t ease each other’s pain.”

“You’re right,” Aiden answered with a heavy sigh.

A smirk tugged at Isaac’s lips and he gave into instinct and sank his claws into Aiden’s back.

Aiden snarled and bared his fangs at Isaac, but Isaac was already tearing Aiden’s shirt off his body, using the holes he’d made as a starting point.

“Oops. Guess my fingers are still clumsy from the electricity.”

Within a couple of minutes all four werewolves were stripped of their shirts and Scott and Isaac had cut through the thin fabric of their lightweight pants from the knees down, turning them into shorts. The twins were wearing thicker pants and since Aiden was already half out of his, they decided to leave well enough alone with Ethan’s. Aiden not so subtly propped Ethan’s head against his shoulder and tilted his face toward the moon.

“You dumbass,” Aiden murmured, tracing Ethan’s jawline with his thumb and holding Ethan’s abused stomach with his other hand.

Isaac coughed and pretended not to notice the black shadows that crept across Aiden’s skin or the quivering fear in his voice.

“We’re all going to be okay.” Scott said it like a mantra and Isaac found himself silently repeating it.

It was true. They were werewolves. It was the full moon. They were getting stronger by the minute. They would be fine. Thank god they weren’t humans. A human would have–

“Liam!”

Everyone jumped at Isaac’s outburst and dread seized Scott’s face. “Liam? What about him?”

Isaac twisted his head and scanned what little of the lacrosse field he could see. His view was mostly obscured by the injured werewolves pressed around him, but he concentrated his hearing and soon found what he was looking for.

“He’s alive!” Isaac sighed in relief, silently adding barely as he noted the weak thump of Liam’s heart and his ragged, shallow breathing.

“What happened?” Scott asked as everyone but Aiden attempted to get up and check on the boy. It quickly became apparent, however, that none of them could manage it quite yet. Aiden had lost the least amount of blood, having not had his throat ripped out like Scott or his stomach impaled and
then electrified with iron blades like Isaac and Ethan, but he also had the worst mobility and, Isaac was sure, the least motivation to help Liam.

As they waited for the moon to work its magic, Isaac gave Scott a quick rundown of the events that had transpired since Iron Claw had taken over earlier that night. While he talked, Isaac was careful to keep his voice steady and repeatedly make eye contact with Scott, stroking his side or arm to make it clear that everything was fine between them and that no trust had been broken. He was desperate to ease the guilt he felt radiating out of his alpha.

“This is my fault. I let this happen,” Scott said.

“No, it’s my fault,” Isaac insisted. “I promised I’d protect people from Iron Claw and I failed. And now” –Isaac dropped his voice to a whisper as he faced the reality of the situation– “Liam might die because of me.”

Scott’s arm was warm and heavy around Isaac’s bare shoulders and Ethan was holding his hand, so it was especially jarring when Aiden spoke.

“You’re both full of so much shit.” Aiden’s tone was harsh as he scowled at them. “You’re possessed,” he said to Scott then turned to Isaac, “and you’re no match for a badass alpha. How ‘bout we make a plan for the rest of the night instead of throwing a pity party?”

Isaac wasn’t about to admit it, but Aiden had a point. He squeezed Ethan’s fingers then pulled his hand away and slid it into his pocket to retrieve his phone. He frowned. The screen was cracked and he could smell the fried circuitry without trying.

“Lydia’s here in the basement. If we could call her, she could help, but...” Isaac held up his phone for the others to see – well for Scott and Aiden to see.

“I already checked mine and Ethan’s. They’re toast too,” Aiden said.

“I don’t think Iron Claw brought mine,” Scott said.

“Yeah, all his friends are probably dead, and he doesn’t look like a Candy Crush kinda guy,” Aiden remarked with a smirk.

“More Fruit Ninja really,” Isaac commented, eliciting a grinning laugh from Aiden that caught them both off guard.

Despite having lost the most blood and come the closest to dying, Scott was an alpha, and after a few minutes he managed to stand and limp on wobbly legs across the field to where Liam’s prone body lay. While they were waiting for him to return, Isaac forced a glance at Ethan’s face. It looked better. His right eye was less leaky, though still discolored to the point of obvious blindness, and although his left eye was still swollen shut, the flesh around it looked less like charred ground meat and more like normal injured skin. The diagonal split in his nose had closed and the tip was regrowing. Best of all the flaps of his cheeks and mouth were less...flappy. The wounds had gone from gapping fissures to small cracks.

“Ethan, can you talk yet?” Isaac asked.

Ethan’s head rolled back on Aiden’s shoulder, and Isaac and Aiden were both silent with anticipation as he took a long, deep breath.

“No, you’re...the dumb...ass,” Ethan told his brother, wincing as he tried to smile and fresh blood seeped out along the cracks in his face.
Isaac noticed a palpable lightening in Aiden’s scent. He smelled almost content now.

Isaac was preparing a quip about how bloody battles were probably just Aiden’s idea of a fun way to spend a Tuesday night, when Ethan grunted and pulled himself loose from Aiden’s and Isaac’s arms.

“Think I can...stand.”

Ethan rose stiffly to his feet, joints popping and creaking. Before Isaac had a chance to react, Ethan took a blind half-step and his shin hooked against Isaac’s arm where he had propped it on the ground, throwing him off balance.

Suddenly, Isaac was on his feet, hands on Ethan’s back and chest steadying him. Isaac looked around in confusion, ignoring the spasming protests of his muscles. “Oh. Turns out I can stand too.”

Aiden exhaled a weary breath. “Well I definitely can’t.”

When Scott returned, he passed Liam’s unconscious body to Isaac, then helped Ethan get Aiden up with minimal disruption to his leg. They carried him between them, with Aiden occasionally bracing himself on his good foot as the group hobbled off the field and toward the school. Ethan was still blinded but with Aiden and Scott guiding him, he didn’t have anymore tripping accidents.

Isaac trailed behind the other three with Liam’s limp body in his arms. Liam’s gray shirt was slashed and shredded front and back. It hung in tatters around his body, the fabric soaked through with dark, sticky blood where it was still intact. One side was torn and ripped away where Iron Claw had sunk his fangs into Liam’s stomach. Isaac found it difficult to gauge the extent of damage to Liam’s torso, but his arms and thighs were in bad shape. He had scabbing horizontal scratches evenly spaced and lining his arms from shoulder to wrist and covering his thighs from front to back. Iron Claw had apparently flipped him over to keep the carnage going.

Isaac recalled Liam’s screams as Iron Claw had toyed with him, drawing out his suffering with slow cuts from his claws. The injuries he had inflicted seemed to purposely avoid severing major arteries. Iron Claw must have wanted to prolong the torture as long as possible. Unless...

Isaac gasped.

“What? What is it?!” Scott asked, spinning around to face Isaac and nervously eyeing Liam’s unconscious form.

“I just realized something while I was looking at Liam,” Isaac answered.

Aiden smirked and arched an eyebrow. “You just realized that?”

“Not that!” Isaac snapped. He returned his attention to Scott. “I don’t think Iron Claw wanted to kill Liam or Stiles.”

Aiden chuckled and answered first again. “Sorry, but how stupid is this ghost alpha then? Because uh...” He waved his hand at Liam’s almost dead body.

“He wants them to transform, so he can kill them as werewolves and take their power,” Ethan said, words clear and strong. His face had even healed enough to show hints of emotions as he turned to Aiden. “Like Deucalion.”

“Shit,” Aiden answered. A dark look crossed his face. “There is a quick and simple way to thwart...
that plan.”

Isaac swallowed and cradled Liam’s body closer to his chest. “No.”

“I’ll do it. None of you have to get your hands dirty.”

“No,” the other three answered in unison.

The group finished their slow trek to the school and opened the doors. They hobbled to the basement stairs where they had to form a single line. Aiden growled as Scott picked him up and carried him down the stairs, with Ethan following behind them, his hand on Scott’s shoulder for guidance. Isaac brought up the rear with Liam in his arms.

By now Isaac could hear Malia snarling and clanking her chains in the distance. There was a strong chemical smell as they descended the stairs and reached the basement itself, and it became overpowering when Scott opened the door. As they emerged from the stairwell, Isaac realized they were standing in something.

Isaac caught Lydia’s scent and turned his head just as she popped out from behind a row of storage shelves, a beaker raised ominously in her hand and goggles and a mask on her face.

“Scott?” she asked, eyeing the others with visible concern but lingering on the alpha, the beaker still raised threateningly in the air.

“Yeah, it’s me,” Scott answered in a friendly tone.

“Thank god.” Lydia sighed and set the beaker on a shelf before stepping closer. “What happened?”

“Uh, what are we standing in?” Isaac asked, glancing at the liquid puddled around his feet. “Is it safe?”

Lydia laughed softly and peeled the protective gear off her face.

“It’s safe unless I throw the reactant into it.” She nodded toward the beaker on the shelf. “It was the best I could improvise with from raiding the chemistry lab. It would be painful and messy, but non-lethal to werewolves.” Her gaze settled on Liam and she asked in a worried tone, “What’s he doing here? Is he alive?”

They filled her in on what had happened while she led them down the hallway to the room where Malia was chained up.

Malia was wild-eyed and feral. Her long, brown hair hung in strips over her face, framing her electric blue, glowing eyes. She wore a light blue spaghetti-strap tank top and thigh-high cutoff jeans. Her scent reeked of rage and her fangs and claws were fully extended. She tore at the chains and growled as the group walked into view, but as she eyed the four shirtless werewolves her scent started to change. The tangy, sharp bite of fury began to sweeten and turn earthy. Her growls took on a lower, throatier quality. She was becoming aroused.

Isaac’s head got cloudy and he lowered Liam in his arms so that the boy was obscuring his waist. Scott’s pulse sped up and he stepped behind Aiden, whom he had just put down and who was leaning against Ethan. Aiden whimpered and angled his body sideways next to Ethan, the hand he didn’t need for support coming to rest in front his crotch.

“What’s going on?” Lydia asked, looking at them like they were all crazy.
Ethan laughed and turned his head in Lydia’s direction even though his vision hadn’t yet returned. “Malia likes what she sees, and they like what they smell.”

“Wow. Right now? Seriously?” Lydia’s remark was directed mostly at Aiden but she cut her eyes at Scott and Isaac too.

“Someone come here,” Malia pleaded, voice needy as she spread her thighs and rolled her body against the wall.

Isaac let out a strangled gurgle and stepped forward as the full force of her erotic scent caressed his face, tickled his nostrils, and pooled low in his stomach. He stopped and forced himself to take a step back. He was relieved when he turned his head and saw that he wasn’t the only one who had reacted. Scott’s fangs were out and he had also taken several steps forward. Aiden had apparently tried as well and was paying the price, hissing in pain as he put weight on his bad leg and teetered back and forth with Ethan holding him up.

“We need to get Scott in mountain ash before Iron Claw comes back, and then we need to figure out what we’re going to do about...” Lydia trailed off and Isaac realized she probably didn’t know the underclassman’s name.

“Liam,” Isaac supplied.

“Liam,” Lydia repeated, and Isaac knew she wouldn’t forget it. She crossed the room to the table where she’d left her purse and took out an envelop and a brush, which she then used to gather up the mountain ash ring around Malia.

Malia growled and snarled, her arousal abating as her fury surged back to the surface and she tried to tear the chains off the wall so she could get loose.

“Scott, are you keeping an eye on her?” Lydia asked, notes of anxiety in her tone as she looked up from her task and eyed Malia.

“Definitely,” Scott answered, voice low and suggestive.

“Scott!”

“Sorry,” Scott muttered.

“Those chains don’t sound too good,” Ethan said. “Are we sure they’ll hold her without the mountain ash.”

“They won’t.” Malia growled, her scent pulsing with conflict. “I’m trying but I can’t...someone needs to keep me...occupied.”

Her voice was heavy with need and another torrent of sweet, rich pheromones flooded the air, making Isaac, Scott, and Aiden all whimper.

“I can do that!” Aiden said, the urgent timbre of his voice making something quiver in Isaac’s stomach.

Isaac turned his head and – Oh fuck!

Isaac needed to look away or close his eyes but he couldn’t. Aiden looked obscene. His gorgeous, muscular torso glistened with moisture. His bare hip and hairy inner thigh were on full display thanks to his removed pant leg as was the outline of his huge, thick erection in a pair of snug, white boxer
briefs. It jutted out sideways through the ripped-away opening in his pants, extending all the way past the edge of his hip and straining the confines of the thin material, leaving the shape and flare of his bulging cockhead completely evident. There was no longer any doubt that Aiden and Ethan were twins when it came to their manhoods, and that fact provided a wealth of mental images.

Fuck, they’re brothers. I probably shouldn’t be picturing Aiden’s and Ethan’s cocks side-by-side...pressed tight against each other between their hard, rippling abs...their bloated, meaty cockheads flushed a dark red and sliding together...their slits kissing...Aiden and Ethan kissing...tongues and lips and...oh. My. GOD...

“Isaac, I think you need to calm down,” Ethan whispered.

If you only knew.

“Come here,” Malia pleaded, eyes flicking back and forth between the three horny werewolves.

“Take me forward,” Aiden said to Ethan, bouncing on the toes of his good foot.

“And what about Lydia?” Ethan whispered at werewolf levels.

“Fuck,” Aiden said out loud. His scent flared with embarrassment and a hint of regret. “Lydia, I...the full moon...I got carried away.”

Lydia swept up the last of the mountain ash and rose to her feet. “I don’t care what you do. We’re done. Entertain her if you want.”

It was obvious Lydia didn’t mean it. The scent of pain was rolling off of her in thick sheets, rapidly killing Isaac’s boner and making him want to go hug her. Aiden would be able to smell it too, as would Malia. There was no way this was going to happen.

“Okay,” Aiden answered in a broken voice, soaking the room with another wave of lust and making Isaac’s poor confused dick harden again.

“Okay!” Malia half-moaned, half-growled as she shimmied her body and dropped as low as she could with her legs spread. She made eye contact with Aiden and flicked her tongue before raking her eyes down his muscular chest and toned stomach and openly staring at his arousal as she flexed her thighs and gyrated. “Get me out of my clothes. I’ll do all the work since you’re hurt.”

“You fucking idiot!” Ethan werewolf whispered, swatting the back of his brother’s head. “You just blew it for good with Lydia.”

“Shut up and take me to Malia,” Aiden answered, cock visibly throbbing in his underwear.

Scott helped bring Aiden forward since Ethan was still blind. And by helped, Isaac meant Scott stood there with his own visible erection eyeing Aiden with intense envy and whimpering at Malia. Meanwhile, Isaac stared at everyone and salivated.

“Come on, we’ll lock Scott up in the boiler room,” Lydia said, storming past Isaac and boiling with anger. Isaac’s dick began to soften again.

I don’t know either, buddy.

Ethan tugged Scott away and Isaac turned to follow Lydia with Liam still in his arms.

They didn’t quite make it out of the room before the sound of tearing fabric and hungry growls
reached their ears.

“Don’t forget to pull out,” Ethan whispered as he left. “I’m too young to be an uncle.”

Aiden growled again but made no other response.

“How’s he doing?” Scott asked Isaac a little while later as they walked down the corridor toward the boiler room.

Isaac tilted his head and extended his hearing back where they’d come from. “Sure sounds like she’s having fun.”


“Oh.” Isaac frowned down at the battered boy he was carrying. “He’s not healing, but I don’t know if he should be.”

“Not yet,” Ethan answered. “Even on a full moon it’ll take at least a couple of hours after the Bite before anything changes, and he probably won’t wolf out for the first time until tomorrow night.”

“What if he can’t make it that long?” Isaac asked, stomach queasy as he looked at all the blood covering Liam’s body and noted that his heartbeat seemed weaker than before.

“I think you should take him to the hospital,” Scott said. “Maybe my mom can keep him stable and out of sight until his healing kicks in.”

“But I can’t leave you,” Isaac answered, pulse quickening. “Iron Claw could come back. The mountain ash won’t hold him.”

“I think it will for the rest of the night,” Lydia said, opening the door to the boiler room and pausing at the doorway. “He should be weakened from the blood loss, and manifesting itself takes a lot of energy.”

“And I’ll be right here with Lydia,” Ethan said, blindly reaching out with his hand until he found Isaac’s forearm where it curled up around Liam’s body. “There’s only one way in or out of this room and we’re resourceful. We’ll keep him in until morning.”

“He’s right,” Lydia said, retrieving the envelop of mystic powder from her purse, “and since I only need to block the door, I think I have enough mountain ash to make concentric rings.”

“But–”

“And if we have to we can get Aiden to help too. His leg and my eyes should be done healing soon,” Ethan said.

“Please, Isaac, Liam can’t die. I can’t be responsible for that.” Scott gave Isaac an earnest look as he stepped between Isaac and Lydia and into the boiler room.

Isaac nodded at Scott and held eye contact as Lydia shut and locked the door, then began spreading mountain ash along the threshold.

“You want me to call an ambulance?” Lydia asked, not looking up from her task.

“No.” Isaac sighed and readjusted his grip on Liam. “I have Stiles’ Jeep out front, and we need to keep this quiet, but please text Scott’s mom and ask her to meet me in the parking lot.”
“Okay,” Lydia answered, beginning work on the second ring.

Isaac was rooted in place for a moment, imaging everything that could go wrong.

Ethan found Isaac’s shoulder and squeezed it. “I’ll keep your pack safe. I promise.”

“I know,” Isaac answered, smiling at Ethan even though he couldn’t see it.

By the time Isaac carried Liam out of the school, Liam’s breathing was a shallow wheeze and fresh blood was seeping from his stomach wound. His body temperature was dropping too, and Isaac cursed himself for not searching the basement for something with which to cover Liam.

Isaac hurried the rest of the way to Stiles’ Jeep, intent on getting the engine warmed up and turning on the heater for Liam. He yanked the door open, grateful it was unlocked, and laid Liam as carefully as he could in the passenger seat. It didn’t seem like Liam could afford to lose much more blood, so Isaac tore away the remnants of Liam’s shirt and pressed it to the oozing bite, tying several of the tattered strips together behind Liam’s waist to hold it in place.

Isaac rounded the vehicle and climbed in on the driver’s side but stopped again as he slid the keys into the ignition. Liam’s heartbeat was too weak. It sounded like it might stop altogether at any moment. Isaac started the engine and got the heater going then turned in his seat. He couldn’t risk Liam going into cardiac arrest on the way to the hospital, and there was only one thing Isaac could think of doing that might help. He took a deep breath and laid his hand on Liam’s slashed chest.

Sharp, shredded sensations rippled up Isaac’s arm and through his entire body, making him break out in a cold sweat. Isaac grunted and clenched his jaw. He was usually good at leaching pain, but tonight was different. Isaac was weak and injured and his instincts were screaming at him stop. The full moon also reasserted its dominance, making Isaac angry and resentful about the pain he was taking for this boy who was neither a packmate nor even a friend. Isaac’s head swam and his fingers burned as he held back his claws. It was too hard. Isaac had to stop or he’d risk loosing his temper and finishing Liam off himself.

Isaac let go and slumped in his seat. He studied Liam as he recomposed himself. Liam’s vitals had improved. His breathing was less ragged and his heartbeat was a little stronger. Some color had even returned to Liam’s skin, restoring his healthy tan glow and banishing the clammy pallor.

As soon as Isaac was certain he wouldn’t pass out or wolf out, he backed out of the parking space and exited the lot. He drove fast, but didn’t make it even halfway to the hospital before Liam started gasping for breath. Isaac slammed on the brakes and pulled over as Liam’s heart rate spiked and then fell dangerously out of rhythm. Isaac didn’t need to be a banshee to know Liam was moments from death.

Isaac lunged across the seat and pulled Liam into his arms, using every point of skin contact to suck as much pain as he could out of Liam’s body and relying on the burst of moon-fueled adrenaline coursing through his own body to keep from passing out or falling into shock. To Isaac’s relief, after a few seconds Liam stopped gasping and his chest relaxed enough to allow more oxygen into his lungs. But the tension was still tight in Liam’s body, threatening to make him seize up again. It felt like Isaac’s chest against Liam’s was the only thing making it rise and fall, the only thing keeping Liam’s airways open and his heart beating. Isaac had to keep taking Liam’s pain to stabilize him.

Yet Isaac wasn’t sure if he could. He was shaking and his teeth were clattering, calling attention to the fangs that had sprouted in his mouth. Isaac’s claws were pressed against but not into Liam’s back and he was snarling so savagely that his own blood ran cold. A wave of fury crashed over Isaac and suddenly he wanted nothing more than to sink his fangs into Liam’s jugular and end him.
Isaac growled and shifted Liam in his lap just enough that his head fell back, exposing the long column of his throat. Isaac’s eyes blazed with heat, and he let himself snap his jaws experimentally in the air a few times, toying with the possibility of taking the next step.

Liam wheezed and his heart stuttered. Isaac was no longer leaching Liam’s pain...because of course he wasn’t. He wanted Liam dead not comfortable. Liam gasped again, and Isaac stared at Liam’s throat, his own pulse pounding harder as he listened to Liam’s pulse get weaker.

Isaac eased his face forward, fangs out, and nosed at Liam’s skin. The smooth, flat surface of Isaac’s incisors glided across rough stubble. A little tilt of Isaac’s head and the points would be in place. It was such a fucking rush. He wouldn’t even need to bite down. He could hold his mouth in place and feel Liam’s pulse weaken and stop without doing a thing. Then he could let the wolf run wild and it wouldn’t even be murder.

Liam’s next breath caught in his throat...and so did Isaac’s. This was happening. This was fucking happening!

Isaac’s stomach lurched.

_Fuck. This can’t happen._

Isaac sucked his fangs and claws back in with a brutal abruptness that made him cry out in pain. Then he kept on sucking, pulling Liam’s pain in on top of his own, punishing himself with it, letting it wash over him and praying it would cleanse him. It felt right. He deserved this pain and so much more for what he had almost done.

Isaac focused on his anchor while he took it. Only this time he didn’t think about the father from his childhood; he thought about the father from his adolescence, the man who had taught Isaac about pain. He had been right. Isaac had deserved it. Isaac had always deserved it.

_Stop. That’s not right either._

Isaac took a trembling breath and opened his eyes, cool and blue. Liam’s breathing had returned to the shallow levels it had been at back at the high school. His heartbeat was weak but steady. He could still make it if Isaac could get his shit together.

Isaac rubbed Liam’s back in silent apology and pressed Liam’s chest against his own. He braced himself and...

Nothing happened. Liam’s muscles were tense with pain but it was all staying put, clenching around the boy’s chest and limiting his airflow. That wasn’t right. The pain was supposed to be leaving Liam’s body and entering Isaac’s.

Isaac took another pull and...nothing.

Isaac felt the conflict raging inside of him. The human part of Isaac wanted Liam to live, but the werewolf part that controlled the pain leaching ability didn’t.

Isaac had to change the werewolf’s mind. He had to make the werewolf care about Liam.

Isaac lowered his nose to Liam’s throat again, this time firmly in control. He concentrated on Liam’s scent, ignoring the rancid stench of Liam’s stale anger and frustration, as well as the nauseating odor of injury and suffering, focusing instead on the unique, underlying fragrance of Liam’s personal body chemistry. Isaac took a deep breath and held the scent close. Then he did what he had to do: he let Liam’s scent tangle around the part of his chest he associated with pack. He needed that link with
Liam to vanquish the darkness threatening to pull him under, and perhaps if Liam could feel the connection too it would give him something to hold onto from his end.

The full moon and the fact that Liam was covered in Scott’s scent and sparking with tiny flickers of his power made forming the bond easier than it should have been. Isaac hadn’t even formed a proper packbond with Malia yet, but he already felt the supernatural part of his mind opening a place for Liam, nestling the new connection in next to Scott, Stiles, and Lydia at the very center of Isaac’s awareness, away from the dormant links Isaac held open for Allison, Derek, and Cora, and far removed from the severed but immortalized tendrils that should have connected Isaac to Erica and Boyd.

Isaac’s chest fluttered as the new connection surged to life, and in a heartbeat Liam suddenly felt precious in his arms, not just as a person he had promised to protect, but as a soul bonded to his own. Liam’s suffering seeped into Isaac’s skin like water into a towel. It felt cleaner this time, more pure.

Isaac nuzzled Liam’s throat and placed a tender kiss there, vowing to never risk his life again. Their connection flared, and Isaac could feel the new wolf inside of Liam responding to it. He half expected Liam to open his eyes. He didn’t, but his breathing and heart rate improved to the best level they had been at since Iron Claw’s attack.

When Isaac finally set Liam back in the passenger seat several minutes later and pulled away from him, the pain didn’t quit. Isaac’s stomach twisted in a sharp, visceral distress, physically aching for his injured packmate in a way it hadn’t since Stiles had gotten hurt.

“You better live, you little asshole,” Isaac muttered, brushing fingers through Liam’s hair and taking comfort from the relatively peaceful look on the boy’s face and the steady thump of his heart.

Isaac drove the rest of the way to the hospital trying not to freak out about the fact that he had just intentionally formed a packbond with someone on the brink of death. Moral crisis aside, it was a stupid decision. Isaac didn’t even like Liam. Now suddenly he was personally invested in Liam’s well being?

Good move, dipshit. Why not just swing by the ICU later and see if you can stuff a few more semi-corpse into your heart?

Melissa stepped from behind a parked ambulance as Isaac pulled into the parking lot and waved him over. He maneuvered into the neighboring spot and killed the engine.

Melissa’s jaw dropped and she held a hand to her chest as Isaac got out of the Jeep. “Oh my god, what happened?”

Isaac glanced down at himself, self conscious about the fact that he was naked except for a pair of grimy, cutoff sweatpants and covered almost completely from the stomach down in dried blood. He knew the situation wasn’t any better from the small of his back down. It must have looked like he had been wading in blood.

He shrugged as casually as he could. “Rough night.”

Melissa stepped forward and wrapped her arms around his mostly-not-bloody shoulders, pulling him down for a hug.

Isaac didn’t return the embrace because his hands and arms were bloody, but he leaned in as close as he could without actually making contact, drawing her scent deep into his lungs and letting it soothe away some of his distress.
“Is Scott okay?” Melissa asked as she stepped back and brushed flecks of dried blood off her sleeves.
“Um...yeah?”
“What does that mean?!” Her face froze with alarm and her heart skipped a beat.
“No, I mean he is. He’s definitely fine, I promise. He just...well he had a rough night too.”
Melissa frowned and didn’t look convinced.

“Anyway, Liam’s the one who might...” A stab of pain made Isaac trail off, and fuck that packbond was feeling a little too strong now.

Melissa went to the ambulance as Isaac went to the Jeep’s passenger side for Liam. By the time he returned with Liam in his arms, Melissa had lowered a gurney to the ground. They placed Liam on it and she covered him with a blanket before retrieving a second blanket from the ambulance and wrapping it around Isaac’s shoulders.

“We’ll take him in through the side entrance and set him up in the wing of the hospital they’re renovating,” Melissa said.

Isaac held Liam’s hand as they wheeled him to the side doors.

“Are you guys close?” Melissa asked, brow furrowing in confusion. “Lydia said he had just transferred from another school.”

“Werewolf thing,” Isaac answered. He started to leave it at that but decided to continue, needing to talk about what had happened even if he wasn’t ready to go into details. “I kind of...already accepted him as a packmate so I could help him heal better. He...yeah we’re close now.”

“I’ll do everything I can for him,” Melissa said with a solemn nod. She squeezed Isaac’s arm through the blanket and gave him a reassuring smile.

Isaac smiled back and leaned his shoulder against hers as they walked. Everything felt so much lighter now, like the darkness that had almost swallowed him had only been a dream. Tonight had been a special circumstance, but Isaac knew he needed to stay with Melissa or pack on the full moon from now on.

“How’s Stiles?” Isaac whispered, feeling a different packbond throb as they entered the building and turned down an empty corridor to the right.

Melissa sighed and a weight settled over her features. “No change.”

“I need to see him,” Isaac answered. Then a twinge of conflict in his gut made him reconsider. “…but I also need to stay with Liam.”

“You need to get cleaned up first and then have something to eat and drink,” Melissa answered with a stern look in what could only be described as a mom voice.

Isaac blushed and nodded. He didn’t deserve to be spoken to in that voice...or maybe he did. He really wasn’t sure anymore.

Melissa took pity on him, a smile creasing her lips. “You can go to Stiles’ room. There’s a shower in it and as soon as I get Liam settled in I’ll bring you a gown and something to eat.”

“A gown.” Isaac stuck out his bottom lip in a pout, trying to feel as innocent as he was pretending to
“Nice try, kiddo, but that look hasn’t worked on me since Scott was five. Now get.” She waved her hand toward the end of the hall and a set of elevators Isaac could use to take him to Stiles’ floor. Then she opened the door to a darkened hospital room.

“What a second.” Isaac squeezed Liam’s fingers and clasped his other hand around the back of Liam’s. He took a long draught of his pain, refusing to grimace and let Melissa see how much it hurt. He owed Liam this and so much more.

“That’s enough,” She said after a few seconds, patting Isaac’s back.

Isaac nodded and tried to send one more wave of comfort through his and Liam’s newly formed packbond. Then he let go. It was terrifying but Liam was out of his hands now. At least Isaac trusted the hands that were taking over.

Chapter End Notes

I know the end of this chapter was rather dark, but I felt like the events of last chapter created a perfect storm to test Isaac and his self control. I also felt it was in keeping with the general theme of one of Isaac’s central internal struggles: he wants to be good but he feels like he’s bad. Please let me know what you guys think. Did I take things too far?
Before the elevator doors had even opened on Stiles’ floor, a cold chill ran down Isaac’s spine, and the hair on his arms stood on end where it wasn’t too matted down by dried blood. He clenched his jaw and drew the blanket tighter around his shoulders, bracing himself against the sharp, high-pitched buzzing coming from Stiles’ amulet.

He stumbled back against the rear wall of the elevator as the doors opened and he was blasted full force by the supernatural screeching whine. It was much more intense than it had been on previous visits to see Stiles, and Isaac knew its power must have been being amplified by the full moon like Deaton had said it would be.

Balling his fists and praying the heat in his face was only due to discomfort from the buzzing and not a werewolf shift, Isaac set his shoulders and slogged down the hospital hallway toward Stiles’ room, grateful that the late hour meant he was the only one walking the halls.

The mystical energy seemed to affect Isaac on a cellular level, making his muscles pulse and throb and his skin tingle. He found it inexplicably invigorating. His head felt like it was going to split open from the pressure and the mind-shattering buzz, yet he felt a greater sense of power pooling in his extremities and lighting his core. It was the same unsettling sensation he’d had a few days earlier when the pack had gone to the Beacon Hills Cryptozoological Society, only now the intensity had been turned way up.

Isaac was sweating and trembling as he stumbled into Stiles’ room, desperate to see him and make sure he was okay, that he wasn’t being ripped apart by the amulet the way Isaac was. However, Isaac barely had time to take in Stiles’ unconscious figure in the hospital bed and confirm that his vitals seemed okay before he was collapsing to his knees in the doorway.

“Isaac, what happened?!” The sheriff was by Isaac’s side, clutching his shoulders.

“Aa- Aa- Amu...let.” Isaac waved the back of his hand at Stiles’ bed and clutched his face, which he was surprised to find was dry. It felt like blood should have been coming out of his eyes and nose. He was also surprised he could even hear the sheriff over the whining squeal in his ears. How were his eardrums still intact?

The sheriff helped Isaac stand and dragged him out of the room. Once they were around a bend in the hallway Isaac was able to compose himself enough to realize that despite an outwardly calm appearance, the sheriff was on high alert, his heart pounding and his scent flooded with adrenaline and concern.

“Hang on, I’ll find a doctor.”

“What? No, I’m fine.” Isaac grabbed the sheriff’s arm, barely remembering to mind his strength.
“You’re covered in blood,” the sheriff told him, speaking gently as if he thought Isaac might not be aware of his own condition and might panic.

“It’s fine. I just need to shower,” Isaac answered, confident it was true. He had a migraine and intense hunger pains and nausea, but other than that he felt energized from his proximity to the amulet and from the full moon’s continuing influence.

The sheriff looked at him skeptically.

“It’s a long story,” Isaac said with a hand wave. “Is Stiles okay?”

The sheriff frowned but nodded. “Exactly the same as he’s been.”

Now it was Isaac’s turn to be skeptical. He didn’t understand how the magic amulet wasn’t affecting Stiles, for better or worse, in some way.

“I- I can’t stay on this floor,” Isaac said, hissing through his teeth. He felt like he was ten feet tall and bullet...riddled.

The sheriff helped Isaac back to the elevator and got on with him. As soon as the doors closed and the elevator started to descend, Isaac breathed a sigh of relief and slumped against the elevator wall. He gave the sheriff an abbreviated account of what had transpired that night as they went to Liam’s room.

Melissa started to fuss at Isaac for coming back without getting cleaned up, but stopped and regarded him with visible concern as they explained what had happened. She was still attaching equipment to Liam but directed Isaac to another room where he could shower and promised a gown would be waiting for him when he got out.

Isaac was grateful for the shower, and even more grateful that he could hear Liam’s heartbeat as he took it. It was soothing in the way that only the heartbeat of a packmate could be. A soft smile tickled Isaac’s lips as he noted Melissa’s and the sheriff’s heartbeats and reconsidered. They weren’t pack but they were...something important to him. Even the muted buzz Isaac could still detect in the corner of his awareness was reassuring in its own way, simply because of what it represented. Isaac wasn’t sure what that something was exactly, but whatever it was, it seemed more than powerful enough to heal Stiles.

Melissa’s heartbeat recede into the distance before coming back several minutes later and entering the outer room.

“You’re gown, slippers, and a fresh blanket are waiting for you,” Melissa said through the door, pausing for just a second before adding, “honey.”

A warmth washed over Isaac that had nothing to do with the shower’s spray. Melissa sometimes called Isaac other little nicknames, but he had never heard her call anyone but Scott ‘honey,’ and it set off a chain of pleasant thoughts about how he was being adopted. He hadn’t realized it was something he wanted so much until the day before when they had talked about it. Now it felt like a lifeline in the dangerous, violent madness that had been his night.

Isaac found himself playing over how the conversation would go when he told Stiles the news. After all, it was largely thanks to Stiles. Isaac knew on a wonderful, secure level he almost couldn’t believe still existed within him that him joining the family was something Melissa and Scott both wanted, but if Stiles hadn’t brought it up to Melissa who knew when or if it would have happened?

Isaac sighed and his chest throbbed as he thought about Stiles. It had only been a few days but Isaac
missed him dearly. It felt like Stiles had crawled inside him and attached himself directly to Isaac’s heart. Scott and Melissa were the foundation of Isaac’s post-abuse, post-Derek life. Yet Stiles was the one who had opened Isaac up to what they and the rest of the pack were offering. Stiles was the one who had torn down Isaac’s walls and shown him how good it felt to cuddle and be emotionally intimate with people. Stiles was the one who had helped Isaac finally process the grief he felt about the loss of his family. Stiles made Isaac feel safe, emotionally safe, which Isaac now realized had been missing from his life for many years. Even if Stiles couldn’t return Isaac’s romantic feelings, Isaac owed Stiles so much and he desperately needed him to wake up so he could tell him.

When Isaac emerged from the room’s toilet and shower facilities, he found not only a gown, slippers, and new blanket waiting for him as Melissa had said, but also three bottles of water, two cold sandwiches – one chicken and the other a club sandwich – and a couple of small bags of Doritos and Cheetos. Melissa had raided the vending machines for him.

Isaac intended to bring his meal to Liam’s room and meant to only take a sip of water but found himself chugging the entire bottle instead. His stomach protested the cold liquid and the lack of solid substance, so Isaac decided to take a couple of bites of chicken sandwich to appease it.

A few minutes later he had finished both sandwiches and a second bottle of water and was tipping the bag of Doritos crumbs into his mouth before crumpling up that bag and the equally ravished Cheetos bag and tossing everything in the trash. What was the expression? To wolf down your food? Yes, that was about right. Isaac figured that phrase must have been coined by a hungry werewolf. He wrapped the blanket tight around himself, triple checked that his ass wasn’t hanging out of the gown, and then took his one remaining bottle of water down the hall to Liam’s room. Isaac’s face lit up as he walked in and got a look at Liam. Melissa had cleaned him up and bandaged his wounds, and now he looked as though he were merely sleeping rather than unconscious following a supernatural attack and a life-altering bite. His color had returned and his breathing and heart rate were completely normal.

“Is he healing yet?” Isaac asked Melissa as he took a seat next to the sheriff.

“I think so. Most patients who’ve lost that much blood aren’t in such good condition,” she answered.

“Do you think Stiles will turn before Liam since he was bitten first, or will they both wake up tomorrow?” the sheriff asked Isaac.

“Uh...” Isaac fidgeted in his seat. By this point he was almost positive Stiles wasn’t going to become a werewolf. His new packbond with Liam felt like a werewolf packbond, like the bonds he had with Scott, Derek, and Cora, and had experienced with Erica and Boyd. By contrast, Stiles’ packbond felt the way it always had: like a supernaturally unreciprocated link with a human. It felt just like Isaac’s link to Allison – Lydia’s was something else entirely. Until Liam, Isaac had never bonded with someone before they were fully turned, and he had hoped that maybe the ‘werewolfishness’ of the bond wouldn’t manifest until Stiles was awake. Liam seemed to disprove that.

“Sounds like that’s a question for Deaton,” Melissa said.

“Yeah, I don’t know that much about it,” Isaac answered.

Isaac then proceeded to provided more details of the attack. When he was done, Melissa mentioned that she would see about getting Isaac a new phone right away to replace the one that had gotten fried. Isaac made a token protest, saying that she didn’t need to do that for him, but she insisted and he was inwardly relieved. He already felt antsy to text Lydia or Ethan for updates on how things were going with Iron Claw and Malia and to find out if Ethan had finished healing. Besides, Isaac
was about to be very bored now that he had finished catching Melissa and the sheriff up and there was nothing to do but sit around and wait for something to happen with Stiles or Liam. Next time he was in a situation like this it would be nice to have a phone to keep him occupied.

Isaac was considering whether or not it would be okay to mention what new phone he wanted when his attention was diverted to someone else’s phone: Liam’s.

They all glanced at the ringing pile of Liam’s clothes Melissa had tossed in the corner.

“I guess we should turn it off,” Isaac remarked as he got up and rifled through Liam’s pants until he located the device in one of the pockets. He glanced at the screen. “It’s his dad.”

Melissa frowned. “I’ll answer it and say he’s spending the night with Scott. His parents are probably worried sick.”

Isaac leaned over Liam’s bed and handed her the ringing device, taking the opportunity to squeeze Liam’s hand and check his pain levels. They were much lower.

“Hello, this is Melissa McCall. Liam is—”

She froze as a surprised male voice on the other end of the phone cut her off.

“Melissa? Why do you have Liam’s phone?”

“Uhm, just a second.”

She tapped the screen, apparently muting it as the other end of the call went silent. Her eyes were wide and she looked stricken.

“That’s Dr. Geyer. Why didn’t you tell me Liam’s dad was Dr. Geyer?”

“I didn’t know.” Isaac shrugged. It wasn’t like he and Liam were best friends, but he did know one thing. “Liam’s last name is Dunbar.”

“Dr. Geyer is at the hospital, and he knows I’m on a shift. There’s no way I could have Liam’s phone unless he’s here too.”

“Oh crap,” Isaac muttered. His heart sank further as he heard the sound of hurried footsteps approaching. “Someone’s coming.”

“Is it Dr. Geyer?” Melissa asked in a rush.

“I don’t know what Dr. Geyer sounds like.” Isaac threw his hands up in frustration. “I seriously don’t know Dr. Geyer at all.”

A moment later the door opened and Melissa cringed.

“Dr. Geyer,” She said with a tense nod at the man in the white doctor’s coat who had just entered.

Isaac looked back and forth between Liam and the alarmed doctor. He didn’t see the family resemblance.

“My god, Liam!” Dr. Geyer rushed past Isaac to Liam’s bedside and squeezed his arm. Then he pushed the covers down to Liam’s waist and frantically looked over his injuries between darting gazes at the equipment monitoring Liam’s condition. “What happened to him? Why wasn’t I notified? When did he get here? How deep are these wounds?” Dr. Geyer paused for a moment and
brushed his thumb over Liam’s wrist. He gave Melissa an accusing glare. “No wristband. He hasn’t been admitted has he? Is that why he’s in this closed wing? Thank god I heard your voices. What the hell is going on here?!”

“It was an animal attack,” Melissa answered, selling the lie better than Isaac expected.

“Same animal that attacked my son a couple nights ago,” the sheriff said, moving to stand next to Isaac and clapping a hand on his shoulder. “Isaac found him.”

Dr. Geyer eyed Isaac up and down and turned another hot glare at Melissa. “Is he another unofficial patient?”

Melissa gave Dr. Geyer a challenging look. “He’s my son. The one I’m adopting.”

Isaac’s stomach fluttered and he didn’t hide the grin that broke across his face.

Dr. Geyer returned his attention to Liam, fear and anxiety rolling off the doctor in blankets thicker than the one around Isaac’s shoulders. “I’m taking him to be properly treated and admitted.” He gave Melissa another sharp look. “Then when I’m done, you and I are going to have a long chat about hospital protocols.”

“You can’t do that!” Isaac stepped fully into Dr. Geyer’s path. He hated the idea of his new packmate being out of his sight and he had to protect his secret. Liam didn’t even know what he was yet.

“I think you’ll find that I can,” Dr. Geyer answered, giving Isaac a look that would have been withering if he hadn’t already faced so much crap that night. A grumpy doctor wasn’t much of a threat compared to a homicidal ghost alpha with eight-inch iron claws.

“We need to tell him the truth,” Melissa said to Isaac with grim resignation on her face.

“What?!” Isaac couldn’t believe what he was hearing.

“Are you sure that’s a good idea?” the sheriff asked, calmer than Isaac but clearly uncertain.

“I wish I had found out sooner. What about you?” She asked.

The sheriff nodded.

“Tell me what?” Dr. Geyer asked, glancing between them and back at Liam. “Who hurt my boy?”

“A werewolf,” Melissa answered, tone quiet but assured.

Dr. Geyer gapped at her and narrowed his eyes. “Why would you say that? Do you think that’s funny?” He tilted his head in Isaac’s direction. “How would you feel if he got hurt?”

“He did,” Melissa answered, holding eye contact. “He showed up covered in blood. And yes, it freaked me out.”

“I’m sorry,” Isaac said, not quite sure what he was apologizing for.

Dr. Geyer gave Isaac a more appraising look, and Isaac drew the blanket more securely around his shoulders in response, grateful that the doctor couldn’t see much of him.

“It’s true,” the sheriff said, “werewolves are real, and I know this is hard to hear, but Liam was bitten. That means he’s going to—”
“You’re crazy!” Dr. Geyer shouted, sliding into the narrow space between Liam’s bed and the sheriff and Isaac protectively. The agitation in his scent, tone, and body language all indicated he was about to snap.

“Isaac, show him,” Melissa said.

“Are you sure?”

“Just your eyes.”

“I’m calling security,” Dr. Geyer said, reaching down and pressing a button on Liam’s bed panel.

“That’s not hooked up to anything,” Melissa said, mild amusement on her face. “The nurses’ station for this wing is closed.”

Dr. Geyer looked at the door then back at Liam, clearly conflicted about leaving him. He must have decided not to because he moved to the end of the Liam’s bed and pressed a pedal with his foot, preparing to take Liam with him when he left the room.

Isaac sighed. He couldn’t let that happen and short of physically stopping Dr. Geyer, which would probably only make matters worse, he saw no alternative. He cleared his throat and leaned into Dr. Geyer’s field of vision. Then he flashed his eyes at him.

Dr. Geyer gasped and jumped back, bumping Liam’s heart monitor. “How did you do that?!!”

Isaac smirked at him and shrugged innocently. “I’m a werewolf.”

“But he’s a good werewolf,” the sheriff said as panic gripped Dr. Geyer’s face. “He didn’t attack anyone a...a bad werewolf attacked our sons.”

“I– You– He– WHAT?!”

“You wanna see it again?” Isaac asked, smirking and letting his eyes heat with gold. This time he left them that way.

Dr. Geyer raised his palms and backed up, then glanced at Liam and swallowed fear as he stepped forward again, positioning himself between Isaac and his unconscious son.

“Isaac, knock it off,” Melissa said, frowning at him.

Isaac obligingly cooled his eyes, and they spent the next twenty minutes calming Dr. Geyer down and giving him a brief rundown of key points about what had happened, repeatedly emphasizing the need for secrecy and tying it to Liam’s safety.

“I need to go back and be with Stiles,” the sheriff said when they were done. “He probably won’t turn until tomorrow night when the full moon is at its peak, but I need to be with him just in case.”

The sheriff left and Dr. Geyer turned his shell-shocked gaze on Isaac. “So Liam...Liam’s really going to...” He gripped Liam’s hand and radiated sadness.

“He’s going to live and be stronger and healthier than ever,” Isaac answered.

“Unless this Iron Claw kills him for his power, or he loses control and goes on a rampage himself.”

“I won’t let that happen,” Isaac said, holding eye contact and speaking in a serious tone. “Liam’s pack now. That means I’ll do anything to protect him including from himself.”
“Are you one of those alphas, you mentioned?” Dr. Geyer asked.

Isaac shook his head and Melissa answered. “My son Scott is the alpha of their pack.”

“Can he stop Iron Claw?” Dr. Geyer asked.

They hadn’t quite gotten around to telling him the possession part of the story or that Scott and Iron Claw were technically the same physical person.

“There are a few more details we need to tell you,” Melissa said, exchanging a look with Isaac.

They proceeded to do just that with Dr. Geyer blanching at each new piece of information. After they were done with the longer version of the story, Melissa excused herself to make her rounds.

“When should he start healing?” Dr. Geyer asked.

“I’m pretty sure he already has,” Isaac answered.

Dr. Geyer donned hospital gloves from a box on the wall and carefully pulled back one of the bandages on Liam’s arm. Sure enough, there was dried blood and the skin was pink, but it had closed. Dr. Geyer repeated the processes with the bandages across Liam’s arms, also finding those wounds healed. Next, he raised the hospital gown to begin checking the injuries on Liam’s chest, stomach, and thighs.

Isaac gasped and raked his eyes over Liam’s nude body and exposed crotch for a few seconds before he realized how inappropriate he was being.

“Oh ’scuse me, I need to, uh, go to the restroom,” Isaac blurted, relieved that Liam’s step-dad seemed too intent on his son’s injuries to notice Isaac’s leering.

Isaac hurried into the bathroom in Liam’s room, already tenting the front of his gown and grateful for the bulky folds of the blanket.

Fuck fuck fucking full moon!

Isaac was steel-hard and couldn’t get the image of Liam’s hairy, lean torso; thick, bushy brown pubes; soft, uncut dick; and toned, muscular legs out of his head. He sighed and stroked himself a few times. He really didn’t want to get that visual out of his head; he wanted to concentrate on it and finally relieve his moon-fueled lust. Unfortunately that would have been all kinds of wrong considering Liam’s step-dad was in the next room taking care of him, not to mention the fact that Liam certainly hadn’t consented to Isaac seeing his naked body.

Isaac took a shaky breath and forced himself to think about the less erotic version of Liam he had seen earlier, the blood-covered, half-dead boy who had been violently assaulted and who had almost died in his arms.

Isaac was still hard when he left the restroom, blanket strategically draped, but it was less a desperate, throbbing steel and more an I-could-get-off boner.

“Isaac, come look at this,” Dr. Geyer called to him.

Oh god, I don’t think that’s a good idea.

Isaac reluctantly approached Liam’s bed to see what the doctor wanted to show him. Thankfully (or maybe soooo not) the sheets were once again covering Liam’s waist.
“Is it supposed to look like that?” Dr. Geyer asked.

Isaac swallowed and studied Liam’s sculpted, hair-lined chest, the pert brown nubs of his nipples, and his tan, almost glowing new skin where Dr. Geyer had wiped away the blood. Isaac’s gaze tracked lower, following Liam’s lush trail of hair down to where it bisected his washboard stomach and swirled luxuriously around his shallow, taut navel before dipping tantalizing beneath the sheets. 

_Goddamn right_, everything looked like it was supposed to as far as Isaac was concerned.

Oh wait, there were still slowly seeping fang marks along the side of Liam’s abdomen. That was probably what Dr. Geyer was asking about. Oh well, Isaac was thorough…and also back to blue steel under his blanket.

“Uh yeah, that uh, that’s normal.” Isaac shook his head and made himself concentrate. “Sorry, feeling a little lightheaded. Full moon and all. Anyway, yeah I think the bite itself is usually the last to heal. Plus it was probably the deepest.”

Dr. Geyer breathed a sigh of relief and began redressing Liam’s wound. “You should sit down. You’re looking a little pale.”

_Yeah, the blood kinda rushed away from my face._

Isaac sniggered and reclaimed his seat, bunching the blanket up in his lap.

Things got boring after that, partially because Dr. Geyer re-covered Liam, but also because there was nothing to do but sit and wait for Liam to wake up, or less likely for Stiles to wake up, or for the sun to rise to confirm that they weren’t going to wake up that night. Melissa and Dr. Geyer were in and out checking on Liam between their regular duties.

Isaac stopped Dr. Geyer during one of his visits.

“I think he’s about to wake up. His breathing is getting lighter.”

Dr. Geyer hovered by Liam’s bedside and sure enough after a few minutes Liam began to groan and stir.

“Isaac, please give us a few minutes. I want to be the one to tell him,” Dr. Geyer said.

Isaac nodded and stepped out of Liam’s room and into the hallway, but stayed near the door.

“Dad?” Liam said a little while later, voice hoarse but strong.

“I’m here, son.” The bed rustled as Dr. Geyer embraced Liam and Isaac smelled the sweet, toasty scent of happiness and relief wafting out of the room.

“What happened?” The fear in Liam’s voice had Isaac struggling to stay put in the hallway.

“What do you remember?” Dr. Geyer asked, tone gentle.

Liam paused before answering, and his heart rate increased. “I think I must have a concussion or something. It doesn’t make sense.”

There was a splish of skin on skin as Dr. Geyer took Liam’s hand. “What do you remember?” he repeated in a whisper.

“I-I was arguing with this guy from my lacrosse team when a…a monster came out of the woods. I think Isaac, the lacrosse guy, was a monster too, but he wasn’t as scary and he told me to run…but I
“Why didn’t you run, son?” Dr. Geyer’s tone wasn’t harsh, but Isaac could hear the regret in it.

“I...I wanted to fight the monster, not Isaac the other one....well Isaac too, but mostly the other one.”

Isaac and Dr. Geyer both gasped.

“You wanted to fight the monster?”

Isaac heard the ruffle of Liam’s gown as he shrugged. “I always try so hard not to hit anyone when I lose my temper.”

“And you’re doing good. Your mom and I are proud of you.”

“But, uhm, I knew it would be okay to hit the monster. I wasn’t scared, I just, I wanted to mess him up.”

Isaac’s jaw dropped and Dr. Geyer laughed.

“It was stupid,” Liam said quietly. When he continued there was fear and pain in his voice. “He...He...”

Isaac heard them embrace again and Dr. Geyer whispered, “It’s okay. It’s over now.”

“Dad, he bit me, and scratched me, and-and just kept doing it.”

Isaac’s stomach turned as Liam’s agonized screams reverberated in his mind again.

“Whoa! Hey, I’m not” –Liam patted himself and rustled the covers– “I’m not hurt. Oh wait, my stomach is.”

“It’s almost healed,” Dr. Geyer told him. He had been monitoring its progress with every visit.

“How is that possible?” Liam’s voice was a mix of wonder, terror, and confusion.

Dr. Geyer cleared his throat.

“Liam, your body’s going through some changes.”

Liam giggled. “Are you giving me the puberty talk? Because we had that conversation a long time ago and uh, yeah, those changes definitely already happened.”

Isaac chuckled too. He could fucking testify to that.

“These changes are different,” Dr. Geyer answered.

Oh, I dunno, doc, he’ll be growing hair in some new places when he wolfs out.

“Liam, when the monster bit you–”

“He infected me?!” Liam shouted, heart racing. “Oh my god, am I gonna be a monster like him?”

“No, no, son, not at all.”

Liam breathed a sigh of relief, but Dr. Geyer continued in a sympathetic voice.
“You’re going to be a monster like Isaac.”

Isaac huffed and folded his arms.

“What?!”

“A werewolf, Liam. You’re going to be a werewolf.”

“A WHAT?!” Liam growled and Isaac prepared to run into the room just in case. “That’s impossible!”

“It’s okay. Isaac says you can control it.”

“I can barely control myself as a human. You’re telling me I’m gonna be a wolfman?!”

“Werewolf,” Dr. Geyer corrected. “I don’t know if they like the term wolfman. Don’t say that. It might be a slur.”

“You’re kidding about all this right?”

“Isaac, can you come in here?” Dr. Geyer called.

Isaac re-entered the room and gave Liam an awkward head nod.

“I’m going to let Isaac explain things more.” Dr. Geyer squeezed Liam’s shoulders. “Just know that your mom and I love you and this doesn’t change anything. We’ll figure this out.”

Liam swallowed. He looked and smelled so scared Isaac’s chest hurt. As soon as Dr. Geyer left the room, Isaac took his place sitting on the edge of Liam’s bed.

“We’re pack so this isn’t weird.” Isaac grabbed Liam and yanked him into a hug that was much tighter than any he would have given a human. He could feel the strength in Liam’s bones and muscles easily absorbing it.

Liam sighed and hugged back just as tight, tilting his head to the side and taking a long, deep whiff of Isaac’s scent. He froze.

“Why did I just do that?” Liam pulled back, face scrunched in confusion. “And why do I suddenly like you way more than I thought I did?”

Isaac smiled and patted Liam’s chest. Things were starting off much better than he had expected.

“We’re pack.”

“What does that mean?!”

“Uh, it’s kinda hard to explain. Basically that we have the same alpha, and we’re stronger together, and we have this special packbond.”

“Who-who’s our alpha?” Liam rolled his eyes and shook his head. “I can’t believe I just asked that.”

“Scott,” Isaac answered, allowing the pride and reverence into his tone.

“Scott?” Liam’s eyes widened and shock washed over his face. “Scott! Oh my god, Scott was the other monster. I didn’t recognize him at first. Scott attacked me!”

“He did not!” Isaac growled and flashed his eyes at Liam, making him jump.
“C-can I do that?”

Isaac shrugged. “I dunno, maybe. Tomorrow night’s your first full moon. You’ll definitely be able to from then on.”

“What else can I do?” Liam’s face lit with excitement. Then he added, “And are you sure the monster wasn’t Scott? I really think it was.”

Isaac took a long, weary breath. “Okay, this is going to take awhile to explain. Please hold all questions and comments until the end.”

Chapter End Notes

Random little funny that made me laugh. I was taking notes on my phone for this chapter and I was typing “Dr. Geyer calls Liam’s phone” as a plot point, but autocorrect insisted that I meant, “Dr. Geyer calls Liam princess.” I woulda totally had that be his nickname for Liam if I coulda worked it in in an inoffensive way, but alas I couldn’t.

Anyway feedback is always appreciated!
Isaac knew who was on the other side of the door before he answered it. The strong, steady rhythm of his heart was familiar. The barest hint of his smell drifting in from around the door frame was also familiar. And good lord was the ball of nervous energy in the pit of Isaac’s stomach ever familiar. Isaac hesitated before opening the door, habit causing him to mistake the tension in his gut for fear or dread. A second flush of emotion gave Isaac clarity, pointed out that fear and dread were outdated emotions to have for this person. This was–

“Ethan!” Isaac breathed his name like a prayer as he flung the door open.

The smile that had been on Ethan’s face fell away, replaced by an intense expression that really should have been frightening but wasn’t.

“Isaac.” Ethan’s voice made Isaac’s fingers tingle.

An instant later those fingers were on Ethan’s back, rubbing across the soft cotton of his rust-red v-neck shirt and tracing along his spine. Isaac embarrassed himself with a low-pitched mewl as he tilted his face and nosed at the warm skin along the crease of Ethan’s neck, inhaling his scent as deeply as possible.

Ethan’s hands were everywhere on Isaac all at once: his back, his sides, his arms, his thighs, the back of his neck, in his hair – Ethan couldn’t seem to get enough of touching Isaac, and Isaac sure as hell wasn’t complaining.

Ethan’s chocolate eyes were ringed in blue as he gently pinned Isaac against the wall by the door. “It’s taking all my will power not to rip your clothes off right now,” Ethan said, a predatory smirk on his face and just a hint of his fangs showing.

Isaac whimpered and rolled his hips against Ethan’s, grinding their aroused crotches together. It wasn’t enough. He dipped his hands into Ethan’s back pockets, squeezing his ass and dragging him closer.

“You look...perfect.” Isaac whispered, breaking eye contact with Ethan just long enough to steal glances at his straight nose with the cute little rounded tip, the strong, smooth ridge of his brow, his angular cheekbones, and his full, pillowy lips. There was no trace of damage on Ethan’s handsome face.

“So do you,” Ethan whispered back, pressing impossibly closer and making them both moan at the fuller contact.

“No one’s home...I won’t say no if you wanna do stuff.” Isaac licked his lips and tilted his head, lining up their mouths in anticipation of Ethan accepting the offer. Fuck Isaac’s rule about not kissing Ethan; Isaac wanted to spend the rest of the afternoon making out with him.

Ethan took a long, deep breath and closed his eyes. When he re-opened them they were human again, the animal hiding just beneath the surface, but still pulsing wild and hot, howling at Isaac’s equally primal side.

“You asked me to stay away from you,” Ethan said, hands firm on Isaac’s hips as his thumbs snaked
under Isaac’s t-shirt and caressed the flesh there.

“You’re not doing a very good job,” Isaac answered, palming Ethan’s ass.

“It’s really hard.”

“Yeah, I can tell.” Isaac smirked and rolled his hips again. They both shuddered and breathed hot breaths against each other’s faces.

Ethan closed his eyes and composed himself before letting go of Isaac’s hips with visible difficulty. “I needed to make sure you were okay.”

“I’m okay and” –Isaac swallowed and held onto Ethan’s ass as he tried to step back– “I may have been wrong...I may not want you to stay away.”

Ethan smiled and cupped the side of Isaac’s face with his hand.

Isaac leaned into Ethan’s palm shamelessly. Ethan could touch him anywhere he pleased and Isaac would like it.

“You never wanted me to stay away,” Ethan whispered as he brushed his thumb over Isaac’s cheekbone and stepped back with more determination, pulling out of Isaac’s grasp. “But you were right. We were hurting each other.”

Isaac wanted to argue, but he didn’t. The way Ethan was making him feel right now certainly wasn’t painful, but lust and...affection aside, there was still too much baggage and bad history between them. Isaac nodded and folded his arms across his chest, determined to keep them from winding around Ethan’s waist.

“How’s Liam?”

An involuntary smile crept across Isaac’s lips. “He’s good. He healed completely and went home this morning. Scott’s over at his place now getting to know him.”

“Good.” Ethan snickered. “Malia’s over at our place getting to know Aiden.”

Isaac arched his brow. “Still?”

Ethan laughed out loud this time. “I don’t think they would have even stopped on the way home if I hadn’t made Malia ride on the back of my bike instead of Aiden’s.” Ethan turned and shut the front door, which had gone forgotten during their reunion. He gave Isaac an exaggerated traumatized look. “She got handsy with me too.”

Isaac let out a low growl, only half joking.

“Anyway, since they aren’t exactly quiet and I couldn’t ignore what they were doing, I went out and got me and Aiden replacement phones. Same numbers by the way.”

“Cool,” Isaac answered, not that he even had Aiden’s number or imagined himself ever wanting to call or text him, but he was glad Ethan’s contact info hadn’t changed. “I think Melissa is getting me a new one today too. She’s running errands. I’m supposed to be sleeping but...”

“Well if you wanna go get in bed...” Ethan smirked at him and let the implication hang in the air.

“Okay!” Isaac answered right away, his face lighting up as he nodded.
Ethan laughed nervously and adjusted his straining crotch – which was now all Isaac could look at. “I was kidding.”

“I sure wasn’t,” Isaac answered, openly leering at Ethan and rubbing the tent in his own pants. “I’m so damn worked up from the full moon. I think that’s why I couldn’t sleep.”

“Isaac, I really want to but–”

“Yeah, I know,” Isaac answered, dragging his gaze away from the outline of Ethan’s erection and up to his face – and okay, yes, maybe Isaac’s eyes did linger on Ethan’s chest and arms on the way up.

“Anyway, we need to plan for tonight’s full moon,” Ethan said, looking toward the living room with an unspoken question on his lips. This was the first time Ethan had been over, and he seemed hesitant to make himself at home the way Stiles or Lydia would have. Isaac nodded and motioned for Ethan to go ahead.

Ethan took a seat on one end of the couch and Isaac sat on the far opposite end, their bodies turned toward each other but with almost a full seat cushion between them. It wasn’t that Isaac didn’t want to sit close to Ethan – Hell, he wanted to sit right in Ethan’s lap, ideally with no clothes on and Ethan’s cock up his ass. *Would that be an okay way to discuss werewolf business?* – but he needed the extra space to strengthen his resolve.

“You, um, you want to be involved again tonight?” Isaac asked, trying to clear his head of unwanted–well of *wanted* images.

Ethan looked offended and a sour note flared in the air, helping Isaac focus. “Of course I want to be involved.”

“I’m sorry,” Isaac said, brushing his fingers over Ethan’s arm along the top of the couch in apology. Hurting Ethan’s feelings really wasn’t something Isaac was okay with doing anymore. “It’s just you’re not...pack.”

Ethan sighed and the sour scent intensified even as he kept his face expressionless. “I know, but Aiden and I want to help anyway.”

“Aiden wants to help?”

“Yeah, he does. He’s hoping it’ll make Scott reconsider not letting us in the pack.” Ethan paused for a moment and shrugged. “I’m hoping that too.”

“Ethan, I don’t think–”

Ethan held up a hand. “I know, and I promise there are no strings on this. I do want to join the pack, but that’s not my main motivation here.”

“It isn’t?” Isaac asked, cheeks warming in a blush.

Ethan rolled his eyes and laid his hand over Isaac’s on the back of the couch. “We both know it’s not.”

Isaac swallowed and changed the subject. “How did you know Scott was possessed anyway?”

“It was actually kind of obvious.”

“What?! How?”
“Well I’ve known something was wrong in your pack for a long time, ever since Scott couldn’t come out to the woods to help with Malia, not on any of the three nights we were there. Yet he was around and seemed fine during the day, so that pointed to a moon or werewolf problem.”

“It could have been something else,” Isaac insisted.

“Yeah, it could have been, but then there was Allison. She almost shot Lydia for no reason whatsoever according to Aiden. Then she attacked you and Aiden, proving she was out of control. I mean, even if she wanted to hurt him, why would she hurt you? And Aiden said she wasn’t acting like herself during the attack. So it seemed likely that whatever was happening to Allison must be related to what was happening to Scott.”

“And you figured that had to be possession?” Isaac asked.

“I did when I realized Stiles was involved too and made the connection that it had to do with their sacrifice to find the Nemeton. I noticed his scent was off, not just distressed like you and Lydia, but actually different. So—”

“Wait, what do you mean different if you don’t mean distressed?” Isaac asked. “Stiles smells a little different because he isn’t sleeping very well, and he’s under a lot of stress, but that’s it.”

“Um...” Ethan fidgeted and gave Isaac a sympathetic look. “He also smells like a druid now.”

“What?!” Isaac gapped at him. “No, he doesn’t.”

“It’s subtle, but...yeah he does.”

Isaac folded his arms. He wished Ethan were lying to him, but he obviously wasn’t. “What does a druid smell like?”

“A little bit like rain and sap, with notes of sage. It’s a faint smell. I can smell it on Deaton and Morrell easily enough, but I never caught the scent on Ms. Blake. She may have been doing something to mask it.”

“I...I’ve never smelled that on him.”

Ethan’s hand was on Isaac’s again on the couch cushion. “You spend a lot of time with him and it was gradual. I can see why you wouldn’t notice. And” –Ethan shrugged and smirked at him– “no offense but I’m a lot better at scents than you are.”

“I’m getting better,” Isaac answered, scowling at Ethan without any heat. Isaac knew what Ethan was doing. He was teasing Isaac to keep him from freaking out about the revelation that Stiles smelled like a druid.

“Yeah, you really are,” Ethan answered, a fond smile on his lips. “You’d be a total badass by now if you were a born wolf.”

“Thanks,” Isaac answered, grazing his thumb over the side of Ethan’s hand.

“Anyway,” –Ethan pulled his hand away, and Isaac was already tired of the mixed signals they were sending each other– “yesterday when I was at the hospital paying off those bikers Aiden attacked, I went to visit Stiles and—”

“Hold on, you went to visit Stiles?” This time Isaac’s scowl was real and he was glad he wasn’t holding Ethan’s hand. Fuck Ethan’s hand! – Well actually Isaac wanted to do that too, but that was
beside the point, Ethan didn’t have any business visiting Stiles. “Why?”

Ethan shrugged. “I was already there and...I just wanted to make sure he was okay. I know he’s not pack, or even my friend, but he’s important to you and–”

“You don’t have to care about the people who matter to me!” Isaac was struggling not to flash his eyes at Ethan and snarl. He waved a hand between them. “We aren't anything to each other.”

Ethan’s face hardened and his scent vanished. Isaac was grateful; he didn’t want to know what effect his words had.

“Fine. I care about Stiles because he’s someone in a pack I want to join.” Ethan’s tone was emotionless. “Think of it as a strategic move.”

Isaac took a breath and reminded himself that hurting Ethan’s feelings just for the hell of it was off the table now. Ethan deserved better than that. “No, I...I didn’t mean that. Of course we’re not nothing to each other.” He looked up and let the emotion show on his face. “I’m sorry.”

Ethan’s face softened and his scent flared back. There was still a tinge of hurt in it, but it was overlaid by an emotion Isaac couldn’t label. Whatever it was, it smelled nice, and Isaac took a long whiff of it.

“Anyway,” Ethan continued, tone gentle. “I noticed that buzzing druid amulet and the rancid smell of an alpha bite that wasn’t taking. That pretty much clinched it. Of course Scott would never bite Stiles, so he had to be possessed.”

“Yeah, apparently when Scott, Stiles, and Allison died and came back, some supernaturals assholes hitched a ride from the spirit world.”

Ethan nodded. “A werewolf alpha for Scott, a druid for Stiles–”

“A darach,” Isaac clarified with a frown. “Druids don’t possess people unless they’re evil...unless they’re darachs.”

Ethan frowned too and continued. “And a hunter for Allison?” His brow furrowed. “How did a hunter’s spirit get inside the Nemeton in the first place?”

Isaac explained the situation with Kate and when he was done, a weight lifted from his shoulders as Ethan took a moment to process everything. It felt good that all this was finally out in the open.

Ethan was silent for a little while before speaking. “So Iron Claw can get out of mountain ash. That’s gonna be a problem.”

“Actually, Scott has an idea. There’s this abandoned hunter compound on the edge of town that the Argents used. Allison did a lot of training there. It’s built to hold werewolves, even alphas. They have an electrified cage. Scott thinks if we surround the cage with mountain ash, that’ll hold Iron Claw long enough to shock him back into submission. Plus it’s underground in a basement, so that should disrupt the energy he gets from the moon.”

“Hmm, well I can’t say I like the idea of going to a former hunter compound, but that does sound like a good plan. I’ll come with you to keep an eye on Scott, and Lydia and Aiden can keep an eye on Malia and Liam.”

Isaac frowned. “Don’t you think it would be awkward for Lydia, Malia, and Aiden to be together right now?”
“Oh, I didn’t mean together. It’s not a good idea to put two werewolves – well were-creatures – with control issues together on the full moon. They’d just feed into each other’s fury. Although, Liam should be with an experienced werewolf for his first transformation to talk him through it. Aiden can do that, and Lydia can watch Malia again.”

“Oh no. No way. I am not letting Aiden anywhere near Liam.” Isaac’s muscles tensed and a wave of protective instinct toward his new packmate washed over him.

“He won’t hurt him.”

Isaac scoffed. “What are you talking about? He suggested killing Liam last night to beat Iron Claw to it.”

“He won’t do that now that Liam’s in your pack,” Ethan answered.

“Oh yeah, that’s right. I forgot how much Aiden hates killing people in my pack.” Isaac rolled his eyes.

“He wants to join your pack. That’ll keep him in line. Besides, I’ll make him promise.”

Isaac arched his eyebrows at Ethan.

“He doesn’t break promises to me,” Ethan answered with a defensive edge to his voice.

“Or really? So uh, what happened the other night when you guys wound up in jail?”

“He was acting out, and yes, he knew I didn’t want him to, but he hadn’t promised not to. If I can get him to promise – which I know I can if I wave the possibility of joining the pack in his face – then he’ll behave. He’s” – Ethan dropped his voice and a burst of shame flooded the air – “very loyal.”

Isaac cocked his head. Ethan wasn’t lying, so Isaac didn’t understand what he was ashamed of. “Aiden doesn’t seem loyal.”

“He is,” Ethan answered, a growl in his voice as he flashed blue eyes at Isaac.

“Okay, okay.” Isaac held his hands up, surprised by the intensity of Ethan’s reaction. “But that doesn’t mean he’ll stay in control. He’s kind of a loose cannon.”

Ethan laughed. “Aiden’s a born wolf and a former alpha. He has zero trouble controlling himself under the full moon – or at all. When he acts out it’s because he decides to.”

Isaac huffed and clenched his jaw. “Fine. Then he can watch Scott with me, but I want you with Liam.”

“What?!?”

“I care about Liam now, okay? He’s my packmate.”

“I get that,” Ethan answered.

“So I...” Isaac forced himself to relax as he covered Ethan’s hand with his own on the couch cushion again. “I need to know he’s with someone I trust.”

A smile slowly formed on Ethan’s lips and kept forming until it was a wide, open-mouthed grin. He turned his hand over under Isaac’s and laced their fingers together. He didn’t say anything, and Isaac
wanted to pull his hand away and break the moment, but he also didn’t want to do that, so he held still and waited for Ethan to respond.

“I only have you and Aiden,” Ethan said, squeezing Isaac’s fingers and radiating tension.

“What?”

“I know I don’t really have you.” Ethan swallowed and gave Isaac a nervous look. “But I sort of do, right? I mean, we’re not nothing to each other. You said that.”

“We’re not nothing,” Isaac repeated, shifting closer on the couch and moving their joined hands to his knee.

“So um, yeah, you and Aiden are the only people I’m not nothing with, and I’m not okay with either one of you, much less both of you, being around Iron Claw without me. He almost killed all of us. I'm not leaving you guys alone with him.”

“Uh...”

Ethan covered Isaac’s hand with his other one and held eye contact. “Isaac, I swear, I’ll make it clear to Aiden how important it is to me that Liam doesn’t get hurt, and he will take care of Liam for me. I don’t have any doubt. But I need to be there if you’re watching Iron Claw.”

“Okay,” Isaac agreed without letting himself think too much about it. If he thought about it, he couldn’t agree to it, and then they’d have to hold hands forever.

They chatted a little while longer and decided to meet up at the school that evening before sunset. Then Ethan got up to leave. Isaac followed him to the door but stopped him with a hand on his shoulder.

“Thank you for...saving me last night.” Isaac shivered as the image of Ethan’s slashed face popped into his head. “And thanks for being willing to help again tonight.”

“Thank you for calling me last night.” Ethan brushed fingers along Isaac's arm and smiled at him. “And thanks for trusting me.”

They lingered by the front door for a few moments before Isaac cleared his throat. “Well, I’ll see you later.”

Isaac raised his arm and leaned in to hug Ethan but realized at the last second that doing that might send another mixed signal. Yet it was too late to fully abort the gesture since his arm was already awkwardly poised between them. At a loss for what else to do, he closed his hand into a fist and held it out.

Ethan laughed and bumped his fist. “See ya later, dudebro.”

Oh god, just shoot me now.

About an hour later when Scott got home, Isaac told him about Ethan’s visit. As Isaac had anticipated, Scott was open to working with the twins. They had been planning for Lydia to try to handle both Malia and Liam by herself and for Isaac to watch Iron Claw alone. Scott was relieved that wouldn’t be necessary and appreciated the extra manpower.

Melissa got home later that afternoon with a carload of groceries and shopping bags. Isaac marveled at her seemingly supernatural energy levels. It was one thing for him and Scott to be fine being up all
They were werewolves and they had been re-energized by the full moon, but Melissa was human, and she couldn’t have gotten more than a couple hours sleep. She should have been crashing hard. Isaac was glad tonight was her last shift before she was off for the next two days.

She set a handful of bags on the dining room table and called Isaac over as Scott continued unloading the groceries. His eyes lit up as she pulled out a box containing a brand new phone.

“Thank you!” Isaac declared, once again raising his arms and going in for a hug before pausing in doubt. Melissa wasn’t a fist-bumping kind of person though, so after a few more seconds he decided to go with it and closed his arms around her.

“You’re welcome, kiddo,” she answered, giving him a tight squeeze.

“Sorry I ruined my old one,” Isaac said, as they ended the hug and he grabbed the box, intent on opening it and plugging the new device in to charge.

Melissa laughed and rolled her eyes. “Yeah, what were you thinking saving everyone’s lives at the expense of a phone? So irresponsible.”

Isaac chuckled and plugged the charger into the wall outlet by the table. The phone powered up and he rushed through the welcome screens, eager to get things setup so that he could start using the phone normally and experimenting with the new features. Isaac wasn’t paying attention to what was going on around him, but by the time he looked up, Melissa had cleared away the other shopping bags.

“So I met with a lawyer today,” she said, leaning against the table.

“Oh.” Isaac’s eyes widened and his stomach leapt into his throat. He set the phone on the table. What if there was a problem? What if now that the state knew about him they were going to take him away?

“Issac, I’m sure it’s fine,” Scott whispered to him from the kitchen as he finished putting away groceries.

Isaac giggled, confusing Melissa with his reaction. “Scott’s listening from the other room,” he explained.

Melissa rolled her eyes. “Scott, you wanna come in here?”

“Nah, I can hear fine from here!” Scott called back.

Melissa shook her head and returned her attention to Isaac. “Anyway, they’re going to assign you a caseworker, who you’ll need to meet with privately a couple of times. They’ll probably also want to talk to us all together as a family, and we’ll need to pass a home inspection and maybe a surprise visit or two.”

“That sounds like a lot,” Isaac answered, trying not to get discouraged but feeling like there were a lot of obstacles to overcome.

“The whole thing will take a few months before it’s official, but the attorney doesn’t anticipate any problems.” Melissa placed a hand on his arm. “It’s going to be okay. There’s no reason they would deny the application.”

“And I won’t need to, like, move out in the meantime, right?”
“Of course not,” she answered, giving him a reassuring smile and squeezing his arm. “Everyone wants what’s best for you, the state included.”

Isaac breathed a sigh of relief and grinned. “Wow! I can’t believe this is happening.”

Melissa’s smile widened and she pulled Isaac in for another hug, which he happily went along with. Fist bumps were lame.

“Wait for me!” Scott shouted as he ran into the room and threw his arms around Isaac and his mom.

Melissa laughed and ruffled Scott’s hair. “You sure you want this one as a brother?” She asked Isaac with a teasing lilt in her voice.

“Definitely!” Isaac answered, rubbing Scott’s back and grinning at him.

After an early dinner, Isaac and Scott went to the high school to meet the others. Lydia and Ethan were standing on the outskirts of the lacrosse field eyeing the plastic and metal stump of the destroyed stadium light pole. The pole had been sheered off and cleared away from the damage up, and the ground around the base was taped off in a wide square. The surrounding field where the fight had taken place, with the exception of the taped off area, had been tilled and excavated. The visual evidence of the battle may have been gone, but the metallic tang of the werewolves’ mixed blood clung to the musky scent of the fresh dirt, permeating the air with an unsettling, macabre odor.

“My mom’s trying to keep the school board from investigating what happened too closely,” Lydia remarked as Scott and Isaac walked up.

“The sheriff’s doing his part to keep things quiet from a legal standpoint,” Scott said.

“Me and Aiden can make an anonymous donation for repairs if that’ll help,” Ethan said.

“Don’t worry about it. Stuff like this happens all the time in Beacon Hills. It’ll blow over,” Scott answered.

Isaac tilted his head at Ethan, curious about his comment. Ethan felt familiar now, as though it were completely normal for him to be standing with them surveying the wreckage of their latest supernatural altercation and chatting about the cover-up. Yet in many ways Ethan was still a mystery. Isaac knew next to nothing about his life before Beacon Hills, or how he had come to be in a position to offer to throw money at a problem like it was no big deal.

“What?” Ethan asked, noticing Isaac’s attention.

“I’ll ask you later,” Isaac replied.

Scott didn’t react to the exchange, but Lydia gave Isaac a knowing look. It made Isaac feel guilty, like he was specifically keeping a secret from Scott, which had certainly never been his intention. That wasn’t to say he felt inclined to pull Scott aside and mention the fact that he and Ethan had hooked up a few times. It was over now. Scott didn’t need to know.

“Malia and Aiden are here,” Isaac commented, stating the obvious to shift the focus from himself as Aiden’s motorcycle rumbled in the parking lot.

“I’m glad they managed to pry themselves out of bed,” Ethan commented, tone laced with sarcasm and irritation. “They were still going at it like rabbits when I got home this afternoon. I dropped off Aiden’s new phone and left fast. I just wish I could unhear the dirty talk I walked in on.” Ethan looked at Lydia and frowned. “Sorry.”
Lydia shrugged, her tone giving nothing away as she answered, “I couldn’t care less.”

Isaac subtly leaned against her shoulder. Her tone may have given nothing away but her heartbeat and scent had.

Isaac couldn’t help his reaction as the pheromone-soaked couple strolled across the grass toward them. Aiden was walking with a relaxed swagger that Isaac didn’t doubt he had earned at least twenty times over since the night before. Malia was in one of his shirts and didn’t appear to be wearing any pants underneath it. Her long legs and shapely thighs looked absolutely pornographic as they disappeared beneath the hemline barely covering her crotch. Isaac automatically focused his senses on her nether regions and inhaled, trying to determine by scent if she was wearing any panties. He moaned and closed his eyes. He couldn’t be sure either way, but he did detect the distinct scent of saliva and semen and – Holy fuck! Aiden’s cum smelled really good, almost exactly like Ethan’s but milder. On the other hand that may have been simply because he had fired all his more concentrated loads and Isaac was smelling the less spermy batches at the end.

Isaac shifted his attention to Aiden’s crotch but couldn’t smell much under his pants and, presumably, underwear. Although he did notice a residual earthy-sweet vaginal scent around Aiden’s mouth, not as concentrated as what was coming from Malia’s actual vagina, but unmistakable and – Good lord! Malia was delicious too, heavier and denser than Allison with a more primal tang. Isaac was still partial to the smell of Ethan’s and Allison’s fluids over Aiden’s and Malia’s, but he definitely wouldn’t have minded a few tastes for comparison’s sake, and either way he was savoring these scents and the visuals they caused. Right now he was picturing Aiden’s bare ass in the air, cheeks spread and glistening with sweat as he hunched down to tongue Malia’s clit while she massaged her breasts and flexed her thighs, her juices dripping all over Aiden’s face and his cum spraying the sheets underneath him.

“You’re both gross,” Ethan teased, tone light and playful.

“Disgusting,” Lydia agreed, pointedly looking away from Isaac and Scott as they splayed hands over their crotches.

Isaac was glad that he wasn’t the only one reacting. Besides, he’d gotten twice the titillation Scott had. Scott was probably only imagining the breasts and vagina part of Isaac’s fantasy. There was another whole body worth lusting after.

“It’s nice to see you guys too,” Malia commented as she looked Isaac and Scott up and down. Aiden’s grin was smug as he stretched and wrapped a lazy arm around Malia’s waist. She slid her hand under his shirt in response, flashing his navel and the thin line of short hairs that descended from it and disappeared beneath the black cotton waistband of his underwear. The glimpse of taut, tan skin was all too fleeting and Isaac found himself envying her fingers as they stroked his abs under the shirt.

“So where’s the kid?” Aiden asked, his own fingers caressing Malia’s thigh and teasing Isaac and Scott as they dipped beneath the hemline but didn’t lift it.

“He’s not here yet,” Scott answered, voice strained and making Isaac’s eyes dart to him.

“Good thing,” Lydia remarked, pursing her lips. “Come on, Malia, let’s get you out of sight before he gets here.”

“He’s adorable, but I think you should meet him for the first time with more clothes on and not under a full moon,” Lydia said as she took Malia’s arm and led her back toward the school. She turned and glanced back over her shoulder at the others. “I’ll be back to go with you to the compound once I get Malia situated.”

Scott was the only one who knew how to get to the former Argent compound, so meeting there wasn’t an option.

“Where are you going to take Liam?” Isaac asked Aiden, claws twitching under his fingertips at the notion of Aiden taking Liam anywhere.

“Middle of the woods. He needs plenty of room to run.”

“Wait what?” Scott looked as alarmed by the response as Isaac felt. “You’re not going to lock him up?”

Aiden scoffed and folded his arms. “Of course not. His first full moon would be hell locked up. If he pisses me off then maybe, but I’m not going to start him off like that.”

“But you have to. He’s dangerous,” Scott said. “He could get away and kill someone.”

“That’s why I said the middle of the woods,” Aiden answered, rolling his eyes, “and yes, I’ll make sure no one’s around first and I’ll listen for anyone approaching.”

Isaac opened his mouth to tell Aiden how stupid that plan was, but Ethan’s hand on his arm stopped him.

“I know this makes you nervous,” Ethan said, looking between Isaac and Scott, “but you want what’s best for Liam, right? This is it.”

“This is his first night,” Isaac said.

“Exactly. You remember your first night turning?” Ethan asked. He gave Isaac an apologetic look and added, “I do.”

Isaac frowned and glared at him. It would have been nice if he would stop referencing things about Isaac’s life that Isaac had never told him. “What about it?”

“Derek made this big deal about locking you and Eric and Boyd up with those heavy, painful chains,” Ethan answered. “But you all got loose anyway. Then they almost went on a rampage, but you got yourself under control and helped Derek with them.”

“Isaac has great control,” Scott said, squeezing Isaac’s shoulder and giving him a proud look.

“Yeah, he does,” Ethan answered, tone softening as he gave Isaac a proud look of his own.

A warm, happy sensation throbbed in the pit of Isaac’s stomach and radiated outward throughout his body. That was the most reassuring thing they could have said to him after how terrifyingly close he had come to losing control the night before.

“You three get a room,” Aiden remarked, shaking his head and frowning at them.

“I have a room, but it’s adjacent to the sex dungeon you’re running,” Ethan retorted, the tone of his voice and the set of shoulders making it clear to the other three that he was legitimately irritated about having been exiled from his loft all day.
“You’re just jealous because you and Is–”

“Anyway,” Ethan cut in, glaring at Aiden.

Isaac did his best to keep his heart rate steady and not freak out. Aiden had almost outed his secret to Scott. Now would have been such a crappy time for that to happen. Fortunately, Ethan had never paused and was delivering a point that legitimately distracted Isaac.

“What I’m getting at is that the restraints didn’t do anything to keep any of you in check. You talked yourself down and Eric and Boyd calmed down because their alpha and packmate helped them.” Ethan turned to Scott. “What about you, Scott, did you learn control by being locked up?”

Scott shook his head. “Stiles helped me learn my triggers and he figured out that Allison is my anchor. I ultimately learned control so I wouldn’t hurt her or anyone else.”

“That’s what I mean,” Ethan said. “Being locked up doesn’t help. In fact it usually makes it worse because it raises stress and anger levels. Besides, we don’t want Liam to think he can’t control himself. It’s better if we act like we expect him to be able to and then provide the guidance he needs to do it.”

“But what if he can’t?” Isaac asked.

“I’m stronger and faster than he is,” Aiden answered, for once looking more confident than outright cocky. “I can outrun him and overpower him if I need to.”

“I like this approach in theory,” Scott said. “It sounds more humane and less traumatic for him, but are you sure it’ll work?”

“This is how it’s always done,” Aiden answered.

“At least at first,” Ethan added. “If a new wolf has a problem then they might get locked up as a last resort.”

Aiden shrugged, conceding the point. “But we’ve never been locked up on the full moon and we’ve never had a problem, neither have almost any born wolves or most bitten wolves with a good alpha.”

Isaac bristled at the backhanded jab. “Are you saying Derek wasn’t a good alpha?”

“Do you think Derek was a good alpha?” Aiden countered.

“Derek did whatever he needed to do to protect his pack,” Scott said quietly, obviously daring Aiden to disagree with him.

“True,” Aiden answered, holding up his hands and shrugging innocently. “Derek wanted to protect his pack, but he’s the one who picked an unorthodox method of teaching moon control.”

“He had three new betas to deal with at one time and no experienced packmates to help. It was different,” Ethan said diplomatically.

“What about Malia?” Isaac asked. “Are you saying we should let her out too?”

“Well, I have a very effective technique for keeping her from running off.” Aiden snickered and smirked. “She still loses control, but it’s worth it.”

Ethan rolled his eyes and swatted his brother’s arm. “Malia already has bad habits she needs to unlearn.”
“Yeah, like climbing on Aiden’s dick.”

“I don’t think chaining her up is the best way to teach her,” Ethan said, “but it is the easiest solution until we have more time to work with her.”

Just then a car pulled into the parking lot.

“Do it,” Scott told Aiden as they all started walking back toward the school.

“Mom, I can hear them!” Liam’s excited voice rang through the air. “I think they’re on the lacrosse field.”

“We’ll be right there, Liam,” Scott called out.

“Scott heard me! He says they’re coming.”

Isaac kept his face neutral but inwardly chuckled at the enthusiasm in Liam’s voice. He was still nervous about leaving him alone with Aiden and even more nervous about the fact that he would be loose, but part of him was pleased Liam’s enthusiasm wasn’t going to get snuffed out under a pile of chains.

The four werewolves met Liam’s mom and carefully avoided revealing that Ethan and Aiden weren’t actually Liam’s new packmates as they assured her Liam would be okay. They all seemed to be on the same page about the fact that there was no point in explaining the complicated dynamic between the twins and Liam’s new pack. Fortunately, Liam didn’t know the details yet either and so he didn’t give anything away as they all exchanged phone numbers with her and answered her questions.

Isaac felt better as he listened to Aiden promise Ms. Dunbar that he would take care of Liam. There was no indication that he was lying and the twins were being downright charming and polite to the worried parent. Her anxiety had calmed by the time Aiden disappeared with Liam into the woods, and Isaac, Scott, and Ethan excused themselves to go meet Lydia.

They found Lydia in the hallway on her way back to join them. She informed them that she and Malia had tested the strength of Malia’s chains and they had broken. Fortunately, Lydia found a replacement set in the maintenance room. The chains were only a failsafe precaution anyway. The mountain ash would hold her.

They went to Lydia’s car, and Scott directed them to the old Argent compound. Isaac hated it as soon as they pulled up. It was exactly what he would have expected from a hunters’ lair. It was a short, squat building with thick concrete walls and a dingy exterior. It was obviously designed to resist werewolf attacks, and Isaac wondered how they were going to get in at all, but then Scott produced a key, explaining that Allison had given it to him the first time she had taken him here.

The scent of gun oil and steel permeated the air as they entered the building. It was dark, the only light leaking in from the small, narrow windows that lined the walls. The building’s power had been turned off since it wasn’t in use, but Scott explained that the cage he had in mind was hooked up to a back-up generator so it wouldn’t be a problem. The Argents hadn’t wanted to risk their prisoners escaping just because of a blackout.

They used their cell phones for light as Scott led them down a narrow corridor and into a room that seemed designed for interrogation...or outright torture. Isaac shone his phone light around the room, surveying its contents. Steel tables and chairs were setup in the middle of the room with metal restraints attached. Lining one wall was a series of vertical racks, each designed with grooves for the
captor’s head, wrists, and ankles. There were multiple drains in the floor and a high-pressure hose was attached to another wall. A third wall consisted of panels featuring an array of various sharp and blunt tools. The entire room stank of mold, rust, and traces of wolfsbane. One corner of the room had a set of cellar-style doors rising out of the floor. The doors were padlocked shut, but snapped open under the force of Scott’s hand.

Isaac cringed as Scott threw back the doors, revealing a wooden staircase disappearing into a pitch-black basement. Even Isaac’s powerful night vision was useless in the absence of any light whatsoever.

Scott went first, shining his light down the stairs as he descended. Lydia followed him, stepping carefully onto the battered steps but giving no indication of anxiety. Isaac tried to do the same but froze the moment his foot landed on the first step. In one beat of his pounding heart he was transported back to countless nights spent bent and contorted inside the lightless freezer in the basement of his old home. He felt invisible welts and bruises on his skin and smelled the musty plastic of insulated walls pressing against his face.

Isaac snarled as something struck him across the back. He spun around, swiping clawed fingers through the air at the source of the attack as he shone the light in his other hand at it.

“Whoa, whoa, Isaac. It’s just me.” Ethan jumped back, one arm up as if to ward off more blows as he clutched his bleeding face.

Fuck.

Isaac clenched his fist, digging claws still dripping with Ethan’s blood into his palm as he tried to calm down. His back wasn’t hurt. The ‘blow’ had only been Ethan’s hand, probably meant to reassure him.

“No one’s going to make you go down there.” Ethan’s tone was soothing, as though Isaac hadn’t just slashed open his cheek and made them both recall the nightmare they had endured the night before.

Isaac swallowed and stepped away from the entrance, staring at the floor in shame as he willed his features back to their human form. “Just give me a minute,” he said to Ethan, painfully aware of the tremble in his voice.

“Oh crud! I can’t believe I forgot,” Scott’s apologetic voice said from the bottom of the stairs. “I’m coming, Isaac.”

“Scott, wait! We don’t have time to find an alternative,” Lydia’s voice said from beside him. “The sun is already setting. We need to get you secured for the night.”

“Go ahead as planned,” Ethan called down to them. “I’ll come sit with Scott and shock him if necessary. Isaac can back me up from in here.”

“No, I’ll be fine,” Isaac growled more than said as Scott and Lydia shuffled around in the basement, beginning their preparations. “I just need to psych myself up.”

“Isaac, no you don’t,” Ethan said, holding his injured face with one hand as he slid his phone into his pocket, light still on and shining dimly through his pants. He placed his hand on Isaac’s arm. “I got this okay?”

“Not okay!” Isaac answered. “I’m not a fucking victim anymore. I’m a werewolf.”
Isaac held up a hand and closed his eyes. He could do this.

*I'm a werewolf. I have a pack. I have a family. No one is ever going to lock me up again. Not my dad. Not anyone.*

Isaac repeated those statements on a loop in his mind until they had soothed him, made him feel strong and safe.

“I’m sorry,” Isaac said as he opened his eyes and tilted his light toward Ethan. He was done healing, but the side of his face was smudged with blood.

“That wasn’t your fault.”

“I lashed out.”

“I shouldn’t have touched you. I knew better.”

“I still lashed out.” Isaac swallowed and repeated his apology. “I’m sorry.”

Ethan clapped a hand on Isaac’s upper arm and squeezed. “We’re good.”

“Come on,” Isaac said, taking a deep breath and narrowing his eyes on the darkened doorway.

“You don’t have to–”

“I’m not letting it win.”

Ethan let go of Isaac’s arm and offered him his hand. Isaac wanted to scoff or say something sarcastic but he swallowed his pride and clasped Ethan’s palm instead. Ethan led them to the doorway and stopped, turning back to look at Isaac over his shoulder. Isaac nodded and tried not to panic as he followed Ethan down the stairs. Ethan stopped after a few steps and waved his light around, revealing that, while ominous, the basement wasn’t cramped.

Isaac sighed in relief but flushed with embarrassment. Not only had he overreacted, but he hadn’t even reacted to a real trigger. There was plenty of room now that he was through the dark opening.

A light shone on them.

“You came down,” Lydia remarked.

Isaac shone his own light in her direction. She was standing by a wall with switches and buttons including a two-prong lever like the ones in movies that people used to turn off and on major sources of power. Isaac wondered if the Argents had installed it for effect or if there was a mechanical or electrical reason for the design.

Isaac titled his light toward the sound of Scott’s heartbeat. He was sitting on the floor of a steel cage with thick, closely-spaced bars. Wires were attached to the top of the cage and led into the wall where Lydia was standing. A ring of mountain ash surrounded the cage.

“We barely made it,” Lydia said, nodding toward Scott. “He’s already in one of his trances.”

“But Iron Claw isn’t out?” Ethan asked as they finished their descent of the stairs. Lydia noticed their joined hands and raised a questioning eyebrow at Isaac. He shook his head.
“I think Iron Claw is in control,” Lydia answered. “He’s just not doing anything.”

“Why?” Ethan asked.

“He knows what Scott knows, so maybe he knows he can’t get out and doesn’t want to get shocked for no reason...or maybe he’s biding his time.”

Lydia left a little while later after confirming that the big obvious lever was indeed what they needed to flip if Iron Claw tried anything. She needed to get back to Malia, but would return after sunrise to let Scott out of the mountain ash.

There weren’t any chairs in the spartan basement, so Isaac and Ethan ended up sitting on the floor in the dark next to the wall below the lever.

“This would be a lot less boring if we were still hooking up,” Isaac remarked, resisting the urge to play with his phone. The battery had to last through the night.

Ethan’s hand settled on Isaac’s thigh in the dark. “I’m not going to keep saying no. I think you were right that what we were doing wasn’t working but” –Ethan laughed– “we can do it some more if you want.”

Isaac sighed. He knew it was unfair to make Ethan solely responsible for enforcing the no-sex ban, but Isaac didn’t know what he wanted or what was best for them. They weren’t supposed to be spending time with each other at all, but if they were going to be around one another regardless, then why not go for it?

“Isaac?” Ethan slid his hand from the flat of Isaac’s thigh to the inside, then went completely still, awaiting Isaac’s response.

Isaac was already hard in his pants and if Ethan’s hand moved just a few inches higher the answer was going to be a resounding YES!

“No, I guess not,” Isaac answered. He fought the urge to whimper in disappointment as Ethan immediately let go of him.

Whatever was happening between them was different now. Isaac liked Ethan. He even cared about him and respected him. He didn’t think that had anything to do with the moratorium on sex and was pretty sure it had to do with Ethan behaving at the biker bar, coming to his aid last night against Iron Claw, and generally being consistently reliable and good...but Isaac didn’t want to risk jinxing it either. He wanted to be okay with liking Ethan, and he didn’t want to risk doing anything that might destroy the progress they had made.

“I think we’re friends,” Isaac mumbled, because it actually did feel safe saying that, especially in the dark.

“I think so,” Ethan whispered as he leaned his head against Isaac’s shoulder.

Isaac froze. Ethan’s voice was happy, but he was trembling against Isaac, surrounded by a thick cloud of emotions too complicated and nuanced to even attempt to label. It was overwhelming to Isaac, so Ethan must have been absolutely drowning in it.

“What’s wrong?” Isaac asked, powering on his phone’s screen but not shining it directly at Ethan’s face in respect of his privacy and the distinctly salty scent misting the air.

Ethan shook his head and closed his eyes, barely clinging to his composure.
“Come here,” Isaac whispered, wrapping his arm around Ethan’s shoulders and pulling him against his chest.

Ethan gasped and clung to the front of Isaac’s shirt, enveloping Isaac in the emotional cloud.

“Are you okay?” Isaac asked, turning so Ethan could crawl closer as he rubbed his back.

“I’m an omega,” Ethan answered, voice thick and tight. “I’m always so alone. It feels really good connecting with another wolf.”

“Oh, I...Oh.” Isaac shifted his body and nudged Ethan forward until he could slide into place behind him, until Ethan was sitting between his legs, which he pressed against Ethan’s thighs as he wrapped his arms around Ethan’s torso and pulled him back until he was flush with Isaac’s chest.

Ethan turned, nuzzling his face against Isaac’s neck and snuffling.

“I’m here. You’re not alone,” Isaac whispered, burying his face in Ethan’s hair and inhaling his scent as deeply as he could, desperate to make Ethan feel wanted.

Isaac had to resist the logical next step, opening a place for Ethan in the corner of his chest that he reserved for pack. That wasn’t Isaac’s decision to make, and as he felt the cold sting of two dead packbonds in that corner, he wasn’t sure he could have borne to make it even if it were.

“I know how selfish this is,” Ethan said, tears wetting Isaac’s throat. “Given your history it’s so fucking messed up that I’m asking you to care about someone else who abused you.”

Isaac took a shuddering breath. That statement stung.

“You didn’t–”

“Isaac, I did.” Ethan snaked a hand between the wall and Isaac’s back, clutching him harder and shaking with the fear of rejection. “I beat you, I clawed you, I bit you, I broke your bones. I tortured you for information...” Ethan sobbed. “And just for fun. I terrorized you and traumatized you...and then I mind raped you. I used what I learned to lock you in that closet and re-traumatize you so that you might kill Allison. So that you might have that on your conscience. And yes, I fucking killed your packmates. I don’t deserve to breathe, much less this.” Ethan sobbed and nuzzled under Isaac’s chin.

“You didn’t ask me to care about you,” Isaac answered, silent tears trickling down his face and into Ethan’s hair. “It just happened.”

Ethan shook his head. “I should have stayed away from you. I never should have gone near you again.”

“I’m glad you did.” Isaac cupped the back of Ethan’s head, caressing it with his thumb. “I’m not angry anymore, just hurt.” Isaac sniffled and squeezed Ethan closer. “And I think that’s better. I-I think I can forgive you eventually, and I really want to.”

Ethan pulled back and sat up. There was just enough light for Isaac to see his shimmering chocolate eyes.

“I’m so sorry.”

Isaac pressed a kiss to Ethan’s forehead before easing his head back down against his chest.
“I know.”

Chapter End Notes

I’m sorry too, you guys. I tried so hard to get to the twins’ backstory (Stiles wakes up right after that), but I just couldn’t make it. Anyway, next chapter picks up right here and we’ll get to find out what life was like for Ethan and Aiden before Beacon Hills and the alpha pack.
Ethan pulled back and sat up. There was just enough light for Isaac to see his shimmering chocolate eyes.

“I’m so sorry.”

Isaac pressed a kiss to Ethan’s forehead before easing his head back down against his chest.

“I know.”

A lot had changed in two weeks. The first time Ethan had apologized to Isaac it had been infuriatingly worthless, hollow words from a murderous asshole who had tried to systematically destroy Isaac’s life and who had destroyed the lives of people Isaac cared about. As if an apology could undo all, or even any, of the terrible things Ethan had done. But now...

Now the apology wasn’t coming from a murderous asshole, and it hadn’t been mumbled in a cheap and easy way. It was coming from someone who had saved Isaac’s life twice, fought side-by-side with him, put up with a lot of his crap, been there for him through some painful, difficult times, taught him new things about being a werewolf, helped him explore his sexuality, and basically tried to systematically make Isaac’s life awesome.

Isaac’s life wasn’t awesome. Isaac’s life would probably never be awesome. But it was a damn lot better with Ethan in it.

Isaac held Ethan until he calmed down and quit shaking, until he raised his head from Isaac’s chest and turned around, sitting back-to-front with Isaac and almost tangibly pulling his armor back into place. The change was evident from the set of Ethan’s shoulders and the tension reforming in his neck. His scent shifted too, broadcasting just a hint of embarrassment along with a practiced neutrality.

A part of Isaac wanted to let it happen, wanted Ethan to regain his composure and emotional strength so that they could go back to the way things usually were. But he couldn’t get Ethan’s trembling words out of his head.

*I'm an omega. I'm always so alone.*

Isaac didn’t want Ethan to feel alone. He didn’t want Ethan to feel like he couldn’t open up. Ethan wanted a connection...and so did Isaac.

Isaac nuzzled his cheek against Ethan’s ear and leaned in close, sliding his hands down Ethan’s arms and following the path of warm skin and hard muscle until he found Ethan’s hands in his lap and covered the backs of them with his palms, slotting their fingers together. It worked. Ethan let out a long, contented sigh and relaxed into Isaac’s embrace, snuggling back against him as his scent
Isaac sighed too, mostly to hide how nervous he was and to try to buy time. He had just implicitly asked Ethan to keep his guard down and prolong the emotional intimacy between them. What was he supposed to say or do now that he had?

A memory sparked in Isaac’s head: Stiles holding him in his childhood bed while he opened up about his family. It had been painful but talking about it had helped Isaac gain a new sense of closure and perspective. The mutual trust forged by the experience felt like an integral part of his bond with Stiles now, the other half of the coin that had been minted when Stiles had likewise clung to Isaac and opened up about his own painful loss. Ethan already knew all about Isaac’s past but...

“Will you tell me about your family and your old pack?” Isaac asked, pressing their joined hands against Ethan’s stomach and squeezing his fingers.

Ethan froze, but before Isaac could tell him he didn’t have to talk about it, he nodded and tilted his head, baring his neck as if to symbolically demonstrate his trust. Isaac instinctively scented the exposed skin and mouthed along it with closed lips. It felt really good. Isaac had never been on this end of a throat baring before and it was a bigger rush than he expected being trusted in such a primal way by another werewolf.

“I need you to promise me something,” Ethan said in a quiet voice as he raised his head.

“Anything,” Isaac whispered into Ethan’s ear.

“This is my story to tell, but it’s also Aiden’s. Please don’t ever use it against him or hurt him with it.”

Isaac frowned at the mention of Aiden. He almost didn’t want to know anything private about Aiden, especially if he couldn’t use it against him, but he understood Ethan’s need to protect him.

“I won’t. I promise.”

“Okay.” Ethan cleared his throat and took a breath. “I guess the first thing you need to understand is that before things got bad – they were really good. We had a very happy childhood. We grew up in a small city in Arizona called Mayfield...with our sister.”

“You have a sister?” Isaac cringed as soon as the question was out of his mouth.

“Her name was Christy,” Ethan answered, patting Isaac’s hand and nuzzling back against him as if to let him off the hook for his gaffe. “She was three years older than us. Our mom was the alpha of our old pack. She ran a development and construction company that our grandpa had started back when he was the alpha. Almost all the pack worked at the company. It was sort of like a big family business. Our dad didn’t work there though. He had an accounting firm.”

“So you were rich?” Isaac asked.

Ethan shrugged and nodded. “Yeah, we were rich and powerful, but that ended up being our downfall since it made us targets for greed and resentment.”

Isaac hooked his chin over Ethan’s shoulder and shifted his legs so that they were crossed at the ankles and tangled around Ethan’s.

“We were one of the richest families in town, but it wasn’t like the stereotypes you see on TV or in books or something. Our parents weren’t workaholics, and they certainly weren’t cold or unloving.
They always had plenty of time for us, and they taught us to be good people. I know we ended up being pretty fucked up, but believe me, my parents would be ashamed of the person I became."

“I bet they’d be proud of the person you’re becoming now,” Isaac answered. Ethan let out a shaking breath that was just shy of a sob. “Maybe.”

Isaac rubbed Ethan’s chest until he was ready to continue.

“Anyway, it’s not like they had a lot of enemies. They were really into charity work and activism. My mom was a great alpha. She really cared about her pack and made sure everyone was taken care of. They were responsible business owners too. They didn’t do shady deals or take advantage of people. I know I’m seeing things through a certain lens, but I really looked up to them, and I remember them being really popular with everyone else too.”

“They sound like really good people,” Isaac answered.

Ethan nodded. “Really good parents too. I don’t remember ever even being in the closet around my family. It was always a safe space, so I guess I just said stuff when I was little and it was well received, but I do remember my parents working with LGBT causes and just sort of explicitly letting me know it was okay without making a huge deal about it.”

“I think my parents woulda been cool with me being bi too, even my dad. He was never really homophobic even when...”

“Yeah, I think you’re right,” Ethan answered. Isaac felt him turn his head back, and the edges of his eyes glowed blue, providing just enough light to see his face. “Your parents really loved you, Isaac.”

Isaac let his own eyes flicker gold so Ethan could see his face too. “If my dad had really loved me though...I mean...”

“He did,” Ethan whispered, letting go of Isaac’s hand and wrapping his arm around Isaac’s neck. “There’s no excuse for what he did – just like there’s no excuse for what I did – but he was mentally ill. He was severely depressed and suffering from a major addiction problem. You didn’t deserve any of that, and he didn’t deserve someone as good as you in his life.” Ethan’s face was earnest, and somehow the blue in his eyes seemed warm for once instead of icy. “But sometimes people do terrible things they can’t take back and...and then it starts to feel easier to just keep doing them instead of trying to fix it.”

Isaac’s lip was trembling and his hands were clinched in fists against Ethan’s thighs. He really didn’t want to say what he was about to say because it was obvious they weren’t just talking about Isaac’s dad, but he couldn’t help it.

“That’s pathetic. That’s fucking weak and pathetic. It’s not okay to take your shit out on other people, especially people you care about.”

“You’re right.” Ethan nodded and the light flickered out of his eyes as he let go of Isaac and turned around.

Isaac sighed and closed his eyes as his hand found Ethan’s shoulder in the dark and he stroked it with his thumb. “So did you and Aiden dress the same and have bunk beds and freak people out with your werewolf twin telepathy.”

Ethan laughed, harder than the comment seemed to call for and Isaac felt the tension slipping out of their bodies again, their muscles relaxing against each other. Being with Ethan was getting easier.
The bad moments weren’t as bad or as hard to overcome.

“We did all that stuff actually. We shared a room and slept in bunk beds until we were eleven, just because we wanted to, even though our house was big and there were extra rooms. The freaking people out thing though, that was all on me. Aiden was a sweet kid. I was the rascal.”

“Really?” Isaac asked, managing to keep most of the incredulity out of his tone.

“Yeah,” Ethan answered, a chuckle in his voice, “he was a really good kid. He was nice to everyone...He was actually kind of a little suck up if I’m being honest.” Ethan laughed. “But he just wanted everyone to be happy like him. He was really happy back then. He always had a smile on his face.”

“So what happened? Not with Aiden, just in general?”

“Remember how I said my grandpa used to be the alpha?”

“Yeah.”

“Well when my mom was a kid our pack was in this, war I guess you could say, with the neighboring pack. I don’t know all the details, but supposedly they were acting like a crime gang and going around robbing and attacking people.”

“You don’t think they really were?”

Ethan shrugged. “I’m sure they were to some extent, but...I don’t really remember my grandpa too well, just as a nice old man who used to always give me and Aiden candy and entertain us with advanced werewolf tricks we were too young to learn. But Christy was older and she remembered him better. She said he basically once told her he destroyed the old rival pack to make sure hunters didn’t come to town and to take over their territory.”

“Wow, but I mean, if he was protecting his pack from hunters and the other pack was hurting innocent people...”

“Yeah, I guess he did what he had to do. Anyway, my grandpa didn’t kill everyone in the rival pack. He spared the children.” Ethan’s voice hardened. “He even adopted one himself and had other pack members adopt the others.”

“That was the right thing to do though, wasn’t it?”

“No, it wasn’t.” Ethan’s tone was filled with hate and rage bubbled out of his pores, making him physically quake. “My mother’s adopted brother was the one who betrayed us. His name was Keith, and I don’t think I’ve ever enjoyed anything in my life as much as I enjoyed ripping him limb from limb, cracking his ribs open, and tearing his still beating heart out of his chest. I hated to wash his blood off my hands when it was over.”

Isaac gasped and a chill ran up his spine. He had to struggle not to let go of Ethan. He knew Ethan wouldn’t hurt him, not anymore, but if there was any doubt that Ethan was still a dangerous, violent person who was capable of almost anything, that statement had just removed it.

“It happened when we were thirteen.”

“You killed someone when you were thirteen?!”

“No, he ruined our lives when we were thirteen. We didn’t kill him until three years later when we
met Deucalion.” Ethan took a long breath, his body still throbbing with rage. “I know I’m supposed to hate Deucalion for what he did to us, what he turned us into, and I do. But I’ll always be grateful to him for giving us the power to murder our pack. The things we did afterwards? Yeah, that was terrible and I’m sorry about it, not just the stuff with your pack, but everything. Our pack though? Our first kills? Oh, I don’t regret those. I’ll never regret those.”

“What happened when you were thirteen, Ethan?”

“Things came to a head with Uncle Keith.” Ethan laced the name with sarcasm. “Grandpa treated him like a real son, that’s what makes it all so much worse. It’s not like he was the unwanted stepson. Mom was the CEO of the company and automatically became alpha of the pack when grandpa died, but Keith was the VP and a senior pack member. He was first beta.”

“First beta? What’s that?”

“The alpha’s second in command. It’s not just a title. They’re actually stronger and have more power than a regular beta. They’re tapped directly into the alpha’s power and can use some of it. There’s a whole ritual for doing it. If I can remember enough of it, I’ll show Scott so he can make you first beta.”

“Oh, uh, y-you think he’d want to?”

“Yeah, Isaac, I’m pretty sure he’d want to.”

Ethan’s fingers tailed along Isaac’s bicep and he snuggled back against Isaac’s chest. Isaac could tell he wasn’t just being affectionate. He was having trouble continuing the story.

“I don’t need any more details,” Isaac said softly. “I get it. Your uncle betrayed you, and he and your old pack were shitty to you and Aiden until Deucalion came along. That’s enough.”

Ethan shook his head. “I literally know everything about you. You have a right to know the details. In fact...look, I can’t unknow what I know about you, but I promise to always tell you anything about my life up until we came to Beacon Hills. It’s only fair. Anything you wanna know, just ask.”

Isaac smiled and nosed at the side of Ethan’s head behind his ear, enjoying their connection and reveling in the trust Ethan was showing him.

Ethan took a breath and continued. “Anyway, Keith kept trying to undermine my mom. He spread dissension in the pack and at the company, especially with the other wolves who had been children of the rival pack. He hated my dad. Dad was everything he wasn’t: kind, loyal, honest. Dad woulda done anything to protect his family and pack; Keith did everything he could to destroy it...and he succeeded.”

“Hey, at least you killed him,” Isaac said with a smirk as he squeezed Ethan’s stomach.

“I did.” Ethan laughed. “Anyway, Mom found out that he was embezzling from the company, and while she was investigating that, she also uncovered a plot to kill her and take over the pack.”

“Oh god.”

“Yeah, so she fired him, stripped him of his first beta status, and kicked him and his allies out of the pack.” Ethan sniffled and took a breath. “If only she had killed them instead...but that wasn’t who she was. That son-of-a-bitch only got to do what he did because Mom and Grandpa were too kind.”

“I’m sure Scott wouldn’t have killed him either.”
Ethan sighed and some of the anger in his scent dissipated. He picked up his phone from the ground next to them and shone his light toward Scott’s tranced out body in the cage.

“You’re right.” More of Ethan’s anger cooled as he glanced at Scott then off into the distance. “You’re right. Alphas like Scott and my mom are the ones who end blood feuds and make things better for their packs. She did the right thing. It should have worked out. It just didn’t.” Ethan paused and motioned toward Scott again. “He’s the other reason by the way.”

“What do you mean?”

“Remember a few days ago when you asked me why I changed, and I said there were several reasons and–”

“And I freaked out when you said I was one of them,” Isaac finished, regretting his behavior. “I’m sorry about that.”

“Don’t be. I know something like that’s hard to hear coming from me. I shouldn’t have said it, at least not then. It was too soon.” Ethan laughed without humor. “Believe me, I’ve relieved that moment over and over and beaten myself up about it. I rushed you and ruined everything.”

“No, I get it. You needed a connection. You’re an omega. That...that must hurt.”

“Constantly,” Ethan whispered around a gasping breath.

“Well you have a connection now, Ethan. I can’t offer you a packbond, but you can have everything up to that...I want you to have everything up to that.”

Ethan turned and wrapped his arms around Isaac, nuzzling under his neck and squeezing him tight. “Thank you.”

They were silent for a few minutes, inhaling each other’s scents and syncing up their heartbeats as Isaac stroked Ethan’s hair and Ethan clung to Isaac like he was the only thing keeping Ethan from falling apart. Eventually Ethan pulled back and flared blue eyes at Isaac. Isaac responded in kind with warm gold ones. They stared at each other for a few moments. Isaac found it easier to resist looking away than he expected. Ethan was beautiful, eyes and all.

Ethan tilted Isaac’s chin up and Isaac let him. He placed a kiss on Isaac’s pulse point, then turned around and went back to reclining between Isaac’s legs.

“Anyway, Scott reminds me of my mother.”

They both cracked up, because that was sort of a silly thing to say, but Ethan continued.

“I really wanna be good enough to be in his pack some day.”

“You—you’re already...We just–”

“Don’t say anything, Isaac,” Ethan whispered.

Isaac nodded and wound his arms around Ethan’s torso again.

“So our parents were on high alert the week after Uncle Keith was kicked out of the pack. It’s not like they were being reckless. They kept us home from school and our nanny sealed the house in mountain ash so Keith and the others couldn’t get in.”

“You had a nanny?”
“Yeah, her name was Gretchen. She was a nanny, maid, and part of the family all rolled into one. We loved her.” A low growl formed in Ethan’s throat. “She was murdered too.”

Isaac frowned. He really didn’t want to hear anything else about how Ethan’s family had been killed, but maybe it would help Ethan to talk about it.

“I remember it all so clearly. Aiden and I were actually pretty happy that week. We weren’t scared. We really thought everything was going to be fine. Our parents were so strong, you know? And we had never been comfortable around Uncle Keith anyway, so we were kinda glad he was going to be out of our lives. I mean, we were upset about what was happening to our pack, and the other pack members leaving it, but that was just something Mom was going to handle that we didn’t need to worry about. Plus it was fun staying home from school without it being a holiday.

“One afternoon, Aiden and I were playing *Mario Kart* in the entertainment room and eating pizza rolls...and the doorbell rang. I heard Christy answering it. It was Rachel, our emissary. I-I remember how happy Christy sounded to see her. I think Christy was bored, or worried. So she didn’t hesitate to let Rachel in. I mean why would she, she was pack? We heard the alarm being disabled, and then the door opened and...”

Isaac tightened his grip on Ethan and pressed the sides of their heads together.

“Rachel wasn’t alone. Keith and his gang were with her. Christy definitely would have checked for heartbeats and scents before she opened the door, but they must have been masking them, waiting for Rachel to break the mountain ash barrier. Christy screamed for us to hide and suddenly Gretchen was in our doorway, lining it with mountain ash and covering the barrier with a rug so it would be inconspicuous. She give us this look and–” Ethan sobbed and hung his head.

“Sshh, I gotcha,” Isaac whispered, squeezing Ethan’s legs with his thighs and stroking Ethan’s sternum with his thumb.

“That was the last time we saw her alive. We couldn’t even say anything to her because...So Aiden and I got up and I turned off the TV and we hid behind the couch. We masked our scents and hid our heartbeats the way we had been taught. And...and we held hands and tried not to panic or cry while we listened to Christy snarling and fighting and Gretchen on the phone with Dad.” Ethan coughed and wiped his eyes. “How does that even happen? One minute we were just sitting there having a nice afternoon and then...and then we heard the sounds of one of Keith’s thugs tearing Gretchen’s throat out and Dad’s voice shouting from the other end of the line.”

“Oh Ethan.”

“I’m pretty sure Gretchen tried to call Mom first, but it was too late. Mom and our good packmates had already been poisoned with wolfsbane at the office. In addition to Rachel, Keith had a few other wolves on his side that we didn’t know about. They coordinated their attacks. Most of our packmates were dead before Rachel even knocked on the door.”

“Oh god, so you never saw your mom again?”

Ethan sniffled and turned. He lay his head on Isaac’s chest and sighed. “I wish I hadn’t but I did...one more time. She and a few other packmates survived the wolfsbane attack and killed Keith’s guys at work, but they were...they were really weak after all that.

“It didn’t take Keith and the others long to find Aiden and me. We couldn’t hide our scents for that long, and besides, we still had that fucking plate of pizza rolls on the table. The mountain ash was useless against Rachel. We tried to fight, but they were all older and stronger, and there were like
eight of them, plus Rachel.” Ethan sighed and shook his head against Isaac’s chest. “After they beat us up, they took us downstairs and chained us up in chairs next to Christy. She looked terrible, exactly like someone who had been mauled by a pack of wolves. Then they dragged Aiden into the hallway in front of the door. I was so terrified. I just knew they were going to kill him as soon as they took him out of the room.”

Isaac took a shuddering breath, grateful for once that Aiden was alive and well. At least Ethan hadn’t lost him too.

“They wanted Dad to see him as soon as he got to the house. Because of course caution flew out the window when he saw Aiden beaten and chained to a chair. Keith was waiting out of sight. As soon as Dad ran to Aiden, Keith shot him in the back with wolfsbane bullets. He didn’t even have the fucking balls to fight Dad like a werewolf. He just shot him like a little bitch.”

Ethan trembled, and Isaac held him as tight as he could.

“They dragged Dad and Aiden back into the room with me and Christy, she was conscious by then. And...and Keith shot Dad in the shoulder and leg, just for fun. He was fucking laughing and watching our reactions. We were just kids, his own fucking niece and nephews, and he was getting off on killing our dad in front of us.”

“Oh my god, Ethan. I-I hate him.” Isaac wasn’t sure if Ethan was the one quaking with rage or if he was.

“They beat him to death after that. Christy told us to close our eyes but we couldn’t. I- we- uhm...” Ethan was crying as he finished the next part of his story. “I didn’t want Dad to feel alone in his last moments. I wanted him to know I was with him. And...Aiden said later he...he just wanted to see Dad as much as he could before it was too late.”

Isaac held Ethan and whispered reassuring words into his ear for the next several minutes until he regained his composure enough to speak.

“I have to tell you about Mom and Christy.”

“No, Ethan, you don’t.” Isaac cast his phone light toward Ethan and cringed when he saw how wrecked he looked. “I don’t wanna make you relive–”

“I wanna talk about it,’ Ethan said, face set with determination. “I need to get this out.”

Isaac nodded and brushed the tears away from Ethan’s eyes with the pads of thumbs before turning the light back off, giving Ethan the relative privacy of darkness to finish his story.

“Mom and the remaining pack broke into the house from multiple windows and doors all at once to divide them up. It was a good move but...they were all already dying from the wolfsbane. They killed a couple of Keith’s wolves and injured Rachel, but it wasn’t much of a fight. Keith was still too much of a coward to fight Mom, even in her weakened condition. He shot her in the chest as soon as she burst into the room. It was...god her blood was all over the wall and...and she was making this rasping sound while she looked up at us. She was trying to speak but...but Keith tore her heart out and...and...”

Isaac held his hand, jaw clinched as Ethan finished in a whisper that would have been inaudible without preternatural hearing.

“He threw Mom’s heart in Christy’s face.”
Isaac was glad the twins had killed that monster and the rest of his no good pack. He had been wrong before. It wasn’t frightening that Ethan didn’t regret killing them and admitted to enjoying it. It was justice. After another break Ethan continued.

“So by this point we were all just jumping around and screaming and crying and doing anything we could to try to get loose. And Keith was the alpha by that point. It was the first time I had ever been afraid of red eyes. But he told us he wasn’t going to kill us. He needed us alive. See, we were going to inherit everything, both companies and all the money, but if we died too, then everything would have gone to charity and the businesses would been sold off and the profits given away. But our parents hadn’t updated their wills and legal documents yet, so Keith was still listed as our guardian in the event anything happened to Mom and Dad. That meant he got us, and by extension control of all our money.”

“Shit, so he did all that for money?”

“And power. He wanted to be alpha. Anyway, like I said, Mom’s attack left some of them wounded and dying, so Keith left the room to handle that...and that’s when Christy got free.”

Isaac tensed. He already knew this story didn’t end with Christy and the twins escaping to safety.

“Keith had left the gun in the room.”

Isaac’s blood ran cold as he realized the emotion had drained out of Ethan’s voice.

“She didn’t want us to be Keith’s slaves, and I guess after everything we’d just witnessed she thought...Well she told us she loved us. Then she raised the gun and pointed it right at my head.”

Ethan took a long breath before continuing.

“I didn’t even understand what was happening. I was so confused, and traumatized. But then Aiden screamed and he slammed his chair into mine, knocking us both over. And the gun went off. And then Aiden’s blood was running in my eyes and...And then the gun went off again and more blood splattered everywhere...And Christy hit the floor.”

Isaac was speechless and he felt as numb as Ethan seemed to be.

“Keith ran back in the room. And, well they dug the bullet out of Aiden.”

“But they couldn’t save Christy?” Isaac asked in a whisper.

“Her head was gone, so...no.”

There wasn’t anything Isaac could say after a story like that. All he could do was hold Ethan until morning and do his best to ease the ache tangled around Ethan’s body. Isaac wished to god it was physical so he could leach it away, but he had to settle for touching Ethan and making sure he knew he wasn’t alone.

When they realized it was after sunrise, they went upstairs to wait for Lydia in a room with windows and light. Scott would be back to normal soon and then they could all meet back up at the school and find out how things had gone with Malia, and with Aiden and Liam. However, as soon as Isaac was out of the concrete basement and his phone had service again, it started exploding with notifications. He had numerous missed calls and texts, but everything fell away as he saw Stiles’ name in a new group message to him and Scott.

Stiles: I see how it is. I wake up from a friggin coma and my two best friends can’t even be bothered
Yay, Stiles is awake! I’m so excited because this begins a new Stisaac arc that I think you guys will really like and that I’m so looking forward to telling! It’ll also be so much lighter and happier than the last handful of chapters. I don’t know about you all, but I’m ready for some fluff and smut!

I’m eager to see what you guys thought of Ethan’s backstory, so please let me know if you get the chance...I actually dialed it back a bit. Originally all of this was going to happen, plus even more awful things that I decided I didn’t want to put Ethan and Aiden through. I also debated the mechanics a bit. I considered having the majority of this chapter told as a first person narrative by Ethan, instead of as dialogue. I think it would have made his backstory more emotionally charged and wrenching, but at a sacrifice to a lot of the Ethisaac relationship development that we got as Isaac reacted and comforted Ethan. Plus...well it was really dark, so I think I liked the slightly greater distance we had with Ethan telling Isaac about it, instead of us living it directly through his eyes. What do you think?

Next chapter may be slightly delayed as I finish up my Corey/Liam Easter story. It’s pure fluff, humor, and romance. If you guys can get behind the pairing, I’d appreciate it if you check it out when it goes live, most likely on Friday 4/14. It’ll be called, “The Bunny and the Wolf.” I’m also planning/hoping to update my Isaac & Jackson family fic, “A Street Over and a World Away.”
Stiles: I see how it is. I wake up from a friggin coma and my two best friends can’t even be bothered to answer their phones.

“Everything okay?” Ethan asked as they stood in the corridor leaning next to one of the few small windows along the wall. A ray of early morning sun streamed in from over the horizon, lighting the space between them in golden yellow tones.

Isaac grinned and sunlight glinted off his phone as he held it up to show Ethan the text from Stiles “Look!”

A bright smile formed on Ethan’s face as he read the message, and the light reached all the way to his eyes, melting cool chocolate into warm caramel.

“That’s great!” Ethan meant it. He was happy that Isaac's packmate was safe, and that felt… plausible.

Isaac tried to call Stiles, but he didn’t pick up. He left a voicemail. “You’re awake?! Are you okay? We’ll be there soon. Call me back.”

He hung up and dialed Lydia. She answered on the second ring.

“Isaac? Did you get my voicemail? Stiles is—”

“I know. He texted me! I tried to call him but he didn’t—”

“I talked to him in the middle night when he woke up. His wrists and arms are completely healed. He’s—”

“A werewolf?!”

Please god let him be a werewolf.

“Not a werewolf.” Her voice was tinged with worry yet hopeful. “But he sounded normal. I talked to his dad too and he says he seems fine.”

“But if he didn’t heal by turning, then it had to have been...”

“I know. But that doesn’t mean it’s taken over completely.”

Isaac nodded and breathed into the phone, trying to convince himself she was right. On the periphery of his awareness he realized Ethan was rubbing his back – and that was okay because comforting each other was something they did now. Isaac wrapped his arm around Ethan’s side and leaned in.

“How’s Scott? I’m almost to the compound.”

“Iron Claw never even made an appearance, but Scott was still tranced out when we came upstairs.” Isaac gasped as a flurry of excitement and urgency gripped him. Scott didn’t know about Stiles yet. “I need to go tell him. I’ll see you soon.”
Isaac hung up and dashed back up the corridor while Ethan shouted that he would go wait for Lydia out front.

Isaac turned on his phone’s flashlight as he left the warm, yellow tones of the corridor and entered the ominous black of the interrogation room. He cringed as the artificial light reflected off the jagged metal edges of the torture implements lining the wall. Images of Gerard Argent with victims chained to the nearby racks flashed through Isaac’s imagination as he hurried to the basement staircase in the corner of the room.

He shone his light toward Scott’s cage as he descended the rickety stairs at a reckless trot. “Scott? Scott, are you awake yet?”

Isaac’s heart leapt into his throat as he simultaneously smelled and saw the carnage. Scott was sitting on the floor of his cage, impaled on his hands and bleeding profusely onto the concrete.

_Oh god, no._

Isaac rushed toward the cage, mentally pleading with his alpha to be okay.

A warm wave of relief washed through him as Scott raised his chin and looked at him, but it turned into an ice-cold chill as hateful, glowing red eyes gazed up at him.

Iron Claw let out a slow, deep laugh and withdrew one of his hands from Scott’s gut. He raised the blood-soaked appendage into the air, growled low and savage, and flicked his wrist with enough force to spatter droplets of Scott’s blood across Isaac’s face.

Isaac was inwardly terrified and disgusted, but he refused to give Iron Claw the satisfaction of an outward reaction. Instead, he growled back and lunged for the lever on the wall, flipping it and taking dark pleasure in the way Iron Claw screamed. Isaac’s vengeful glee was short-lived as the timbre of the scream changed and the voice became distinctly Scott’s. Isaac shut off the power and shone the light back toward Scott, not leaving his post at the lever just in case Iron Claw was trying to trick him.

“I-saac?”

Blood gurgled from Scott’s lips and he tried to rise to his knees only to fall sideways and bang his shoulder against the steel bars of the cage.

This time Isaac did run to Scott, or as close as he could get before he was being jolted backward by the barrier of mountain ash blocking Scott’s enclosure.

“And?” Isaac barely got the name out as his chest constricted. He couldn’t breathe and it felt like boiling ice water was pumping through his body. Scott was seriously injured and there was nothing he could do to help him.

“What happened?!” Ethan ran down the stairs and to the perimeter of the mountain ash.

“I’m okay,” Scott whispered, clutching his stomach and sitting back against the bars. “I’m healing.”

That wasn’t good enough. There was too much blood. Scott needed him _now._

“ENAAAH!”

Isaac pounded his palm against the supernatural barrier, ignoring the searing energy that engulfed his hand. He tried to strike again but never connected as Ethan caught the back of his wrist and pulled
him away.

“We need to get him out!” Isaac shouted in Ethan’s face, squirming and struggling to yank himself free.

“Lydia will be here soon.” Ethan’s voice was calm and dispassionate as he hauled Isaac against his chest and trapped him there with arms that felt as unyielding as the steel bars of Scott’s cage.

Isaac hated how strong Ethan was. He growled and blazed hot eyes at him as he sunk his claws into Ethan’s ribs, still frantic to get loose and attack the barrier keeping him from his injured alpha.

Isaac went still the moment he smelled Ethan’s blood. An instant later his fingers were blunt against the puncture wounds, and he was leaching the pain away, his head hung in shame.

“Just relax,” Ethan whispered near Isaac’s ear. His grip was more of a hug now, one hand rubbing over the center of Isaac’s back. “Everything’s fine. Scott’s going to be okay.”

“I am, Isaac,” Scott said, voice steady. It was a promise, and it dulled the razor’s edge of panic scraping at Isaac’s chest.

“Sorry,” Isaac muttered, pulling back from Ethan but allowing him to keep one arm around his shoulders.

“Tell Scott the good news.”

Isaac felt a wave of self consciousness but decided obliging Ethan was the least he could. He turned to Scott, relieved that the blood had quit visibly gushing over his fingers as he pressed his hands against his stomach wound. Scott regarded him with an expectant tilt of his head.

“Me and Ethan are friends now,” Isaac announced with one arm wrapped around Ethan’s torso.

Scott smiled. “Good, I’m glad to hear that.”

Ethan chuckled and gave Isaac a squeeze before letting go. “I meant the other good news, but thanks.”

“Oh!” Isaac’s cheeks burned as he turned back to Scott and grinned at him. “Stiles woke up!”

“What?” Scott climbed to his feet and went to the front of his cage. “When? How is he? Did you talk to him?”

Isaac filled Scott in on the little bit that he knew, and by the time he was done Lydia had arrived to free Scott from the mountain ash.

As soon as Scott was out of his cage, Lydia and Isaac hugged him and helped support his weight as the group trudged out of the basement. Scott insisted that he was fine, but Isaac needed confirmation for himself, so he grazed cautious fingertips over Scott’s abdomen. Sure enough Scott was no longer bleeding, but there was still pain to leach from the sore, tender flesh.

“Do you need help?” Ethan asked, and though his voice had the characteristic neutrality that Ethan often used, Isaac was sure he heard a trace of vulnerability there.

“No, I–”

“Yes, thank you,” Isaac said, shooting Scott a look he hoped would be understood. It must have been because no one protested as Ethan replaced Lydia under Scott’s other arm.
As they exited the compound, they explained to Lydia what had just happened with Iron Claw, and on the way back to school, Lydia reassured them that Stiles had seemed okay when she talked to him. Malia had also gotten through the night without incident and had left with Aiden as soon as he returned with Liam.

“What about Liam?” Isaac asked.

Lydia glanced at him in the rear view mirror and gave him a quick smile. Scott was sitting up front with her while Isaac and Ethan rode in the back.

“He was...wild when I saw him. But not out of control, just high spirited. He’s waiting for us at the school.”

Ethan checked the time on his phone. “We better hurry so we can get there and leave again before people start showing up for the day.”

Isaac hummed in agreement. Blood dotted his shirt and more was smudged across his face. Thus, by full moon standards he was in good shape, but he was also the least disheveled of the three werewolves. Tracks of blood ran down Ethan’s sides from the holes in his shirt where Isaac had clawed him, and the front of Scott’s shirt was a tattered, blood-soaked mess with more blood staining his arms, pants, and shoes.

They turned into the parking lot and Lydia parked next to Scott’s motorcycle. Ethan’s was next to it. As they got out of the car, Liam sprinted off the lacrosse field and ran up to them.

“What happened?” He sniffed the air, eyes wide as he stared at Scott.

“Iron Claw,” Scott answered, the set of his face indicating he didn’t want to go into details.

“Are you” –Liam licked his lips and a burst of distress and nervous embarrassment filled the air– “okay?”

“I’m fine.” Scott clapped a hand on Liam’s shoulder and Liam dropped his eyes but thrummed with satisfaction at the gesture. Scott’s arm flexed as he squeezed Liam’s shoulder. “How was your first full moon?”

Liam’s head snapped up and his face lit with excitement. “It was awesome! You won’t believe all the things I can do now!” Liam snickered. “Well, I guess you will.” His gaze landed on Ethan. “Your brother is such a badass! He showed me all this really cool stuff, and he says there’s a lot more he’s gonna teach me.”

“Scott and I will teach you those things,” Isaac replied.

“You’re mad!” Liam gave a sharp nod, looking very pleased with himself. “I can tell! Aiden taught me how– Wait, why are you mad? Did I do something wrong?”

Scott spoke first, sparing Isaac from answering. “Liam, we need to leave before people get here.”

“Okay!” Liam’s excited grin was back in full force, and Isaac realized that despite the spectrum of stale emotions clinging to the new beta’s clothes, Liam’s present scent was the happiest and most content Isaac had ever smelled on him. “Where are we going?”

“Um.” Scott exchanged glances with Isaac and Lydia.

“Remember I told you that Stiles woke up?” Lydia asked. “We need to go see him.”
“Oh good! I wanna get to know him as a packmate.”

Lydia frowned. She and Scott smelled as guilty as Isaac felt. None of them wanted Liam there for the reunion.

Liam sniffed the air again and tilted his head. “I don’t know this one.”

*Of course you don’t. Aiden has no idea what guilt is like.*

“Liam, do you like waffles?” Ethan stepped forward and threw a casual arm around the younger boy’s shoulders.

Liam’s eyes flashed amber and he half-hummed, half-whimpered. “I love waffles!”

“Try not to love ‘em that hard, at least not in public.” Ethan smirked and patted Liam’s shoulder. “Come on, Tony’s Diner has the best waffles in town, my treat.”

“But what about Stiles?”

“Hey, have you ever ridden a motorcycle?” Ethan asked, guiding Liam to his shiny new bike.

“No!” Liam bounced on the balls of his feet. “But Aiden says if I learn scent tracking he’ll gimme a ride on his.”

“Well I’m the fun twin, and I say you don’t have to wait.” Ethan winked and handed Liam his helmet.

“This is so lit!” Liam glanced back at the others as he climbed onto the seat behind Ethan. “Tell Stiles I said hey.”

A few moments later the engine revved to life, and Liam whooped and waved an arm in the air as they peeled out of the parking lot.

Scott chuckled and shook his head as he pulled his keys out of his pocket. “You coming?” he asked Isaac.

“Uhh.” Isaac eyed Scott’s bloody stomach through the gapping hole in his shirt. It was right where Isaac would need to hang on. It wasn’t like he had never gotten Scott’s blood on his hands before – it wouldn’t even be the first time that day – but it would still be gross and a little weird.

“Why don’t you ride with me,” Lydia suggested, an amused smile on her lips.

Scott glanced down at himself and shrugged. “See you guys at Stiles’ house.”

Isaac cleared his throat as they pulled onto the road. “Can I ask you a weird hypothetical question?”

“If you don’t mind a weird hypothetical answer.” Lydia gave him a playful smile.

She was clearly tired from staying up all night but in a good mood due to Stiles’ recovery. Isaac hated to risk souring the atmosphere in the car, but Lydia was the only person he could talk to about this.

“Would you ever be okay with Aiden joining the pack?”

Lydia’s face registered surprise, then understanding. “So you’re trying to figure out if you’d be okay with Ethan joining the pack?”
“How did you know?”

She rolled her eyes. “Would I ever be okay with Aiden joining? I don’t know. Maybe, if he becomes
the person I thought he was and still think he can be. But right now or in the near future? No,
definitely not.”

“Okay.” Isaac nodded, intending to drop the subject.

Lydia laughed. “But Ethan isn’t Aiden and you’re not me. Our situations are different. So would you
be okay with Ethan joining the pack?”

“It doesn’t matter. You get one, you get the other. And you’re not okay with Aiden.” Isaac huffed out
a laugh. “And I’m certainly not either. So it’s a moot point.”

“But hypothetically, if it were just Ethan?”

Isaac frowned and shook his head. “I don’t think I would be, and that’s pretty fucked up because I
really care about him.”

“But you don’t trust him.”

“No, I do trust him, and I like him, and I want him to be happy. It’s just…what he did to me still
hurts, and I’m not trying to punish him, but I’m also not ready to let it go.”

Lydia smiled at him, genuinely pleased — and what the actual fuck? That wasn’t good news.

“What?”

“You’re just doing really well with your emotions, especially in such a complicated situation.” She
leaned in and whispered conspiratorially as they stopped at an intersection. “I think you’re going to
end up well-adjusted some day.”

Isaac laughed. “I think Aiden stands a better chance of becoming a decent human being first.”

“Maybe.” She shrugged and gave a tight smile. “I’m not ruling that out either.”

Isaac’s chest tightened as they pulled onto Stiles’ street. As desperate as he was to see Stiles, he was
suddenly terrified, and despite what Lydia had just said about him handling his emotions well, he had
absolutely no idea why he felt this way or how to calm down.

“Are you going to tell him?” Lydia asked as they slowed and pulled into Stiles’ driveway.

“Tell who what?”

Isaac wanted to maintain his veneer of ignorance, but the look she gave him made him crack.

“I can’t tell him!” Isaac swallowed. “I still don’t know how I feel about Ethan.”

“But do you know how you feel about Stiles?”

“Of course.”

“Well then.” She arched a perfectly shaped eyebrow at him.

“He just woke up from a coma. Don’t you think laying all this on him would be really
overwhelming?”
Her face softened and she nodded. “Give it a couple of days, but don’t wait too long.”
Isaac sighed and got out of the car, refusing to agree or disagree with her. He needed time to think.
Scott’s motorcycle was parked in front of the house, and the sheriff opened the front door before they reached it. Relief and happiness clouded the air around him as he ushered Isaac and Lydia into the house, telling them Scott and Stiles were in Stiles’ room.
They were sitting on Stiles’ bed embracing when Isaac and Lydia walked in. Isaac was going to give them a minute, but as soon as he and Lydia entered the room a wide smile broke across Stiles’ face. He pulled away from Scott, spreading his arms for them.
Lydia was in front of Isaac and reached Stiles first, throwing her arms around him and leaning her head against his chest. Isaac meant to wait his turn, but the next thing he knew he had crowded in behind her and was hugging them both. Scott wasn’t done either and joined the pile. Everyone was laughing and talking at once and none of it even made sense, but no one cared.
Eventually the pack separated and Scott excused himself to go clean up while Isaac and Lydia sat with Stiles on the bed.
“This is amazing,” Lydia said as she brushed her fingers over Stiles’ wrist. She flipped his hand over and grazed her fingertips over Stiles’ palm.
“It’s certainly gotten me through a lotta long nights,” Stiles remarked, the corner of his mouth quirked into a lopsided smile.
She shot him an imperious glare and dropped his hand to the bed with a dramatic flourish, but the warm, tingly affection radiating from her pores belied the action, and Isaac was sure even without werewolf senses Stiles wasn’t fooled.
Isaac wrapped his fingers around Stiles’ bicep, taking just a moment to enjoy the tight, compact cords of muscle as he gently tugged Stiles toward him and sniffed his shoulder where he had been bitten. There was no trace of the wound or any residual spark of alpha power.
“This is amazing too,” Isaac said, nose hovering a few inches from Stiles’ thinly covered skin – and okay, maybe Isaac’s comment was partially in reference to the way Stiles’ scent flooded his nostrils and filled a void in his chest that had been present for the last three-and-a-half days that Stiles had been unconscious.
“If you guys like my hand and shoulder so much, wait till you get a load of my elbow!” Stiles crooked his arm and raised it into the air for Lydia and Isaac to see, a mock proud look on his face.
“Skinny,” Isaac commented to Lydia, shaking his head.
“Knobby too,” she added, scrunching her face.
“Uhn! Words hurt you know?” Stiles sniggered and folded his arms across his chest.
“What’s skinny and knobby?” Scott asked, strolling back into the room shirtless. Glistening water droplets clung to his freshly scrubbed skin.
“Stiles’ elbow,” Isaac answered, looking at the wall past Scott. He seriously needed to stop objectifying the guy who was going to be his adoptive brother.
“Ssshh! He’s very sensitive about his bony elbows,” Scott remarked, unable to keep a straight face as
he opened Stiles’ dresser and helped himself to a t-shirt.

“I hate all of you,” Stiles muttered, scent flaring with contentment.

“So how did you get the amulet off?” Lydia asked, nodding toward the mystic object that was laying harmlessly on his nightstand. It wasn't buzzing or glowing and looked like any other piece of gaudy antique jewelry.

“With my amazing hand.”

“Stiles.” Isaac frowned at him. Lydia’s question was important.

“Don’t be a grumpy wolf. You missed me too much.” Stiles gave Isaac a confident smirk and booped the tip of Isaac’s nose with his index finger.

Damnit, Stiles was so obnoxious. Also, what were they were talking about?

“Seriously though. I just grabbed it and yanked it over my head. It was no big deal.”

Isaac’s frown deepened. That should have been reassuring, but it wasn’t. All that mystical energy had to have gone somewhere, and Isaac couldn’t help but notice the fragrance of rain, sap, and sage permeating the air around Stiles. It smelled...well very good, like a natural part of Stiles’ scent, and Isaac doubted he would have picked it out and questioned it if Ethan hadn’t identified it as the scent of a druid. Now that Isaac knew what it was, he couldn’t stop smelling it. He wondered if Scott was aware of it. After a few moments of deliberation he decided it was best to bring the topic out into the open.

“Ethan says you smell like a druid.”

“Well tell him I think he smells like a wet sheepdog.”

Isaac scowled and huffed because Ethan most certainly did not smell like a wet sheepdog.

“What are you talking about?” Scott asked as everyone shifted around on the bed to make room for him.

“He’s noticed a shift in Stiles’ scent ever since” –Isaac sighed– “the darach possessed him. I can smell it too now that I know what to look for. It’s like raindrops and sap with hints of sage.”

Scott sniffed the air. “That’s just how Stiles has always...” He lifted the front of his borrowed shirt to his nose and inhaled. His eyes widened and his mouth hung open as the shirt dropped away from it. “You haven’t worn this shirt in the last few weeks have you Stiles?”

“No, why?” Stiles looked so worried that Isaac involuntarily placed a reassuring hand on his forearm.

“You smell like Isaac described, but the shirt doesn’t and” –Scott pinched the collar of the shirt and held it out– “yeah, this is how you’re supposed to smell.”

“Oh my god, so I smell like somebody else?!”

“No, you still smell like you,” Isaac answered, patting Stiles arm, “just like, uh...”

“Like an evil version of myself?!”

“We’re going to fix this.” Scott said, and Isaac whimpered at the notes of alpha power in his voice.
“You’re awake now. That’s all that matters.”

Scott grabbed Stiles and pulled him into a fierce hug as Isaac and Lydia rubbed Stiles’ back.

“So what’s been going on with you guys?” Stiles asked as he broke the embrace with Scott and sat back.

Isaac, Scott, and Lydia exchanged wearied looks and groaned. They spent the better part of the next hour rehashing everything that had happened over the past three days for Stiles.

Stiles freaked out when they told him about the first night of the full moon and Iron Claw’s rampage. When Isaac described the way he had been attacked and almost killed, Stiles crowded closer to him and grabbed his hand. He rubbed his thumb over the back of it as Isaac finished his story. Isaac stole glances at Lydia and Scott, but neither of them were reacting.

Once he was up to speed on everything, Stiles suggested an early dinner that evening before sunset to help Liam and Malia get to know everyone in a more relaxed environment. Isaac, Scott, and Lydia all agreed that it was a good idea. It was also logical from the standpoint of needing to get everyone paired off for the final night of the full moon. They decided to have the get-together at Scott’s house so that Melissa could also get to know Liam and Malia – Stiles’ dad had to work that night, but Melissa was off for the next two days. They texted their new packmates about the dinner plans and included Scott’s address.

“Malia doesn’t know how to text or use GPS yet, but I’m sure Aiden will help her,” Lydia said.

She seemed less upset than Isaac had expected, which was good because someone like Aiden didn’t deserve to take very long to get over.

“So Ethan and Aiden going to help again tonight for the full moon?” Scott asked Isaac.

Isaac grumbled. He wasn’t wild about being the pack’s go-to contact person for the twins, but he nevertheless pulled his phone out of his pocket to check with Ethan. He already had two recent texts from him.

Ethan: [girl doing handstand with spread legs emoji] [eggplant emoji] [boy emoji] [exploding fireworks emoji]

Ethan: [ear emoji] [bed emoji] [face palming boy emoji] [angry face emoji] [angry face emoji] [angry face emoji]

Isaac laughed out loud as he decoded what Ethan was telling him.

“What’s so funny?” Stiles asked.

Isaac started to hold up his phone to show the others, but stopped; he didn’t want his packmates seeing his recent text history with Ethan. He shrugged casually and downplayed his amusement.

“Malia and Aiden are, uh, banging really loud and Ethan can’t sleep.”

“So funny,” Lydia said dryly.

Isaac grimaced and tapped out a message to Ethan asking if he and Aiden would be helping again tonight. Ethan responded a few moments later.

Ethan: Of course.
Isaac’s stomach tightened as he noted the period. Ethan didn’t usually use end punctuation in texts unless he was asking a question. Was Ethan being emphatic about his response? Was he offended that Isaac had even needed to ask? Was he just sleep deprived and cranky? Was Isaac reading too much into a period?

“What?” Stiles asked, his voice taking on an annoyed edge.

“Nothing!” Isaac shoved his phone into his pocket.

Lydia rolled her eyes from over Stiles’ shoulder and mouthed ‘smooth’ to him.

“Will you stay with me tonight?” Stiles asked, brushing his knee against Isaac’s and giving him hopeful eyes.

There was a vulnerable quality in Stiles’ voice that had Isaac answering without thinking about it. “Of course.”

“Oh wait, I-I should be there.”

“No, it’s fine. All Ethan has to do is flip a switch if Iron Claw surfaces.”

“Yes, I’ll get everything setup before I take Malia to the school,” Lydia said.

“And Aiden can keep corrupting our newest puppy,” Stiles remarked with a shrug.

Lydia pursed her lips.

Isaac sighed and nodded. “Pretty much.”

Scott’s brow knitted together. “Liam seemed happy this morning...maybe we should give Aiden the benefit of the doubt.” Everyone glared at him until he swallowed and raised his hands. “Or not.”

With the plans finalized the pack dispersed. Stiles would be spending the afternoon with his dad. Isaac, Scott, and Lydia needed to try to get some sleep.

Isaac had hardly slept at all since the night before the start of the full moon, and he hadn’t realized how tired he was until he climbed onto the back of Scott’s motorcycle for the ride home. As he wrapped his arms around Scott and pressed close against his warm body, he found himself being lulled into a state of semi-sleep by the blissfully comforting scent of his alpha combined with the even more blissfully comforting scent of Stiles’ druid-free shirt. The next thing he knew his face was buried against the back of Scott’s neck and his eyes were sliding shut.

“Whoa, whoa, Isaac.” As they pulled up to a stop sign Scott patted Isaac’s hands and turned his head, letting Isaac nuzzle against his neck. “You gotta stay awake till we get home, buddy. Otherwise you might fall off.”

“Okay,” Isaac mumbled, nosing against Scott’s neck and rubbing his cheek against Scott’s Stiles-covered shoulder.

“I mean it.” Scott used just enough alpha authority to make Isaac sit up and take notice.

“Sorry.”

Scott squeezed Isaac’s fingers on his stomach. “Safety first.”
As they pulled away from the intersection, Isaac let his head slump against Scott’s shoulder but focused on keeping his eyes open. Scott would be able to tell by his heart rate and breathing that he wasn’t falling asleep...or if he was and they needed to pull over.

Isaac managed to stay awake until they got home, but his head was cloudy as Scott helped him off the motorcycle and into the house. He didn’t remember walking up the stairs to his room but had a brief moment of clarity as he lay in bed and Scott pressed a damp washcloth to his face, scrubbing away any lingering traces of blood.

“You...good alpha,” Isaac mumbled. He tried his best to look at Scott and smile, but his eyelids and lips were too heavy to cooperate.

Scott said something Isaac couldn’t quite comprehend, but the tone was soothing as was the sensation of fingers ruffling Isaac’s hair.

Isaac took one more deep breath before drifting away, his hazy mind registering the scent of Stiles draped around Scott and the scent of Ethan draped around himself. Lydia was also a whisper in the air. It was perfect; it was...

*Pack.*

Chapter End Notes

I’m sorry I took longer than usual to finish and post this chapter, but I needed a little break to get some other projects going. Now that I’ve taken care of that, I’m really excited to get back into the swing of things with regular updates! I have the next 5-7 (depending on how I split them) chapters outlined, and I think you guys are going to be really excited about the romantic development (and smut) in these chapters. The next chapter will feature the pack dinner followed by some one-on-one time for Isaac and Stiles.

Meanwhile, I’m pleased with the progress I made on several new stories/updates, so if you’re curious about what I posted during the break in this story and wanted to check any of these out...

*The Bunny and the Wolf* – Easter-themed Corey/Liam romance, fluff, and humor story. Corey’s chimera nature grants him a special, passive power. For the two days before Easter each year everyone around him is automatically compelled to try to please him. Corey is determined not to take advantage of anyone, but his will power is tested when his friend and long-time crush, Liam, asks him out. Completed.

*Reconnecting* – Aiden/Ethan explicit twincest smut and fluff. Aiden is miserable and empty after the twins lose their ability to merge. He blames Ethan and shuts him out, but it only makes things worse. One morning during breakfast a casual brush of hands leads to more, and the twins find a way to reconnect. Completed story-arc, but I may added additional gratuitous smut chapters.
Chapter 7 of “A Street Over and a World Away” – Jackson and Isaac family/brotherhood/friendship fic, Non-romance, non-supernatural AU in which the Whittemores adopt Isaac after learning about his abuse. I just posted Chapter 7: The Party. Isaac develops new friends, but also faces new rivals.

Chapter 7 of “Liam Dunbar: Cuddlewolf Extraordinaire” – A collection of short fluff pieces featuring Liam cuddling and being affectionate with various members of the pack. Purely humor, fluff, and quirky weirdness, no drama or angst. I just posted Chapter 7 - Stiles & Lazy Saturdays. Liam's lazy Saturday with Stiles is interrupted when Stiles asks for a favor.

Chapter 1 of “Bedmates” – Some people search the world for their soulmates. Scott and Isaac only had to roll over. Short Scisaac fluff story that takes place almost entirely in Scott’s bed/bedroom, and features Scott and Isaac’s building relationship. Chapters will alternate between Scott’s and Isaac’s POVs. The story begins after Derek throws Isaac out of the loft in season 3A and Isaac goes to live with Scott.
Anchors and Logical Phalluses

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Isaac awoke with a snarling gasp to the sound of someone scratching at his bedroom window. He bolted upright, senses on high alert as he tried to identify the source of the threat and the danger level it posed.

Oh for fuck’s sake!

Relief and anger dueled for control of Isaac’s mood as he climbed out of bed and stalked across the room. He glared at his unwelcome visitor before unlocking the window and flinging it open.

“I couldn’t get in. I mean I coulda broken it but—”

“What are you doing here, Liam?”

Isaac growled as Liam grabbed his arm and used it for support to climb into the room. He almost retched as the stench of negative emotions clinging to Liam’s skin and clothes invaded his nostrils. Gone was the sweet, rich aroma of happiness and contentment that had hovered around Liam that morning; the noxious blend of rage, frustration, stress, and insecurity that Isaac likened to hot sauce and curdled milk poured into stale coffee was back in full force.

“You, uh, you said this wasn’t weird ‘cause we’re pack,” Liam said, pulsing with anxiety and uncertainty.

“Breaking into someone’s—”

Isaac’s protest died in his mouth as Liam lunged forward and latched onto him with supernatural strength, burying his head against Isaac’s chest and snuffling in a desperate bid to inhale his scent.

“You smell so good,” Liam whispered, lifting his head and nuzzling his face under Isaac’s throat.

You fucking reek.

Isaac held him anyway, rubbing his shoulder and sniffing his hair in a gesture of pack acceptance. Liam’s heart rate slowed and his muscles relaxed against Isaac’s body. He let out a long, deep sigh and patted Isaac’s back.

“Okay, I feel better now. See you this evening.” Liam let go and turned around, making it halfway out the window before Isaac yanked him back into the room.

“What the hell?! Do you wanna tell me what that was about?”

“Not really.” Liam shook his head, completely earnest and apparently taking the question at face value. Isaac glared at him until he continued. “I just...it helped when you did that a couple nights ago at the hospital so...” Liam shrugged. “You give really good hugs, man. I thought about going to Aiden or Scott, but I’ve never hugged them before. Plus I don’t even know if it woulda worked with Aiden since he’s not a packmate, and Scott...well I’m kind of afraid of Scott.”

Isaac took a breath and pushed aside his irritation with the new beta. He remembered how unstable he had felt in his first days after turning, and Liam seemed like an already unstable person. Waking
Isaac up for a hug really wasn’t the worst way he could have handled his problems.

“Are you sure you don’t want to talk about it?”

Liam shook his head even as he opened his mouth and proceeded to do just that. “Is it normal to feel, like, everything really intensely?”

“Yeah, especially on the full moon and especially at first.”

“Does it get better?” Liam asked, his eyebrows drawing together. “‘Cause it feels like I’m gonna lose control.”

Isaac tapped Liam’s arm and nodded toward his bed. Liam grumbled but followed him and took a seat next to him on the edge.

“You’re doing great so far, Liam.”

Liam scoffed and gave Isaac a bitter look as resentment flared in his scent. “You wouldn’t even know that. You and Scott have been ignoring me.”

Isaac opened his mouth to protest but Liam kept talking.

“Aiden’s not even in our pack.” Liam crossed his arms but not before Isaac saw claws protruding from his fingers. “Which is stupid by the way because he’s a total badass and you and Scott need to let him in – but you guys aren’t paying any attention to me. You’re just getting an outside werewolf to fucking babysit me because I don’t matter to you, and I can’t even be in Aiden’s pack. It’s so fucked up and unfair.”

“You wanna be in Aiden’s pack?” And okay, yes, there were about five other things in that rant Isaac also needed to address, but this one was the most shocking.

“I wanna be in your pack too!” Liam shouted, amber eyes glowing with fury. “I want us all to be in one pack! Why can’t we do that, huh? They saved our life the other night.”

Isaac’s first instinct was to yell at Liam for his outburst, to threaten him, or throw him out of the room. That’s how Derek would have handled a beta like Liam. However, the steady, soothing sound of Scott’s sleeping heartbeat a couple rooms away dispelled that inclination. Liam wasn’t Derek’s beta; he was Scott’s, and Scott would want Isaac to be patient with him.

Isaac cautiously reached out and touched Liam’s back. “Liam, it’s more complicated than–”

The air rushed out of Isaac’s lungs as Liam once again surprised him with a crushing hug.

“I’m sorry I lost my temper.” Liam sighed and nosed at Isaac’s throat again. “I’ve always had an anger problem and being a werewolf is really overwhelming.”

Isaac laughed and rubbed Liam’s back. “It does get easier, and I meant what I said before, you’re doing great so far.”

“You’re just saying that,” Liam mumbled against Isaac’s collarbone. He wasn’t being modest. His tone and scent were dripping with shame.

Isaac gripped Liam’s upper arms and tilted him back enough to look at him. “You’re doing great,” Isaac repeated. “You didn’t hurt anyone, and you’re learning to trust your pack. That’s a big deal. Listen to my heartbeat if you don’t believe me.”
Liam’s face reddened and he dropped his eyes. “Aiden tried to teach me that, but I couldn’t calm down long enough to get it.”

A thrill of excitement rushed through Isaac. “I’ll teach you.”

“Don’tcha want me to leave so you can go back to sleep?” Liam leaned closer and looked up at Isaac with a hopeful smile curling his upper lip.

“No, I don’t want you to leave,” Isaac answered with a grudging smile of his own. It felt good that Liam had come to him for help, and it didn’t hurt that he was adorable. “You were right before. You need to spend more time with pack, and we need to make you a bigger priority.” Isaac’s smile faded into a frown as he realized Liam wasn’t the only new packmate he had been neglecting. “Malia too.”

“Well, I know you guys have been busy with Iron Claw and Stiles,” Liam replied with a diplomatic shrug, but he was quivering with anxious excitement as he continued, “but yeah, it’d be so cool if you could teach me that heartbeat-lie thing.”

Isaac nodded and folded his leg under him as he turned toward Liam on the bed. “Okay, so when people lie you can tell by the rhythm of their hearts. Here, I’ll show you. Listen to my heart while you ask me questions. I’ll randomly lie about one of them.” Isaac cocked his head, spotting a potential pitfall. “Nothing too weird or personal, or I just won’t answer at all.”

“Okay.” Liam grinned, his whole face lighting up as he tilted his head toward Isaac’s chest and all but quirked his ear like a dog. “What’s your favorite food?”

After a couple of initial rounds of questions they ended up playing Two Truths and a Lie with Liam also taking turns stating facts about himself so that the information exchange wasn’t one sided and they could get to know each other better. As Liam’s lie detection skills improved they added more true statements into the mix. They were up to ‘Six Truths and a Lie’ and Isaac was having trouble coming up with things by the time they were interrupted by a knock on Isaac’s bedroom door.

“It’s your mom!” Liam announced, clearly proud of himself for divining Melissa’s identity with the door still closed.

Isaac’s mouth went dry but he didn’t correct Liam. He cleared his throat. “Come in.”

“I thought I heard voices,” Melissa said, standing in the doorway with folded arms. “You’re supposed to be asleep, otherwise you might as well have gone to school.” She shifted her attention to Isaac’s packmate. “Hello Liam. Is my brand new front door missing?”

“Huh?”

Isaac cringed as he saw where she was going with this.

“I didn’t hear you knock on it.”

“Oh.” Liam’s cheeks reddened. “I used the window.”

“It was a werewolf emergency,” Isaac said, bobbing his head innocently but struggling to keep a straight face as he reflected that the ‘emergency’ had been that Liam needed a hug right away.

“You’re lying!” Liam whispered in werewolf tones, a delighted gleam in his bright blue eyes.

Isaac mock-snarled and shoved him hard enough to send him crashing to the floor. He bounced back to his feet laughing.
“Front door next time, Liam,” Melissa said in a stern tone.

“Yes, ma’am,” Liam answered, nodding jerkily as he reclaimed his spot on the bed.

Isaac giggled. Liam had missed the hint of amusement in Melissa’s scent.

“Do your parents know where you are?”

“Yes, ma’am.” Anxiety and guilt flared around Liam, and Isaac’s werewolf instincts told him Liam might be lying; his human instincts told him it was more complicated than that.

Melissa hummed in assent, but Isaac recognized it as the sound she made when she was going to verify something he, Scott, or Stiles had said. Dr. Geyer would probably be receiving a check-in text from her about Liam.

“So I’m thinking Mexican for dinner?” Melissa said.

Isaac grinned and nodded eagerly, but Liam’s reaction was even more animated.

“YES!” He bounced on the bed and his eyes blazed gold. His next words reverberated around the edges with a rumbling roar. “I’m. So. Hungry!”

“Dude, settle down.” Isaac backhanded Liam’s chest as Melissa frowned and took a half-step back.

Liam raised his palms, eyes blue again and comically wide. “Sorry, that wasn’t, like, a threat or anything. I just realized I’m super hungry.”

“I think we have a to-go menu in the kitchen.” She gave Isaac a serious look. “You need to work with him on controlling that.”

Isaac nodded, recalling that Liam had a similar reaction that morning when Ethan had offered him waffles. He hated to think how Liam would behave in the cafeteria tomorrow.

Melissa came back with the menu and they made their selections, adding Scott’s usual enchiladas and Stiles’ tacos to the order. They texted Lydia for her choices and picked something out for Malia since she likely wouldn’t have any established preferences.

Scott woke up a little while later, greeted them, then after showering and getting ready for the evening, joined Isaac in training Liam in scent and sound detection. Isaac was both amused and concerned about Liam’s dynamic with Scott. Liam obviously wanted Scott’s approval but was almost painfully uncomfortable around him, alternately seeking out his attention then shrinking away from it.

“I’m gonna go shower,” Isaac announced, standing and going to his closet for clothes.

Liam yelped and followed Isaac across the room before trying unsuccessfully to seem casual. “I think I’m tired of training. Can I go downstairs and watch TV till dinner?”

Scott frowned. “Liam, I can answer your questions. I’m your alpha.”

“I know. I just don’t have any.”

“Don’t lie to werewolves.” Isaac smirked and nudged past Liam to get to his dresser.

Liam growled at him but continued his previous statement like he hadn’t been finished. “—that need to be answered right now. And I know you’re busy, so I can just ask Aiden stuff tonight.”
It was Isaac’s turn to growl. In what universe could someone be more comfortable getting help from Aiden than Scott?

“You know Iron Claw doesn’t come out during the day, right?” Scott asked softly, guilt wafting off of him.

“I know,” Liam answered, but the look he shot Isaac clearly said *hurry!*

Isaac ignored him as he grabbed his phone and left the room. Scott sure as hell didn’t need his help putting someone at ease. The best thing he could do for the situation was leave them alone to work it out. He texted Stiles as he strolled down the hallway to the bathroom.

Isaac: *Liam spent all afternoon whining about Scott not paying attention to him, now he’s freaking out that he is.*

Stiles answered while Isaac was brushing his teeth.

Stiles: *Liams already there? Should I head over?*

Isaac: *Yeah, see ya soon. I’m getting in the shower.*

Isaac was already naked and pulling back the shower curtain when his phone buzzed with a response.

Stiles: *Pics or it didn’t happen*

Isaac laughed and rolled his eyes, Stiles and his dumb pretend flirting. Feeling playful, Isaac snapped a waist-up picture of himself flipping Stiles off in the bathroom mirror.

He waited a few seconds, confident that Stiles’ reply wouldn’t take long. It didn’t.

Stiles: [:clapping hands emoji]...where’s part 2?

Isaac didn’t respond. He didn’t want to further encourage Stiles’ behavior. He was starting to feel more and more uncomfortable about the fact that Stiles didn’t know he was bi. Would it change anything between them? Would Stiles quit making sexual jokes if he knew Isaac might take them seriously?

Stiles and Liam were now the only two people in the pack who didn’t know about Isaac’s bisexuality, and it had almost come out with Liam that afternoon when he had mentioned that his best friend, Mason, was the new guy Danny was talking to. Only the fact that Stiles didn’t know yet had kept Isaac from using the opportunity to mention that he liked guys too. Stiles really shouldn’t be the last person to find out. Whether Isaac was ready to confess his feelings for Stiles like Lydia wanted him to...well that was something else entirely, but it was definitely time to come out to Stiles.

By the time Isaac was out of the shower, Lydia and Malia had arrived and Melissa had left to pick up the food.

“You missed Ethan,” Scott remarked as Isaac walked down the stairs to the living room.

“What?! No, I didn’t,” Isaac answered defensively. He totally hadn’t been picturing Ethan while he was in the shower.

Scott furrowed his brow. “Um, yeah you did.”

“He just dropped Malia off.” Lydia’s tone hinted at amusement that Isaac could only hope would go
unnoticed by everyone else.

“Aiden didn’t think he would be welcome here.” Malia scowled at Lydia then narrowed her eyes at Isaac.

“But that’s stupid because he’s a friend of the pack, right?” Liam gave Isaac an expectant look.

Isaac smirked and shrugged. “That’s Scott’s call, not mine.”

“He’s a friend of the pack,” Scott affirmed, giving Liam and Malia reassuring smiles.

Isaac growled under his breath. Scott had made the wrong call.

It was a relief when Stiles arrived a little while later. Isaac was closest to the door and without thinking about it, he wrapped Stiles up in a long hug, scenting his neck the way Liam had done with him earlier.

They shared a look that was unexpectedly intense as Isaac pulled back.

“I missed you,” Stiles said quietly, still clenching Isaac’s elbows.

“You missed Ethan too,” Malia said matter-of-factly.

Stiles scrunched up his face and shook his head. “I really didn’t.”

Stiles hugged Scott, Lydia, and even Malia in greeting but ended up doing an awkward half-hug, half-handshake with Liam as they each went in for something else then overcompensated the other way.

The pack made casual conversation until Melissa returned with dinner, and they all took their places on the couch, chairs, and floor around the coffee table in the living room.

“Liam, I had a phone call with your step-dad while I was waiting for the food,” Melissa said a few minutes into the meal from her seat by the couch. “I think there’s something you need to tell the pack about yourself.”

Liam’s heart rate spiked and he growled at her, amber eyes burning with anger. He was sitting on the floor in front of the couch between Isaac’s and Scott’s legs. Scott lowered his fork to his plate, alarmed, but Isaac had already smacked the back of Liam’s head.

“Stop that. Don’t ever growl at her again.” Isaac dug his claws into Liam’s shoulder, not hard enough to tear his shirt or break the skin, but hard enough for him to feel it. “Got it?”

Liam hung his head and nodded. “I’m sorry,” he mumbled, not looking up from his lap.

“You have an anger problem.” Melissa’s tone was steady but apprehension lined her face.

“I already told Isaac and Scott that,” Liam snapped, dropping his fist to the table with a thud.

This time Scott’s hand landed on his shoulder. “Calm down.” Scott laced the command with alpha authority.

Liam whimpered and shrunk in on himself, fear clouding his scent.

“Tell them and the rest of the pack more about it,” Melissa said.
Liam hesitated and Isaac wanted to demand that he tell them what she was talking about, but Scott’s hand was back on Liam’s shoulder, this time rubbing it.

“It’s okay, Liam, whatever it is, we’re going to help you through it.”

Liam turned and gave Scott an anxious look. Scott nodded and held eye contact. Liam’s gaze then flicked to Isaac. Isaac wasn’t sure why his response mattered very much, but he nodded too.

Liam took a breath and turned back to the others, his elbow leaning against Isaac’s shin. He glanced around the room before muttering, “I have Intermittent Explosive Disorder. It means I lose my temper sometimes for no real reason, and I have trouble controlling myself.”

“IED? You’re literally an IED?!” Stiles was sitting on Scott’s other side on the couch. He groaned and scrubbed a hand over his face. “That’s great. You’re a walking time bomb with super powers.”

Scott ignored Stiles and kept his attention on Liam. “Are you on any medication for it?”

“They prescribed Risperdal,” Liam answered.

“That’s an antipsychotic drug,” Melissa said.

“Psychotic. This just keeps getting better.” Stiles shook his head.

“I don’t take it.”

“Of course you don’t.”

Lydia silenced Stiles with a withering glance.

“It has a lot of bad side effects.” Liam folded his hands in his lap and stared at the floor. Scott rubbed his back and after a moment’s hesitation so did Isaac. Liam turned and gave them a look that pleaded for understanding. “I’ve been in anger management for awhile now, and I’m getting better.”

“Well gee, I wonder how turning into an anger-driven monster is gonna affect that?” Stiles remarked. This time it was Melissa’s glare that silenced him.

“Were you able to control yourself last night for the full moon?” Scott asked.

Liam shrugged. “Sort of. Aiden let me run around hitting stuff for like two hours, but then I calmed down.”

“Aiden let you run free?” Isaac clenched his jaw and growled in the back of his throat.

“Not free exactly,” Liam answered, frowning at Isaac. “He corralled me and made sure I didn’t leave the woods.”

“But you didn’t attack him?” Scott asked.

“No, I did.” Liam shrugged one shoulder and laughed. “But every time I hit him, he hit me back, and he hits way harder than I do, so eventually I stopped.”

“He hit you?” Isaac felt his eyes blazing amber. Aiden was specifically not supposed to hurt Liam.

“I had it coming.” Liam answered without any bitterness in his voice. “Fighting with him was even kind of fun. I heal so fast now that it was no big deal. But I mostly just punched trees and chased animals. Once I wore myself out, he started teaching me werewolf stuff.”
“Did he tell you anything about anchors?” Scott asked.

“Yeah, but, I don’t know who mine is yet. I was thinking maybe my parents or my friend Mason.”

“What’s an anchor?” Malia asked. She was sitting on the floor at the end of the coffee table in front of Lydia’s chair.

“It someone that keeps us tethered to our humanity,” Scott answered, “something we cling to in the darkness.”

“Oh, you mean like Aiden’s penis?” Malia nodded her head in understanding.

Everyone gaped at her.

“What? I love clinging to it in the darkness.” She shrugged. “Or the light. Ooh, or the shower!”

Scott coughed and shook his head. “No, it should be something substantial that you can feel deep inside you when you close your eyes.”

“Uhh, Scott?” Stiles shook his head.

“Yeah, I hear it now,” Scott answered, cringing and holding up a hand.

“Malia, it’s none of my business, but I hope you’re using protection,” Melissa said, laying her fork across the edge of her plate and addressing the werecoyote in a calm, no-nonsense tone.

“I can protect myself,” Malia responded, eyes flaring ice blue.

Liam snickered at her. “She means condoms. To protect against STDs and stuff.”

Malia gave him a blank look.

“You know, sexually transmitted diseases.”

“Oh. We can’t get those,” She answered.

“What?! We can’t get those?!” Liam looked around the room with a huge grin on his face. “I’m immune to STDs?”

Melissa side-eyed Liam but focused on Malia. “You can still get pregnant.”

“But I can’t!” Liam’s heart rate stuttered and he turned to Isaac. A horrified look had replaced the grin on his face. “Wait, I can't right?”

Isaac considered winding him up, but laughed and shook his head. “No, of course you can’t.”

“Don’t worry. Aiden wears lots of condoms,” Malia said, returning her attention to the taco salad she was eating.

“He wears lots of condoms?” Stiles asked, arching his eyebrows. “You mean, like, all at once?”

“No, back to back.” Malia giggled. “Well, he doesn’t wear them on his back but on—”

“We all know where condoms go,” Melissa answered, raising her hands and motioning for Malia to stop talking.

“His penis. He wears them on his penis.”
Lydia groaned and steepled her fingers against the side of her head.

“I was gonna guess there!” Stiles declared with a smirk before taking a crunching bite of his taco.

“You would have been right,” Malia answered with an earnest nod of her head. “I find it very reassuring.”

“Oh, that he’s serious about safe sex?” A small look of approval had formed on Melissa’s face.

Malia’s brow furrowed. “No. I meant his penis. I find his penis very reassuring. I think it’s my anchor.”

“Can we please talk about something else?” Isaac asked, adding a low rumble for emphasis.

“You see why this guy’s my hero?!” Liam wolf-whispered to Isaac in a playful lilt.

Isaac growled and shoved Liam’s shoulder.

Once dinner was over, everyone stood and congregated by the door. Isaac felt guilty. He would be spending the last night of the full moon at the McCall house with Stiles, and while it was certainly important to keep an eye on their possessed packmate, it seemed unfair that he would be having a quiet evening at home while Scott sat in a dungeonesque basement with Ethan, Lydia guarded a feral Malia at school, and Liam ran around the woods with a homicidal lunatic.

“Call me if you have any problems,” Isaac said, gripping Liam’s bicep and giving him a serious look.

Liam smiled and threw his arms around Isaac. Their packbond hummed and Isaac channeled as much comfort and support as he could through it, trying not to feel self conscious about the fact that he was the only member of the pack Liam was this affectionate with. Isaac’s only guess was that it had something to do with Liam having bonded with him first. Isaac had done it to save Liam’s life and he didn’t regret it, but he needed to talk to Scott about this.

As the pack finished exchanging goodbye hugs, Stiles surprised Isaac by also winding himself around Isaac and going completely slack against him.

“I’m not going anywhere,” Isaac said with a laugh, dutifully tightening his arms around Stiles’ relaxed body to keep him from falling.

“I know,” Stiles murmured, his face against Isaac’s chest.

“Is Isaac Stiles’ anchor?” Malia asked as she followed Lydia outside.

Stiles wouldn’t have been able to hear Lydia’s response as the door closed, but Isaac heard it and his cheeks warmed in a blush.

“Yes, I think so.”

Isaac lifted Stiles into his arms and nuzzled his neck, savoring the rich, satisfying scent of pack and the tangy-crisp buzz of Stiles’ personal scent – sage, sap, and rain be damned.

“So, Netflix and cuddlefest?” Stiles asked hopefully, fingers tickling the back of Isaac’s neck and thighs warm against Isaac’s hips.

Isaac pulled his face back from Stiles’ neck and – *Fuck!* Stiles looked so happy and innocent Isaac could barely breathe.
“Uhm...” Isaac closed his eyes and nodded, and then Stiles’ forehead was against his own, skin warm and tingly. When Isaac reopened his eyes their faces were inches apart.

Stiles lips were barely a finger’s thickness from Isaac’s and his breath kissed Isaac’s mouth as he said, “I know this might be a stupid question but—”

“Isaac!”

They both jerked their heads back and Isaac fumbled to keep Stiles from falling out of his arms.

“I need your height!” Melissa called from the kitchen. Isaac heard the hinges of a cabinet squeaking open.

Isaac cleared his throat and deposited Stiles on the couch before going to help Melissa with her task.

Chapter End Notes

I hope you guys enjoyed this chapter! I know its focus being on Liam, Malia, and the pack might not be to everyone’s liking, especially if you’re more here for the Isaac/Stiles or Isaac/Ethan romance, but rest assured things will heat up on both fronts quite soon. In the meantime I felt like it was important to show the pack bonding and spending some non life-or-death time together. LOL, this chapter was getting a silly title no matter what. The alternate title was, “Isaac Gets a Puppy,” but I decided to go with wordplay instead of sarcasm.

Please let me know what you thought of this chapter if you get a chance!
Things were awkward after the rest of the pack left and Isaac, Stiles, and Melissa settled in to watch TV. Isaac couldn’t stop thinking about how he had almost kissed Stiles. In the moment it had felt completely mutual. Yet now that Isaac had more time to think about it, he realized that he had been about to make a fool of himself, or worse, force himself on Stiles. And Stiles knew it too. That’s why he was sitting on the far opposite end of the couch, staring intently at the TV and not acknowledging Isaac in the slightest. The scent of their combined anxiety hung thickly in the air between them. Did Stiles think Isaac was going to try to make a move again the next time they were alone? Should Isaac apologize? Would it even help? Had he ruined their friendship?

Isaac and Stiles both jumped when Stiles’ phone rang about halfway through the second episode of whatever show was on. Isaac wasn’t sure what it was, just something on Melissa’s DVR that she was catching up on and that he and Stiles were pretending to watch.

“It’s my dad.” Stiles’ voice was too tight and too high, and his heart was racing. If Isaac hadn’t specifically been making it a point to keep his hands to himself he would have touched Stiles’ back or shoulder to reassure him.

“Well answer it,” Melissa said, giving them both curious looks from her chair by the couch. Stiles nodded. “He probably just wants to check on me.” He accepted the call and stood up, strolling out of the room as he chatted with his dad.

“How about we go fix some hot chocolate and popcorn?” Melissa suggested as she rose to her feet. Isaac wasn’t fooled by her casual tone. The tense set of her shoulders told him she wanted to talk to him about something. *Crap.* Had she noticed what was going on between him and Stiles?

Sure enough, while Isaac was getting the popcorn out of the pantry she spoke up.

“I’m worried about the pack,” she said, pulling mugs out of the cabinet.

*You mean about me tearing it apart by trying to sexually assault Stiles?*

Isaac knew he was being a little over-dramatic, but it didn’t change how he felt.

“I know you’re upset about the situation with Stiles. I am too.”

Isaac flinched and shut the pantry door. “You are?”

“Of course. But I feel like I could handle Stiles if you weren’t here.”

Isaac’s stomach lurched and he almost spilled the bag of popcorn kernels as he set it on the counter. “You think I should leave?”

Melissa frowned and shrugged as she set a kettle of water on the stove to heat for their hot chocolate. “I don’t want you to be in danger, but I would feel better if you were with Scott.”

“What?” Isaac’s hand stilled on the handle of the refrigerator.
Anxiety rolled off Melissa’s shoulders, joining the lingering clouds of nervousness left by Isaac and Stiles.

“I know he helped you save Malia, and I know he was on your side in the Iron Claw battle, but...I don’t like Ethan. I don’t like that you’ve been spending time with him, and I hate that he’s with Scott tonight while Scott’s basically helpless. And as for Aiden”—she poured the popcorn into the pan with overt irritation—“I had to lie to Dr. Geyer on the phone this evening. I had to tell him Liam would be fine spending another night in the woods alone with Aiden. I don’t know if that’s true, and I find it harder to believe that it is than that it isn’t.”

Isaac yanked open the refrigerator and grabbed the tub of butter. He handed it to her without making eye contact. “You don’t like Ethan?”

“Do you?” Her tone was deceptively neutral.

“Yeah, I do.” Isaac folded his arms as he raised his eyes to her face. He didn’t want to come off as defensive, but he felt...defensive. “He wouldn’t hurt me or Scott. I promise. I don’t like Liam being with Aiden either, but I trust Ethan when he says he’s making sure Aiden won’t do anything to him.”

Melissa set the lid on the popcorn pan and turned back to face Isaac, brow raised in an appraising look.

“I trust him,” Isaac repeated, trying to keep the hostile whine out of his voice. “I wouldn’t leave Scott alone with him if I didn’t,” Isaac added softly.

Melissa sighed and relaxed against the counter with visible effort. “Okay. I trust you and Scott’s judgment.”

Isaac gave her a small smile, happy with the way this discussion had gone. He couldn’t have imagined reaching such a peaceful resolution with his dad. Actually, he couldn’t have imagined even standing his ground and defending his position with his dad. Melissa rubbed his back as she stepped past him to get the hot chocolate out of the pantry, and Isaac spoke up on an impulse.

“Can I tell you something?”

“Of course.” She passed him a packet of hot chocolate and pulled two more out of the box.

“I’m bisexual.”

Her eyes widened for a moment and she did a brief double take. Then she was smiling and nodding. “That makes sense.”

Isaac laughed. “It does?”

“Yeah. I thought you had a crush on Scott, but then you started dating Allison.” She laughed too as she set the hot chocolate on the counter by the mugs. “Now all the pieces fit.”

Isaac chuckled as they exchanged a hug.

“Thank you for tell me,” she said as the embrace ended. She held eye contact. “Are you comfortable with it? Is there anything you want to talk about?”

Isaac shrugged and shook his head. “I’m good.”
She smiled and patted his arm as she returned to the stove to turn off the kettle just as it started to hiss. “Okay, let me know if you ever need help finding resources or just want to talk.” She shook the popcorn pan, then turned and gave him a meaningful look. “About this or anything else.”

Isaac nodded in understanding. She meant his abuse. He was grateful for the offer and even more grateful that she hadn’t mentioned it outright. He had enough to think about tonight without going down that rabbit hole.

Stiles joined them in the kitchen a little while later, and once again Isaac felt like a fraud for keeping the information about his sexuality a secret from his friend and packmate.

Stiles was more relaxed than before as they returned to the living room with their snacks. He sat on the middle cushion of the couch next to Isaac.

“Ugh, do we have to watch this?” Stiles complained as Melissa restarted the show, which turned out to be *The Bachelor*.

Melissa huffed in mock outrage. “You were riveted to the last episode.”

“I’m over it now.” Stiles grinned and took a slurping sip of his hot chocolate. He nudged Isaac with his elbow. “Back me up, man.”

“I’m over it too,” Isaac confirmed with a smirk.

“Yeah, it’s completely unrealistic,” Stiles said, waving his arm.

“I know right?” Isaac shook his head at the screen. “A guy getting to have his pick of multiple attractive people who wanna be with him? As if.”

“Alright, alright. What did you two TV critics have in mind?”

Then ended up watching *Daredevil* so that Isaac and Melissa could pick up where they had left off last week. Stiles had already watched the whole season by himself, but he didn’t mind re-watching and insisted it was preferable to the love triangle bullshit.

As they watched the show, Isaac and Stiles gradually got cozier. Isaac almost jumped when Stiles leaned his shoulder against him, but as the evening progressed and Stiles increased the pressure and leaned closer, Isaac eventually succumbed to temptation and wrapped his arm around Stiles’ body, reveling in the warm firmness beneath his fingers and the rich, soothing scent caressing his lungs.

Did this mean Stiles had forgiven him? Was this his way of letting Isaac know that he didn’t want to put the brakes on all the cuddling they had been doing recently? Maybe Isaac really had over-reacted. Yes, he had almost kiss Stiles mid-sentence – he still didn’t know what Stiles had been about to ask him – but perhaps it wasn’t as big a deal as he thought.

By the time the second episode had started, Stiles was practically lying across Isaac’s chest, and Isaac had turned too, shifting sideways so that Stiles had more room and winding his arm around Stiles’ lean stomach. Soon Stiles’ head was resting on Isaac’s shoulder, and a little while later when Stiles grabbed the throw blanket from the back of the couch and covered them, Isaac worked up the nerve to move his leg so that it too was around Stiles, and they were fully lying on the couch cuddling.

Isaac couldn’t see Melissa from this angle, but he had been monitoring her scent and listening for any sign of distress or disapproval. She didn’t seem to care. When the third episode ended she announced that she was going to bed and told them not to stay up too late. Tomorrow was Friday and apparently since they were home for the full moon, they were expected to go to school, even though the others
weren’t.

They turned off Netflix and channel surfed for a bit, eventually landing on a rerun of *The Simpsons*.

Stiles wanted to move again to get more comfortable, so Isaac sprawled out on his side and Stiles pressed in tight against his body in front of him. Both boys propped themselves up on their elbows and Isaac wrapped his other arm around Stiles’ chest. Minutes later they tangled their legs together too and in doing so Stiles rocked and shifted back and forth, his ass grinding against Isaac’s crotch.

Isaac bit back a whimper and tried unsuccessfully to scoot back. It was no use. He didn’t have the room to escape the contact. He was fully hard in seconds and all he could do, short of leaping off the couch, was wedge the blanket between them and hope for the best. Stiles grumbled at the intrusion and suddenly Isaac realized that he was practically groping Stiles’ ass as he tried to stuff the fabric in place.

“Sorry, I got hot,” Isaac mumbled, inwardly laughing at his double entendre.

“Well let’s just take it off.”

Stiles grabbed the blanket; Isaac grabbed his hand.

“Oh no, I– Uh, it’s soft. So let’s leave it.”

Stiles elbowed Isaac’s side. “Are you saying I have a bony ass?”

“Definitely not!” *Smooth, Isaac, smooth.*

Stiles snickered and wiggled back against Isaac but didn’t say anything else.

*Asshole!*

No wait, Isaac shouldn’t be thinking about assholes right now.

*Dick!*

That wasn’t any better.

*Jerk!*

Holy fuck, were all insults sexual?

*Jerk dick in your asshole!*

Isaac sighed and frowned. He was so horny.

“You’re really good at controlling yourself.”

Isaac almost choked.

“What do you mean?”

Stiles muted the TV and tilted his head back so that he could look up at Isaac upside down. Damn it was cute.

“It’s the full moon, but you’re so calm.” Stiles rolled over and Isaac had to tighten his grip to keep him from falling off the couch.
Fuck. The front of their bodies were pressed together now, and even with the blanket running interference, it might not be enough.

Stiles licked his lips and their eyes met, sending sparks of energy shooting through Isaac’s body—and okay yes, most of the sparks pulsed in his cock, but some of them also made his stomach tangle in knots and his chest flutter.

“I feel so safe with you,” Stiles whispered, his brown eyes soft and warm. His hand drifted from Isaac’s side to the small of his back. “Not safe from you,” –Stiles shifted closer. God, did he want to whisper his words directly into Isaac’s mouth?– “But safe from myself.”

“What do you mean?” Isaac asked, hand on Stiles’ hip. He wasn’t sure if his cock was throbbing harder by this point or if his heart was, but either way Stiles had to feel it.

Stiles drew back, his eyes darkening and his muscles tensing. “The darach isn’t gone...he’s getting stronger.”

Isaac’s mouth went dry. “Are you sure?”

Stiles nodded. “The whole time...” He clenched his eyes shut and trembled against Isaac.

Isaac pulled him closer. “It’s okay. I gotcha.” He ran his hands up and down Stiles’ back and leaned their foreheads together. “We can talk about it or not, whatever you need,” Isaac whispered almost against Stiles’ lips. It should have felt dangerous, but it didn’t.

“I need...” Stiles licked his lips and the tip of his tongue grazed against the corner of Isaac’s mouth.

Stiles whimpered and pulled back, eyes wide. “Sorry.”

Isaac leaned forward, reclosing the distance. “Stiles, whatever you need.”

Stiles drew closer again, their bodies sliding together from their chests down to their toes. They both moaned under their breaths, and hands tightened around backs. When Stiles closed his eyes and tilted his head sideways, there was only one thing he could possibly be about to do.

“I need to think.” Stiles ducked under Isaac’s chin and nuzzled his throat.

“Th-think?”

“Yeah.” The word was a breath against Isaac’s Adam’s apple.

Isaac exhaled softly and stroked Stiles’ spine. His eyes were glowing with heat and his wolf was bucking against the edges of his consciousness, not at all pleased at being denied.

Fuck the wolf.

Isaac tamped down his animal instincts and held Stile gently as he rolled them over, repositioning so that Stiles was on his back beneath Isaac. Stiles felt safe with him, and dammit he wanted Stiles to feel safe.

“The darach tortured me.” Stiles’ tone was incongruous, relaxed.

“What?” Isaac trembled against Stiles as surprise turned to cold horror.

“While I was in my coma, he...he was there. It was like a dream but more...cohesive.”
“What did he do?”

“He...He um...” Stiles closed his eyes and shook his head. “I-I can’t...”

“No, hey,” –Isaac squeezed Stiles’ side and brushed their foreheads together– “we don’t have to talk about it.”

“I want to. I want to tell you, but I-I just...” Stiles let out a long shaky breath and clung to Isaac’s back. “I’m not ready.”

“Yeah, of course.”

The anguish eased from Stiles’ face and he gave Isaac a tender look.

“Isaac, you’re” –Stiles licked his lips again– “You’re so...”

“So?”

Stiles sighed, his breath gusting against Isaac’s mouth. “So Isaac.”

Isaac huffed out a laugh against Stiles’ face. “Well, I’ve been practicing for a really long time.”

Stiles giggled and his hand was light against Isaac’s shoulder, indicating he wanted to get up.

They sat together on the couch, the television still muted, colorful animations flickering across the screen as Stiles clung to Isaac and pressed his face against Isaac’s chest.

“It was so fucked up. He looks just like me, and he could make it seem like anyone was in the dream with us. Sometimes I watched him do stuff to you guys...sometimes he made me do it.”

“Stiles, I–”

Stiles shook his head and kept talking. “Sometimes he made you guys do stuff to me, or each other. But sometimes it was just me and him. The things he did then...they were the most physically painful, but...easier to cope with.”

“You’re safe now.”

“He did this too,” Stiles whispered. “He knows how I...uh...feel about you. Sometimes we cuddled and then suddenly I was stabbing you, or you were...disembowling me.”

“I would never do that in real life.”

“No shit.” Stiles laughed and slapped Isaac’s chest.

Isaac chuckled and pressed his face against the top of Stiles’ head, rubbing his cheek against his short hair, and drawing Stiles’ scent as deeply into his lungs as he could, trying to tuck it away in a permanent corner.

“Is this real?” Stiles whispered the question at werewolf levels, probably inaudible to his own ears.

“Yeah, it is,” Isaac murmured back, mouth against the side of Stiles’ head. “I promise. This is real and we’re both safe.”

Stiles laughed, sharp and bitter. “It would feel so normal if you suddenly gutted me.”
Isaac’s blood ran cold and he didn’t respond.

“When we go to sleep, I’m probably gonna dream about killing Liam. That hasn’t happened yet so...” Stiles shrugged. “On the other hand, he might save it a few nights to surprise me with it.” Stiles raised his head and glared into the distance. “Give it your best shot, fucker! I barely know the kid. I can watch him die all night long!”

Isaac cringed and drew Stiles’ head back against his chest.

“I-I know that was a fucked up thing to say,” Stiles mumbled.

“No, I get it. I’m sure it would be easier with Liam than, like, Scott, or your dad, or Lydia.”

“Or you.”

Isaac swallowed and nodded. He was shaken, and not just about Stiles’ declaration.

“Speaking of Liam dying...”

Stiles sat up and arched an eyebrow at Isaac.

“Something happened that I haven’t told anyone.” Isaac hadn’t planned to tell Stiles either, but Stiles was being so candid with him, and Isaac desperately wanted to get this off his chest.

“The darach can hear.”

“Huh?”

“Whatever it is.” Stiles shrugged one shoulder and frowned. “I won’t say anything, but you shouldn’t tell me unless you’re okay with the darach knowing too.”

“Oh.” Isaac raked his fingers through his hair. He certainly didn’t want some random, evil druid to hear his confession...but on the other hand Iron Claw already knew things he’d rather only Scott know. It had taken Isaac years to reach the point of wanting to open up to people. Now that he had made it, he couldn’t stop talking to his two best friends just because they were possessed by demonic spirits. No relationship was perfect. “It happened two nights ago when Liam was attacked.”

“What happened?”

Isaac took a breath and blurted it out before he could change his mind. “I almost killed him.”

“What?” Stiles crossed his legs under him and turned to fully face Isaac on the couch. “I thought Iron Claw...?”

“He did, but when I was taking him to the hospital he almost didn’t make it, and...”

Isaac hung his head as a raw, quivering ache throbbed in his chest around his packbond with Liam. Their bond felt so fucking special and important. He’d die to protect Liam now, but two nights ago...Isaac could barely cope with the knowledge of what he had almost done.

“And?” Stiles face was void of judgment, showing only patient sympathy.

“It was the full moon, and I was in a lot of pain and really fucked in the head from everything that had happened, and Liam was so...broken and vulnerable.” Isaac dropped his eyes and stared at the floor. “I wanted to kill him.”
“That’s not so bad. Just wanting to–”

“I had my fangs on his throat.”

Stiles shook his head and rubbed Isaac’s arm. “I know that’s a big deal. I know you must feel like shit about it, and I’m so sorry that happened but...my perspective is kinda skewed right now. I just spent the last three days watching you and the rest of the pack kill and torture each other, and me. And I mean I know real life versus nightmare and all, but you didn’t do it. So maybe go easy on yourself?”

“You're not disappointed in me?”

“For doing the right thing in a difficult moment?” Stiles scoffed and shoved Isaac’s shoulder. “Um, no, try proud of you.”

“Seriously?” Isaac looked up and gave Stiles a small smile. How much of that did he mean, and how much was just him trying to be supportive? “But I almost lost control in the worst possible way.”

“But you didn’t and that’s what counts.”

Isaac wanted to believe that, but he knew no one but Liam could absolve him of his guilt.

“I need to tell him.”

Stiles’ lips parted and he stared at Isaac before rolling his eyes. “Yeah, that’s a real good idea. I’m sure hearing his mentor almost murdered him won’t upset the new werewolf with anger issues.”

“Mentor?”

“Well obviously.” Stiles shook his head and smirked. “He looks at you like you used to look at Scott.”

Isaac’s guilt deepened and anxiety twisted his stomach. “He should look at Scott that way. Not me.”

“I have a theory on why he doesn’t.”

Isaac motioned with his hand for Stiles to continue.

“Because Scott almost killed him!” Stiles shifted in his seat and gave Isaac a serious look. “I know you feel bad, and you can talk to me about it all you want, but Liam needs a packmate he can trust right now.”

“And lying to him is good for that trust?”

“A lie by omission sure. Look think about it this way, how would you feel if you found out that eight months ago in a desperate moment, before we were packmates or even friends, I almost killed you? Would it change anything between us now?”

“Well I wouldn’t love it but...no I guess not.”

“Same here. I don’t hold your crazy early days in Derek’s pack against you. We’ve moved on and we’re fine. Wait till you get to a point like that with Liam, then if you need to tell him, tell him.”

Isaac nodded. He could see the logic in what Stiles was saying. Besides, it wasn’t like Liam was in any danger from Isaac anymore. Telling him what happened would only serve to unburden Isaac...and maybe Isaac deserved to carry this guilt around for awhile for what he had nearly done.
Either way he needed to think about what was best for Liam right now, not himself.

Isaac pulled Stiles into a hug and scented his neck. How had he coped without him the last few days?

“I wish Scott would react like this when I try to convince him to lie about something,” Stiles remarked with a snicker as he held the back of Isaac’s head and bared his throat, giving Isaac greater access.

“I’m way more devious than Scott.”

“That’s true.”

Isaac growled against Stiles’ skin, but it soon turned into a quaking laugh.

“Come on, wild thing, let’s go to bed.” Stiles stood and held out his hand for Isaac, and it was weirdly intimate, but Isaac didn’t hesitate to accept the gesture and let Stiles haul him to his feet.

Isaac turned off the television with his free hand, then pulled Stiles closer so he could guide him through the dark room. Stiles wrapped his arms around Isaac’s torso, and the way he brushed his leg against Isaac’s shin made it clear what he had in mind.

Okay sure.

Isaac picked Stiles up with one arm and cradled him against his body as he finished getting the living room in order then ascended the stairs.

Twenty minutes later, Stiles was sound asleep in Isaac’s bed, sprawled across his chest and breathing slow, warm breaths against Isaac’s bare skin. They were shirtless and the body contact felt really good. Isaac couldn’t help but think how much better it would feel if they were naked from the waist down too.

Geez, I am so fucking horny!

Isaac laughed to himself and rubbed Stiles’ shoulder. It seemed like he was always horny when Stiles was in his bed, and he knew that wasn’t exactly a coincidence. The full moon and the fact that it had been an absurdly long time since Isaac had gotten off, at least by his standards, didn’t help. He couldn’t manage another day like this, so he set an alarm on his phone. He’d get up twenty minutes early and jerk off in the shower before school since having a lucid wet dream with Stiles in his bed wasn’t an option.

Since he was going to sleep, and since Stiles was already out cold, Isaac let himself shamelessly inhale Stiles’ scent, even going so far as to focus on the unspeakably delicious pheromones circling his crotch. Stiles’ balls smelled incredible, and the composition of the scent, fresh but with a denser, needier musk, told Isaac Stiles probably hadn’t cum since he awoke from his coma the night before. Just two half-naked, sexually frustrated guys lying in each other’s arms, no big deal, nothing to see here.

Isaac was hard as steel and high out of his mind by the time he slipped into unconsciousness, and maybe he’d regret it in the morning, but right now he was just too happy and tingly with Stiles draped all over him to care.

Hours later, Isaac was disoriented but enthusiastic when he awoke to the ringing of his phone. It would suck getting out of the warm bed and leaving Stiles, but it was definitely time to go get some relief!
Isaac grumbled and blinked when he opened his eyes. It wasn’t morning. Why was his alarm going off? Wait, that wasn’t his alarm, it was the regular ring tone. Someone was calling him...in the middle of the night...on a full moon...oh god.

Having Stiles tangled around him impeded his movements, and by the time Isaac grabbed his phone it had quit ringing. The missed call was from Ethan, and when he tried to call back it went straight to voicemail. Before Isaac could panic, he got a text.

Ethan: *I have to go back downstairs, but this just happened...*

A picture message arrived moments later. It took Isaac a few seconds to figure out what he was looking at. It was the basement of the Argent compound in weird lighting, a result of the flash on Ethan’s phone glinting off the steel of Scott’s cage, which was bent and mangled but unbroken. Scott was in the picture, the real Scott based on his human eyes and general posture. He was sitting on the floor of the cage, clutching his hand to his stomach as he looked through the bars at something shiny in front of the cage. Isaac expanded the picture and zoomed in, trying to mentally picture what it would look like without the glare.

Isaac gasped and sat up, sending Stiles sliding off his chest and into his lap. The shiny object was a long, iron claw, one end of which was covered in blood and skin.

Chapter End Notes

I’m so excited for the next several chapters! I hate to spoil the ‘surprise’ but Isaac and Stiles are really close to getting official (*not* next chapter, but soon). In fact, as with Isaac and Ethan’s first time, it’s probably about time we start discussing what you guys would like to see with Isaac and Stiles’ first time. Unlike with Isaac/Ethan, I’m pretty set on how I want the dynamic between Isaac/Stiles to go the first time, but specifically if you’re interested, I’m open to naughty input about how you’d like Stiles’ private bits to be since Isaac hasn’t explored real-life Stiles naked yet (there was that sex dream in chapter 11, but that was just his imagination). So yeah, what are you thinking for cock size and shape? Cut or uncut? Cum and precum production? Does Stiles keep things natural or smooth down there? What about his ass? Do you guys imagine any particular kinks or fetishes he might have? Any other peculiarities? Like maybe he enjoys humming Abba songs during sex, I’m not judging. (I feel like that might get on Isaac’s nerves though.)

LOL, anyway, I know such a discussion could get a bit lewd, and definitely I want the plot and romance of the story to stand on it own, but this is supposed to be a smutty, erotic story too, so I’m open to hearing opinions/suggestions about what would make it hotter for readers, if you’re comfortable making them.

General feedback on the chapter or story as a whole is always greatly appreciated too!
Stiles was rambling about US History as he and Isaac climbed into his Jeep to go to the Argent compound. It started as a general discussion about their class itself and the homework Stiles had missed, but it transitioned into the broader topic. Did Isaac know European settlers had basically committed a genocide against Native Americans, and wasn’t it fucked up that their textbook glossed over that fact?

Yes, it was fucked up, just like it was fucked up that genocide was the subject Stiles had landed on as a substitute for discussing Scott and the cryptic picture text they had received. Isaac knew Stiles meant well with his efforts to distract them, and it was true that worrying and wildly speculating wasn’t going to make anything better, but this was the most irritated Isaac had been at Stiles since before his coma.

The night before while Isaac was trying to make sense of the mangled cage and ripped out claw in the photo, another text had come through, this one from Lydia. It was then that Isaac noticed that though Ethan had tried to call him specifically, his text and photo message were part of a group thread involving Isaac’s entire pack and Aiden. Lydia had asked for details and said that she was hesitant to leave Malia alone, but had inquired whether they needed to find someone who could go to the compound and open the mountain ash. Aiden had texted a couple minutes later telling his brother that he could meet him at the compound if Ethan sent the GPS location. Isaac had been surprised and angry that Aiden was texting while he was out in the woods with Liam on the full moon and had demanded to know how Liam was doing. Aiden’s response had been a flipping-someone-off emoji and a picture of Liam fully wolfed out and swinging from a tree limb. After what had felt like an eternity but was only about ten minutes, Ethan had texted again and said that he and Scott had decided the situation wasn’t urgent and that everyone should resume their normal plans. A picture showing Scott smiling and waving through the bent bars of his cage had followed. It alleviated Isaac’s anxiety somewhat, but it didn’t escape his attention that Scott’s smile was clearly forced and that he was waving with his left hand, the one he hadn’t been clutching to his stomach in the first picture.

When he wasn't having nightmares, Stiles had to be the world’s soundest sleeper. He hadn’t woken up from Isaac’s frantic texting, huffing, and general worrying. Eventually, Isaac had settled down and managed to fall back into a fitful sleep until morning, soothed in large part by Stiles’ proximity and his comforting scent. If Isaac had been sleeping alone, he wouldn’t have even tried to go back to sleep and probably would have wolfed out and run all the way to the Argent compound.

Isaac had woken Stiles up early so that they could go check on Scott before school. Lydia was meeting them there.

“Can we not talk about people getting their hands cut off?” Isaac asked with a harsh edge to his tone as he interrupted Stiles’ rant about Columbus’ treatment of Native Islanders on Hispaniola who didn't collect enough gold.

“Sure.” Stiles grinned playfully. “What would you like to talk about people getting cut off?”

“Their hair,” Isaac responded dryly.

Stiles shrugged. “Okay, so did ya know in North Korea people have to choose from one of fifteen
legal haircuts for their gender?"

Isaac growled and flashed his eyes at Stiles but undermined it by smirking around his fangs.

Stiles laughed and they fell silent as the GPS on his phone announced a turn. Isaac could have directed him, but Ethan had sent the coordinates in his group message as a precaution even though he said no one needed to come. So Stiles had mapped their destination since he had never been to the compound.

“I’m worried about Scott too,” Stiles said quietly, breaking the silence that had descended over the Jeep.

Isaac frowned. He had rather liked the silence. It was preferable to chattering about topics that didn’t matter and easier to cope with than addressing actual concerns.

“Ethan would have told us to come if Scott was in danger.”

Stiles turned his head and gave Isaac a once over before returning his gaze to the road.

“What?”

“Nothing.” Stiles laughed. “I just have to interpret your mood like a normal person instead of a supernatural mood ring like you and Scott.”

Isaac grunted and occupied himself by directing his nervous concern toward someone who could actually give him answers.

Isaac: How was your night?

“Did you sleep okay?” Isaac asked as the text he sent prompted him to realize he hadn’t asked Stiles whether he’d had a nightmare last night. Considering Stiles had slept in his arms and barely moved, it seemed unlikely.

“I slept great!” Stiles grinned and tapped the steering wheel. “I strangled Lydia once and blew up the Beacon Hills Hospital with Melissa on duty, but that was it. So all in all a pretty low-key night.”

Isaac gaped at him.

“It wasn’t that realistic. The darach was really phoning it in.” He licked his lips and gave Isaac a lingering look. “I, uh, always sleep so much better with you.”

Isaac smiled as a warm flush crept over his body. He knew he should be fighting his deepening, unrequited feelings for Stiles, but if he could help...

“I’m not doing anything tonight.”

“I really wish I could take you up on that, but my dad’s off and he wants us to spend the evening together.”

Isaac opened his mouth to answer but the buzz of his phone distracted him.

Liam: It was great! Aiden taught me how to concentrate on specific scents

Before Isaac could respond a second text arrived.

Liam: Hows scott?
Isaac: Don’t know yet. We’re on the way to meet him

Liam: You guys should come meet us for breakfast. Me and aiden and malia are at tonys diner. They really do have the best waffles and I can like smell the individual blue berries. Its so cool!

Isaac: Stiles and I have to go to school

Liam: [frowny face emoji]

Liam: I miss you

“What?” Stiles asked, apparently reading the surprise and confusion in Isaac’s reaction to the text.

“Liam misses me.”

“Awww that's sweet,” Stiles answered, a smirk on his face but his tone sincere.

“I just saw him last night.”

“Well, you are very lovable.” Stiles said it casually, but there was a hint of sincerity that made Isaac’s stomach tighten.

“I don’t know what to say.” Isaac didn’t just mean to Liam.

Stiles shrugged. “Do you miss him too?”

“Not really. I–”

Liam: Nvm I know thats weird. I dont know why I said that

Isaac frowned. He couldn’t leave Liam hanging like that. He responded quickly but worded his text as carefully as he could.

Isaac: It’s not weird. We’re pack. I was worried about you last night. I’m glad you’re ok.

Isaac read the text out loud to Stiles to get his opinion.

“Give him a smiley face.”

Isaac nodded and sent Liam a happy-grin emoji. A moment later Liam responded in kind.

Liam: [happy grin emoji]

Liam: Aiden says I have to stop texting

Isaac laughed and sent Liam one more text so he would check it and annoy Aiden.

Isaac: K enjoy breakfast

When they arrived at the Argent compound, Ethan was waiting for them out front. Stiles parked the Jeep and reached into the back for his school bag.

“You’re bringing your bag?”

“Yeah, I have a Pop-Tart and a bottle of OJ for Scott.” Stiles shouldered the bag and opened his door.
There was an awkward moment as Isaac walked toward the building and Ethan slid his phone into his pocket then seemed unsure what to do with his hands. It would have been adorable except now Isaac was unsure what to do with his hands.

“Hey,” Isaac mumbled, stepping a little too close to Ethan and leaving his posture open. That was as much as he was willing to put himself out there. Ethan could take the initiative if he wanted to.

He did.

“Hey.” Ethan wrapped his arms around Isaac and pulled him forward the last half-step, making him lose his balance slightly and collapse against Ethan.

It wasn’t the worst place Isaac had ever collapsed. He regretted it anyway. The hug was all wrong as a casual greeting between friends. There was too much inhaling of each other’s scents and rubbing of each other’s backs for non-packmates. It also made Isaac’s crotch too warm and – yep, that was arousal also flaring in Ethan’s scent.

“Hey,” Isaac muttered again, pulling away and folding his arms over his chest.

“Hey,” Ethan repeated with a smirk and a wink.

Asshole. Isaac’s stomach fluttered and he looked away.

Fine. Adorable asshole.

“Hey man,” Stiles said to Ethan with a head nod as he leaned his shoulder against Isaac’s.

“Hey!” Ethan’s smirk shifted into a regular smile and he reached out and bumped Stiles’ arm with the back of his knuckles. “I’m glad you’re up.”

Stiles’ eyes flitted to his arm where Ethan had touched him and a smile formed on his face.

“Thanks!”

A little trill of happiness rang in Isaac’s chest as Ethan and Stiles got along. Apparently, that was something he cared about now. He gave in to the urge to drop hands on both their shoulders, but let go a second later as the sound of Lydia’s car turning onto the dirt road brought a wave of self-consciousness with it.

“What is it?” Stiles asked, glancing between Isaac and Ethan who were both looking at the clump of trees near the bend in the road.

“Lydia’s here,” Isaac answered.

They waited for her to park and exchanged quick greetings before heading into the concrete building.

“Is Scott okay?” Stiles asked, walking down the dimly lit corridor alongside Ethan with Isaac and Lydia following them.

“He is,” Ethan answered, “but...he got hurt.”

“What happened,” Lydia asked.

“He’d been zoned out for hours. I was monitoring his heart rate for changes, but Iron Claw must have modulated it. All at once he suddenly sprang up off the floor of his cage and attacked the bars, claws out. I got up and flipped the switch to zap him, but his claws were already hooked in the bars. One of them got caught and when the electricity knocked him back, it ripped out.”
Isaac hissed through his teeth and Stiles grimaced.

“How did that affect Scott?” Lydia asked.

“Well...you’ll see.” Ethan opened the door of the interrogation chamber and they all turned on the flashlights on their phones as they entered the dark, windowless room.

“Oh, this isn’t creepy at all,” Stiles remarked, shining his light on the vertical metal racks designed to restrain prisoners while the Argents tortured them with the various sharp and blunt implements hung up on the nearby wall.

“Be glad you can’t smell it.” Isaac’s nose wrinkled as he glanced at one of the rusted drains in the floor.

“Or feel the death,” Lydia said with a faraway quality in her voice.

“Come on,” Ethan said as he led them to the open, cellar-style doors in the corner of the room.

Ethan and Lydia paused and looked at Isaac as the group reached the narrow, dark opening. Stiles seemed confused for a moment, but then understanding flashed across his features in the dim glow from his phone, and he gave Isaac the same concerned expression as the others.

“I’m fine,” Isaac said, not trying to keep the annoyance out of his voice. It helped obscure the anxiety.

The group descended the rickety wooden stairs with Ethan going first and Stiles and Lydia in front and behind Isaac. Lydia brushed reassuring fingers across Isaac’s back as he stepped over the threshold.

“Guys?” Scott’s voice called out, ringing with relief.

“We’re here!” Stiles attempted to rush past Ethan on the stairs but missed a step. “Waaah!”

The light on Stiles phone waved around the room as the device clattered onto one of the wooden steps. Isaac had already lunged into position to catch Stiles’ head and shoulders before they slammed into the staircase, but it proved unnecessary as Ethan snatched him out of air by the waist and held him against his chest.

Stiles cleared his throat and ducked his head, embarrassment rolling off of him in thick sheets. “I tripped.”

“Yeah, we noticed.” Isaac stooped and picked up Stiles’ phone. His clumsy packmate was lucky; it was undamaged.

“You can put me down now,” Stiles remarked to Ethan in an indignant tone.

Ethan laughed and shook his head, carrying Stiles the rest of the way down the stairs. Isaac squeezed the back of Ethan’s neck in gratitude and passed Stiles his phone as they reached level ground.

Lydia stepped around them and grabbed the key for Scott’s cage off the hook on the wall before going to the mountain ash circle. She paused as the light on her phone glinted off the long, bloody iron claw laying on the ground between her and the cage. Her heart rate sped up and her scent clouded with distress.

“Lydia, could you lemme out?” Scott’s voice was soft and his scent was muddled with stress and
agitation.

Stiles stepped past her and broke the mountain ash ring with his foot as he hurried to the door of Scott’s cage. Lydia handed him the key then crossed the short space back to Isaac.

“It’s killed a lot of people,” she whispered, glancing back toward the darkness where the claw was once again shrouded.

Isaac mumbled an acknowledgment, but most of his attention was focused on his alpha.

Scott gave Stiles a quick, one-armed hug, his other arm down by his side, hand twisted back out of view. He repeated the process with Lydia and Isaac, but Isaac grabbed his wrist as they separated.

“Oh my god, Scott.”

“It doesn’t hurt,” Scott answered, his good hand cupping Isaac’s neck.

Isaac’s stomach lurched and a chill swept over him as he examined Scott’s blood-dried, right hand. His index finger was...gone up to the second knuckle. All that was left was a nub that somehow looked too stout without the usual tapering off of a finger.

An ache flared in Isaac’s chest and he surged forward, wrapping one arm around Scott and carefully holding his disfigured hand between their bodies. He nuzzled Scott’s neck and poured comfort through their packbond, relieved when Scott’s facade crumbled enough that he melted into Isaac’s embrace and nuzzled back.

Stiles and Lydia rubbed Scott’s shoulders and murmured reassurances. A small, petty part of Isaac was pleased that he was the one holding Scott, that his non-werewolf packmates couldn’t offer the same type of supernatural comfort that he could. It was stupid and selfish, and Isaac was ashamed of himself for having the thought as he let go.

Scott leaned on his pack as he turned and looked through the darkness toward the lone wolf standing quietly by the cage. “Ethan?”

Ethan raised his head and Scott stepped away from the group. He lifted his arms just a little and gave Ethan a questioning look. Ethan’s heart stuttered and he dropped his eyes, a combination of confusion, anxiety, and happiness billowing off of him.

The omega didn’t look up as he crossed the room and accepted the alpha’s embrace.

“Thanks man, you were great last night.”

“Thanks.” Ethan’s voice was thick with the same swirl of emotions that were radiating off of him.

Isaac tilted his head as he assessed the situation. Ethan’s behavior was genuine but unnecessary and out of character. He could have blocked his scent, and Isaac knew from experience how effectively Ethan could make his voice neutral when he wanted to. He was being vulnerable in an attempt to win Scott’s approval. Isaac didn’t like it.

“What?” Stiles asked Isaac.

“Nothing,” Isaac answered, forcing the scowl off his face.

Scott and Ethan both gave Isaac disappointed looks as they separated. They weren’t being fair. Isaac couldn’t help that he felt possessive and didn’t like an omega trying to worm his way into the pack,
even if the omega was Ethan, especially if the omega was Ethan.

It sucked that the omega was Ethan. The stung, betrayed expression on his face made Isaac want to melt into the dirty concrete floor.

Lydia squeezed Isaac’s hand and flashed him a smile, and in that moment it felt like she was the only person in the room who understood him.

“So, emergency vet trip to see Deaton?” Stiles’ tone was light and amused. Isaac doubted anyone was fooled.

“Yeah, I’ll call him.” Scott pulled his phone out of his pocket and headed for the stairs since there was no reception in the basement. It must have been a hassle last night for Ethan to keep running down to check on Scott then run back up to text the others. Isaac felt more like a douchebag.

“I’ll come with,” Stiles said, following Scott up the darkened staircase with a hurried recklessness. Isaac and Ethan smirked at each other but didn’t say anything. Isaac felt less like a douchebag.

After Scott and Stiles left, Ethan retrieved the dismembered claw from the floor and wiped it clean with the front of his shirt while Isaac stared at Ethan’s abs and the bulge in the front of his pants and regretted not getting up early enough to jerk off in the shower like he’d planned.

“Disgusting.” Lydia turned up her nose and frowned at what Ethan was doing.

Disgusting wasn’t the word Isaac was going to use, but there were chunks of Scott’s skin and cartilage clinging to Ethan’s blood-smeared green v-neck...so yeah, maybe disgusting was an okay adjective.

Ethan handed the claw to Isaac without making eye contact, and a new tension Isaac hadn’t realized he was carrying eased. It was dumb. It’s not like Isaac thought Ethan was going to try to run off with it or hold it ransom from the pack, but keeping it safe for Scott was a responsibility Isaac wanted.

He held it in both hands as Ethan shone his light at it for him. It was cold, thick, and heavy, and Isaac judged it to be almost a foot long, though a few inches would have been embedded in Iron Claw’s finger. It had a rounded, curved top with sloping sides and a flat underside. It looked roughly how Isaac imagined his own claws would look if they grew to an enormous size and turned into solid iron. He cringed and his stomach throbbed as he flashed back to this very claw, along with three others, impaling his stomach and heading straight for his heart.

Ethan lowered his light and squeezed Isaac’s shoulder. “It’s okay.”

Isaac looked up at him, at his smooth, handsome face and gentle brown eyes. Isaac flashed back to the image of Ethan’s face slashed and his eyes mutilated and unseeing as he heroically held Iron Claw’s arm back and kept him from finishing Isaac off, as he let Iron Claw impale him with his other hand but didn’t let go.

Isaac held the claw in one hand and threw his arms around Ethan, using every bit of his werewolf strength to hug him but careful to avoid poking him with the iron weapon.

“I’ll give you guys a minute.” Lydia strolled across the basement toward Scott’s cage.

“I do trust you,” Isaac whispered, scenting Ethan’s neck. He wasn’t pack, but god he smelled good.

“I know,” Ethan whispered, a lazy happiness in his voice.
“You can hold the claw if you want,” Isaac said as he pulled back and let go.

Ethan laughed. “I’m good.”

“You’re coming with us to Deaton’s right?” Isaac tucked the base of the claw into his pocket and angled the sharp tip out away from his body.

“You want me to?” Ethan’s face registered surprise.

“Yes?” Isaac answered, trying to sort out his conflicting feelings. It felt too much like a pack thing for him to actually want Ethan there, but at the same time it felt like Ethan was entitled to be there, and either way Isaac was pulsing with affection for Ethan and wanted him nearby.

“I don’t have to go,” Ethan answered, and now his voice was neutral, hinting at neither hope nor disappointment.

“I want you to,” Isaac said, making up his mind as he reflected on the anguish Ethan was in as an omega and how that burden would be eased while Ethan was around other werewolves.

“We should probably ask Scott,” Ethan remarked, happiness bleeding into his tone.

“Ask me what?” Scott was at the top of the stairs.

“Can Ethan come with us to Deaton’s?” Isaac asked, shining his light at the wall behind Scott as he descended into view.

“Of course.” Scott gave them both smiles and locked eyes with Ethan. “You can be as involved in this as you wanna be. You’ve been amazing. We wouldn’t be alive without you.”

Ethan flushed at the approval and dropped his eyes submissively again.

Another unwanted wave of jealous possession crashed over Isaac. Ethan wasn’t supposed to be submissive to his alpha. It was weird seeing Ethan be submissive at all. The dynamic was all wrong, and even though he had just invited Ethan to join them at Deaton’s, his impulse was to protest that Ethan shouldn’t be allowed to come.

“I think the cage will hold for another night,” Lydia said, mercifully speaking up before Isaac could open his mouth and stick his foot in it.

“Yes, I think so too. Ethan stopped Iron Claw before he could do too much damage.”

Isaac rumbled a low growl. That was the proud tone Scott used with him.

All eyes snapped to Isaac.

“I don’t like the idea of you spending another night in this place,” Isaac said to Scott, and that wasn’t a lie. “Can’t you stay home? Now that the full moon’s over with, won’t Iron Claw be too weak to break through mountain ash?”

“That’s something we need to ask Deaton.” Scott looked around the room, phone clutched between his thumb and three fingers. “Hey where’s Stiles?”

“Didn’t he go with you?” Lydia asked.

“Yeah, but once I started talking to Deaton he said he was coming back to meet you guys.”
Everyone exchanged concerned looks, and they hurried out of the basement.

“Where did you make the call from?” Lydia asked as they tromped through the interrogation room and back out into the corridor.

“Just outside the front entrance,” Scott answered. “I tried to call by a window but there was too much static.”

“Crap, so he could be anywhere inside.” Isaac heaved a sigh and looked down the corridor leading away from the interrogation room. He had never been in that direction and knew next to nothing about the size or layout of the Argent compound. There was another unexplored corridor by the entrance and numerous closed doors that Isaac had passed but never entered.

“Let’s split up,” Scott said.

“No, we shouldn’t,” Ethan answered with more authority than Scott was expecting based on his surprised reaction. Isaac liked it. “The compound doesn’t get good service. We might lose each other and not be able to call or text.”

“I just texted Stiles, and I think it went through,” Lydia said, holding up her phone, “but you’re right. We don’t know if he got it or where the dead zones are in this building.”

“He probably just got distracted and wandered off,” Scott said with forced optimism as they walked down the unexplored corridor.

Lydia stopped at the first door they came to and reached for the handle but Isaac shook his head.

“He didn’t go in there.”

“Oh right,” Lydia said with a smirk as she rejoined the group, “we have three bloodhounds in the search party.”

They passed two more doors that didn’t have Stiles’ scent on them and came to an intersection where the corridor branched off in either direction or continued straight. Isaac’s anxiety spiked. Stiles clearly hadn’t touched any of the walls, and Isaac had no idea which path was correct.

Ethan tilted his head and sniffed. “That one.” He pointed toward the corridor on the left.

“Great, so two bloodhounds and a mutt.”

They passed another door and rounded a bend in the hallway before the faint but distinct rhythm of Stiles’ heartbeat reached Isaac’s ears. He raced forward to the nearest door and opened it.

“Isaac, wait!” Ethan called after him. “It’s not that room. You’re hearing him through the walls.”

Isaac’s cheeks warmed in a blush as he realized Ethan was right. There was no trace of Stiles’ scent in the darkened room.

After rounding one more corner they arrived at a door that was marked with Stiles’ scent.

The werewolves gagged and Lydia recoiled when Scott opened the door. The room was a cacophony of potent scents. Isaac’s nose burned and his eyes watered. He was too overwhelmed to even try to sort out everything he was smelling.
“It smells like a very nasty museum,” Lydia said, covering her nose and mouth with her hand.

“It’s worse if you’re a werewolf,” Scott assured her between halting breaths.

“Focus on Stiles’ scent. Block everything else out.” Ethan inhaled, eyes glowing blue with determination. When he exhaled they cooled and his face relaxed. “Got it.”

“Show off.” Isaac glared at him but tried to follow his advice. He coughed and dry heaved.

Next to him Scott’s eyes burned red and his jaw clenched. A moment later he too relaxed. He patted Isaac’s shoulder. “You can do it.”

Isaac took another breath and was overcome by the range of noxious scents: spicy, sickly sweet, astringent, sour, tangy, savory, metallic, and rot. He concentrated on the tangy. Stiles’ scent had tangy notes, and tangy was one of the easier scents to stomach. Soon he found the rich, caffeinated, crisp buzz that made up other constituent parts of Stiles’ signature aroma. He found the fragrances of sage, sap, and rain too, but decided to shove them aside with the other odors in the room and focus only on the purest elements of Stiles’ scent.

“Ready?” Scott asked. Isaac nodded.

They entered the room and scanned their lights around. Lydia’s description of a museum wasn’t far off. The ‘room’ was further subdivided into smaller, open-entrance chambers. The chamber they were standing in had two exits, one straight ahead and one to the left, as well as the main door through which they’d entered. Long tables with glass cases occupied the interior of the chamber and musty tapestries adorned the walls. The group followed Stiles’ scent through the left exit and into another vestibule.

This chamber had a similar configuration with an exit straight ahead and another to the right that would take them further into the center of the larger overall room. Tables with display cases once again occupied much of the floorspace, but this vestibule featured shelves along the back wall instead of tapestries.

They hadn’t passed close enough to any tables in the first vestibule to investigate its contents, but this time Isaac shone his light on some of the cases as they walked by. Lydia gasped and jumped back, and Isaac choked and gagged as he couldn’t help but smell the scent of what he was looking at: a mouldering, decapitated head. It had grayish green flesh, a bloated tongue protruding from double rows of sharp, pointed teeth, and scraggly black hair that was sloughing off the skull and had chunks of scalp still clinging to it.

“Don’t look,” Scott told Lydia, guiding her away from the table and toward the center exit that had been to the right when they entered.

“And don’t smell,” Ethan told Isaac, wrapping an arm around his side.

Isaac didn’t care if it raised questions with Scott later, he buried his face in the crook of Ethan’s neck and inhaled his scent to purge the stench of putrefied flesh.

Ethan’s fingertips scratched soothingly along the back of Isaac’s head as they followed Scott and Lydia into the next vestibule

“Why was it still so wet?” Isaac asked once the nausea had passed and he’d disentangled himself from Ethan.

“Gerard was still using this place until like eight months ago,” Scott said as the group swerved left
toward the next chamber without examining anything in the display cases.

“Who or what do you think that was?” Lydia asked.

“We probably don’t wanna know,” Scott answered.

“It was a wendigo,” Ethan said. “I could tell by the teeth.”

“What’s a wendigo?” Isaac asked.

“That you don’t wanna know,” Ethan answered with a wink.

Isaac frowned at him.

“Basically a monster with an insatiable appetite for human – or werewolf – flesh.” Ethan looked at Lydia and shrugged one shoulder. “I doubt banshees would be safe either.”

Isaac hoped there weren’t anymore of these wendigo creatures around in Beacon Hills.

Scott paused and raised an arm as they stood in the center of the next vestibule. Stiles was in the chamber to the left, so everyone angled their lights away from the entrance, and the werewolves reached out with their senses.

“Sounds normal,” Ethan whispered at werewolf levels.

“I’m not so sure,” Scott whispered back.

“It’s the darach,” Isaac whispered as he recognized the subtle difference in heart rhythm. Scott and Ethan had never been around the darach before, at least Scott hadn’t while conscious.

“You’re sure?” Scott asked.

Isaac nodded. The difference wasn’t as pronounced as the first two times he had heard the darach occupying Stiles’ body, but it was there. If Iron Claw could modulate Scott’s heartbeat to be less conspicuously not-Scott to the werewolves, Isaac wondered if the darach was developing a similar ability.

Scott gave Isaac and Ethan meaningful looks and then flashed his eyes red and silently extended his nine remaining claws.

Blue sparked across Ethan’s face, and he opened his mouth, baring his fangs.

Isaac reluctantly let his vision heat with gold as his gums and fingertips throbbed around his slowly sprouting weapons. Realizing that Lydia was unarmed, he pulled the dismembered claw from his pocket and held the blunt end toward her.

She gave him a death glare but accepted the blade, gripping it like a dagger.

“Let’s do this,” Ethan whispered, and he sounded a little too excited about the prospect of violence.

“We can’t fight the darach without hurting Stiles,” Isaac reminded him.

“Maybe we can scare—”

Scott was interrupted by the grinding zzzup of a zipper. A moment later Stiles’ heartbeat returned to normal.
“It’s Stiles now!” Isaac declared at a normal volume, eyes cooling and claws and fangs retracting.

“Isaac?!” Stiles called, voice tight with panic and heart rate accelerating. “I don’t know where I am!”

“We’re right here, Stiles,” Scott called, walking into the opening so Stiles could see him.

Stiles rushed into their chamber, school bag conspicuously swinging. He touched Scott’s arm and looked around the dim room. “I don’t know what happened.”

“What’s in your bag?” Isaac asked, unable to keep the accusation out of his tone.

“Oh right!” Stiles twisted and held the bag against his chest as he unzipped it. “I gotcha a snack, Scotty.”

“Whaat? I’m so hungry!” Scott bounced on the balls of his feet and looked eagerly at Stiles.

“What’d ya get?”

Stiles rummaged around and pulled out a packet of strawberry Pop-Tarts.

“Thanks man!” Scott took the treat and gripped it in both hands. His thumbs and left index finger got into position along the seam of the foil wrapper to tear it open, but the nub of his bloodstained right index finger twitched ineffectually. Everyone cringed and Lydia reached to help him, but before she could, he tore it open with his teeth. He tried to act casual as he crinkled the sides of the wrapper away from the pastry and took a bite.

Stiles frowned and pulled out a bottle of orange juice. He unscrewed the cap before passing it to Scott.

“Dude, you’re the best!” Scott took a big swig and another bite of Pop-Tart.

Ethan arched his brow at Isaac and Isaac nodded.

“Stiles, I think you have something else in your bag,” Isaac said.

“Yeah, like a buncha school crap. Can you be more specific?”

“We heard the darach put something in it,” Scott said with his mouth full.

Stiles rooted around. His eyes widened when he shifted a binder. “Whoa!”

He pulled out a long, flat black leather case and handed it to Isaac.

“I have no idea what that is,” Stiles said, backing up with his palms raised.

The case had the expected leathery notes but also smelled faintly of leaves and dirt. The top flap was sealed with a brass snap, above which was embroidered a silver crescent moon. Isaac slid his phone into his pocket, relying on the light the others were casting in his direction as he unsnapped the case and flipped it open. It contained a stack of five, thin panels of glass, each individually wrapped in thin pieces of muslin cloth. He pulled one out and gave the leather case to Lydia so that he could unwrap the glass. The center of the panel was etched with a finely detailed image of a wolf’s head, and the corners were decorated with small circles. Thin lines ran along the outer edges of the panel, connecting the circles and surrounding the wolf. Wanting to show the others, Isaac pulled the cloth away and held the pane of glass up to Ethan’s beam of light.

Isaac blinked and turned his head as light shone through the glass and glared into his eyes. It felt weird on his face, but there was a collective gasp and surprised murmurs from the others, distracting
him from the sensation.

“What?” Isaac asked.

He turned so that he was holding the panel of glass out away from his body and into open space. This time when Ethan’s light hit it, he understood the cause of his friends’ surprised reactions. The panel was gathering the light that hit it and channeling it all toward the etchings, leaving its smooth surfaces dim but its embellished surfaces glimmering a vibrant silver. An image of a wolf’s head with the circles and lines surrounding it was reflected on the wall in front of them.

“Is that magic or just how the glass is designed?” Stiles asked no one in particular.

“It’s moonlight,” Isaac answered as he made the connection with how the light had felt on his skin.

“What are you talking about?” Scott asked, crumpling up his empty Pop-Tart wrapper.

Instead of trying to explain, Isaac pulled his phone out of his pocket and tilted the glass toward Scott, illuminating it with his light so that Scott could feel for himself what Isaac meant.

Scott snarled and his eyes flashed crimson.

Stiles, who had been standing the closest, jumped away and grabbed Isaac’s phone out of his hand, almost making him drop the glass panel.

Scott was already back to normal. “Sorry, I– It surprised me, and it felt like Iron Claw took over for a second.”

Stiles handed Isaac his phone back with his thumb over the light. “Next time you suspect something of being moonlight maybe don’t shine it at a possessed alpha.”

Isaac huffed and glared him.

“Let me see,” Ethan requested.

Isaac held out the glass panel for him, but Ethan shook his head.

“No, I mean–” Ethan motioned at himself with his hands, indicating he wanted Isaac to shine the silver light on him.

Stiles gave him a suspicious look and took a step back toward Isaac.

Ethan smirked at him. “I’m not possessed.”

“Yeah but still.”

Isaac ignored him and shone his light through the wolf’s head etching, focusing it on Ethan’s chest then raising it to his throat and chin so he could feel it.

“Rawr!” Ethan curled clawless fingers in the air and half-lunged at Stiles.

Stiles let out a startled yip but folded his arms and tried to play it cool. “You’re not funny.”

“I’m amused,” Isaac remarked with a snicker.

“Me too,” Lydia added.
“I hate you both.”

Ethan laughed. “Anyway, yeah, that’s definitely moonlight.”

“How is that possible?” Scott asked, moving to stand next to Isaac and examine the panel. Isaac showed him but kept the side projecting the silver light tilted away from him.

“Maybe it’s like a moonlight battery or something,” Stiles answered. “Let’s take it to Deaton and see if he knows what it is.”

Stiles reached for it, but Isaac pulled it away and handed it to Lydia along with the balled up cloth it had been wrapped in.

“I think we should put it back where you got it,” Scott said.

“But I don’t know where I got it,” Stiles answered. “It might be useful. Let’s take it.”

“I don’t think you and I can be trusted with it right now.” Scott placed a hand on Stiles’ shoulder. “The darach must want it for something, and we saw how Iron Claw reacted.”

“I agree,” Lydia said as she finished wrapping the glass panel and slid it into the leather case with the other four they hadn’t looked at. She snapped the flap shut. “We can leave it here in the compound and tell Deaton about it. If he wants to see it, I’ll take him back without you guys.”

“That’s a good idea.” Scott reached into his pocket with his disfigured hand, his nub twitching on the outside while his other three fingers dug around. After a few fumbled attempts, he produced the key for the compound’s main door. It was the only entrance as far as Isaac knew. “Here, you hang on to this,” he said, passing it to Lydia. He furrowed his brow. “Where’s the claw?”

She laughed and held up her purse. The iron tip was protruding from the open top. She shifted the claw aside, unzipped an inner compartment, and slid the key in.

The group retraced their steps through all the chambers and back to the room’s entrance. Lydia set the leather case on a table by the door and they left the room and the compound.

Once outside, Isaac climbed into Stiles’ Jeep for the trip to Deaton’s, and everyone else got in Lydia’s car. Liam had texted asking for updates about Scott, but then he had sent a second text saying he was home and going to sleep, so Isaac decided not to respond until he knew more.

When they arrived at the animal clinic, they found it closed, probably in anticipation of their visit. An irritated woman with a white Pomeranian was walking away from the door. Recognition dawned on her face as Scott got out of the car.

“Steven, are you open or not?” She scowled at him, but her eyes widened when she noticed the bloodstains on his clothes and his disheveled appearance. She cupped the fluffy dog’s head against her bosom, as though shielding it from the disturbing sight.

“We had an emergency this morning, Mrs. Fineman,” Scott answered, holding his maimed hand out of view by his side. “I’ll let Dr. Deaton know you were here.”

“No, I’ll just wait. How long will you be?”

“Oh, could be awhile.”

“Oh for Pete’s sake! What’s the point in—”
Lydia sobbed dramatically and pressed her face against Scott’s chest. “I can’t believe my Mr. Waggles is gone!”

An uncomfortable expression fell over Mrs. Fineman’s face as Lydia continued quaking and wailing. “Actually, I’ll just come back another time,” she said as she slunk past them and got in her car.

After Mrs. Fineman had left, Scott let them into the clinic and called out to Deaton. He was in the back. The doctor’s first order of business was cleaning Scott’s hand and examining his smooth, healed-over nub. Lydia had set the claw on the exam table next to him, and after he was done with his cursory evaluation of Scott, he studied the mystic claw.

“Well, what do you think?” Stiles asked after several minutes of tense silence. Isaac had been sure all along that Stiles would be the first to crack under it.

Deaton held up a hand to quiet him. He eased the base of the claw toward Scott’s finger but didn’t make contact. Scott grimaced as the end of his nub re-opened and his skin crawled around the severed bone, blood spewing onto the steel table.

“That’s a good sign,” Deaton said, surprising everyone by pulling the claw away from Scott’s finger before they could touch. The claw was quivering of its own accord in his hand. “It wants to reattach.”

“Here’s a wild idea, we could let it,” Stiles remarked as he helped Scott staunch the blood flow with a wad of gauze from the table.

Isaac silently agreed and shot the doctor a dirty look as he reached around Scott and placed his palm over the back of Scott’s hand to leach away some of the pain.

“I think that might be taking a step in the wrong direction,” Deaton answered.

“Because we need to ‘undo Iron Claw’s making,’” Lydia said with a nod, prompting Isaac to recall Deaton’s cryptic suggestion last week for how to defeat Iron Claw, the darach, and Kate.

“Exactly.” Deaton held the claw up to the light. “This is completely unnatural. It’s not something a werewolf, even an alpha, could develop on his own.”

“Ezra Crane said Iron Claw was still a beta when he got his iron claws,” Scott said.

“Well actually he said Iron Claw was a peasant,” Stiles pointed out with a smirk.

“I think he used alchemy,” Deaton said, running his hand slowly along the claw’s smooth top surface. “It was a thriving movement during the time he lived.”

“So alchemy’s real?” Ethan asked, his face registering surprise.

“I don’t know of any practitioners nowadays, but yes, it goes back millennia. There was a resurgence in the eighteen hundreds as a fringe community of scientists and pseudoscientists sought supernatural methods of harnessing and creating new powers. They didn’t all use alchemy. Some of them used electromagnetic forces, others tried to exploit the burgeoning field of pathology and germ theory, while still others experimented with a combination of medical surgery and druid rituals to try to build their own creatures.”

“Wow, that sounds – You know what? I’m just gonna say it – terrifying!” Stiles waved his hand through the air. “That sounds friggin’ terrifying!”
“Dreadful,” Lydia agreed with a nod.

“So you think Iron Claw was an alchemist?” Scott asked.

“Possibly, or he found one willing to help him,” Deaton answered. “I want to test something.” He crossed the room and pulled a metal jar off a shelf. Isaac recognized the scent of mountain ash before he even removed the lid. Deaton scooped up a handful and returned to the exam table. “Iron Claw can get through mountain ash by breaking it with his claws, right?”

Isaac answered since he had been the one to witness Iron Claw do it. “Yeah, before he got his claws, mountain ash held him just fine, but on the first night of the full moon as soon as his claws materialized he broke out.”

Deaton let the mountain ash slowly tumble from his fingers as he moved his hand in a circle over the table, creating a small, cylindrical barrier from the table to the ceiling.

“Isaac, would you like to help me test my theory?” Deaton slid the long claw across the table to Isaac. “We need to see if it’ll work for a werewolf since a human could get through regardless.”

Isaac took hold of the cold iron and hovered his hand next to the miniature mountain ash ring. Even without touching it, he could feel the repellent field humming with mystical energy. He took a deep breath and pressed the tip of the claw against it, half expecting to be zapped away like he normally was when he touched mountain ash.

Instead, the little barrier flashed with pale blue light, sizzled and popped, dimmed and flickered, and finally went out with a screeching whine. Isaac felt the energy dissipate and was sure it had worked, but held his arm directly over the ring of black powder just to be sure.

“I officially want one of those,” Ethan remarked with a chuckle.

“I’d give you mine, but I’m kind of attached,” Scott deadpanned.

“Will Iron Claw be able to manifest his remaining claws when it isn’t the full moon?” Lydia asked.

“I doubt it,” Deaton answered. “If he hasn’t killed any supernatural creatures and absorbed their power, then he shouldn’t be any stronger than he was before the full moon – weaker actually since he’ll be missing one of his claws.”

“So then I can’t have my finger back until we get rid of Iron Claw for good?” Scott looked down at his bloody nub, a devastated look on his face and anguish in his scent. “And I might lose the rest as we get closer to defeating him?”

“We’ll think of something.” Stiles squeezed Scott’s shoulder and rubbed his back.

“Yeah, Scott, it’s gonna be okay.” Isaac crossed his arm with Stiles’ and squeezed Scott’s other shoulder.

It was decided that Lydia would hide the claw from Scott and Stiles. Then the group recounted to Deaton what happened at the Argent compound, and he said that once they finished up here, he wanted to go with Lydia to see the leather case containing the mysterious panes of glass that the darach had tried to make Stiles steal. Once they were done, Lydia would also be in charge of keeping the key safe from Scott and Stiles.

“You know how we thought the darach had to sacrifice people to get more powerful?” Stiles asked once the logistics of the claw and compound key had been settled.
Deaton frowned, but gave Stiles a look of understanding. “Yes, I think we can be reasonably certain that he absorbed power through the druid amulet.”

Isaac’s heart sank even though he had assumed the same thing.

“So he’s even closer to coming back.” Stiles stared at the floor and shrugged one shoulder. “…or I’m closer to going.”

Isaac, Scott, and Lydia exchanged concerned looks, but before they could say something to reassure their friend, Ethan spoke.

“We’re not going to let that happen.”

Stiles gave him a half smile, but ran his hand through his hair and sighed. “I guess I better return the amulet to Ezra.”

Deaton pursed his lips and exhaled through his nose. “I knew that man was going to cause problems someday.”

“You know him?” Scott asked.

“I met him once years ago. Talia and I heard about that cryptid society he runs and paid him a visit to find out how much of the truth he knows. If he had had the spark of druid power, or even just the right psychological temperament, we would have leveled with him for his own good, but he had neither. He’s not the kind of person who could keep our secrets. We decided it was better for him to live in his fantasy world and spread half truths than to have the knowledge to do real harm.”

“If he’s not anything supernatural, then how did he get the amulet and those other relics to begin with?” Stiles asked.

“He’s a tenacious collector with the resources and connections to amass a wide variety of supposedly mystical things. Some of them are authentic, but he also has has a lot of junk.” Deaton was thoughtful for a moment before continuing. “I had never heard of Iron Claw until recent events, but if he was Ezra’s ancestor like he claims, and if he was involved with alchemists, then that may explain where many of the artifacts came from, and perhaps also Ezra’s incomplete but partially accurate knowledge of the supernatural world.”

Lydia covered her mouth and yawned through barely parted lips. “This is fascinating, but I need to take Scott and Ethan home before we go to the Argent compound.”

“We can drop ‘em off,” Stiles said with a mischievous glint in his eye.

“Oh no, I’m not getting on the sheriff or Melissa’s bad side by making you and Isaac any later for school. You guys go ahead. I’ll take them home.”

After that the group prepared to break up, and everyone said their goodbyes.

As Isaac was bidding his farewell to Scott, he pulled him aside. “Can I ask you a favor?”

“Of course.”

“When you tell your mom about your finger and what happened, could you downplay Ethan’s involvement so it doesn’t seem like his fault.”

“It wasn’t his fault,” Scott answered.
“I know, but I want to make sure she does,” Isaac said. “She was worried about him watching you last night, and she doesn’t trust him. I don’t want this to make it worse.”

Scott clapped Isaac on the shoulder. “I’ll make sure she doesn’t blame him.”

When Isaac turned to leave, he found Ethan staring at him from across the room. Ethan made eye contact and smiled, and Isaac smiled back before quickly looking away. He and Ethan were just friends now, and the last thing Isaac wanted to do was send any mixed signals.

Chapter End Notes

I want to thank everyone who commented last chapter with their excellent suggestions and requests for Isaac and Stiles’ first time! You guys had some really great ideas, and I think it’s going to make the scene so much better and so much hotter! I want it to be a surprise when it happens, so I’ll just say it won’t be next chapter but any time (soon) after that is on the table, and you guys should expect a smut- and romance-filled next few chapters in general with more than one surprise ;-

Also, just FYI I have the rest of the story’s major plot points and character arcs planned out...and we’re not even close yet. I had thought we were about halfway there, but now that I have things better mapped out, I’m thinking we’re only about a third of the way in. So I really hope you guys are enjoying this story and willing to stick it out that long. I would have undoubtedly lost interest and motivation 30 or so chapters ago without your support and encouragement, so major thanks!

Anyway, this was a plot-heavy chapter that laid a good bit of groundwork for future events, and I always get nervous when Dr. Exposition Deaton is too prominent, so feedback and opinions are very welcome if you have the chance and thanks again for reading!
“Guess what I found in my anatomy binder.” Stiles set his tray on the table and sank into the seat across from Isaac in the cafeteria.

“Drawings of Mr. Stevenson as a giant penis?”

“Well yeah. He just has one of those faces.”

“And he’s a huge dick,” Isaac said between sips of milk.

“Agreed. But that’s not what I’m talking about.” Stiles unzipped his school bag and pulled out a binder. “I stole something else from the Argent compound.”

Isaac almost choked on his sandwich.

“What did you take?”

“This—” Stiles’ face twisted with confusion. He flipped to the back of the binder, then rifled through his bag. “It’s gone.”

“What was it?”

“Like a leather journal thing.” Stiles shoved his lunch tray aside and dumped his bag out on the table. He frantically flipped through binders and searched under books and notebooks, ignoring the pens, coins, and sundry junk that rolled away. “Crap, I can’t believe it’s gone.”

“Well where was the last place you saw it?” Danny asked as he appeared over Isaac’s shoulder and stooped to retrieve a pen and a couple of highlighters that had fallen off the table.

Isaac hunched under the table and collected the items Danny couldn’t reach.

“Yeah, where was the last place you saw it?” Isaac asked as he set the things he’d gathered in a pile on the table.

“In my anatomy binder,” Stiles answered, irritation coloring his tone as he continued turning things over. “I left it there to show you.”

“And what was it?” Danny asked with a laugh as he plunked down in the seat next to Stiles. He hadn’t gone through the lunch line yet and didn’t have any food.

“Oh, my uh...porn mag. It was the Red-Haired Busty Goddesses edition. I wanted to show Isaac one of the models.” Stiles turned and shook his head wistfully at Isaac. “You would have been so into her, man.”

“Aww darn it!” Isaac slapped the corner of the table in an animated show of distress.

“Gee, now you guys’ll just have to get your porn on the internet like normal people.” Danny’s dimples were in full effect and his dark eyes were dancing with amusement.

“Do you think you might have left the magazine in your locker?” Isaac asked. If the darach had
stolen a journal they needed to find it as soon as possible.

“Well I don’t remember putting it there, but I guess we can look.” Stiles began stuffing things back into his bag.

“So uh, did you have a chance to read any of the articles?” Isaac asked.

Before Stiles could answer Danny cut in. “Dude, no one reads the articles.”

“I didn’t read any of the articles,” Stiles confirmed with a frown.

“See.” Danny turned and clapped Stiles on the arm. “It’s good that you’re back by the way. How was the packing championship?”

Stiles huffed dramatically. “Wouldn’t ya know it? I lost to a guy with really long arms. He could just reach all the way down to the bottom of his suitcase and shift things around without needing to pull stuff out. It was so unfair!”

“Ah, it’s like swimmers with long torsos.” Danny patted Stiles’ back consolingly.

“Exactly!”

Isaac speared a grape with his fork. “Yeah, they really oughta make those long-armed freaks compete in their own division.”

“Now, Isaac, don’t be prejudiced,” Stiles chided.

“Yeah, man, that was uncalled for.” Danny shook his head disapprovingly at Isaac.

Stiles bumped the edge of his tray and grunted with exertion as he tried to zip his bag around the bulge of books.

“No offense, but I’m kinda surprised you made it to the championships at all,” Danny remarked.

“Championships for what?” a new voice asked from behind Isaac.

Danny looked up and grinned, his pulse accelerating. When he spoke his voice was deep and silky. “Hey you.”

Isaac’s cock twitched in his pants. Danny could use that tone with him whenever he wanted.

“Guys, this is Mason.” Danny stood and touched Mason’s upper arm. “Mason, Stiles and Isaac.” He motioned at them in turn.

“Isaac?” Mason arched his brow and repeated Isaac’s name almost cautiously.

“Yeah, I think we have a friend in common.” Isaac picked up his apple but waited to bite into it. “You’re Liam’s best friend right?”

“I thought so.”

Danny’s hand grazed the top of Mason’s shoulder and the irritation left Mason’s face, replaced by a smile that didn’t quite reach his eyes.

“Sorry, I just haven’t seen him today, and he’s not answering my texts. I guess his phone must be dead.”
Isaac smelled the worry in Mason’s scent and decided to reassure him that Liam was okay.

“No, he’s at home asleep. He stayed out all night.”

“Oh. Great.” Mason didn’t look reassured, but his face brightened when he turned to Danny. “Ready to get lunch?”

“Yeah, let’s go.”

“You guys should join us,” Stiles said as they started to leave. “We need to get to know Mason better.”

“You do?” Mason looked startled and leaned closer to Danny, prompting the other boy to wrap his arm around Mason’s shoulders. They both let out nervous huffs of laughter and smiled without looking at each other. Was this the first time Danny had held Mason?

Stiles didn’t pay them any mind and responded to Mason. “Yeah, you’re important to Liam, and he’s in our pack—”

Isaac kicked Stiles’ foot under the table.

“—ing enthusiast’s group.”

“What are you talking about? Liam can’t stand packing. Also...what?”

“Don’t try to figure it out,” Danny whispered into Mason’s ear, too quiet for Stiles to hear.

“Stiles, I’m sure Danny and Mason want to have lunch by themselves. Besides, we need to go check if you left your porn in your locker.”

Mason’s eyes bulged.

Crap. That sounded weird now that Isaac heard it out loud.

“Right, yeah.” Stiles grabbed his uneaten sandwich off his tray while Isaac snagged his apple.

As Isaac and Stiles were returning their trays, Isaac overheard Danny and Mason’s whispered conversation from the lunch line.

“Are they always that weird?”

“Yeah, but you get used to it.”

Isaac grumbled under his breath.

“What?” Stiles brushed their shoulders together as they exited the cafeteria.

“Mason thinks we’re weird.”

“We are weird.”

Isaac shoved him, but it came out as more of a vigorous shoulder stroke.

Stiles bit into his sandwich and walked in Isaac’s personal space as they went to his locker to check for the journal.

Isaac rolled the apple around in his hand and darted glances at Stiles from the corner of his eye. He
was chomping and smacking his food, and he really shouldn’t have looked this cute when he was
being this disgusting.

“You gonna eat that?” Stiles asked, his mouth full, as he nodded toward the apple.

“I brought it for you.”

Stiles eyes lit up and he shoved his half-eaten sandwich into Isaac’s free hand before snatching the
apple and taking a noisy bite.

“Yeah sure, I’ll just go ahead and hold this for you,” Isaac muttered.

“I know!” Stiles grinned and leaned their arms together.

“So did you look at the journal at all?” Isaac asked to distract himself from the flutter in his chest and
the tingle in his crotch.

“A little. It was handwritten in old-person lettering.”

Isaac smirked at Stiles and opened the door as they entered the hallway where Stiles’ locker was
located. “Old-person lettering?”

“Yeah, you know, cursive, and not calligraphy, but like, real neat and formal looking.” Stiles took a
messy bite of apple and swiped at his mouth with the back of his hand. “The inside cover said
*Douglas Durge, 1947.*”

“But you didn’t read any of it?”

“Didn’t have time,” Stiles answered as they stopped in front of his locker. “Let’s hope it’s here, but I
don’t think it will be.” He entered the combination and yanked the metal door open, catching a
notebook as it tumbled out. “This isn’t it.”

“No shit,” Isaac answered as he glanced at the modern-style green notebook with *US History*
scribbled across the front in Stiles’ sloppy block letters.

Stiles sank his teeth into the apple to keep it in place in his mouth as he searched his locker, holding
the precarious mess up with one hand and rifling through it with the other.

“Ihh ihhnt hhre”

“What?” Isaac pulled the apple out of Stiles’ mouth.

“It isn’t here.”

He held Stiles’ food as the boy shoved ineffectually at his wedged-open locker door. After a few
seconds Isaac huffed, passed Stiles his sandwich and apple back, and slammed the flat of his hand
against the door, compressing the jumbled clutter enough to get the locker shut.

“Werewolf strength must come in so handy with your own locker.” Stiles finished the apple and
tossed the core in the trash before sinking to the hallway floor.

“But really. I use the power of basic organization on my locker.” Isaac plopped down next to Stiles,
sitting close enough that their elbows touched.

Stiles pressed back against Isaac’s skin but broke contact to shove the last bite of his sandwich in his
mouth. “Well I don’t have either of those powers.”
“I’ve noticed.”

“I’m worried,” Stiles said softly as he stared across the hallway at the bank of lockers along the opposite wall. “The darach had to have taken over and hidden the journal between when I found it in second hour and now...but I didn’t even notice, and it doesn’t feel like I’m missing any time.”

Isaac sighed and cautiously rubbed his hand along Stiles’ thigh. The action felt both forbidden yet completely natural. “It’s gonna be okay. I’m not gonna let him hurt you.”

Stiles turned his head and smiled at Isaac as he draped his arm over Isaac’s leg and patted his knee. “It’s everyone else I’m worried about.”

Isaac’s head was swimming as he gazed into Stiles’ caramel eyes and his fingers continued their circuit over Stiles’ thigh. “They don’t matter,” he whispered.

Stiles did a double take and tilted his head. “What do you mean they don’t matter? We can’t just let the darach hurt innocent people.”

Oh right. They had been talking about the darach. *Fuck.*

“I got distrac– uh, confused.” Isaac felt the blush on his cheeks as he withdrew his hand from Stiles’ leg. “Let’s just focus on finding the journal. Do you think he could have hidden it in your gym locker? Or one of the classrooms?”

Stiles growled in frustration, sounding almost wolfish. “Maybe. Apparently for all I know he could have driven home and hidden it under my mattress.”

“No, you’d have definitely missed some time if he did something like that.”

Stiles cut him a look and Isaac realized Stiles’ previous comment had been sarcastic.

They spent the rest of lunch searching for the journal and retracing Stiles’ morning schedule but came up empty handed.

Isaac was in his final class of the day, still pondering where the darach could have stashed the journal, when his phone vibrated in his pocket.

Ethan: [light bulb emoji]

Ethan: [two boys holding hands emoji] [sushi emoji] [city skyline at night emoji]?

Isaac’s stomach twisted, but a smile formed on his face. He was pretty sure he knew what Ethan was asking, but he didn’t want to make any assumptions and he wasn’t sure how to react.

Isaac: ?

Isaac pretended to pay attention to his teacher’s lecture, but his mind was racing and he kept one eye on his phone until Ethan responded.

Ethan: *I have an idea. Let's go get sushi tonight.*

Isaac swallowed, unsure if he was thrilled or angry with Ethan’s suggestion. Was Ethan ignoring their decision to stop seeing each other, and if so...was that what Isaac wanted?

Isaac: *We’re supposed to just be friends*
Ethan: Yeah, I meant as friends.

‘I don’t think that’s a good idea.’ Isaac hovered his thumb over the send button, but he couldn’t bring himself to press it.

Isaac: What time?

I’m so fucked.

Isaac bit his lip and shifted in his desk as he realized that if he wanted to, he could get fucked tonight. Good lord he wanted to. He was horny as all hell.

He was also happy. The prospect of spending some alone time with Ethan was appealing. He could almost smell him, almost feel his fingers on his skin.

Ethan: 7, I’ll pick you up.

On his motorcycle. So I’ll have to hold on. And rub his stomach. And smell his neck. I mean I’ll have to do that.

The smile didn’t leave Isaac’s lips for the rest of class.

Isaac went to his locker and changed out his books before stalking over to Stiles’ locker and waiting silently behind him.

“BLAHH!”

Stiles threw his hands up, and Isaac dissolved in a fit of laughter.

“I hate you.” Stiles folded his arms and glared.

“You’re not very good at it then,” Isaac retorted throwing his arm around Stiles’ shoulders as they navigated the slow crawl of people making their way toward the main doors.

“You’re right. Hating you is one of my most under-developed skills.” Stiles brushed his cheek against Isaac’s chest and squeezed his waist.

The air abandoned Isaac’s lungs, and he temporarily forgot how to breathe as he pulled Stiles closer; he remembered as he nuzzled the top of Stiles’ head with his nose and inhaled his scent.

“You’re affectionate for being in public.” Stiles’ hand slid lower on Isaac’s waist, and his thumb caught against the top of Isaac’s pants through his shirt.

A snide comment formed in Isaac’s mouth, but died away as he took in Stiles’ happy expression. He gave him a small smile and shrugged instead.

“So what’s got you in such a good mood?” Stiles asked as they burst out of the dimly lit school hallway and into the bright, streaming daylight. It felt like freedom in the way that only a Friday afternoon could.

“I made plans with Ethan. We’re gonna go out for sushi tonight.”

There was no reason to keep it a secret. It was just a friend thing, and Isaac’s pack knew he was friends with Ethan. Besides Ethan was picking him up. Scott and Melissa would find out, so Stiles might as well know too.
“That sounds fun. Dad and I are going for Italian.”

“Do you think it’s weird I’m going out to eat with Ethan?” Isaac asked as he waited for Stiles to unlock the Jeep. He had no intention of canceling even if Stiles did think it was weird, but he was curious about his opinion.

“Nah, you’re friends now,” Stiles said, voicing Isaac’s thought. He opened Isaac’s door then went around to the driver’s side while Isaac climbed in. “The three of us should do something together sometime.”

_Yes, that won’t be awkward for me at all._

“Sure.”

“Just, no Aiden,” Stiles added as he waited for a group of seniors to get out of the way so he could back out of his spot. “I still don’t like that guy.”

“Ptah, yeah.”

“So um, speaking of going out...” Stiles trailed off and Isaac almost choked on the sudden cloud of anxiety that flooded the cab of the Jeep. Stiles heart was pounding in his chest and he was clenching the steering wheel.

“What’s wrong?” Isaac turned in his seat to face Stiles.

“No-nothing’s wrong. I was just thinking we should go out tomorrow night. I want to talk to you about something.”

“What is it?”

“Tomorrow,” Stiles repeated. “I want to talk to you about it tomorrow.”

“Oh sure, now I won’t worry.”

“Everything’s fine! ...okay well, not everything. The darach and Iron Claw are– But like, this isn’t– I don’t think it’ll– I mean even if you don’t–” Stiles slapped the steering wheel and snapped his head toward Isaac. “Will you just go out with me?!”

“Yeah of course.” Isaac raised his hands defensively. _Geez!_

“Good.” Stiles’ tone was agitated, but it softened as he tried again. “I mean good. Thank you. I’m looking forward to it.”

Isaac shrugged. He didn’t see what the big deal was. They hung out all the time.

Chapter End Notes

I know this was a short chapter, but I’m not ‘counting it’ as my regular update, and I’m planning to get the next chapter out quickly.

Anyway, the reference to porn magazines and reading the articles was a bit of a joke in regards to Charlie Carver (Ethan)’s recent article in _Playboy_ about LGBT Pride. I don’t
think AO3 has a problem with people linking to other sites (someone please let me know if they do), so here’s the link:

To All LGBTQIA+ People: You Are Remarkable by Charlie Carver

I quite recommend it. He’s a good writer, the article is short, there’s no nudity on that page, and it’s free to read. (Charlie and Max are also my all-time top two favorite celebrity crushes...so you know, there’s that.)
Isaac shouted goodbye to Scott and Melissa and hustled outside as soon as Ethan’s motorcycle revved onto their street. Things were tense in the McCall house and the last thing Isaac wanted was Ethan walking into the middle of it. Scott and Melissa had been arguing about Scott’s finger since Isaac had gotten home. Melissa’s stance was that it be reattached immediately while Scott held Deaton’s position that not having it was weakening Iron Claw and that reattaching it would be a step backward. Isaac had of course backed his alpha in the dispute.

Melissa wasn’t happy. She insisted that as a nurse and health care professional she knew better. Scott countered that Deaton was also a medical professional and an expert in the supernatural. Eventually the argument had devolved into Melissa playing the mom card and Scott playing the alpha card. Isaac’s news that he was going out that evening with Ethan had only increased Melissa’s irritation. Isaac had thought that by clearing out he was giving Scott and Melissa the chance to spend some quality time together on Melissa’s day off, but it turned out that Melissa had planned a family dinner for the three of them. Oops. She didn’t quite ask Isaac to cancel his plans, but it was obvious she wanted him to. He felt like a jerk for not doing it, but by now he was too excited for his not-a-date with Ethan to cancel. Besides, he wanted to be across town when the next round of the finger fight flared up.

Isaac stood by the curb as Ethan pulled to a stop in front of him.

“Impatient to see me?” Ethan asked with a cocky smirk on his lips as he killed the engine.

“No.” Isaac didn’t hide the lie as he raked his eyes over Ethan’s body. He wore a light blue henley with the buttons open, revealing a hint of the tan, muscular planes of his chest and the downright erotic valley of his throat and collarbone. Isaac longed to lick and nip at that smooth expanse of soft skin.

Ethan knocked the kickstand into place with his heel, drawing Isaac’s attention to his denim-clad leg and the way the dark material clung to his thigh, knee, and calf, and making Isaac picture Ethan without his pants on, an image he happily had little trouble calling to mind.

“Careful, buddy, friends don’t stare at each other that way,” Ethan said with a teasing lilt as he climbed off the bike and approached Isaac.

Isaac felt himself hardening under Ethan’s gaze and tried to pull away but stopped as Ethan held him in place. Their eyes met and lingered on each other for a moment before dropping to each other’s crotches. Due to his size, Ethan always walked around with a prominent bulge in his pants, but as Isaac watched it swelled into an outright tent, mirroring the one Isaac had pitched. It was all Isaac could do not to buck against it.

“Does this happen when you look at your other friends too?” Ethan asked, his voice just above a whisper.
“Sometimes, but I’m usually a little more discreet.”

“You don’t have to be discreet with me.” He licked his lips and his eyes flared.

Taking him at his word, Isaac sucked Ethan’s arousal in through his nostrils and moaned as it warmed him to the core. They both watched as Isaac’s hard cock throbbed in his pants, and Ethan’s responded in kind.

“Hungry?” Ethan asked, still staring at Isaac’s waist and gripping his arms.

“Starving.” Isaac leaned forward, moving his face closer to Ethan’s.

Ethan looked up at Isaac through his eyelashes and beneath the strong ridge of his brow. He let go of one of Isaac’s arms so he could sweep his own back toward his motorcycle. “Climb on.”

Isaac glanced at the bike then back at Ethan’s clothed erection. He smirked and gave Ethan a pointed look to convey just how much he wanted to climb on.

As soon as Ethan took his place in front of Isaac in the seat, Isaac slid forward and splayed his hands across Ethan’s stomach through his shirt, digging his fingers into Ethan’s abs as he grunted and thrust against his lower back.

“Fuck Isaac.”

The cool, teasing tone had left Ethan’s voice, replaced by desperation. He took Isaac’s hand and pressed it to his crotch. As Isaac’s fingers curled around his length and stroked him roughly through his pants, Ethan growled and leaned back, writhing against Isaac’s body.

Isaac took another slow, heavy drag on Ethan’s arousal and slid his other hand under Ethan’s shirt. He clawed with blunt fingertips at the hot, sinewy flesh of Ethan’s stomach before venturing higher and kneading one of his pecs, reveling in the hard swell of muscle.

“I’m not going to jerk you off in the street in front of my house,” Isaac whispered into his ear.

“Coulda fooled me,” Ethan answered, playing with Isaac’s fingers through his shirt and humping his hand.

Isaac grazed his mouth over the shell of Ethan’s ear, nipping at the cartilage with his lips. He was about to suggest they go to Ethan’s loft when Ethan sighed, shifted Isaac’s hand from his lap back to his stomach, and started the motorcycle.

Isaac tucked his head against Ethan’s shoulder and left his hand on Ethan’s chest beneath his shirt, not thinking about anything but the gentle thump of Ethan’s heart and the heat radiating off his strong body. It was so hot it warmed Isaac’s insides, making him feel toasty and full. Endorphins flooded Isaac’s brain as they pulled onto the highway and barreled down the road at breakneck speeds. He nuzzled closer to Ethan, enjoying the danger.

Isaac didn’t bother to pay attention to the journey itself and soon enough they were turning into a strip mall parking lot. Ethan pulled into a space near the front.

“We’re here,” he said as he turned off the engine but made no move to get up or shake Isaac off.

Isaac reluctantly raised his head and extricated himself from Ethan. He was disappointed that they really were here instead of at Ethan’s loft. Isaac scrubbed a hand over his face and through his hair as they got off the motorcycle. He needed to get a hold of himself. Their friend date had hardly started
and he had already almost suggested they skip it and go fuck.

“You do want” –Ethan smirked and cocked one eyebrow– “sushi, right?”

“I want this to work,” Isaac said, motioning between them.

“Me too,” Ethan answered, becoming serious.

“Then yeah, all I want is sushi.”

Ethan shrugged and a grin lit his face. “Suit yourself, but I’m gonna have some tea while we’re here.”

Isaac laughed and shoved Ethan as he fell into place beside him. “Fine, maybe I’ll also have a tea.”

The restaurant was called Osaka Hills, and Isaac had never been to it. He was surprised to find that it was popular with families. As they walked in, a rambunctious child darted between them and ran outside. Her haggard parents gave them an apologetic smile and hurried after her. Numerous other families dotted the tables and long sushi bar, and the venue featured bright lighting and a lively decor decorated with ceramic good fortune cats and festive paper lanterns. It wasn’t what Isaac had been expecting. It wasn’t romantic or particularly fancy. Maybe Ethan had been serious about this just being a friend thing.

They were seated near the back of the restaurant in one of the quieter areas, and after ordering a pot of green tea, they began perusing the menu.

“Cam used to love sushi,” Isaac remarked as his eyes alighted on the spicy tuna rolls, his brother’s favorite.

Ethan smiled and brushed his knee against Isaac’s under the table.

“You knew that.”

“Doesn’t mean you shouldn’t tell me.”

“Is that why you picked this restaurant? To remind me of my brother?”

“No, I picked it because my brother doesn’t like sushi and won’t come here with me. Danny introduced me to this place, and I kinda fell in love.”

“But what did you think of the sushi?” Isaac asked with a smirk.

Ethan frowned and his voice was neutral as he answered, “The sushi’s good.”

“Sorry, that was a really bad– I don’t know why I said that.”

Ethan shrugged and his face softened. “I should have thought about the fact that Cam used to take you for sushi. I didn’t. I just vaguely remembered that you liked it. If you wanna go somewhere else...”

“No, I do like it.” Isaac dropped his eyes back to the menu. “And it’s not the worst thing being reminded of him.”

Camden would occasionally take them out for sushi if their dad had passed out early or if he had been yelling and they needed to get away. The final time Isaac had had sushi was three days before Camden had shipped out for basic training. Their father’s verbal tirades had escalated quickly once
Camden had left, and a few days later he struck Isaac for the first time. He was all apologies as Isaac ran to his room and locked the door. Isaac had immediately called Camden but gotten his voicemail. That had been the closest Isaac would ever come to telling someone about the abuse while it was happening, but it just wasn’t the kind of message he could leave on voicemail. He had hung up and texted Camden, saying he wished they could go out for sushi. He hadn't gotten a reply, and the next time Isaac had spoken with his brother he was evasive when Camden asked how things were with their dad. It was too late. By then the abuse was Isaac's dark secret, not a shocking, one-time thing he could confide to his brother.

“I’ll have the miso soup and the spicy tuna rolls.” Isaac feigned a smile as he handed his menu to the server.

Ethan placed his order and gave Isaac a look too full of compassion as the server walked away. It was infuriating – not because it was from Ethan, but because Isaac couldn’t stand that kind of pity from anyone.

“Can we pretend you don’t know the significance of that order?” Isaac pulled his hand away as Ethan tried to cover it with his own.

“I have no idea what you’re talking about,” Ethan answered with a blank face. He sipped his tea and only the slight stutter of his heart belied the deception.

The conversation was surprisingly light after that. There was no discussion of dead family, supernatural threats, or their own rocky past. Instead they chatted about school and cross country, guys they thought were hot – Isaac mentioned a few girls too – and upcoming movies they wanted to see. They even made tentative plans to go see some together, and Isaac used the opportunity to mention that Stiles had suggested they all hang out. Isaac realized with a laugh that fit into the context of their conversation that this was the first time they were hanging out as normal friends – no crisis, no emotional baggage, no verbal foreplay, just two people having a pleasant evening together.

Of course it couldn’t last.

Liam: I broke my door. Can you come over?

Isaac furrowed his brow as he glanced at the banner on his phone and read the text without opening it. What did Liam expect him to do? Isaac had no idea how to fix a door. Melissa had hired someone to fix theirs.

Liam: Isaac?!

Isaac blinked at the demanding tone of the text. What the fuck? It had been like five seconds.

“Do you need to get that?” Ethan asked, a half-smile still on his face as he glanced at Isaac’s phone on the table where it had buzzed.

“Nah, Liam’s just being a jerk. I’ll talk to him later.”

Liam: Im fucking PISSSSSSED!!

Isaac’s stomach dropped and he finally picked up his phone.

Liam: Gonna break something else

“Okay, I guess I do need to respond.” Isaac opened his text conversation with Liam and held up his phone for Ethan to see. He pulled it back and hovered his thumbs over the keyboard. “I don’t know
what to say.”

“Call him.”

Isaac frowned. Ethan was right.

Liam answered on the first ring and roared into the phone.

“WHAAAT?!?”

Isaac cringed and hissed through his teeth as Liam’s distress blasted through him and he felt it as a tight, quivering ache around their packbond.

“Liam, what happened?” Isaac kept his voice as level as possible.


Isaac shot Ethan a panicked look and fought the urge to shove the phone at him. He would have if Ethan had been Scott, but Liam was his packmate, not Ethan’s.

“You’re not gonna hurt anyone,” Isaac said with a confidence that surprised him. “You’re going to calm down and everything’s going to be okay.”

“Can’t.” Liam’s heart was pounding on the other end of the line and hot rage pulsed through their bond. “Come over.”

Ethan nodded and pulled out his credit card to pay for their meal. Isaac had intended to pay for his half, but he could hardly argue about that now.

“Isaac, please.” Liam’s voice was shaky and pleading. “My parents are downstairs and we’ve been arguing. I’m scared of what I’m gonna do.”

“You’re not gonna do anything because you can control yourself. I’ll come, but I’m across town. I can’t get there right away.” Isaac didn’t actually know where Liam lived, but this was the commercial district of Beacon Hills. It was a safe bet Liam’s house wasn’t nearby. “But you’re already calming down. I can hear it.”

“I’m not.”

“Yes. You are.” Isaac ran his hand through his hair as he racked his brain for a solution. “You’re in anger management right? What do they tell you to do when this happens?”

Liam snarled. “Werewolf problem.”

“I know, and we need to figure out who your anchor is, but in the meantime, how do you usually calm down?”

“Deep breaths.”

“Okay, so let’s do that. Inhale.”

Liam didn’t and Isaac heard the sound of fabric ripping. Liam was raking his claws through something. “Won’t help. Too late.”

“No, Liam, it’s not. I’m not there, but I’m right here with you on the phone, and we’re going to get
through this together. Now breathe in with me and hold it.”

This time when Isaac inhaled so did Liam.

“Good, now exhale,” Isaac said after a few seconds. “And in again.”

To Isaac’s amazement it was working. Liam’s heart rate slowed and the fury and distress around their packbond ebbed.

“Okay, are you still” –Isaac dropped his voice and whispered below the range of human hearing as the server came to take Ethan’s credit card– “Wolfed out?”

“Yeah.” Liam’s voice was tight and harsh, but at least it wasn’t a snarl.

“Okay, focus on your eyes and let the heat drain out of them.” Isaac hesitated for a second and decided to try to be more supportive. “You’ve got this, Liam. You’re doing so well.”

“My eyes are cool,” Liam said with a hint of pride in his voice.

“I knew you could do it.” Isaac meant it. Liam had gotten this far; he was going to be okay. “Now let’s do your claws. Pull ‘em back in nice and slow.”

The tension in their bond eased further, and Liam’s heart rate was almost normal.

“Done. I did my face and ears too.”

“Dude, I’m really proud of you.” Isaac channeled affection through their bond, hoping Liam could feel it on the other end of the line. “Me and Ethan are about to leave the restaurant. Text me your address and we’ll come meet you.”

Liam was silent for a moment then sighed. “Thanks, but I’m okay now, and I think I need to go apologize to my parents. It’s probably gonna be a long talk.”

“Okay, send me your address anyway, and call or text if you have anymore problems.”

They hung up just as the server returned with Ethan’s card.

“Next time’s on me,” Isaac said.

Ethan grinned and nodded. “Sure.”

Isaac craned his neck as Ethan added the tip and signed the bill, but he couldn’t make out Ethan’s last name. It would have been embarrassing to ask at this point in their relationship.

They left the restaurant, and once outside Ethan slung his arm around Isaac’s shoulders, gently stopping him from walking back toward the motorcycle.

“How about some coffee?” Ethan gestured with his free hand toward the cafe at the opposite end of the strip mall.

Isaac succumbed to the impulse to lean against Ethan and wrap his arm around Ethan’s waist, slouching to compensate for the height difference. “It’s kinda late for coffee, but yeah sure.”

Ethan laughed as they set off toward the cafe. “Why would that matter?”

Isaac turned his head, not minding how close their faces were. “You know, caffeine.”
Ethan’s eyes widened and a sly gleam formed in them. “You do know that doesn’t affect werewolves, right?”

Isaac stopped walking and pulled away, mouth agape. Over the past several months he had often used coffee, *Monsters*, and other caffeinated drinks as study aids. “Seriously, it doesn’t?”

Ethan shook his head and clutched Isaac’s arm as he quaked with laughter. “Of course it doesn’t.”

“Why didn’t Derek tell me?!”

Ethan shrugged, still chuckling. “Maybe he owns stock in Starbucks.”

Isaac swatted his arm with the back of his hand and glared, but he couldn’t fight the smile tugging at his lips.

“Can you just make me a list of all the werewolf stuff I don’t know?”

“A list?” Ethan smirked and patted Isaac’s back as they walked. “I think we’d need a whole book.”

“I’m gonna hit you,” Isaac threatened, flashing gold eyes at Ethan.

“Sure you are.” Ethan darted in and kissed his cheek.

Heat coursed through Isaac’s body from the point of contact all the way to the tips of his toes.

Their teasing continued as they finished the short jaunt to the coffee house. It felt decidedly less platonic and more flirtatious, but Isaac couldn’t bring himself to mind.

Ethan paid for their drinks before Isaac remembered that he had wanted to split the costs.

Isaac smiled around the rim of his mug as he took the first sip of his latte. He didn’t hate feeling like he was being taken out.

“You know what I don’t understand about this?” Isaac sank into the center of the well-worn couch the cafe provided for its customers.

“They steam the milk,” Ethan said with a playful smile as he settled in next to Isaac, their hips touching. “That’s why it tastes so light.”

“Not this!” Isaac glared and took another sip of his drink. “I meant the thing with Liam.”

Ethan nodded at him to continue as he draped a casual arm around Isaac.

It may have been casual to Ethan, but it broke down the last of Isaac’s defenses. It was too confusing getting signals like this from someone he had been sexual with in the past, especially while he was so horny and pent up. Isaac’s gaze flicked to Ethan’s lap, and once again he found himself fascinated with Ethan’s bulge. It was obscene how big and full it was. Even with Ethan unaroused, Isaac could make out the outline of Ethan’s balls and the direction his dick was hanging. Ethan’s scent and body language were giving him the green light and before he could stop himself, Isaac reached out and rubbed Ethan through his pants.

“I didn’t mean to do that,” Isaac whispered, leaving his hand in place as he looked up to gauge Ethan’s reaction. How could he possibly pull his hand away when Ethan was swelling beneath it?

“I’m not objecting, but people are staring,” Ethan whispered, nodding toward a table of college-aged girls who had fallen silent and were studying the werewolves much more intently than the textbooks
and laptops in front of them.

Embarrassment made Isaac withdraw his hand, but he couldn't stop eye-fucking Ethan's semi. He took a nervous swallow of his latte to distract himself, burning his mouth in the process.

Ethan rubbed his shoulder and squeezed the back of his neck. “So what don’t you understand? Other than social conventions and how hot beverages work.”

“I’m seriously gonna hit you.” Isaac growled too low for the girls to hear.

Ethan kissed his cheek again, this time venturing closer to his mouth.

The girls giggled and Isaac tried to block out the cocktail of arousal, amusement, and curiosity wafting from their table. He wanted to focus on Ethan's arousal, amusement, and curiosity.

“I don’t understand why Liam always comes to me for stuff instead of Scott.” Isaac frowned. It was a general concern rather than one specific to Liam’s most recent crisis. Of course Liam couldn’t get help from Scott this late at night; Scott would already be tranced out for the evening. Yet Liam had come to Isaac in the middle of the day yesterday and had practically clung to him for support during the pack dinner last night. His text that morning about missing Isaac was also strange given how recently they had seen each other.

“Oh.” Ethan’s face lit with delight and he let go of Isaac so he could turn to face him. His knee rested atop Isaac’s thigh. “This would be in that hypothetical book we were talking about. You’re Liam’s First Bond.”

“First Bond?”

“Yeah, the first werewolf in his pack he bonded with. It’s much stronger than a regular packbond.”

“It feels like a regular packbond to me.”

“That’s because it only works one way. You’re his First Bond; he isn’t yours.”

“Whose mine? Is it Scott?” Isaac smiled and his chest glowed. It had to be Scott. His bond with Scott was the most intense one he had.

“No, but I think you’re his. Derek’s yours.”

“Wait what?” Isaac’s mind was reeling to catch up.

Ethan shrugged. “Scott was never in Peter’s pack, or Derek’s. You’re the first werewolf he had a packbond with. But you and Erica and Boyd bonded with Derek like normal.”

“Like normal?”

“Yes, First Bonds are almost always between a bitten wolf and their alpha or a born wolf and one of their parents.”

“So Liam wasn’t supposed to bond with me?” Isaac waved a hand. “I mean First Bond with me?”

His stomach twisted with guilt. He had stolen Liam from Scott.

“It’s uncommon, and some alphas would have a problem with it, but I’m sure Scott won’t.” Ethan clapped a hand on Isaac’s shoulder and gave it a reassuring squeeze. “You saved Liam’s life. No one’s going to hold that against you, least of all Scott.”
“Is there a way to break it?”

Ethan jerked his head back and frowned. “Dude, don’t break it. That’s a dick thing to do, and it wouldn’t help. Liam can’t have a First Bond with anyone else. You’d just be hurting him for nothing and taking away an important source of security.”

Isaac’s thoughts turned to the night Derek had thrown him out and how agonizing it had been. It had felt exactly like Ethan was describing, like a major source of security had been torn away from him and destroyed.

“Is my First Bond with Derek broken?”

Ethan dropped his eyes and shifted uncomfortably in his seat. “I don’t know. It’s not strong, but it might not be beyond repair if he comes back.”

“I don’t want to repair it,” Isaac said with clenched jaw. Derek had systematically re-traumatized Isaac by making him flashback to the night his father was murdered. Fuck bonding with him.

Ethan looked up and gave him a sad shrug. “Then it’s probably broken.” Ethan took Isaac’s hand and draped their joined fingers over his knee. “I’m sorry. That’s my fault too. Derek only sent you away because he was trying to protect you from us.”

Isaac shook his head and leaned closer to Ethan, shifting more of his body under Ethan’s leg. “I don’t blame you for that. And I’m not just giving you a pass because it’s you. I don’t blame Aiden or Deucalion or Kali for that either. It was Derek’s dumbass decision. And it was just dumb. Your pack had already kidnapped Erica and Boyd after they left our pack. All kicking me out accomplished was making me an easier target.”

“You’re right,” Ethan said quietly. “Deucalion still planned to take you...but he was going to make Scott kill you since you joined his pack.”

“Then I guess I was safer because Scott would never hurt me.”

Ethan squeezed Isaac’s fingers. “No, he wouldn’t.”

“I have a very strong bond with Scott, stronger than I ever had with Derek.”

“Scott’s your alpha, and your friend. First Bonds help a werewolf develop that important first trust with someone in their pack. They orient a new beta and give them a foundation in the pack, but nothing is more instinctual or compelling than an Alpha-Beta bond. A strong one with a strong alpha will override almost everything else. It’s not impossible to resist your alpha of course, but it is painful and difficult if there’s a strong Alpha-Beta bond in place. A First Bond is less about control and obedience and more about affection and trust. That’s why the two together are so powerful.”

“And you think Scott and Liam both have First Bonds with me?”

“You’re beloved in your pack, Isaac.” Ethan’s tone was playful but sincere. He squeezed Isaac’s hand again and took a sip of his drink.

“So, is yours with Aiden?”

Ethan shook his head and a peaceful smile formed on his face. “It was with my mom.”

They were interrupted as Ethan’s phone buzzed in his pocket. Isaac didn’t pay much attention as Ethan checked it. He was lost in thought about everything Ethan had just told him and what it meant
for his relationship with Liam. It was a major responsibility. Isaac knew what it was like to feel unwanted by someone he had a special bond with; he couldn't let that happen to Liam.

Isaac’s attention snapped back to Ethan as he gasped quietly and his heart skipped a beat then accelerated. Shock and anger flooded his scent along with an undercurrent of fear.

“What is it?” Isaac asked, his hand on Ethan’s shoulder.

“Nothing.” Ethan pressed his phone to his chest as if to hide it from Isaac’s gaze.

Isaac frowned and raised his brow.

“Okay, not nothing.” Ethan shoved his phone back in his pocket. “But I don’t want to talk about it.”

“Ethan...” Isaac’s frown deepened and he slid away from Ethan on the couch. “You told me you’d be honest with me.”

“And I meant that.” Ethan closed his eyes and took a deep breath. By the time he reopened them the distress had left his scent and his heart rate was back to normal. “I will tell you what this is about. I’m not trying to keep it from you. It’s just unpleasant, and I don’t want to ruin our evening. Can we talk about it later and just have fun tonight?”

Isaac wanted to protest. His curiosity was piqued and he wanted to insist that Ethan tell him what was going on now. The hint of vulnerability on Ethan’s face changed his mind. The message had upset Ethan, and Isaac didn’t want to make matters worse. He wanted to help Ethan forget and have fun. If Ethan refused to tell him later, then Isaac would throw a fit and insist, but he was pretty sure it wouldn’t come to that. Ethan would honor his word.

“Fun huh? What did you have in mind?” Isaac asked with a coy smirk.

“A little bumping.” Ethan shifted closer on the couch, reclosing the distance between them. “And grinding.” He slid his hand over Isaac’s inner thigh and came precariously close to groping him the way Isaac had done to him earlier. “And sweating.” Ethan stared into Isaac’s eyes and for an instant his flashed blue.

Isaac’s mouth went dry, and he couldn’t look away from Ethan’s face, from his soft, full lips and handsome features. Isaac shouldn’t have been surprised. The way the night had started, it had always been destined to lead to–

“Dancing!”

“What?” Isaac blinked at him and shook his head to clear it.

“I wanna go dancing.” Ethan smiled sweetly and gave him a wide-eyed look. “Why, did you think I was talking about something else?”

“Oh, of course not.” Isaac shook his head and waved the notion away. “Bumping and grinding and sweating – what else could that be but dancing? There are no other options.”

“None,” Ethan agreed with a wink.

Isaac finished his latte and checked the time on his phone. “It’s getting late though, and I don’t want to wake up Scott and Melissa when I get home.”

Ethan’s tongue flicked over his lips and the look he gave Isaac made him blush. “Maybe you don’t
have to go home tonight.”

“What?” There were so many reasons that was a bad idea.

“Spend the night.” Ethan raised his palms and smiled innocently. “As a friend. If you want we can sleep in separate beds.”

Sure, and maybe Marvel’s tired of all those people waiting in line to see their movies.

Isaac latched onto the least complicated excuse he could think of. “It would be weird with Aiden. I’m sure he wouldn’t like it either.”

A scowl flickered across Ethan’s face and his scent soured. “Aiden won’t be coming home tonight. We had a fight this morning. I don’t know if he’ll be back tomorrow either.”

“What happened?”

“I got tired of his constant loud sex marathons with Malia. I told him I needed to sleep and he had to go somewhere else today. He flipped out and we had an argument.”

Ethan’s expression was neutral and his scent had vanished. A week ago Isaac would have left it at that, but things were different now, and if Ethan was hurting Isaac wanted to be there for him. Their eyes met and Isaac brushed his fingers over Ethan’s shoulder. Ethan’s mask crumbled and his face filled with anguish. He looked so scared and hurt that Isaac latched onto him in a tight hug and cupped the back of his head, inviting Ethan to scent his neck and take whatever comfort he could.

Ethan nosed at the crease of Isaac’s neck and ran agitated fingers over his back. “I wanted to see you tonight and hang out, but I also just didn’t want to be alone. It’s weird being by myself in the loft, and now that I’m an omega... it’s really hard being that alone without Aiden.”

“I’m sleeping over tonight,” Isaac announced, giving Ethan one more squeeze before letting go and pulling back to look at him. “And I’d rather be in your bed with you.”

“Really?” Ethan’s somber face split with a smile and his scent flared with affection – and a hint of lust.

Isaac was turned on too, but–

“I still don’t think we should have sex, but it’s okay for friends to sleep together.” Isaac slept with Stiles on a regular basis and there was nothing romantic between them. Sure, Isaac wanted to fuck Stiles as much as he wanted to fuck Ethan, but all that meant was that Isaac would be used to lying in bed, horny out of his mind, next to a hot guy he wasn’t allowed to get sexual with. He was practically a pro at this point. What was one more night of frustration? It's not like Isaac liked to get off or anything.

“Absolutely.” Ethan gave a crisp nod. “No sex, just friends. I promise I won’t try anything.”

“I promise too,” Isaac answered.

Ethan laughed. “You’re totally allowed to if you want.”

Isaac frowned as he realized something. “So are you?”

“I thought you didn’t want to have sex?”

Isaac laughed nervously. “I said I didn’t think we should, but I definitely want to.” Isaac sighed and
scooted away from Ethan on the couch. “I just don’t want things to be like they were before. I felt like shit about myself while we were hooking up, and I was a complete asshole to you. But now...” Isaac squeezed Ethan’s forearm. “I like us actually being friends. I don't want to jeopardize this.”

“You’re right. This is already complicated enough.” Ethan took a breath and sat back against the couch. “I need to make up for the things I did. Being in an unhealthy relationship won’t help with that.”

Isaac’s stomach twisted. Relationship? He thought they were just talking about sex.

“You’re doing really well,” Isaac said softly because maybe Liam wasn’t the only one who deserved encouragement for fighting his demons. “If I met you now” –Isaac made eye contact and held it– “this would be so easy.”

Ethan took Isaac’s hand and surprised him by kissing his fingers.

“Let’s pretend it is easy by having some mindless fun dancing with hot, horny strangers.”

Isaac smirked and nodded. “I’m on board with that plan.”

They left the cafe and walked back to Ethan’s motorcycle. Before they got on it, Isaac called Melissa and filled her in on his plans.

“What do you mean you’re spending the night with Ethan?”

“Uh...” Isaac wasn’t sure what to say. There was really only one way to interpret that statement. He tried repeating it in case it would make more sense to her the second time. “I’m spending the night with Ethan?”

“Like hell you are.”

Isaac's face blazed with embarrassment. He had been taking it for granted that she wouldn’t try to stop him from doing something he wanted to do as long as he stayed out of serious trouble. Why did she have to pick now, in front of Ethan, to prove him wrong?

“Scott spent the night with Ethan last night.” Isaac wasn’t sure quite where that argument had come from, but it seemed rational.

“That was for the full moon.” Melissa's voice tightened with anger and distress. “And Scott lost a finger.”

“This’ll be much safer,” Isaac insisted. He shot Ethan an apologetic look and tried another tack. “Please. He’s an omega. It’s not good for him to be alone, and Aiden left because they had a fight.”

“Aiden won’t be there?”

Melissa’s tone had wavered; Isaac seized his opportunity.

“Nope, Aiden won’t be home at all, just Ethan...all alone. No pack...no friends...just an omega...all by himself...being sad.”

Melissa huffed. “Fine, you can spend the night. But if he hurts you–”

“He can hear you!” Isaac cut in, desperate for her to quit talking.

“Good. Ethan, I still have access to that defibrillator, and a pack full of protective werewolves.”
“Good night, Melissa,” Isaac said, cringing.

“Good night, honey. Have fun and come home early tomorrow. I’d like to see you before I leave for my shift.”

Isaac was too mortified to look up as he ended the call and slid his phone in his pocket. “Sorry.”

Ethan chuckled and clapped his shoulder. “That was the cutest thing I’ve seen all week.”

“Shut up,” Isaac muttered, climbing onto the back of the motorcycle.

Ethan got on in front of Isaac and patted his hands as Isaac gripped his hips. “Make sure you hang on tight, buddy. If you fall off and hurt yourself, it’s my ass on the line.”

Isaac growled and pinched Ethan.

They pulled up to a club called Sinema that Isaac had never been to. A muscular guy and a pretty girl were standing out front making out. A mixed group of men and women emerged from the front entrance a few seconds later.

“So is this a straight club?” Isaac asked, confused about why Ethan would take them here.

“It’s both.” Ethan wrapped an arm around Isaac’s waist. “Like you.”

“We can go gay if you want.”

“Yeah, I know we can.” Ethan smirked at him and guided him toward the doors. “I like this place. It has a lively atmosphere.”

“IDs?” The bouncer was huge and would have been intimidating if Isaac weren’t a werewolf. Nevertheless, he did pose a problem Isaac hadn’t anticipated.

“We’re not drinking,” Ethan said casually, holding out his hand for the black X that denoted people under twenty-one.

The bouncer frowned and inclined his head in a way that said he didn’t appreciate his time being wasted. “Eighteen or older to get in.”

“Right.” Ethan took out his wallet and passed the man his ID.

“What do I do?” Isaac whispered at werewolf levels, his hand over his mouth to hide his lips moving.

“Gimme your ID,” Ethan whispered back.

Isaac handed his license to Ethan and almost choked as he discreetly took a hundred dollar bill out of his wallet and folded it up behind the ID as he passed it to the bouncer.

“Here’s my friend’s.”

The man showed no visible reaction but his scent flared with something approaching joy as he gave Isaac’s license a perfunctory glance and passed it back, keeping the money tucked in his palm. He pocketed the cash a moment later as he retrieved his black marker.

“At least you’re tall,” he muttered under his breath as he X-ed the back of Isaac’s hand.
“Why’d you do that? We could have gone somewhere else,” Isaac whispered, pressing himself to Ethan’s side as they entered the throng of people on the dance floor.

“Forget it. It’s not a big deal.”

Isaac forgot everything as Ethan stopped abruptly and grabbed his hips, crashing their bodies together.

“Dance.” Ethan’s hand dipped into the small of Isaac’s back, and one of his knees nudged Isaac’s apart.

Isaac swallowed and let the music wash over him. He had automatically blocked it out as soon as they walked in. It had a fast, driving beat that pulsed in his bones and made following the rhythm almost instinctual.

“Smell.” Ethan’s low, sensual voice and the way his pupils dilated with lust, was enough to make Isaac’s soft cock twitch and begin to wake.

Isaac took a long, heavy breath and slotted his legs together with Ethan’s as they ground and swayed against each other to the tempo of the song. “Geez, Ethan, you smell so good.”

“Not just me.” Ethan cast his eyes around the crowded dance floor.

Isaac inhaled again, this time shifting his focus from exclusively Ethan to the rest of their surroundings.

“Oh god, is everyone in the building horny?”

“Pretty much.”

A dense cloud of pure sex pheromones hung in the air and invaded Isaac’s throat and lungs. He moaned as Ethan grabbed his ass and yanked him forward, creating full contact between their pelvises. Isaac whimpered in desperation as their cocks hardened against one another in the span of a few seconds. The friction was blissful but also harsh.

“I need to...” Isaac wiggled his ass back against Ethan’s hands, trying to get enough space to readjust his constricted, over-sensitive balls.

“Careful,” Ethan whispered playfully as he gave Isaac just enough slack to reposition himself, “you’re all that’s protecting my modesty.”

“You don’t have any modesty,” Isaac whispered. But Ethan did have a point. As long as they remained pressed together, no one could see their erections, but if they moved...

“That’s true.” Ethan winked. “And neither should you.”

Isaac didn’t understand what he meant, but then Ethan raised his hands from Isaac’s ass to the hem of his shirt and a second later the sound of tearing cloth reverberated in Isaac’s ears.

“What are you doing?!”

A gust of cool air hit the base of Isaac’s back just above the swell of his ass. It felt good and so forbidden.

“You’re over dressed.”
The tip of Ethan’s foreclaw grazed Isaac’s spine just hard enough to send jolts of energy shooting across his back and up his neck.

Isaac moaned and squirmed in Ethan’s arms, and Ethan responded by palming Isaac’s bare lower back and possessively rubbing the skin. It was a grounding force and Isaac leaned back into it as he dropped his head to Ethan’s shoulder.

Ethan surged forward. The outline of his long, thick erection reconnected with Isaac’s and thrust against it wantonly as Ethan gripped the two halves of Isaac’s shirt and finished tearing it open in the back. He turned his head and nipped at the soft flesh under Isaac’s throat with blunt teeth, making him lift his head in startled surprise. Ethan used the shift in position to tip Isaac backward and pull the ruined shirt away from his chest and off his arms.

“That is so much better.” Ethan’s cock pulsed hard and his eyes flared as he stared at Isaac’s nude torso. He dragged a slow, heavy hand from Isaac’s collarbone down across one of his pecs and over his stomach. His thumb slid onto the front of Isaac’s pants just above his bulge and his fingers strummed against the lowest two panels of Isaac’s abs, keeping time to the beat of the music.

Isaac bucked his hips as Ethan used his other hand to tuck the shredded remains of Isaac’s shirt into the back of his pants.

“I wanna see you too,” Isaac said between shallow breathes as he struggled not to get high on the erotic scents pervading the club.

“No one’s stopping you,” Ethan answered, staring shamelessly at Isaac’s chest and trailing his pointer finger over the planes of muscle.

Emboldened, Isaac pushed Ethan away and grabbed the collar of his shirt. He ripped it in half and down Ethan’s arms in one fluid motion, then shoved the pieces of fabric into the back of Ethan’s pants the way Ethan had done with him. It was a rush touching Ethan’s ass, and he continued squeezing and kneading it as their bodies clashed back together.

“Deep breaths, Isaac.” Ethan’s thumb and two fingers gripped Isaac’s jaw, holding his face in place and making it feel less like a suggestion and more like an order. “Let the scents and music take you. Just feel it.”

Isaac inhaled through his nose, rolling the hormones of at least forty people around in the back of his throat and lungs. He clung to Ethan’s hot, sweat-sheened back to stay upright as he shuddered and bucked, following the beat of the song and surrendering to it as it buffeted his body.

“I’m so horny.” Isaac whined. It felt like he was going to cum in his pants, and part of him hoped he would.

“Me too.” Ethan grazed Isaac’s earlobe with a fang. “You feel so good.” Ethan applied pressure to the center of Isaac’s back, grinding the slick ridges and valleys of their torsos together. “I wanna fuck you. So. Much.” Ethan pulled back and looked into Isaac’s eyes. His expression was probably meant to be somber and earnest, but his chocolate eyes were lust-blown and his lazy smile undermined the seriousness of his words. “But I won’t. We’re just friends.”

“Just friends,” Isaac repeated, rabbiting his hips against his pal’s cock. “Can I ask a favor.”

“Sure.” Ethan smirked and rolled his neck to the rhythm of the music.

“I know we’re not gonna fuck, but before we go to bed tonight will you show me your cock?” Isaac’s mouth watered and the knot of lust in his stomach twisted so tight it hurt. “Just let me look at
“Yeah, of course” –Ethan licked his lips and tilted his head– “if you show me your asshole. I can't stop thinking about the last time I saw it.” Ethan’s hands trailed down, palming Isaac’s ass through his pants. “It was fucking wrecked and my cum was dribbling out of it.”

“God yes.” Isaac closed his eyes and nodded. It had been a rough fuck. Isaac had wanted to be punished for hurting Scott and failing Stiles, and good lord had Ethan obliged him. “That's the benefit of werewolf healing. You could fucking ravage my hole every night, and I'd be fine the next morning.” Isaac leaned in and whispered in Ethan’s ear. “I'd be really into that.”

“You’d fucking love it.” Ethan twisted his fingers in the back of Isaac’s hair and pulled his head back. “You’d fucking beg me to ruin your tight little hole with my big cock.”

“I would.” Isaac shuddered and took a ragged breath. “I want that.”

“I’d pump you so full of cum. I’d leave you gaping and pleading for more.”

“I would plead, Ethan.” Isaac’s heart hammered in his chest as he gave voice to one of his fantasies. “I’d fucking do anything to get you to shove it back in and blow a second load in me. And a third...and a fourth.”

“Stop,” Ethan whispered.

“I’d beg you not to stop.”

“No, Isaac, stop.” Ethan’s hands were on Isaac’s elbows as he pulled back, putting a modicum of space between them. “Someone can hear us.”

Isaac glanced in the direction Ethan indicated with his head, and his eyes landed on a tall, lean guy about their age who was dancing between a guy and a girl on the other side of the dance floor. He wore a green v-neck that showed off his well-developed arms and slim, muscular body. His hair was short on the sides, but thick and long on top with a slight wavy curl. Instead of paying attention to his dance partners, he was staring straight at Isaac and Ethan with a roguish smile on his face and lust in his smoldering, heavily lidded eyes.

“How could he possibly hear us?” Isaac whispered. It was noisy in the club. The people dancing next to them, practically on top of them, couldn’t even hear them. Isaac and Ethan wouldn’t have been able to hear each other if they didn’t have super senses.

The stranger smirked and bobbed his head at Isaac.

“He’s a werewolf,” Ethan answered, giving the guy a smirk and head nod of his own. “His name’s Brett Talbot. He’s in Satomi’s pack.”

“Who the fuck is Satomi, and what do you mean he’s a werewolf?!” Isaac practically shouted. No one reacted except Ethan and...Brett, who both looked amused.

“Satomi Ito, alpha of the other pack in Beacon Hills,” Ethan answered as Brett disengaged from his dance partners and headed toward them.

“There’s another wolfpack in Beacon Hills?!” Isaac stopped dancing and snapped his head back and forth between Ethan and the approaching wolf. “That should have been on page one of the fucking book!”
Brett flashed Isaac a disarming smile as he crowded into their space. “What book?”

“Isaac’s training manual,” Ethan answered with a feigned smile. Tension had formed in the set of his shoulders, and he kept his body angled between Brett and Isaac. It put Isaac on edge. Was Brett dangerous?

“Good to see you, Ethan.” Brett raked his eyes over Ethan’s bare chest and stomach. It was all Isaac could do not to growl.

“I bet.” Ethan turned to Isaac and took his arm. “Come on, let’s go get a drink.”

“It’s no wonder you’re an omega.” Brett’s voice stopped them in their tracks as they moved to leave. “You have no manners or respect. I’ve been wanting to meet people from the McCall pack.”

“You know about my pack?!” Isaac’s eyes flashed gold before he could stop them. Ethan and Brett both cringed at the public slip, and the resulting embarrassment partially deflated Isaac’s anger.

“Easy. Calm down. He and his pack aren’t a threat.” Ethan whispered the reassurance in Isaac’s ear, and that, combined with the hand on Isaac’s back, soothed away the rest of Isaac’s rage.

“Yeah, we even let smug omegas linger in our territory as long as they behave.”

Ethan grumbled at him. It wasn’t quite a growl.

“Have a dance with me, Isaac.” Brett extended his hand in offering. “It’ll be good for pack relations.”

Isaac looked to Ethan in question. He would have just said no, but Brett’s mention of pack relations made him worry it might start some kind of pack conflict if he offended Brett.

“Come on. I know you’re curious about me and my pack, and Ethan doesn’t have all the answers.”

“You can if you want,” Ethan said quietly, stepping back so that he was no longer blocking the two of them.

Isaac was pissed that Ethan had just given him permission – he sure as fuck didn’t need that – but he’d be damned if he was going to show division with Ethan in front of the new wolf. Ethan wasn’t a packmate but he was a ‘friend of the pack’ as Scott had put it, so as far as Isaac was concerned they needed to present a united front.

“How you want to?”

Ethan whispered the question with his mouth directly over Isaac’s ear, his lips brushing the hard ridges. Isaac shivered and clung to Ethan. He wanted to say no, wanted to get back to dancing and talking dirty to his friend, but—

“I am curious,” Isaac said aloud, stepping away from Ethan and toward Brett.

Brett smiled at him and gripped his forearms as their bodies slid together.

Ethan’s scent disappeared and his heartbeat went silent. It wasn’t a good sign. “I’ll be at the bar.”

“Wait,” Brett called to Ethan. Isaac flinched as Brett yanked the torn shirt out of the back of his pants. “He won’t need this.”

Isaac was furious. He and Brett had just met. He had no business taking something out of Isaac’s
pants, even if he hadn’t technically touched his ass when he did it. Isaac opened his mouth to tell Brett to knock it off, but then Brett grabbed the hem of his own shirt and shed it in one quick, fluid motion.

“I won’t need mine either.” Brett tossed both shirts to Ethan, and Isaac may not have been able to hear or smell Ethan, but he could feel him seething.

Isaac was a dick because he kind of didn’t care that Ethan was angry, just like he no longer cared that Brett had gotten a little too familiar with him. All he cared about was the fucking miles of long, lean torso stretched out before him. He was tan, smooth, and sinewy as fuck. It was like his upper body had no idea what fat or body hair even were. Isaac could appreciate all types of bodies, and a fuzzy chest and some extra meat on his bones wouldn’t have been a problem but this...this was definitely working for him.

Brett laughed and ground against Isaac to the beat of the music. “Am I already your new best friend?”

“Definitely not.”

“Am I already your new favorite sex object?”

Isaac shrugged and ground against Brett’s thigh. “No comment.”

Brett cleared his throat and gave Isaac’s waist a pointed look. “That speaks volumes.”

“That’s from Ethan, and my eyes are up here.” Isaac hooked his thumb under Brett’s chin and tipped it up. Two could play the inappropriate touching game.

“Your boyfriend hates that you’re dancing with me. If looks could kill my entrails would be splattered all over the walls.”

“Ethan doesn’t need looks to kill,” Isaac remarked in a warning tone. Brett was hot, but he was the one who needed to learn some respect, not Ethan. “Anyway, he’s not my boyfriend.”

“Does he know that?” Brett asked with a glance across the room at Ethan then back at Isaac. “Not that I’m complaining.” They swayed and gyrated against each other, hands on each other’s hips and eyes on each other’s bodies. “Actually, I’m catching up,” Brett whispered as he angled his pelvis so that it slid across Isaac’s. There was a hefty fullness that hadn’t been there when they started dancing.

Isaac swallowed and tried to keep rhythm with the song instead of bucking frantically against Brett the way his instincts told him to. “So there’s a whole other pack in Beacon Hills that I didn’t know about?”

“Apparently.”

“And you knew about us?”

“I did.”

“So where do you go to school?” Isaac was getting frustrated with this conversation. At least the dry humping was good.

“Devonford Prep.”

“Oh really? Do you know...” Isaac stopped as he remembered that Liam had left his old school under
bad circumstances. From what Liam had said most of the guys at his old school had turned their backs on him. The last thing Isaac wanted to do was give Brett fodder for gossip by updating him on Liam’s life, and Isaac would lose his temper for sure if Brett badmouthed Liam to him.

“Do I know...?” Brett arched his brow and gave Isaac an inquisitive look.

_Fuck, he’s cute._

Isaac hooked his thumbs under the waistband of Brett’s jeans and smashed their bodies together with renewed vigor, making them both groan at the harsh friction.

“Shit. You are the horniest werewolf I’ve ever met, and that’s saying something.” Brett squeezed Isaac’s ass and grazed their chests together. “You can talk dirty to me the way you were doing with Ethan. I was enjoying that.”

“I’m horny enough already,” Isaac answered truthfully as he gave into the instinct to mirror Brett’s action and grope his ass.

“Yeah, I’m kinda surprised you and Ethan are still here instead of acting out what you were talking about.”

“We’re trying not to have sex.” Isaac probably wouldn’t have been so candid if the cloud of pheromones surrounding Brett weren’t loosening his lips, _especially_ when it came to talking about sex.

“Why?”

“For our friendship.”

“You don’t wanna catch feelings?” Brett asked, running his hand up Isaac’s spine and kneading the back of his neck.

“Basically.”

Brett grinned and moved his mouth almost against Isaac’s. “Then how ‘bout a threesome? It’ll be way less intimate and way _more_ fun.”

“I– You– _REALLY??!”_

“Yeah, man, I’d be down for that.” Brett tilted Isaac’s head and pressed a series of quick, open-mouthed kisses along his jaw until he reached his ear. “And we can go wild on each other since we’re all werewolves.”

Isaac vigorously nodded his head, his cock already leaking in his pants in anticipation. “Yeah, let’s do this. Lemme just go get Ethan.”

Chapter End Notes

I hope you guys enjoyed this chapter! Next chapter will be almost exclusively the Isaac/Ethan/Brett threesome.

Feedback and opinions of any kind are always very welcome and appreciated!
In the Car

Chapter Notes

This is a smut chapter featuring Isaac/Ethan/Brett. It does serve some plot and character development purposes, but if you don’t want to read smut, you should be fine skipping it.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

We were looking for ourselves
but found each other
In the car

We groped for excuses
not to be alone anymore
In the car

We were waiting for our lives
to start their endings
In the car

We were never making love
We were never making love
We were never making love

~“In The Car” by Barenaked Ladies

Chapter 42: In the Car

It was getting late and the club had filled significantly since Isaac and Ethan had arrived. Isaac was high on the sexual energy in the room and the thumping, electronic beat of the music as he wormed his way through a maze of dancing bodies. A statuesque girl with dark skin, bright red lipstick, and short hair eyed his bare chest and gave him a coy smile, silently inviting him to dance as he slid past her. A burly guy with a square jaw, broad shoulders, and biceps that bulged beneath the tight sleeves of his shirt glanced at Isaac’s obvious erection and grinned, inclining his head and opening his posture. Isaac flashed them both wide smiles and nodded toward the bar to let them know he couldn’t stop.

Their attention felt good. Isaac was having fun at Sinema and wanted to come back another night, but for now all he could think about was Ethan’s naked body and imagined images of Brett’s nude form. Isaac’s skin was hot and sheened with sweat, and if one more person brushed against his crotch, he would surely exploded. He needed to have this threesome right away.

Ethan stood at the bar facing away from Isaac. His exposed, muscular back rippled with power as it tapered down to his lean waist and the tragically untapped swell of his ass. Ethan was an amazing
top, but that didn’t mean that Isaac wasn’t fucking desperate to see Ethan’s ass naked and spread wide, to plunge inside and hammer Ethan until he howled Isaac’s name. The fact that it would probably never happen only made Isaac want it more.

“So Brett has an idea,” Isaac whispered as he wrapped his arms around Ethan’s slick torso, squeezing and massaging Ethan’s pecs with one hand and gliding his fingers into the ridges of Ethan’s abs with the other.

“I heard.” Ethan’s voice was flat and emotionless. He was masking his scent and hiding his heartbeat, but his efforts were ineffectual at this range. Isaac nosed along the side of Ethan’s neck, tasting the anger and hurt wrapped tight around his body. His chest pounded beneath Isaac’s palm, and his stance was ridged, muscles clenched with frustration.

“What’s wrong?” Isaac whispered. Ethan was upset about something. The last thing he needed was Isaac thrusting long and slow against his ass and moaning in his ear...that didn’t stop it from happening.

“I’m a werewolf,” Ethan answered, letting the heat flare in his hushed tone. “I don’t like to share.”

Isaac didn’t understand his logic. He and Brett were werewolves too, and they very much wanted to share.

“I think we should do it. It’ll be a way for us to have sex without messing things up.” Isaac’s fingers descended from Ethan’s stomach and brazenly gripped his cock through his pants. Fuck! He was big and as hard as a steel bar, obviously in the mood despite his words. “I really want you, Ethan.”

“And this is the only way,” Ethan said.

Isaac couldn’t tell if it was a question or a statement. Before he could ask, Ethan went slack against him and tilted his head, granting Isaac greater access to his neck. Isaac ran his lips along the warm flesh, savoring Ethan’s scent, which was now unmasked and enveloping them both. Isaac loved the way Ethan smelled. It made his lungs tingle and his skin twitch against Ethan’s body. It was so delicious that Isaac didn’t have the presence of mind to decipher the individual notes of his emotions. All he could do was squeeze Ethan closer and hope he was happy.

“Let’s do this.”

The rumbling purr in Ethan’s voice made Isaac’s dick quiver and spurt against Ethan’s ass. His head swam and black spots formed in his field of vision as he clamped down tight around the sensation, hoping it was only precum dripping out of his aching tip.

“Fuck, Isaac, how long has it been since you got off?”

“Since you got me off.”

“That was before the full moon!”

“Yeah.” Isaac whimpered and bucked recklessly against Ethan’s ass. “Things have been so crazy...who has time to jerk off?”

“I have been.” Ethan tangled his fingers with Isaac’s on his chest and raised them to his mouth. “Thinking about you.”

Isaac’s pinky slipped between Ethan’s lips and the soft wetness sent a shiver of pleasure cascading down Isaac’s spine.
“I don’t know if I can make it back to the loft before I blow,” Isaac admitted, rolling his hips against Ethan’s ass one more time just to see if it would send him over the edge.

“The way you smell I don’t know if I can either.”

“I’ll suck you both off in the back of my car before we leave,” Brett werewolf whispered.

The shock of finding him standing right behind them, combined with his offer, made Isaac spurt another volley of probably-not-just-precum. His whole body throbbed, stuck on the precipice of an orgasm that felt like it would be earth-shattering when it hit.

“Come on.” Ethan pulled out of Isaac’s arms and grabbed his hand.

A growl rumbled in the back of Isaac’s throat as Ethan also took Brett’s hand, forming a chain to keep them together as they headed for the door.

*Okay, so maybe werewolves really don’t like to share.*

That was going to make the threesome interesting. Not that Isaac had expected it to be dull.

Isaac and Ethan were forced to let go of each other as they reached the front entrance and a couple that was just entering crashed into them. Ethan caught one of the guys by his upper arms, but Isaac wasn’t fast enough to keep the other guy from colliding with his chest.

Isaac groaned at the impact, but it became a soft moan as the boy’s cool hands landed on Isaac’s ribs and he looked up into Isaac’s eyes. Time seemed to slow, and a smile broke across Isaac’s face, his chest fluttering right below the boy’s chin.

Isaac liked him on sight. He had thick, dark hair and brown, almost black eyes with lightly tanned skin and features that were a striking mix of adorable and classically handsome, right down to his button nose, delicate mouth, and strong jaw. He was short, roughly Liam’s height, with a compact but muscular build. There was strength in the muscles of the boy’s upper back where Isaac’s hands had come to rest, and the softness of the boy’s own hands was in contrast to the firmness of his grip on Isaac’s bare torso.

“I’m sorry. I wasn’t looking where I was going,” he said as his eyebrows rose expressively and his deep, soulful eyes widened. His voice was smooth and resonant, masculine yet boyish. He was utterly captivating and Isaac’s cock agreed as it throbbed hard against the boy’s firm stomach.

The boy’s mouth opened in an awestruck expression, and his eyes darted down to where their bodies were pressed together. “Whoa!” he exclaimed under his breath.

A slight blush crept over the boy’s cheeks, and Isaac realized he was getting turned on. *Fuck.* He smelled incredible. He wore a leathery, crisp cologne that Isaac couldn’t place but wouldn’t have minded buying for himself. His natural scent was mild and unassuming with a milky-sweetness perfectly complimented by the cologne. Best of all was the fucking *mouthwatering* scent of his arousal. It was savory yet subtle with rich, nuanced flavors that made Isaac lightheaded with lust.

“S-sorry,” the boy repeated, stepping back but leaving his cool fingertips pressed against the hot flesh of Isaac’s sides.

“I’m not,” Isaac answered, angling his head and flashing his most predatory smirk as he gently squeezed the boy’s shoulders, then let go. “But I am sorry if I hurt you. I didn’t see you till it was too late.”
“That’s okay. I’m used to not being noticed,” he answered, his mouth forming a sad line.

“Corey, come on.” His companion frowned at Isaac and pulled the boy – Corey – away by the arm.

Isaac watched him leave, checking out his ass of course, but also wondering what he had meant by his final comment. He hardly seemed like the kind of guy who would fade into the background.

“Did you want to try to arrange a different threesome, Isaac?” Ethan stood next to Brett by the door, arms folded over his chest. “Perhaps they’ll let you join them.”

“Sorry, I’m just really horny and he was very cute.” Isaac bit his lip and raked his eyes over Ethan’s muscular body and Brett’s long, lean one. “I’m great with the current lineup.”

Brett slung his arm around Isaac as they exited the club. His skin was hot and supple, and his bicep dense and unyielding against the back of Isaac’s neck. He turned his head and whispered in Isaac’s ear. “I can’t wait to taste your cum.”

Ethan’s heart stuttered and disappeared.

“You’re not impressing anyone,” Brett said with a laugh, throwing his other arm around Ethan’s shoulders as they walked through the parking lot. “I can do that too.” Brett’s heart went silent.

Isaac shrugged under Brett’s arm and also hid his heartbeat, eager to show the other werewolf that he was a member of the stealth club.

“So you want me to cum in your mouth before we leave?” Isaac asked, trying to play it cool but hearing the excited tension in his own voice.

“Absolutely – if you haven’t already finished cumming in your pants.”

“I didn’t cum in my pants!”

Isaac gasped as Brett turned and grabbed his arms, slamming him against the side of a car and covering Isaac’s open mouth with his own.

The kiss was rough and deep. Isaac had never kissed someone as tall as him before and it was hot that he didn’t have to angle his head down and that Brett wasn’t standing on tiptoes. Their mouths clashed together in a way that was more like combat than making out, and it spurred Isaac to buck and thrust with abandon against Brett’s crotch, enjoying the way the harsh contact hurt through their jeans. It also felt amazing, and the ache only served to heighten Isaac’s desperation and willingness to keep doing it.

Brett broke the kiss and pulled back, a smirk on his lips and a glint in his eye. “It’s so hot that you came in your pants.”

“I didn’t cum in my pants!” Isaac blushed as he realized he had just shouted the statement to the whole parking lot.

His heart caught in his throat as Brett pressed the back of his arm against Isaac’s bare chest and pinned him to the car. He struggled for a second but quit when Brett gave him an intense look and his bright blue eyes flickered even brighter. A ring of amber fire lit the edges and his pupils widened, creating a large, dark center within the vivid concentric bands of color. Isaac needed to learn how to do that.

Brett grasped Isaac’s chin, denying him the sexy visual as he tilted Isaac’s head to the side.
Isaac’s blood ran cold as his throat was bared to the other werewolf. His instincts kicked into overdrive when Brett sucked and nipped at his jugular, causing Isaac’s eyes to blaze with heat and his claws to shoot out. He didn’t know this guy, not really. This was so fucking dangerous! He trembled and struggled not to ruin everything by attacking Brett.

“That’s enough.” Ethan’s voice was filled with latent authority as he shoved Brett out of the way.

Isaac’s claws retracted, but he didn’t have time to catch his breath before Ethan pressed himself just as forcefully against the front of Isaac’s body. He turned Isaac’s head in the opposite direction and latched his mouth over the corresponding spot on Isaac’s throat.

A wave of euphoria washed over Isaac. He panted and clung to Ethan’s back with blunt fingertips as one of Ethan’s fangs dragged over his pulse point. Awww fuck it was good! Dangerous but...Isaac’s mind whorled into oblivion and he whimpered, dropping his head all the way back and going still in submission.

Ethan lifted his face from Isaac’s throat and whispered rough-edged words in his ear. “Get in the car and take off your jeans.”

Isaac nodded and scrabbled for the door handle, frantic to obey the command.

Ethan slid inside the vehicle after Isaac, and Brett went around to the other side and climbed in behind Isaac.

There was no delay as Isaac toed off his shoes and stripped out of his jeans, no time to feel self conscious or even to look around at his surroundings.

“Holy fuck, how big are you?” Brett hooked his chin over Isaac’s shoulder and reached around to touch Isaac’s erection. He didn’t make contact.

“Stop!” Ethan snarled and slapped Brett’s hand away.

Brett growled and reached for Isaac again.

Ethan caught his wrist and squeezed, eyes blazing blue and lips bulging around his fangs. “Me first. Then you.”

Brett let out another rough growl, but it carried a tinge of defeat as he withdrew his hand.

In the back of his mind, Isaac knew he should tell Ethan to stop being possessive – they were just friends after all – but Ethan’s behavior was turning him so much his cock was quivering in his soaked briefs and his wolf was yipping at the edges of his consciousness, eager for another command from Ethan.

“Take off your underwear and give them to Brett.”

Brett moaned and tentatively rubbed Isaac’s stomach, his eyes darting between Isaac’s crotch and Ethan’s face.

Brett was so freakin’ cute with his long eyelashes and pouty lips parted in anticipation. Isaac wanted to kiss him, but his need to obey was stronger...even if he did sort of want Ethan to discipline him. He leaned back against Brett’s chest and arched his hips so that he could shuck off his underwear and hand them to Brett.

Ethan’s and Brett’s heart rates sped up as they stared at Isaac’s erection and sniffed the air. Isaac
sniffed too. There was so much lust filling the car that Isaac was sure he would cum untouched now that his cock was finally out in open air.

Open, cool air – it felt so fucking good on his throbbing, inferno-hot erection. Isaac’s thick cockhead was a deep, needy crimson, glistening with creamy-clear liquid. It was a little too creamy and smelled a little too strong to be just precum, but however much cum had leaked out wasn’t enough to offer Isaac any measure of relief. His balls, damp from the flow of liquid down his shaft, hung heavy in his sack against the blue cloth seat of Brett’s car. Isaac’s light brown pubes were wet and matted to his pelvis. The thick, rich tang of his pheromones hung heavy in the car, and while Isaac was entranced by the scents of Ethan’s and Brett’s arousal, he had to admit his own crotch smelled really frickin’ good right now.

“Dude, you have hottest cock I’ve ever seen in real life.” Brett sighed and reached for it, but Ethan snarled so savagely Isaac thought he was going to take Brett’s hand off. Brett recoiled, causing the whole car to rock as he jumped back in his seat.

“So those.” Ethan nodded at Isaac’s briefs still clutched in Brett’s hand.

Brett’s eyes flashed gold as he balled up Isaac’s underwear. He moaned and tongued the wet spot that had been right against Isaac’s cockhead, drawing the fabric into his mouth. The back of his other arm brushed Isaac’s lower back as he stroked himself through his pants.

Isaac was shoved against Brett’s arm and knee as Ethan pushed him away. It didn’t make sense until Ethan used the new space he’d created to hunch over in his seat and investigate Isaac’s groin. Isaac hissed and Ethan whimpered as he rubbed first one side of his face and then the other along Isaac’s wet shaft, milking out a string of precum against the apple of his cheek.

Isaac clenched his teeth and keened. He was on the brink of cumming all over Ethan’s smooth, handsome face, and it didn’t help when Ethan looked up at him with glowing blue eyes and gave him a lust-drunk smile.

An instant before it would have been too late, Ethan broke contact with Isaac’s cock and poked his nose into the crease of Isaac’s thigh right along the edge of his balls. His thumb massaged hard circles against Isaac’s pelvis, producing an audible wet scratching against the hair that somehow made the sensation even more intense. Ethan’s tongue flicked out and laved across Isaac’s balls, and Isaac screamed.

“Sshhh.” Ethan made the sound with puckered lips against Isaac’s balls, his nose resting atop Isaac’s sack.

“Ethan please.”

“Will you cum if I suck you?”

“In like one second flat.”

Ethan laughed and raised his head, giving Isaac a serious look. “Do you want to cum in my mouth or Brett’s?”

“Yo-yours.’

Ethan grinned and Brett growled.

“I’ll save you some,” Ethan said with a wink to Brett.
Brett smirked and winked back. “I better cover his lips.”

Isaac had just enough time to take a deep breath before Brett tilted his head back and locked his mouth over Isaac’s. Their tongues swirled together and Isaac gasped and shook as Ethan took hold of his balls with firm but gentle hands. Isaac sucked harder on Brett’s tongue and spread his thighs as far as he could in the confined backseat of the car. He was desperate for Ethan to—

Isaac yelped into Brett’s mouth as Ethan’s lips sealed over the top half of his cock and Isaac’s glans brushed the hot, silky smooth back of Ethan’s throat. Isaac’s balls twitched and jumped in Ethan’s hands, trying to rise and spill their load as Ethan gripped Ethan’s head and fucked into his mouth. Ethan gagged and swallowed around Isaac’s cock, drawing Isaac’s swollen head deeper into the tight, wet folds beyond the back of his throat. The moment Isaac was sheathed in all that glorious smooth muscle, Ethan shifted from holding Isaac’s balls down in his sack to gently massaging them as he hummed and wiggled his tongue.

Oh goddamn – FUCK!

The orgasm was soul-rending. It felt like Isaac’s very essence was blasting down Ethan’s throat as he howled down Brett’s.

He couldn't unload fast enough. Every thick rope barreling out of his wide-open slit and down Ethan's gullet brought such mind-blowing relief he was frantic to pump it out faster.

He flattened his fingers against Ethan’s head so he wouldn’t gouge him with his claws and bounced and bucked in the seat, skull-fucking Ethan in a rough, frenzied way that he sure as hell never would have done with Allison. Hot, thick cum flooded around his glans and shaft as Ethan swallowed again and again, each time sending spikes of sharp pleasure jolting through the euphoric background bliss and making Isaac shoot harder.

After awhile it became too much. Isaac’s cock wouldn’t stop spasming and his nerves pulsed and burned with pleasure. He couldn’t breathe and his eyes were watering. He pushed Brett away from his face and went slack in Ethan’s mouth, hoping to escape some of the intensity.

“Good?” Brett asked, amusement in his voice.

Isaac nodded, his eyes squeezed shut. As much as he wanted it to stop, he so didn’t ever want it to stop.

It was a relief when Ethan pulled his mouth off Isaac’s cock, but continued stroking him with one hand and catching the steady stream of cum in the palm of his other.

“Your turn.” Ethan’s voice was scratchy and deep and – Fuck, another hard torrent blasted out of Isaac’s exhausted cock, overshooting Ethan’s hand and spraying his throat and collarbone.

Brett climbed around Isaac’s limp body, shoving Isaac back into the spot he had occupied as Ethan knelt on the seat so that Brett could squeeze into the tight floorspace.

Isaac whimpered and shook his head as Brett’s mouth replaced Ethan’s on his over-sensitive cock.

“Noooo.” Isaac panted and shook his head. “Too much.”

“It’s okay.” Ethan slurped up the cum in his hand and grinned down at the mess on his chest.

Isaac watched the creamy white tendrils dribble lower on Ethan’s tanned skin until they slicked the groves around his upper panel of abs. He cursed as his dick throbbed violently in Brett’s mouth and
Brett moaned and sucked him with renewed vigor. Isaac swore his orgasm was starting all over, and there was no way he could endure it.

“Isaac, look at me. This is good.” Ethan gripped his shoulders and shifted on top of him until they were pressed together tight. “Deep breaths and just enjoy it.”

Isaac sighed and clung to Ethan’s back, nuzzling the side of his head as he let the pleasure wash through him and savored the sensation of Brett’s tongue swirling around the ridge of his cockhead and relished the steady contractions in his pelvis as he kept pumping out his semen. The intensity was much easier to take now that Ethan was here, up here, with him, rubbing his sides and back and grounding him against the swell of sensation.

“Am I having another moon’gasm?”

“Well I dunno, do you usually cum this long?”

“No,” Isaac answered earnestly. His brain was too scrambled to pick up the sarcasm until after the fact. “Why is it happening. I wasn’t out in the moon much tonight.”

Ethan laughed. “I think you were backed up from the full moon.”

Oh. That made sense. Isaac hadn’t thought about it, but he had probably never gone through such a long dry spell and three nights of the full moon before. He arched his body and thrust lazily into Brett’s mouth. The contractions had mellowed and become blissfully predictable.

“It feels so good.”

Ethan raised his head and smiled, and when their eyes met, Isaac’s stomach lurched – into his cock of course.

“Hey,” Isaac whispered. He was already dripping sweat and his skin was on fire, but his face somehow managed to get hotter.

A bright smile lit Ethan’s face and robbed Isaac of his already limited supply of oxygen. “Hey.”

Their lips touched and Isaac was sure the kiss would have been orgasmic even if he weren’t in the middle of an orgasm. He immediately wanted to stop. It shouldn’t haven been this intense. He shouldn’t have liked it this much. There was no way he was stopping.

He cupped the back of Ethan’s head and twirled his tongue around Ethan’s closed lips, asking, pleading for entry. Ethan’s mouth opened and Brett gagged as Isaac plunged inside.

It was their second kiss, but it felt like the first. Isaac explored Ethan’s mouth like it was their first time. He prodded Ethan’s tongue, trailed along his teeth, flicked the ridges of his palate. Ethan reciprocated, caressing every inch of Isaac’s mouth and making him whimper. Isaac was so lost in what was happening in his mouth, he didn’t notice what was happening in his crotch, or more precisely what had stopped happening in his crotch.

Brett pulled off of Isaac’s dick with a wet pop. Isaac gasped and Ethan went rigid as they separated.

“Damn! I feel like such a cockslut now.” Brett looked up at them with a lazy grin and worked his jaw back and forth with his hand. “And I’m A-okay with that. You’re so fucking delicious, man. And that’s the biggest cock I’ve ever sucked.”

“Thanks,” Isaac mumbled, feeling awkward about the compliment even as it made him glow.
“No, thank you. That was also the first time I’ve ever played with a guy having a moon’gasm. Girls are pretty fun though.”

Isaac’s eyes widened and his dick, which was sprawled limp and spent across his thigh, managed a valiant twitch of interest. “Girls have moon’gasms too?”

“Oh yeah.” Brett’s facial expression was lewd and sexy, and Isaac really wanted to work up some lust for it.

“What’s that like?”

“Wet and loud.”

Ethan squeezed Isaac’s knee and gave him a gentle, affectionate smile that still seemed out of place on his face despite how far they had come...or maybe it was exactly how Isaac expected Ethan to look at him. He wasn’t sure.

“Put your pants on and let’s go.” Ethan glanced down at Brett. “You can follow us, but give me your number and I’ll text you my address just in case.”

Brett licked his lips and his eyes flared gold. He shook his head and stared at the long outline in Ethan’s pants. “Uh-uh. I want to suck you both off. That was the deal. Oral in the car, anal at your place.” Brett curled his lip and tilted his head at Ethan. “In your place.”

Isaac sniggered as Ethan gave Brett what could only be described as a bitch-please face.

“I’m a top.”

“Me too.” Brett shrugged and gave Isaac a look that made his heart stutter. “Think you can handle both of us?”

Isaac plastered a cocky smile on his face despite the anxiety prickling the back of his neck. “All night.”

Ethan’s hands on his belt snapped Isaac’s and Brett’s attention back to him. He took his time as he unclasped the buckle, opened the top button of his fly, and eased the zipper down. He was doing it for dramatic effect and it was working. Brett’s heart was thumping in their ears and the scent of his arousal had gotten so thick Isaac could almost have eaten it with a spoon. Isaac wasn’t any less eager. A ball of anticipation had twisted around his navel and his cock was getting heavier on this thigh, threatening to rise again as soon as Ethan’s came out to play.

Isaac and Brett both groaned as Ethan slid his pants down his hips, but left his snug black trunks on.

“Like ‘em?” Ethan asked with a teasing lilt, pinching the fabric over his right hip. The fabric over his left hip was bulged and strained around his hefty erection.

“I’d like ‘em around your ankles,” Brett answered, sliding sideways on his knees till he was between Ethan’s spread legs.

“Help yourself.” Ethan leaned back in the seat, raising one arm behind his head and flexing, obviously posing for Brett.

A wave of possessive aggression flared hot and unexpected in Isaac’s stomach as Brett’s fingers curled around Ethan’s waistband, but then he untangled Ethan’s cock and it snapped against his abs, and all Isaac could think about was licking it.
Brett beat him to it. He wrapped his hand around the base of Ethan’s erection and stared in awe for a moment at the small gap left between his thumb and fingers. His eyes flared gold and he pressed his tongue flat against Ethan’s shaft, licking from the base above his thumb to the tip. He flicked Ethan’s tight cockslit and twirled laps around Ethan’s big, bloated cockhead. It was downright bulbous and sat obscenely on the end of Ethan’s majestic cock. Brett seemed as fascinated by it as Isaac always was and promptly hooked his lips around the wide, flared rim and bobbed up and down with hollowed cheeks.

Isaac moaned and stroked himself faster. He didn’t know when he had gotten hard again or when he had started masturbating; all he knew was that Brett looked fucking hot with Ethan’s dick in his mouth.

“Squeeze my knee if you want me to stop,” Ethan said, his tone dripping with danger as he gripped Brett’s ear with one hand and covered the back of his head with the other.

In the few seconds that Ethan gave Brett to comprehend what was happening, fear tinged Brett’s scent and his heart rate accelerated. Ethan pushed Brett’s head down, slow and relentless, ignoring the way he choked and gagged.

“Come on, cockslut, swallow it. This is what you wanted.” Ethan’s tone was smug and aggressive. The last time Isaac had heard that tone, Ethan was using it to taunt him while he gave Isaac the rough fuck he had begged for. It was embarrassing, and scary...and absolutely something Isaac needed to be on the receiving end of again.

Brett gurgled and managed to drop a half inch lower on Ethan’s shaft before Ethan arched his hips and plundered more of Brett’s throat.

“Oh yes! Such a hot little mouth.” Ethan closed his eyes and sighed as he squeezed Brett’s ear and lifted his head a few inches before slamming it back down so hard Isaac was worried about the beta’s neck.

Brett whimpered and groaned, shaking and gagging violently. He was about three quarters of the way down Ethan’s shaft now, and Isaac wondered if it was even physically possible for him to take any more. He was nearing sword-swallowing territory.

“Squeeze my knee if you want me to stop,” Ethan repeated in the gentlest tone he had used with Brett all night.

Some of the fear abated in Brett’s scent and his arousal deepened. He shook his head minutely and redoubled his efforts to sink lower on Ethan’s shaft.

“Let me help.” The dark tone was back in Ethan’s voice, and he threw Isaac a positively evil smirk.

Ethan forced Brett’s head lower another inch and held it in place as Brett tried to pull up.

Brett’s face was dark red and his eyes watered with tears. His breathing came in a series of rapid pants between violent gags, but he raised his hand and very pointedly rubbed up Ethan’s muscular, hairy thigh instead of down toward his knee.

“Close your mouth and suck, bitch.”

Brett dug his claws into Ethan’s thigh but slurped and hollowed his cheeks.

“Oh so you wanna get rough?”
Brett whined.

Ethan held Brett’s head in place and snapped his hips hard and fast, pummeling his throat. Brett made a sound like he was going to throw up but nothing came out, and Ethan didn’t stop. He rabbited his hips up and down like he couldn’t have cared less whether or not he hurt Brett, and Isaac had no idea if that was true.

“Fucking suck it, bitch!” Ethan twisted Brett’s ear and rose up a couple of inches in his seat, squatting more than sitting to give him better leverage for his frenetic assault.

Brett lifted his hand and Isaac was sure it would squeeze Ethan’s knee; instead it slid under Ethan’s ass and cupped one cheek.

_Fucking fuck! They look hot like that!_

Ethan growled and curled his body around Brett’s head. His hips were a blur, and Isaac didn’t see how it was possible for Ethan to snap them that fast. He sank his claws into Brett’s lower back and snarled.

“Goddammit! Fucking get me _OFF_!”

Brett wrenched Ethan up by the ass, smashing his face against Ethan’s stomach as he slurped and sucked like his life depended on it.

Ethan howled and arched his back, eyes blazing blue. His ass clenched and relaxed a few times in Brett’s hand and his hips stuttered, then Brett was gurgling, wet and noisy, and his throat was contracting as he swallowed.

Isaac was on the edge of a second orgasm but stopped on the brink, wanting to save it for later when he got fucked.

Ethan unfurled his claws from Brett’s back and panted, his face blissed out. Once his breathing had returned to normal, he pressed blunt fingertips to the bleeding gouge marks on Brett’s back. Relief warmed Isaac’s heart as black vines twined up Ethan’s fingers and Brett relaxed.

Ethan collapsed in his seat and Brett gave one more noisy slurp as he withdrew from Ethan’s cock.

Isaac shivered as Brett gave him a mischievous look and opened his mouth, revealing that it was full of Ethan’s cum and his own saliva, thin and clear in some places, thick and milky in others. The smell made Isaac’s eyes burn and his fingertips itch. Brett slid back to Isaac’s side of the car, and Isaac fell against him in his desperation to get his tongue inside Brett’s mouth.

Brett held his mouth open and let Isaac lap at the creamy treat for a few seconds before clutching Isaac’s head and surging forward. He sealed their lips together and snowballed the whole load into Isaac’s mouth, making Isaac moan and rub his cock against Brett’s stomach. In response, Brett cupped a hand around Isaac’s shaft, creating a sweaty, sinewy tunnel of hard flesh for Isaac to thrust into as they swished Ethan’s load back and forth between their mouths.

Isaac had thought this would be a quick thing, but it was the first time he had ever tasted Ethan’s cum and it was freakishly good, supremely good, satisfied-an-instinct-Isaac-didn’t-know-he-had-good. He bucked harder and faster as his brain lit up with endorphins and a full-bodied sense of well-being washed over him.

He realized he was going tocum about five seconds before it happened, and those final five seconds were among the best of his life as his dick ploughed up and down the slick ridges of Brett’s abs and
his tongue and brain were completely coated in Ethan’s cum.

Isaac sputtered and choked as he erupted between them, spraying their chins and throats with his second load.

They made out until Isaac was done. He sighed and rested his forehead against Brett’s, euphoric and drowsy.

Brett laughed and pecked Isaac’s lips one more time. “Okay, so you owe me two orgasms, and Ethan owes me one.”

Chapter End Notes

I didn’t want to ‘spoil’ that this was only the first half of the threesome because I thought it would be more fun for people to read it without expectations, but yeah, there’s a second, more explicit part coming. I thought this was a good stopping point and I didn’t want to keep you guys waiting any longer than necessary. I hope you don’t mind the interruption of the Iron Claw and Darach plot lines, but this part of the story is supposed to be a little cooling off period for smut and romance (Stisaac is coming up right after this) before things get crazy in the second major section of the story. There’s still a whole third section after that, so quite a lot more to come. As an extremely rough estimate I’m thinking the story will have about 100-120 chapters by the time it’s finished. There will be a lot more Brett action in the next chapter, and I’ll try to get that posted as soon as possible. I can’t promise it’ll be faster/sooner than a regular update, but I’m going to try.

I hope you guys enjoyed Corey’s little cameo too. I have a huge soft spot (okay, hard spot) for Corey and I couldn’t resist since Isaac and Ethan were at Sinema where it was logical for Corey to be too. Anyway, no spoilers but this may not be the last time we see Brett and Corey in the story.

As always, you guys are the bee’s knees for reading, and feedback is greatly appreciated! (What’d ya think of Ethan? Kind of a dick right?)
Isaac buttoned his jeans and collapsed against Ethan in the backseat of Brett’s car. The plan was for them to all take the car back to Ethan’s loft. Then tomorrow morning Ethan would pick up his motorcycle and take Isaac home.

“You won’t need to turn for awhile,” Ethan told Brett as they pulled out onto the open road after weaving through a few side streets.

Ethan draped a heavy arm around Isaac’s shoulders, and Isaac hesitated only a few seconds before giving in to the urge to slump in his seat and snuggle against Ethan’s warm, bare chest. Ethan sighed with contentment and traced patterns along Isaac’s side, and Isaac was so tingly with happiness that he took things to the next level and wrapped his arms over and under Ethan’s torso, holding him like a body pillow. It was going to be so awesome sleeping with him tonight!

Ethan’s fingers trailed up Isaac’s side and over his arm until they were carding through his sweat-damp hair. Isaac was self conscious at first but noted that Ethan’s body was as slick as his own and decided it didn’t matter. He nuzzled his cheek against the firm plane of one of Ethan’s pecs and inhaled through his nose. Ethan sure as hell didn’t smell sweaty, at least not stale sweaty. His scent was crisp and inviting, humming with energy.

“I call dibs on fucking Isaac first,” Brett said, an edge of needy desperation in his tone.

A tremor of anxiety roiled through Isaac. He was going to get passed between the other two werewolves. It wasn’t unappealing – the thought alone had him swelling in pants – but this would only be Isaac’s third time bottoming, and taking on two tops with werewolf stamina was a daunting prospect.

Ethan stroked the shell of Isaac’s ear with his thumb and rumbled low and dangerous. “You won’t touch Isaac unless he invites you to.”

Brett huffed and dropped his hand against the steering wheel. “He did invite me to.”

“Yeah, this is going to be so much fun!” Isaac meant it despite the obvious tension in his voice.

Ethan pulled his phone out of his pocket and angled it toward Isaac as he opened their text conversation and typed a message one-handed, his other hand snaking under Isaac’s arm and rubbing his chest. Ethan didn’t hit send when he finished the message, just held it up for Isaac to read.

*You’re nervous. Let’s call this off. I’ll get rid of Brett and make it about me, so you won’t be embarrassed.*

Isaac shook his head and shifted against Ethan’s chest so he could take the phone from him. He deleted Ethan’s message and typed his own.

*I want to do this. I want to get fucked. I want to get SLAMMED by the two of you. I’m just nervous.*

Ethan’s heart stuttered and anger flared in his scent as his body became rigid beneath Isaac. He took his phone back and shoved it in his pocket.
Isaac sat up and looked into Ethan’s stormy chocolate eyes. He cupped the back of Ethan’s head and pressed a kiss to his soft, pouted lips. “I want you, Ethan. This is what we agreed to. Brett’s doing us a favor so we can fuck.”

Brett let out a sharp bark of laughter. “Yeah, I’m a real humanitarian. As soon as I find an ass to tap to end world hunger I’ll be all over it!”

Isaac snickered and Ethan growled, but a reluctant smile curled the corner of his mouth. Isaac pressed another kiss there and settled back against his chest, pleased when Ethan folded his hands over Isaac’s stomach and leaned his chin against Isaac’s head.

Brett smirked at them in the rearview mirror. “You guys are so good at just being friends.”

“Shut up and turn left at the next intersection.”

They arrived at Ethan’s loft a few minutes later, and Isaac blushed as he remembered something while getting out of the car. “Don’t you have a doorman?”

“Yeah.”

“What’s he gonna say?”

“Probably something like, ‘good evening, sir,’” Ethan answered in a deep, serious voice.

Isaac sighed and waved a hand over his shirtless body, then flicked his wrist at Ethan’s and Brett’s bare torsos. “I mean about this.”

Ethan shrugged as the group walked toward the main entrance. “I doubt he’ll comment, or even care as long as we don’t linger in the lobby.”

“Well I for one am eager to get upstairs.” Brett hooked an arm around Isaac’s shoulders and whispered in his ear. “Do I have dibs or not?”

Isaac throbbed in his pants and silently cursed Brett for getting him worked up right before they walked into the building. However, he couldn’t bring himself to openly protest once he caught a whiff of Brett’s thick, throat-tingling arousal.

“You have dibs,” Isaac whispered, his hand around Brett’s waist, fingertips pressed against his lean hip where it dipped down into his well-defined v-line.

“I have dibs,” Brett bragged with a smirk as Ethan opened the door for them.

Ethan’s scent and heartbeat were missing, and Isaac couldn’t bring himself to check his face for a reaction.

“Good evening, sir.”

All three boys snickered as they turned to look at the besuited doorman behind the building’s ornate front desk.

“Good evening, Juan. Is my brother here?” Ethan asked as he rang for the elevator.

“I haven’t seen him come in or out since I’ve been on duty.”

“Good.”
Isaac agreed that it was good. Cockblocking this threesome would be exactly the sort of thing Evil!Aiden would do.

The elevator arrived and Isaac got on first. A wave of pure lust twisted deep in his gut as Brett stood in front of him. His jeans were low on his hips, revealing the blue cloth waistband of his underwear, which had also ridden down, highlighting the muscular swell of his ass. From further back Isaac wouldn’t have been able to see the cleft of Brett’s ass, but from right behind him, Isaac could look down the back of his pants and see the top couple of inches of his tan valley.

Brett shifted to lean against the sidewall of the elevator, and Isaac’s hands shot out, gripping Brett’s belt and holding him in place.

“Stop, I wanna look at your ass.”

Brett laughed and backed up closer to Isaac, his hand reaching around behind him to grip Isaac’s. “Just look?”

Isaac whimpered and bit his lip as Brett pressed Isaac’s fingers against the small of his back and leaned forward at the waist, inviting Isaac into the back of his pants.

Oh god.

Isaac’s fingers slid under the waistband of Brett’s underwear and over the sinfully hot, smooth flesh of Brett’s upper ass. His middle finger worked its way between the hard globes and into Brett’s tight cleft, lower and lower until–

“Enough!” Ethan slapped the flat of his hand against the opposite wall of the elevator, making Isaac and Brett jump. “One more floor, guys. Think you can wait?”

Isaac didn’t think he could. He had pulled his hand out of Brett’s pants, but for a split second before Ethan had interrupted them the tip of his finger had crept past the smooth, delicate skin of Brett’s crack and grazed over something hot and wrinkly.

The elevator chimed and Brett grabbed Isaac’s hand, yanking him through the small opening in the doors as soon as they had slid open enough for them to squeeze out.

“I don’t know where I’m going!” Brett audibly whined as he snapped his head up and down the hallway.

“This way!” Isaac tightened his grip on Brett’s hand and pushed past him, tugging him along as he sprinted to Ethan’s door.

“You don’t have a key?! ” Brett shot Isaac an accusing glare as they stared at the locked knob then back down the hallway to a slowly approaching Ethan.

“Why would have a key?”

“You’re his...okay not boyfriend, but – c’mon! You should have a key for emergency threesomes.”

“I’ll be sure to bring that up.”

“I’m not giving you a key for emergency threesomes,” Ethan announced as he finally arrived and let them in.

Isaac’s eyes widened as they walked into the loft, and Brett turned and grinned at Ethan.
Ethan grimaced and shook his head as he locked the door. “I know. It smells disgusting in here. I’m airing out Aiden’s room. Just try to ignore it.”

Brett adjusted himself and shot Isaac a knowing look. Isaac agreed with a nod. It smelled fucking incredible in here. Aiden’s and Malia’s pheromones were dense and silky in the air. Isaac might as well have had his nose buried in their crotches, and he definitely wasn’t complaining, not when he was this horny.

“So this isn’t doing it for you, huh?” Brett asked, crowding into Ethan’s space by the door.

“The scent of my brother and a girl? No, not really.”

“Well what about this?” Brett whispered, closing his mouth over Ethan’s and grinding against his body.

Isaac stared, jealousy warring with lust. Lust won out. He moved in close and pressed his hands to the centers of their backs as he nosed his way into the kiss.

“Yeah, this is doing it,” Ethan whispered against Brett’s mouth before turning his head and licking Isaac’s lips.

The makeout session was sloppy and frenzied. Their tongues collided as their faces squished together in a bid to connect their mouths in the ever-changing threeway configuration. Isaac’s lips stung as Brett lurched forward at the same moment that he did, and Ethan nipped along Isaac’s collarbone. Then Isaac was sucking on Ethan’s throat – and Ethan was fucking letting him! – and the other two boys were moaning into each other’s mouths.

While the three werewolves made out, one of Ethan’s hands squeezed Isaac’s ass and Ethan’s other arm brushed Isaac’s hip as Ethan worked his fingers into the front of Brett’s pants. Brett yipped and bucked as he reciprocated, draping his forearm over the buckle of Isaac’s belt and snaking his hand into Ethan’s pants.

Isaac knew he was the one who was going to get fucked tonight – and it’s not that he didn’t want to play with their penises – but good god all he wanted in that moment was ass. He sucked harder on Ethan’s throat and plunged his hand into the back of Brett’s pants, ignoring the harsh pressure on his wrist and the way Brett stumbled and banged against him as Isaac’s sudden intrusion threw him off balance.

Brett’s ass was a delicious feast of hard, unyielding muscle covered by soft, pliable flesh. It had to be at least five degrees hotter than the rest of Brett’s body, and despite the two orgasms Isaac had already had, he swore he was going to cum as soon as his fingers crooked between Brett’s cheeks and touched his soft, smooth opening. Isaac wiggled his middle finger, and Brett gasped and broke his kiss with Ethan, also interrupting the glorious contact between Isaac’s lips and the hollow of Ethan’s throat.

Brett’s face was flushed and the look he gave Isaac was one of unbridled lust as he eased Isaac’s hand out of his pants. “I like that, but so we’re clear I’m not bottoming, and I don’t want to get fingered either. But you” –he glanced at Ethan to include him in the statement– “can play with the outside of my ass as much as you want.”

“That might be a lot,” Isaac said with a leer.

“It will be a lot,” Ethan confirmed, his eyes flashing blue and the points of his fangs giving him a toothy, predatory grin.
Brett took a long breath and flared amber irises back at Ethan. “Let’s get these damn pants off.”

Isaac more than liked that suggestion and used what little will power he had to tear his eyes away from the beautiful guys in front of him so he could strip himself as quickly as possible. He toed his shoes off and all but ripped his pants and underwear down his hips and off his legs, hooking his fingers in his socks in the process and shedding those as well.

By the time he looked up, Ethan was equally naked, his huge, erect cock dominating the space in front of his body. Brett had taken off his pants and shoes and his thumbs were sliding into the waistband of his blue briefs. Isaac watched with rapt fascination as Brett pushed his underwear down and lifted his leg to tug them off.

Isaac couldn’t keep his eyes still. He needed to look at everything at once. Brett’s legs were lean and muscular with a dusting of thin, light hair from just above his knees down to his ankles, barely visible against the backdrop of his rich, golden skin. His thigh, which was raised and accentuating the perky little swell of his ass, was smooth and well-proportioned. Most enticing of all was his hard, uncut cock; it bounced and rubbed against his abs as he kicked his underwear away.

Brett gave his manhood a slow stroke and glanced in turn at Isaac’s and Ethan’s. “I’m not a freak of nature like you guys.” He shrugged. “But I’m happy with what I’ve got.”

“You should be.” Ethan stepped closer and covered Brett’s hand with his own on Brett’s cock. “It’s fucking gorgeous.” Ethan kissed Brett and bucked his own erection against Brett’s and their hands.

Isaac was mesmerized by the difference. Brett’s cock was gorgeous; he certainly didn’t have anything to be ashamed of, but it looked about half Ethan’s size, both in length and girth. The fact that Ethan was cut and had a dark red cockhead that bulged out away from his shaft was in stark contrast to the way Brett’s foreskin was bunched behind his flesh-colored glans, giving his own cockhead a sleek, unobtrusive appearance. The final notable difference was the way Brett dribbled a long, clear string of precum all over Ethan’s otherwise dry length. It was almost like they were working with two different types of equipment, and Isaac wanted to get his hands and mouth on both.

Isaac knelt beside the other two guys and gripped the bases of their cocks as he rubbed them all over his face. He dragged Ethan’s tip over his cheekbone, against the bridge of his nose, and over his closed eyelid, relishing the sensation of spongy fullness against his thin, delicate skin. Meanwhile, the thick, heady scent of Brett’s arousal made Isaac giddy as he smeared Brett’s fluids along his upper lip and under his nose. Isaac’s stomach quivered and he let out a hungry growl as he drew Brett’s dick into his mouth. His tongue swirled around Brett’s rounded helmet and probed as deep into his foreskin as he could get, making Brett gasp and twist his fingers in Isaac’s hair.

Ethan growled and chastised Brett, and soon soft fingertips replaced the harsh digits against Isaac’s scalp. He hadn’t minded the way Brett was holding him, but he liked the way Ethan was looking out for him even more. He opened his mouth as wide as he could to take Ethan inside next to Brett. His mouth was stuffed full and he couldn’t close it around the two cocks, but he managed to lick them as he rubbed the tips together and jerked their shafts.

Isaac was grateful that this sloppy technique was probably the best that could be expected of him under the double dick circumstances. His cock-sucking experience up till this point had consisted solely of blowing Ethan for a couple of minutes the night they had sex the first time. He knew he wasn’t very good.

“I’m about to cum.” Brett whimpered and thrust hard into Isaac’s mouth, hard enough to slide over Ethan’s shaft and against the hollow of Isaac’s cheek. Isaac redoubled his efforts to keep his teeth
“Hold on.” Ethan withdrew from Isaac’s mouth and gripped Brett’s hips, allowing him to stay inside but preventing him from fucking deeper. “How do you want to finish him?”

Ethan’s question was obviously directed at Isaac, prompting him to lift his eyes and look up at Ethan and Brett as he oh-ed his lips around Brett’s shaft. Brett looked down at him and let out a strangled gurgle, releasing another salty volley of precum. Isaac slurped as obscenely as he could to indicate he wanted Brett to cum in his mouth. Brett thrust forward and a wave of anxiety and excitement crept down Isaac’s spine as he realized he was about to get face fucked until Brett unloaded.

Or not. Ethan growled and held Brett’s hips in place, denying him the range of motion needed to hit the back of Isaac’s throat. “Stay still. Let him suck you off.”

Isaac’s cheeks burned. He sure as fuck didn’t need Ethan to...Warmth flooded Isaac’s body, and he thanked Ethan with his eyes. That had been really considerate.

Ethan slid around Brett and held him from behind, one hand massaging his chest while the other seemed gentle and sensual, but Isaac knew that Brett’s hip wasn’t going to be moving.

Isaac took a deep breath and lapped at Brett’s cockslit, gathering another salty treat. He stared straight ahead at Brett’s hairless pelvis, trying to gauge the distance it would take to press his nose there. It looked like a lot. Brett wasn’t small; he was about average, and Isaac only had the first couple inches in his mouth. That left at least three or four more. Isaac wasn’t afraid of choking; he was afraid of embarrassing himself and revealing his inexperience.

“It’s not his first time.” Ethan’s hand tightened on Brett’s hip and the tips of his claws dug against Brett’s v-line, not hard enough to break the skin but hard enough to make Brett’s stomach tense.

Brett’s stomach tensing gave Isaac the motivation he needed to swallow more of Brett’s cock. Holy fuck, Brett’s abs were awesome! They were even more sinewy and better defined than Ethan’s. While simply relaxed they were etched deep into his stomach, but once tensed they became bulging knots of perfection. Isaac ran his hand down them, pressing his fingertips as hard as he could into the valleys and pinching the ridges. Isaac’s other hand was a blur on his cock, and he zoned out as he bobbed his head, gradually taking more and more of Brett’s shaft.

“You can hotdog me, Ethan.” Brett’s voice wasn’t permissive so much as pleading, and the imagined visual of what was happening as Ethan released Brett’s chest and arched and shifted behind him was enough to make Isaac gag himself as he sank the rest of the way down Brett’s shaft and ground his nose against Brett’s flat pelvis.

All three guys moaned, and Isaac felt the vibrations in Brett’s body as Ethan thrust up and down the channel of Brett’s asscrack.

“Oh god, I’m so fucking close.” Brett’s tone was tight and frantic, completely void of the laid-back chill that had characterized it for the rest of the night. He abs spasmed beneath Isaac’s fingers and his hip quaked against Ethan’s claws. “Please let me move. Please.”

Isaac was as desperate for Brett’s load as Brett was to give it to him. He quit jerking himself and shifted both hands to Brett’s ass, nudging Ethan’s hand out of the way and probing into the tight space between Ethan’s pelvis and Brett’s ass. He squeezed Brett’s hard globes together and tickled
the flat of Ethan’s shaft, closing the ‘bun’ for Ethan.

Ethan grunted and Brett moaned.

Isaac hummed on Brett’s cock and wiggled his nose harder against the soft, tan skin above the base of his shaft as Ethan’s hand found Isaac’s shoulder and squeezed it affectionately. Ethan bucked harder, driving Brett’s cock deeper into Isaac’s throat and making him gag.

“Oh god yes, yes, YES!” Brett’s hands clenched Isaac’s head and he rocked forward, growling long and guttural as he filled Isaac’s throat with his hot, thick load.

“Ahh! I can feel your hole throbbing on my shaft!” Ethan bucked wild and fast, the topside of his cock rushing back and forth under Isaac’s fingers.

Isaac choked and sputtered around Brett’s spasming dick. His throat burned and tears watered his eyes as he struggled to keep swallowing, but had the presence of mind to clamp Brett’s asscheeks tighter around Ethan’s cock and tickle the topside of his silky-hard, throbbing erection.

Ethan’s orgasm howl was blissfully familiar as it tore out of his lungs, joining the shaky, guttural rumble still emanating from Brett.

Cum was everywhere, dribbling out of Isaac’s mouth, spattering against Brett’s back and gushing down over Isaac’s fingers and into Brett’s crack, trickling down Isaac’s chin and onto his chest, dripping to the floor between Ethan’s and Brett’s feet – it made Isaac’s cock quiver and throb, desperate to assert its dominance and add Isaac’s seed into the mix.

It was no use. Isaac couldn’t cum untouched, and his hands were full. He couldn’t even breathe and everything was burning from the neck up, but he refused to pull his mouth away from Brett’s cock until he was sure Brett had gotten everything he could from his release. Besides, Ethan was still bouncing and panting, and Isaac sure as hell didn’t want to rob him of any pleasure. He caressed Ethan’s perfect manhood with his fingertips, reverently massaging the semen that had splashed there into his skin.

“Fuck.” Ethan sighed and let go of Isaac’s shoulder and Brett’s chest.

“Yeah.” Brett’s voice was lazy and relaxed as he slid out of Isaac’s mouth and helped him up. He laughed and nodded at the floor where Isaac had been kneeling. “Dude, you made a puddle.”

Isaac glanced down, coughing and trying to catch his breath. There was a patch of glistening precum on the polished floor where Isaac had been kneeling. He wouldn’t really call it a puddle, but more was beading off his cockhead and under his balls and certainly threatening puddle status if the tendrils broke.

“So did Ethan,” Isaac answered, eyeing the much larger mess of cum where the other two had been standing.

“I’ll say. He got it in my hair.” Brett ran his fingers through the hair at the base of his skull, creating a wet squishing and amplifying the already intense scent in the room. “My back and ass are covered too.”

Isaac didn’t answer, just scraped fingers down his sticky throat and chest and smirked at Brett.

Ethan patted Brett’s shoulder and slapped Isaac’s ass as he walked past them and into the open-style kitchen. He washed his hands, poured three glasses of water, and nodded at Isaac and Brett to take theirs from the counter as he returned to the entryway and wiped up the mess with a hand towel.
He should have left it. Maybe Aiden would have stepped in it when he got home.

“Let’s see if we can make it to my bedroom shall we?” Ethan tossed the towel in the sink and chugged his water.

“Dunno if Isaac can. I think he’s about to pop. *Again.*” Brett groped Isaac’s cock and balls and gathered the vines of precum coating them. He smirked and rubbed his hand over his face. “Can’t have you dripping when Ethan just cleaned.”

Isaac bit his lip and thrust into empty air as he stared at the shiny droplet of his own fluid clinging to Brett’s eyebrow. He swallowed and tried to play it cool.

“You should talk,” Isaac answered, dragging his hand over Brett’s lower back and collecting a palmful of Ethan’s cum. He smeared it over his chest and nipples, pleased to have both their scents on him.

“Finish your water and come on.” Ethan pushed Isaac’s half-drunk glass toward him and strutted out of the kitchen, his ass bouncing in a way that very much made Isaac thirsty.

Brett groaned and watched Ethan every bit as intensely as Isaac did until he had traversed the living room and disappeared down the hallway to his bedroom. “Race ya.” He drained his glass and bolted after Ethan.

Heat warmed Isaac’s eyes as they tried to keep up with the glorious stretch and flex of Brett’s cummy backside as he sprinted away.

*And they’re both tops.*

Isaac wistfully downed his drink and set the empty glass in the sink, taking an extra sniff of the towel. His ass throbbed.

*And they’re both tops!*

Chapter End Notes

Three hot werewolves having a threesome? Sounds like it calls for a third chapter to me. ;-)  

But I’m seriously not counting this update as my regular update. You guys can throw stuff at me if I don’t have the third and final part of the sextravaganza posted by the end of the weekend.
“Wow!” Brett was looking in awe at Ethan’s floor-to-ceiling window as Isaac walked into the room.

Ethan gave Brett a proud smirk as he stood in the moonlight by the bed, clearly pleased with his reaction.

Isaac stepped around Brett and bathed himself in the silvery light as he kissed that smirk off Ethan’s handsome face.

Ethan moaned into his mouth and crowded him back until he was pressed against the side of the bed. Ethan broke the kiss and flashed icy eyes at him as he shoved Isaac hard enough to send him sprawling across the mattress.

There was a needy growl, and when Isaac looked up, he found himself staring into Brett’s hypnotic amber eyes as the other beta hustled forward and covered Isaac’s body with his own.

Brett yipped as Ethan slapped his ass. The smack reverberated through the room and down Isaac’s spine as Brett’s erection slid against his own.

Isaac hissed and grabbed fistfuls of Brett’s slick ass, grinding Brett’s manhood harder against him.

“Aww, fuck yeah. Hold his crack open.” Ethan’s lust thickened in the air and he disappeared from over Brett’s shoulder as he hunched over Brett’s ass.

Brett’s pulse spiked and his amber werewolf eyes flickered with human blue concern as Isaac accommodated Ethan’s request and curled his fingers into Brett’s channel, spreading it open and raking his fingers through Ethan’s sticky, cooling cum.

Ethan groaned in satisfaction and the sides of his face pressed against Isaac’s fingers as he buried his mouth and nose in Brett’s crack and slurped.

Brett whimpered and squeezed his eyes closed, dropping his head to Isaac’s as he wiggled back, grinding his cock and balls against Isaac’s and shimmying on Ethan’s face.

Isaac tilted his head and caught Brett’s lips, nipping at them until he kissed back.

They spent several blissful minutes that way with Isaac and Brett making out and frotting each other while Ethan rimmed Brett and occasionally licked and sucked Isaac’s fingers. It ended when Ethan pulled his face away.

“Move over!” he thundered in his alpha voice.

Isaac’s and Brett’s erections throbbed against each other and their cockheads got wetter as they broke their kiss and dragged themselves higher on the bed, never breaking the blissful contact between their
genitals.

Ethan appeared over Brett’s shoulder, and stared down at Brett’s spread ass for a moment. Then one hand covered Isaac’s in Brett’s crack and–

“NO!” Brett shouted in a panic-stricken voice, his heart full-on pounding.

Isaac released Brett’s ass and rubbed his shoulders.

Brett looked back at Ethan, body tense. “I don’t wanna bottom.”

Ethan backed up and Isaac heard the soft splish of skin contact as Ethan rubbed Brett’s back. “I wasn’t going to put it in. I just wanted to rub the head against your hole.”

Brett hesitated, conflict playing out over his face.

“You can trust Ethan,” Isaac said, running his hands down Brett’s arms. A flush of warm happiness bloomed in Isaac’s chest as he realized how much he meant it. He gave Ethan a look of admiration. He couldn’t see the murderous alpha at all anymore.

“Okay.” Brett leaned forward and closed his mouth over the side of Isaac’s neck, nipping and sucking as he bounced their erections together and wiggled his ass for Ethan.

Ethan wasn’t looking at Brett’s ass. His eyes met Isaac’s with a silent question.

Isaac nodded and forced himself to stay calm as he tilted his head for Brett and ran his hands up and down Brett’s back and sides, touching him as much as he could.

Ethan’s face relaxed and his eyes filled with lust as he returned his attention to Brett’s hole. Isaac focused and strained his hearing, listening as Ethan’s cockhead dragged against Brett’s wet hole. *Fuck!* He wished he could see that, see what was causing the pleasure to light Ethan’s face as he sighed in satisfaction.

Brett wrapped his arm around Isaac’s head. His bicep pressed against Isaac’s chin as he trailed his fingers through Isaac’s hair and grazed sharp claws over Isaac’s scalp. He moan-growled and increased the pressure in his hand and arm as his fangs extended and scraped Isaac’s throat.

Isaac gasped, his pulse hammering in Brett’s mouth. He was fucking terrified, and he couldn’t stop bucking against Brett’s cock as he dug his claws into Brett’s hips. “Snarl!”

Brett let out a ravenous snarl that rattled Isaac’s spine and bit down just hard enough to break the skin over Isaac’s jugular.

Isaac screamed and rammed his cock as hard as he could against Brett’s as he came undone beneath him, shifting into full blown hysteria as his orgasm tore through him.

Brett pried his mouth away from Isaac’s throat and sealed it over his shoulder. Isaac howled and thrashed – and came harder – as Brett bit into him and rabbited his hips, slipping and sliding against Isaac’s cummy cock.

Isaac growled and hammered back, feeling less submissive as his orgasm tapered off and enjoying how much bigger and more dominant his cock felt against Brett’s. He slammed up against Brett hard enough to make him yelp into Isaac’s shoulder and roared into Brett’s ear, trying to channel Ethan. “*CUM!*”
Brett’s claws dug deeper into Isaac’s scalp and he whimpered and shook as he sprayed Isaac’s cock with hot, thick semen.

They were both panting and slack on the bed as Ethan climbed up next to them and slapped – well *clubbed* – Brett’s face with his cock. Brett gave a lazy grin and Isaac moaned in anticipation. A moment later Ethan grunted and erupted all over them.

Isaac closed his eyes to shield them from the stinging, potent cum but opened his mouth. He throbbed with joy as Ethan blasted his tongue, lips, and the side of his face. Then the stream moved and Brett moaned and smacked his lips.

Isaac thought it was over but Ethan’s plush tip pressed against the crease where Isaac’s and Brett’s faces met and smeared them with ejaculate. It sputtered out of Ethan’s cock and onto their skin as Ethan drew figure-eights across their faces and stroked their heads.

Isaac was high on pheromones and drunk on the moonlight by the time Ethan lay down next to them and wiped the cum away from their eyes with a corner of the duvet. Things transitioned into a lazy make-out and licking session with the boys taking turns lying on their backs while the other two kissed and cleaned them with their tongues.

When it was Brett’s turn on his back, Ethan made out with him while Isaac ran his tongue from Brett’s Adam’s apple down across his collarbone. He took his time tongue-fucking the hollow of Brett’s throat and caressing the rounded balls of his shoulders and the elegant swell of his biceps. Isaac clung to those corded muscles as he trailed his tongue down the midline of Brett’s smooth torso, reconstituting the drying blend of their juices in the deep grooves of Brett’s body. He was gorgeous, perfect, and Isaac was utterly lust-drunk as he nuzzled the side of his face against Brett’s flat stomach and shallow navel before dipping lower. His lips peppered wet kisses down Brett’s smooth pelvis and around the base of his still hard cock.

Brett’s manhood rose like a majestic obelisk from his supple skin. His foreskin was pulled back and his shiny glans glistened in the silvery moonlight. Isaac flicked his tongue over Brett’s slit and licked his way back down Brett’s shaft to his pelvis. He couldn’t get enough of caressing, massaging, and kissing that soft, silky skin. Isaac liked the way Ethan kept his auburn pubes intact but meticulously groomed, and Isaac himself tended to prefer the natural look, but Brett’s smoothness suited him perfectly.

Isaac rubbed his face over Brett’s shaft and tongued his balls. He lifted Brett’s sack and followed the crease over his hairless taint, becoming frustrated as he realized he couldn’t get any lower with Brett in his current position.

“Brett, I need to see your ass,” Isaac announced as he stroked himself. Isaac *wanted* plenty of things from life, but seeing Brett’s ass was a *necessity*. At this point it was right up there with food and water.

Brett and Ethan didn’t react. Their mouths were fully open and sealed together as they sucked and moaned. It was really hot and part of Isaac just wanted to watch and jerk off while he played with Brett’s cock, but–

“Ass!” Isaac made his plea as plaintive as he could. It worked. Ethan broke the kiss and smirked at him with swollen lips as Brett sat up.

“I would like to get rimmed some more,” Brett said, shrugging one shoulder.

“And your ass is mine, Isaac,” Ethan said, flaring electric blue at him.
“But I still have dibs on fucking him first.” Brett winked, Ethan growled, and Isaac chuckled.

After a few frustrating, failed attempts to find positions that gave everyone enough room, Ethan ended up lying on his back with his head against the pillows, while Isaac squatted over his face. Brett got on his hands and knees over Ethan’s waist and dragged his cock backwards over Ethan’s as he raised his ass in the air in front of Isaac’s face.

Isaac let out a very embarrassing squeal as Ethan flicked his hole at the same moment that he finally got a look at Brett’s nether regions.

**FUCK!**

He squeezed Brett’s hard, tan globes and salivated as he studied the tract of soft, dark skin that ran from the crease of Brett’s balls to his flushed pink, puckered hole. Brett’s crack was as smooth and supple as the rest of his groin, and though all of Ethan’s cum had long since been licked away, Isaac smelled traces of it and Ethan’s saliva on Brett’s skin.

Isaac trembled and moaned, overcome with lust. He pulled Brett back and did his best to impale Brett’s hole on his tongue. The fleshy ring of muscles was too tight and wouldn’t yield, but the way Brett cursed and writhed was more than enough motivation for Isaac to keep trying.

Ethan rubbed Isaac’s taint with a rough thumb and strummed his fingers against Isaac’s sack, making Isaac’s cock quiver against his stomach. Thank god Ethan wasn’t outright jerking him off or he’d blow again before they started fucking, and he really wanted to save this load. His skin was hot and tingly from the moonlight. If he could absorb enough was it possible to have two moon’gasms in one night? Ethan or Brett could probably have answered that question, but his mouth was too full to ask.

Isaac puckered his lips and sucked as hard as he could on Brett’s little mound of skin, alternately pummeling the center with his tongue and pinching the edges with his lips. Ethan’s earlier oral ministrations had made Brett’s hole rosy pink; could Isaac bring it to a full puffy red?

Isaac reached between Brett’s legs and played with his cock while he worked over his hole. The awkward position and limited range of motion had Isaac grateful that Brett wasn’t as big as him or Ethan since it was easier to curl his fingers around Brett’s shaft. He rubbed Brett’s leaking tip over Ethan’s balls, then inched his fingers higher and began teasing Brett’s foreskin. He pushed it forward, over Brett’s glans, then dragged it back slowly, listening with his enhanced hearing as the moist folds squeegeed Brett’s tip and milked more precum from his slit and onto Isaac’s fingertips. Isaac used the prize to shine Brett’s cockhead with focused intensity until he was dry again and Isaac was polishing the nerve-packed bundle without lube.

“Oh goddammn you, Isaac!” Brett’s voice was ragged and lust-drunk. “Keep doing that!”

Brett’s glans throbbed and his body dribbled another slick bead of precum, evidently wanting relief despite Brett’s plea. Isaac dragged Brett’s foreskin back up and used it to smear the lubrication evenly across his glans.

Isaac yelped into Brett’s hole as Ethan shoved two fingers into him hard enough to make it sting just right. He grunted and burrowed his face deeper in Brett’s crack as the sharp, delicious sensations kept coming thanks to the way Ethan scissored his fingers.

A switch flipped and Isaac no longer had the presence of mind to do anything but bounce on Ethan’s hand.

“Remember I have dibs.” Brett’s tone was playful, but the way he emphasized ‘remember’ made it
“Y-yeah, yeah.” Isaac pulled his head back and nodded urgently. When he opened his eyes his stomach tightened with absolute want. Puffy. Brett’s hole had achieved puffy status. He raised his finger to poke inside but reluctantly stopped, remembering Brett’s rule about not getting fingered.

Brett got up and moved away from Isaac, taking his beautiful puffy red hole with him.

Isaac whimpered in despair...or maybe from the fingers tickling his prostate.

Ethan nudged Isaac forward on the bed and shifted out from under him. The bedside drawer opened as Ethan retrieved the lube.

“I don’t need much,” Isaac said, resting on his forearms as he looked back at Ethan.

“Yeah, Isaac, you do.” The cap popped open and the bottle hissed as Ethan squeezed it.

“I feel really wet.”

“Yeah, with saliva. You need something that’ll last longer. You need KY.”

“Dude, are you shooting a commercial.” Brett laughed and clapped a hand on Ethan’s shoulder.

Ethan grumbled, but he smelled amused and relaxed. It put Isaac at ease as Ethan lubed him up and finished the preparations.

“Wow, that is an amazing asshole.” Brett’s heart rate had sped up again and his voice was tight with excitement.

“You can’t cum in him.” Ethan’s tone was resolute as he rubbed Isaac’s back. “I don’t want sloppy seconds.”

“Isn’t that his decision?”

Isaac was conflicted. He wanted Brett’s load, but he also didn’t want to upset Ethan. “I’m fine either way,” he said at last.

They didn’t discuss it further as Brett took Ethan’s place behind Isaac, and Ethan moved to the foot of the bed next to Isaac’s face.

“I’ll suck your cock while he fucks me.” Isaac licked his lips as he eyed Ethan’s erection. He was both relieved and disappointed that this behemoth wasn’t going to be pounding him in a few seconds.

“No, roll over. You’ll be able to see things better with missionary.”

Isaac leapt at the suggestion. Ethan was right. He really wanted to stare at Brett’s long, sinewy torso while he got fucked.

“Toss me a pillow,” Ethan said.

Brett’s body twisted and flexed and his erection waved in the air as he turned and pulled a pillow from beneath the covers.

“Are you sure this is what you want?” Ethan werewolf whispered against Isaac’s ear.
“Absolutely!” Isaac said aloud, his hole twitching, aching to be taken by Brett’s gorgeous, uncut cock.

“Okay.” Ethan’s tone was unreadable as he took the pillow from Brett and propped it under Isaac’s head. He stroked Isaac’s cheek then shifted higher on the bed and cupped Isaac’s balls, lifting them out of the way.

“What are you doing?” Brett asked, raising Isaac’s legs. Isaac took the hint and wrapped them around Brett’s waist.

“I want to watch you penetrate him.” Ethan grabbed Brett’s dick and positioned it against Isaac’s hole, the pinky of his other hand tapping the base of Isaac’s cock while he supported his balls with his thumb and the rest of his fingers.

Isaac and Brett both moaned.

“God, that’s so hot,” Brett whispered, inching forward on his knees and increasing the pressure between his cockhead and Isaac’s hole.

“This looks hot as fuck,” Ethan whispered, eyes glowing blue. “You ready, Isaac?”

Isaac nodded and hooked his ankles over the swell of Brett’s ass, urging him forward.

Ethan nodded too and let go of Brett’s cock. “Ease into him.”

Isaac’s eyes rolled back in his head as Brett grunted and there was a flash of sharp, yet satisfying pain in his ass. It vanished a moment later as Ethan’s hand dropped from Isaac’s balls and formed a V around Brett’s cock against Isaac’s ass. Black vines coiled up Ethan’s forearm and ascended his bicep.

“So dramatic.” Brett shook his head at Ethan and snapped his hips hard.

Ethan winced and growled.

“Stop. I-I wanted that.” Isaac meant it. He’d had a pain-free first experience with Ethan as he lost his anal virginity, and a very painful second experience as he pleaded for punishment sex. This time he wanted to find out what regular bottoming felt like.

Ethan frowned at him, but a moment later the vines around his arm got thinner.

Isaac gasped and threw his head back against the pillow as a stinging throb blazed around his rim and burned into his stomach.

“That’s only about half.”

“I like it.” Isaac let out a long sigh and forced his body to stay relaxed.

“Of course you like it.” Brett smirked and stuttered his hips and – oh god, yes, Isaac liked it very much.

Isaac focused on savoring the sensation the way Ethan had taught him to do with tastes and smells. He explored its fiery core and the pulsing sting surrounding it. He clung to the cool aftershock and the way it made his nerves tingle in a way that was pure pleasure. He thrilled at the hot, full feeling of Brett’s cock pushing deeper and deeper, to depths Isaac didn’t know he had.

“Easy,” Ethan warned Brett in a dangerous tone.
Isaac shook his head. The vines on Ethan’s arm had already shriveled and the fire in Isaac’s gut was burning lower. “Harder.”

Brett grinned and slammed Isaac for the first time.

“Ah. Yeah!” Isaac arched his back against the bed and clenched his hole.

“Fuck, you’re so tight!” Brett thrust faster. His abs strained as a trickle of sweat dripped down between his pecs, making his tan skin shine even in the low lighting of the bedroom. He looked unspeakably good, and Isaac was desperate for more.

“Rail me, Brett, fucking rail me!”

Isaac reached for his cock but Ethan caught his hand and pinned it to the bed next to his hip instead.

“I wanna...”

Isaac trailed off as Ethan hunched over and licked up his shaft from just above his balls all the way to his–

“Oh my god YES! Suck my dickhead.”

“Aww fuck that’s hot!” Brett gripped Isaac’s thigh harder and placed his other hand on the back of Ethan’s head, pushing him lower on Isaac’s cock.

Ethan pulled off and snarled at Brett.

Isaac’s blood ran cold at the ferocious sound, and a terrified expression flashed across Brett’s face as he raised his palm and stopped fucking Isaac.

“Sorry man.”

“Don’t do that again.” Ethan growled at Brett, and Isaac was downright confused when Ethan picked up Isaac’s hand and set it over his head as he returned to sucking Isaac.

Brett laughed and resumed fucking Isaac. “That’s his way of saying you can do that, but I can’t.”

Isaac nodded and scratched gentle fingertips along Ethan’s scalp as Ethan slurped on him.

Ethan was an excellent cocksucker, and Isaac found it impossible to hold still, especially with Brett hammering him with renewed vigor.

Isaac squirmed and wiggled, bouncing between Brett’s cock and Ethan’s mouth. He could hardly take everything they were giving him.

Brett cast a hesitant look at Ethan, then locked his hands around Isaac’s hips and wrenched him down hard on his next up-thrust. His mouth fell open and his eyes crossed as he kept grinding into that deep thrust.

Isaac could relate. He had felt that thrust in his teeth.

“That angle. Oh god, that angle.” Isaac gave Brett a pleading look.

Brett nodded and gripped Isaac’s hips harder as he canted into him.

“Ye- yeah, yeah!” Isaac pushed Ethan lower on his shaft and Ethan hummed and sucked harder.
“Fuck. Fuck. Fuck. FUCK!” Brett chanted it like a mantra as he bucked harder and faster, a look of intense determination forming on his attractive features. “I am so fucking about to cum in you, Isaac.”

“Do it, Brett! Do it!”

“FUUUUCK!” Brett plunged into Isaac and arched his back, burrowing as deep as he could and corkscrewing his hips. His cock spasmed violently inside Isaac’s rim and he lifted Isaac’s hips off the bed and twisted them against his crotch like Isaac was his personal fuck doll.

The scent of Ethan’s fury ripped through the cloud of lust and pheromones swirling around the room. He raised his head and growled, low and dangerous.

“You weren’t supposed to that.”

“He said I could.” Brett shrugged and gave Ethan a smug, satisfied look. “And I am so fucking glad I did.”

Ethan’s scent flared with an emotion Isaac didn’t recognize and Brett backed up, slowly pulling out of Isaac.

“Uhn.” Isaac raised his hips higher and tried to stay still, unsure what to do. Brett’s warm cum was dribbling out of his hole and onto Ethan’s bed, and Isaac was pretty sure Ethan wasn’t going to like that.

Brett took a seat on the foot of the bed near Isaac’s head, a faux-innocent look on his face.

Ethan’s eyes were icy blue as he settled between Isaac’s legs and stared at Isaac’s opening with a seething intensity. Isaac half expected him to start growling again, but instead he grabbed Isaac’s hip and turned him over.

Isaac lay still, not exactly scared, but nervous about what Ethan was going to do. His neck and shoulders tensed as he sensed Ethan looming over him. Ethan’s breath was hot against Isaac’s ear when he spoke.

“Do you want me to fuck you?”

Isaac nodded stiffly and stared at the mattress, wishing he could see Ethan’s face.

“Say it.”

“I-I want you to fuck me.”

“Say it like you mean it.”

Isaac swallowed and forced confidence into his tone. There was nothing to be nervous about. This was Ethan.

“I want you to fuck me, Ethan. I want you to rail me and fill me up with your seed just like Brett did.”

Ethan growled and slapped Isaac’s ass, hanging on and spreading it open. Cool air gusted against Isaac’s wet, tingling hole, and Isaac was about to offer to go ‘clean up’ when Ethan’s thick cockhead pressed against his opening.

“Impale yourself. If I do it I’m going to be too rough.”
“You can be as rough as you want.”

“Impale yourself!”

The command jolted from the tip of Ethan’s cock right up Isaac’s spine and clawed it’s way into Isaac’s brain. It was all he could think about as he held his ass open with both hands and rose up on his knees, relentlessly grinding his hole against Ethan’s giant, bloated head until—

Isaac’s eyes flew open as wide as they could and blazed with heat as he dug his claws into the duvet. He whimpered and clamped his jaw shut, refusing to cry out. It felt like he hadn’t been fucked at all as Ethan breached him.

Ethan lifted Isaac up and pulled him into his arms, sliding deeper in the process and making Isaac’s vision blur. He rubbed Isaac’s chest and stomach and whispered in his ear. “Ask me to help.”

“Help!” Isaac yelped it more than said it as he clung to Ethan’s hands. An instant later the pain abated and Ethan’s breathing became strained.

“See, that’s why I’m glad I have a normal size dick. It’s not such an ordeal to get it into people.” Brett smiled and nodded at them casually like he was commenting on the weather.

Ethan and Isaac flipped him off.

After a couple of minutes Ethan started to move, slow and purposeful, every inch dragging out of Isaac with a wet squelching until Ethan’s flared head caught on his abused rim and stopped.

“D-do it, Ethan. Do it.”

Ethan snapped his hips and re-sheathed himself in an instant.

Isaac howled and threw his head back against Ethan’s shoulder, relieved that Ethan didn’t move, just let Isaac sit on it and catch his breath. “That’s the best thing I’ve ever felt,” Isaac said in a shaky, broken voice, and it probably wasn’t true, but it seemed true.

“You ready to get serious about this?”

Isaac nodded woodenly and gripped his dick.

Ethan’s hand slid from Isaac’s stomach down to his hand and pulled it away, replacing Isaac’s fingers with his own. “I’ll make you cum. I should make you cum from just my cock, but you’ve gotten off so many times tonight I don’t know if you can.”

Isaac opened his mouth to tell Ethan to do it anyway, but he thought better of it at the last moment. He had never cum untouched before and he didn’t know if he could do it, and now that Ethan was inside of him, stretching him beyond his limits, all he wanted to do was get off and feel Ethan unload inside him.

“Ethan?”

“Yeah?”

“Ruin my hole.”

“You dirty wolf,” Ethan whispered tenderly before sliding out and slamming back in with enough force to steal Isaac’s breath.
He never caught it, just went limp against Ethan’s body and let the former alpha hold him up with one hand and jerk him with the other as he ravished Isaac, barreling in and out of him and pummeling his prostate with a precision Brett hadn’t managed.

Isaac couldn’t see straight and the whole room was spinning so he closed his eyes. His whole body was throbbing, every inch of him quaking in perfect rhythm with Ethan’s thrusts. The pressure on his cock was unbelievable. He didn’t think he had ever been this hard. Each of Ethan’s strokes terminated with the pad of his thumb grazing Isaac’s delicate glans.

“I think– I-I think...” Isaac couldn’t think.

Ethan’s cockhead caught on his rim again, but this time Ethan pulled it all the way out. An embarrassed chill ran up Isaac’s spine as Brett’s cum gushed out of his hole without any resistance and rained on Ethan’s cock. Ethan wiped the seed all over Isaac’s inner thigh.

“You’re gonna have my cum in you, Isaac.”

“Please, yes, yes.” Isaac was delirious. He was on the verge of orgasm and was nothing but an an empty, throbbing mess. He needed Ethan to make him full again.

Ethan rammed back in and Isaac’s head snapped back. He tilted his throat, trying to get Ethan to claim him. Instead, Ethan pressed a kiss there and sped up his hand and his thrusts, driving Isaac back up the precipice toward his release.

“Clench your ass.”

“I-I can’t.” Isaac panted. It felt like he had no muscles left back there.

“I’m really close,” Ethan purred in his ear. “Come on. Make it tight for me.”

Isaac gritted his teeth and squeezed with as much strength as he could muster.

Ethan gasped and plowed through Isaac’s ring like he wanted to tear it apart. He pinned Isaac against his chest and twisted his hand hard and fast on Isaac’s cock.

Everything exploded.

They howled in unison and Isaac’s cum whizzed through the air in a wide arc, clearing the bed and spraying the floor. Every nerve in Isaac’s body was bathed in warmth and it felt like his bones had been removed.

A guttural grunt caught Isaac’s attention and he turned his head as Brett’s hot cum spattered Isaac’s thigh, the side of his body, and Ethan’s hand on his still sputtering cock. Isaac gasped and his nerves throbbed harder as the last spurt of Brett’s cum landed square on Isaac’s cockhead.

Brett stretched his legs and curled his toes. “You guys really know how to put on a show.”

Ethan might have tried to growl at him, but it came out as a moan. He collapsed backward on the bed, pulling Isaac on top of him and keeping him impaled.

Isaac’s ass was loose around Ethan’s cock as he sat in his lap, and Ethan’s cum trickled out of his slack opening. Isaac liked it. He was almost disappointed when he felt the telltale skittering tingle that signaled healing, and he got tight around Ethan’s cock again.

Ethan hissed and bounced Isaac in his lap. “You’re making me want to go for another round.”
Isaac looked down at his dick. It was fully limp for the first time since he had gotten hard dancing with Ethan in the club. “I think I’m done, but seriously, go ahead and use me.”

Ethan kissed his neck and shook his head as he eased Isaac off of him.

Isaac whimpered and tried to sit back down on Ethan’s manhood, already hating the emptiness.

Ethan held him up and shifted away from him. He patted Isaac’s leg as he set him on the bed. “We all need to go get cleaned up.”

“Nah.” Brett yawned and stretched as he stood up. “I’ll just get cleaned up at home.”

“You can spend the night if you want,” Ethan said. He rubbed Isaac’s back, and Isaac caught just a hint of possessiveness in his scent. “In Aiden’s room.”

“Better not. Satomi will worry if I don’t come home.”

“I’ll walk you out,” Ethan said, sliding off the bed. He turned to Isaac. “Use my shower. I’ll use Aiden’s.”

Isaac frowned. He wouldn’t have minded if Ethan had joined him.

Isaac hobbled to the bathroom. Now he was grateful for his werewolf healing. He would probably be able to walk normally by the time he got out of the shower. He took a few minutes using Ethan’s facilities before pulling back the shower curtain and getting in. He stopped just as he was about to turn on the water. His curiosity got the better of him and he extended his hearing and focused on Ethan’s and Brett’s voices. They were in the living room next to the kitchen.

“You can keep that shirt,” Ethan was saying.

Brett snickered and Isaac heard the muted sound of his fingers pinching fabric. “It’s kind of short for me.”

“At least you have the abs to pull it off,” Ethan answered, amusement in his voice.

Brett laughed out loud. “You’re right. Maybe I’ll wear it next time I go out.”

Brett’s footsteps drifted toward the door, followed by Ethan’s.

“Brett, wait.”

Brett stopped.

“I owe you an apology.” Ethan’s voice was strained and filled with discomfort. “I’m sorry I was so aggressive with you tonight.”

“Don’t worry about it.” Brett sounded a mix of surprised and pleased. “I knew what I was getting into when I suggested the threesome. You didn’t do anything I couldn’t handle. It’s all good.”

Ethan let out a frustrated sigh. “No, it’s not. I’m trying to do better.” There was a moment’s hesitation before he continued. “Gimme your phone.”

Brett’s pocket rustled and his fingers tapped the phone’s screen before a soft, muffled thump indicated Ethan had taken the device. There were more taps, and Isaac flinched as Ethan’s phone buzzed from the bedroom.
“There. Call me if you ever need anything.”

Brett laughed, light and happy as he took his phone back. “Stop with the guilt, man. It’s seriously fine. You’re hot, and I had a lot of fun tonight. There’s nothing to brood about.” Brett took a couple more steps and stopped. His tone was serious when he spoke. “You’re a good guy, Ethan, despite your reputation. I’ll put in a good word for you with Satomi, try to convince her to let you join our pack.”

“Thanks,” Ethan answered. There was a light clap, and Isaac assumed Ethan had gripped Brett’s shoulder or slapped his back. “But I doubt she’ll ever let Aiden in the pack after the way he acted at our meeting.”

Brett groaned. “Yeah, she told me about that. I don’t think she’ll reconsider about Aiden.”

“It’s both of us or neither,” Ethan answered without emotion.

“That’s a shame. I think a chill Buddhist pack is just what you need. You’re fighting a war with yourself, Ethan, and you may be winning right now, but it’s unsustainable. You need to find peace, not another battle.”

Ethan laughed. “That’s not something I expected you to say.”

“Well, I’m a complicated guy,” Brett answered. There was a splish of skin on skin, and Isaac considered that Ethan might still be naked, or at least shirtless. “You know, I hear phones work two ways these days, so you call me if you ever need anything too.”

Ethan hummed his assent.

Surprise and a twinge of jealousy gripped Isaac as he heard them kiss and embrace each other. It wasn’t a quick peck either, but a several second, noisy lip-lock.

“Be safe, Brett,” Ethan said as the door was unlocked and opened.

“You too,” Brett answered, “and for god’s sake talk to Isaac. He obviously feels the same way.”

“What?”

Brett laughed. “Later Ethan,” he said before shouting, “Bye Isaac!”

Isaac cringed, hoping they hadn’t figured out he was listening. “Bye Brett!” He shouted back as he hurried to turn on the shower.

Ethan grumbled something about neighbors that Isaac couldn’t catch under the cascade of water.

It turned out to be a long shower. Isaac was already pleasantly familiar the fragrance of Ethan’s shower products, and it was fun lathering them onto his body. He liked the fact that even as he had to wash away Ethan’s most primal and natural scents, he was reapplying many of the constituent scents that contributed to the artificial layer of Ethan’s overall smell. Besides, Isaac was going to get Ethan’s natural scent all over him again as soon as they went to bed.

When Isaac emerged from the bathroom with a towel wrapped around his waist, Ethan was already out of his shower and had stripped the bed. He wore a basic white t-shirt and blue boxers, and his hair was still damp – Isaac scowled – and smelled of Aiden’s shampoo. Crap, his skin also smelled of Aiden’s body wash. Isaac should have insisted that Ethan join him in the shower.
“What’s wrong?” Ethan asked, hooking one corner of a fresh fitted sheet to the mattress.

Isaac went to the other side of the bed. “Aiden,” he grumbled, motioning for Ethan to toss him the opposite end of the sheet so he could help.

Ethan did so with a laugh and secured the other corner of his end to the mattress. “It’s actually kind of comforting if I’m honest. I sent him a text earlier and he didn’t answer.” Ethan frowned and picked up the top sheet. “This is a bad fight. We don’t usually ignore each other for this long.”

“I’m sorry,” Isaac answered with genuine sympathy as he pulled the final corner of the sheet tight and smoothed away the wrinkles. “Did you try calling him.”

“I will tomorrow.” Ethan handed Isaac a couple of pillow cases and kept the other two to do himself. Anxiety clouded his scent. “He needs to know about the text I got at the cafe.”

“Do I get to know about the text you got at the cafe?”

“Yes, but–”

“Tomorrow. Got it.”

“I’ll tell you now if you really wanna know. It’s just” –Ethan shrugged and laughed without humor– “not a great bedtime conversation.”

“Then forget it.” Isaac bumped Ethan’s shoulder and caught his eye. “Forget it completely.”

Ethan nodded and returned the shoulder bump.

“Are you gonna give me clothes to sleep in?”

“No.”

Ethan laughed and made like he was going to pull the towel off Isaac’s waist, but then pointed at his dresser instead. “Underwear in the top drawer, t-shirts in the second, pajama bottoms in the third. Help yourself to whatever you want.”

Isaac settled for just a pair of loose boxers, forgoing a shirt. As he went to the bathroom to put away the towel, Ethan told him there were extra toothbrushes under the sink. Isaac was relieved he wouldn’t have to go to sleep with a dirty mouth, and by the time he returned to the bedroom he felt clean and tingly fresh.

Ethan lay in the bed with the covers pulled back invitingly. He had drawn the curtains, and Isaac flicked off the bedside lamp before settling in next to him.

For all of two seconds, Isaac felt self conscious as he rolled onto his side and faced away from Ethan. He had taken a short nap with Ethan once before – well more like passed out from physical and emotional exhaustion – but this was the first time they would be sleeping together. But then Ethan wrapped his arms around Isaac’s chest and curled his body around him, and Isaac murmured contentedly and slid lower on the bed so he could nuzzle under Ethan’s chin, and Isaac felt like he was right where he belonged.

“Good night,” Ethan whispered, thumb stroking Isaac’s sternum.

“Night,” Isaac mumbled, already surrendering to the peaceful sensations that were washing over him
and tugging him toward sleep.

Chapter End Notes

I hope you enjoyed this final part of the threesome! Next up, Isaac has his he-doesn’t-realize-it’s-a-date-yet date with Stiles.

ALSO, my friend FusedTwilight recently started a series of stories called “Fox in the Hills” in which Stiles is a different type of kitsune in each chapter and is paired with a different male character. I had the opportunity to get an advanced peek at these stories and they’re absolutely outstanding! I highly recommend all of them, but since Iron Claws features Stiles and Ethan heavily, I especially want to recommend Chapter 2 - Mountain in which Stiles and Ethan have a really beautiful (and hot!) romance! It’s set in a very rich, compelling story world with tantalizing backstories for both Stiles and Ethan. That one is my personal favorite, but the other chapters are amazing too! The first chapter features Stiles as a fire kitsune getting wild and primal with Parrish! The third chapter is an erotic masterpiece in which Stiles is a thunder kitsune and Liam is introduced to the world of an underground supernatural sex club! Needless to say, all three chapters are scorching, but the Liam one is absolutely electrifying and intensely sexually charged!

If you like this story, I know you’ll love those! A Stiles/Scott wind chapter is coming up soon, and I hear there’s a Stiles/Isaac spirit chapter on the horizon further down the line.
Isaac groaned and opened his eyes as he was shifted in bed.

“It’s okay. I’m just getting up,” Ethan said, stroking Isaac’s shoulder.

Isaac whined and shook his head. It wasn’t okay for Ethan to get up yet. Isaac was too comfortable. They had fallen asleep lying on their sides with Ethan spooning Isaac, but in the night they had repositioned. Ethan lay on his back with Isaac sprawled on top of him, his face nuzzled against the warm, soft cotton covering Ethan’s chest and his arm bent beneath the pillow that was under Ethan’s head. One of Isaac’s legs was stretched out against Ethan’s, and his other leg was raised and draped over Ethan’s thighs. It probably shouldn’t have been as comfortable as it was, but Isaac felt utterly boneless and relaxed.

“I need to pee, and I’ll make us breakfast.”

“Five more minutes,” Isaac mumbled, squeezing Ethan’s side and snuggling closer.

“Okay,” Ethan whispered, contentment deepening in his scent.

Isaac smiled to himself and brushed his lips against the pert bud of Ethan’s nipple through his t-shirt. Maybe Stiles had been right when he’d called Isaac a ‘cuddlebug’ last week over breakfast with the sheriff. It wasn’t something Isaac would admit to in broad daylight, but he quite enjoyed having someone in bed with him at night, and he especially liked waking up to a familiar heartbeat and scent. Isaac and Allison had never actually slept together during their brief relationship, and Isaac regretted that. It would have been awesome to snuggle in bed with someone he was actually dating, someone who wasn’t just a friend like Ethan or Stiles.

Isaac all but purred as Ethan smoothed his hair and trailed heavy fingers up and down his shoulder and back.

‘Five minutes’ ended much too quickly, even if Isaac was pretty sure it had turned into ten or fifteen.

“Go back to sleep. I’ll call you when the food’s ready,” Ethan said as he eased out from under Isaac and slid a pillow beneath his head.

Isaac burrowed into the warm spot on the mattress and nodded, eyes closed, as he hummed his approval of that plan. Ethan had the best plans.

The next time Isaac awoke it was with a grimace as the odor of smoking oil invaded his nostrils.

“Are you kidding me?! I just turned you on.” Ethan growled and a metallic scrape pierced the air.

The stench of burning eggs stung the back of Isaac’s throat. He coughed and sat up, eyes watering.

“Err, not yet, Isaac!” Ethan called out. “Ow!Fuck!Ow!”

A skillet clattered against the stovetop, and a new starchy burn filled the air, followed moments later by the shrill cry of a smoke detector. Ethan snarled and the sound of crunching plastic interrupted the smoke detector mid-blare before everything went silent.
Isaac jumped out of bed and hurried from the bedroom in just the pair of boxers Ethan had lent him, his morning erection tenting the front.

“What happened?” Isaac asked, wide-eyed as he took in the chaos engulfing the kitchen. The counter was strewn with pots and pans; a broken carton of eggs lay next to the sink, its yokey contents spilling onto the granite surface; an uncapped bottle of cooking oil sat in a pool of its own grease in the middle of the shiny floor; a broken mug lay in three pieces by the stove; the smashed smoke detector clung by a wire to the wall, its metal and plastic parts scattered across the floor beneath it; and Ethan’s white t-shirt, blue boxers, and tan legs were dusted with black coffee grounds.

“Aiden rigged the kitchen to attack me!” Ethan waved an agitated hand, claws out, at the skillets of smoldering food. “Damn stove burned our breakfast!”

Isaac snickered but covered his mouth. “Did Aiden also break the eggs and spill the oil?”

“Yes! Well I mean...” Ethan’s cheeks darkened and embarrassment spiraled into the air next to the cloud of smoke. He crossed his arms and glared at Isaac. “YES! He put all this stuff away. He knew I would spill it.”

“And he made you turn the stove on too high?” Isaac asked with arched brow, barely suppressing a giggle.

“I did not turn the stove on too high! I simply wanted to cook at top speed.” Ethan picked up the skillet of blackened eggs. “Anyway, I know this doesn’t look fancy, but I think you’ll be pleasantly surprised.”

Isaac was surprised, but not pleasantly. He frowned and took a half-step back. “Oh, you still wanna eat that?”

“You don’t wanna eat it?” Ethan’s eyes filled with hurt and his bottom lip stuck out ever so slightly. “Of course I wanna eat it!”

“Your heart just stuttered.”

“It’s from hunger!” Isaac glanced at his traitorous chest. “See, there it goes again. I’m just so hungry.”

“Look, if you don’t wanna eat it–”

“No, no, I’m curious to try it!” It was a morbid curiosity, but that counted, right?

“I made coffee.”

Isaac ran his eyes down the front of Ethan’s grounds-covered body. “Do I have to lick it off you?” He smirked. “’Cause I’m not saying I won’t...”

Ethan rolled his eyes and nodded at the coffee maker on the end of the counter. “It’s in the pot.”

Isaac scrunched his nose as he caught a whiff of the burned brew. His previous suggestion was much more appealing. Ethan was an adorable mess standing in the kitchen in his t-shirt and boxers. His short hair was mussed, and a poofy clump in the back stood out away from his head. The dusting of coffee grounds trailed all the way down his bare legs, clinging to the light hairs. His toes curled and wiggled as he stepped and hopped around the cooking oil puddle to set the skillet of ‘eggs’ by the
sink next to their fallen brethren.

“The bacon looks pretty good,” Isaac said, eying the skillet still on the stove.

Ethan turned and frowned at him. “Those are hashbrowns.”

“Oh, well, uhm...”

“Use your nose, not your eyes.”

Isaac bit his lip and refrained from mentioning that he had been using his nose. “I’ll help you clean this mess up.” Anything to get a temporary reprieve from eating it.

Ethan shrugged. “It’s okay. Our maid service comes on Monday. We can just leave it. Besides, it’ll drive Aiden nuts.”

“You have a maid service?” Isaac asked as Ethan hopped back over the puddle and got plates from the cabinet above the stove.

“Yeah, I know it makes us seem lazy, but we got used to it while we were with Deucalion, and neither one of us wanted to cancel it. They come once a week to clean and restock the fridge.” They both cringed as Ethan scrapped the metal spatula against the bottom of the skillet. “It’s a good thing Teflon flakes don’t hurt werewolves.”

Isaac laughed awkwardly. *Teflon flakes. Sure, who needs parsley?*

Isaac gathered up his clothes and got his phone out of his pants pocket but remained in just his underwear while they ate...well while they pushed the food around their plates and occasionally risked taking a bite. About ten minutes into breakfast the sound of footsteps in the hallway outside caused Ethan’s head to snap up.

“Aiden’s home.”

Isaac inwardly cursed and wished he had reconsidered his no-pants decision as a key clinked in the lock.

“Oh fuck!” Aiden stood in the doorway, his lip curled in disgust. “It smells like cum and charcoal in here!”

“We had a barbecue and an orgy,” Ethan deadpanned.

Aiden glanced at Isaac and growled, then glanced at the kitchen and growled harder. “What did you do to my kitchen?!” He closed the door and strode into the room.

“I made breakfast,” Ethan answered with a scowl, and Isaac had to resist the urge to rub his back to soothe the defensive edge in his voice. “I saved you some eggs.”

Aiden picked up the skillet, shook its charred contents, and glared at his brother. “You asshole.”

“I was trying to be nice.”

“Your cooking is never nice.”

“Isaac likes it.” Ethan gave Isaac a smile, prompting Isaac to reluctantly shove a forkful of...hashbrowns? into his mouth.
“Do you seriously believe that?” Aiden snickered and strolled to the table. “I can hear his stomach turning.”

“That’s from you,” Isaac answered. His frown deepened as he caught a familiar scent on Aiden that didn’t belong there. “Why do you smell like Liam?”

“None of your business.”

“Liam is my business.” Isaac’s hand tightened around his fork. “He’s pack.”

“Then ask him.” Aiden returned his attention to Ethan. “I’m just here to change, then I’m going to meet Malia.”

Ethan stood and grabbed Aiden’s arm. “No.”

Aiden glared at Ethan’s fingers and pulled his arm away slowly. “No?” He smirked. “And just how are you planning to stop me?”

Ethan huffed and shifted his weight to his other hip, and Isaac tried his best to pay attention to the confrontation happening between the twins rather than staring at Ethan’s—

“As.”

“No, I wasn’t!” Isaac raised his palms and skidded his chair back.

“Huh?” Ethan glanced over his shoulder at Isaac, his eyebrows drawn together, while Aiden regarded Isaac like he was covered in cum and charcoal. “You’re being an ass, Aiden. We need to talk,” Ethan said as their focus shifted back to one another.

“Oh yeah, because we’re so good at that.”

“I got a text from—”

“And where the hell do you think you get off trying to tell me I can’t have Malia over when you spent last night fucking your boyfriend like a cheap whore?”

Ethan snarled and shoved Aiden, fangs and eyes wolfed out, but claws retracted.

Aiden squared his stance and smirked, his own claws emerging with a fwip.

“Stop!” Isaac stood and slammed his hand against the table. “God. Just make up already.” He turned hot eyes on Aiden. “He has something important to tell you.”

“Get the fuck out of my house!” Aiden snarled, electric blue eyes buzzing with hate.

“No! He’s right!” Ethan rounded the table, placing himself between Isaac and Aiden. “We do have something important to talk about.”

“Well what the hell is it?!”

Isaac huffed and grabbed his pants off the back of his chair.

“What are you doing?” Ethan asked. His tone was still harsh, but his eyes shifted back to brown as he looked at Isaac.

“Leaving.” Isaac’s fingers itched and his gums hurt. Goddammit he hated Aiden, but he didn’t want
to pick a fight that would drive a deeper wedge between Ethan and his brother.

“You don’t have to leave. He can’t kick you out.”

“You fucking hypocrite.” Aiden sounded almost amused. “You kicked Malia out.”

“I didn’t kick her out. I asked you not to bang her at pornographic levels for the third fucking day in a row so I could finally get some sleep.”

Isaac zipped his pants and jammed his socks in his pocket, forgoing putting them on in favor of simply shoving his feet into his shoes and ignoring the way the rough action scrapped the back of his heels. He stuffed his underwear from the night before into his other pocket. “See you later, Ethan.”

Ethan caught Isaac’s arm as he walked past. “You can’t go. You don’t even have a shirt, and you need a ride.”

“I’ll call Lydia.” Isaac shot Aiden a smug smile. “Lydia’s always there for me.”

The tips of Aiden’s fangs peeked from beneath his lips, but he didn’t say anything as he looked away.

“I’ll take you.” Ethan squeezed Isaac’s bicep.

Isaac laughed and stepped into Ethan’s personal space. He was sexy when he was angry, especially when that anger wasn’t directed at Isaac. “You don’t have a ride either, remember?” They had left Ethan’s motorcycle at Sinema last night. “It’s fine. Talk to the douchebag, err, I mean Aiden.”

Aiden rolled glowing blue eyes at him.

“Wait.” Ethan pulled the white t-shirt over his head and handed it to Isaac. “Here.”

Isaac’s dick twitched as he ran his eyes over Ethan’s chest and abs.

Aiden gagged and covered his nose and mouth as he waved his other arm at the door. “Get outta here with that! It’s bad enough I know what your fucking jizz smells like.”

Isaac winked at him and hung Ethan’s t-shirt over his neck as he walked to the door.

While he waited for the elevator, he put the shirt on. His skin tingled as he covered himself in Ethan’s scent. The residue of smoke and coffee grounds was unwanted but worth it. The shirt itself was a size smaller than Isaac was used to wearing. He liked the way it fit across his chest, but it was too short. He snickered as he got into the elevator, recalling Brett’s comments about wearing the shirt Ethan had given him the next time he went out.

Isaac sighed and stroked himself through his pants as images of Brett’s abs flexing while he fucked Isaac flickered through his head. He was pretty sure he would spend the rest of his life occasionally jerking off to the events of last night.

Isaac moaned and slid his hand into his pants, into Ethan’s boxers. Fuck, his fingers felt good on his shaft, really good. It felt like he never touched himself anymore. He had lost his virginity about a month and a half ago when things started heating up with Allison, and between their brief relationship, their subsequent hookup the night before she left, and his hookups with Ethan and Brett, Isaac had been getting what felt like a lot of sex, even if he’d had a few frustrating dry spells here and there. He’d also spent the first two weeks of his relationship with Allison creaming his pajamas every night while lucid dreaming about the sex they were having, and he’d managed to have several
other lucid wet dreams since then until sleeping with Stiles became a semi-routine thing. weirdly the 
only thing that had been missing from isaac’s ejaculatory life the past month and a half was plain, old 
masturbation. he used to spend almost every evening that scott was at the animal clinic, and melissa 
was at the hospital, with his hand around his cock. now he could barely remember the last time he 
had gotten to kick back with some porn and rub one out.

the elevator chimed, and isaac yanked his hand out of his pants like he’d been burned. he folded his 
hands over his crotch as casually as he could and looked around the lobby. it was empty except for 
the doorman, a different one than he’d seen the night before, who wasn’t paying any attention to 
him. isaac hurried to the sitting area near the edge of the lobby. it featured a sectional sofa arranged 
around an ornate gold and glass coffee table. he took a seat and pulled out his phone to arrange a 
ride.

it was barely 9:00am on a saturday morning, so he decided he really would call lydia since she 
stood the greatest chance of being awake. after exchanging pleasantries, he learned that not only 
was she awake, but she was at the argent compound with deaton. they were trying to determine 
the origin and purpose of the panels of moonlight-imbued glass the darach had tried to steal yesterday 
morning. isaac said he would call melissa or scott to come and get him, but she said they were 
finishing up since deaton had to leave soon to open the animal clinic, so she would pick him up on 
her way home.

while he waited, isaac texted liam. he needed to find out why aiden smelled like his packmate. he 
had a bad feeling that something was wrong.

isaac: you awake?

liam: yea

isaac typed two version of his message before he gave up and called liam.

“hey man!” liam sounded like he was in a good mood, and isaac breathed a sigh of relief. 
apparently aiden hadn’t done anything to liam.

“why does aiden smell like you?”

“That’s a weird way to start a conversation.”

isaac huffed. he didn't care that liam had a point. “just answer.”

“he slept over last night.” liam laughed. “my turn. why have you been smelling aiden?”

“We’re not playing this game.”

“Aww, c’mon, it's a fair question,” liam answered with a playful lilt.

isaac wanted to ignore him and keep pressing for information, but he also didn't want to ruin liam's 
mood and risk bringing out the rage beast liam had been the night before. “fine. i stayed over at 
ethan’s last night. i smelled aiden when he got home.”

“are you and ethan a couple? aiden didn’t say you were, but he kinda dropped some hints.”

“What?! no!”

liam was silent for a moment. when he spoke he sounded offended. “dude, why would you lie to 
me about this? i can hear your heart over the phone, you know?”
“I'm not lying. We're not a couple.”

“Damn, now it sounds like you're telling the truth.” Liam growled. “I thought I was getting the hang of this.”

“Keep practicing,” Isaac muttered. “Look, why did Aiden stay over?”

“Malia’s dad said he had to leave at nine o’clock. He and Ethan are fighting – well I guess you knew that – so he came to my house.”

Isaac frowned. He didn't like Liam and Aiden hanging out when it wasn't the full moon…well he didn't like them hanging out when it was the full moon either, but at least then there was a valid reason. “Your parents were okay with you having someone over after the argument you had with them last night?”

“We worked that out,” Liam said quietly, “and yeah, they were glad Aiden came over. They like him.”

“They like him?”

“Yep, he answered some of their questions and showed me some more werewolf stuff. They like you too by the way. They want you to come over for dinner.” Liam sounded hopeful as he continued. “You should. Mom's a good cook.”

“Uhm, yeah okay.”

“What are you doing today? You wanna come over now?”

“No, I–”

“Or we could meet up somewhere and do werewolf stuff.”

“Werewolf stuff?” Isaac laughed.

“Yeah, I want you to teach me some more things. Hey, did you know it's possible to mask your scent? Aiden did it last night. It was so freaky!”

“Aiden taught you how to do scent masking?” Isaac couldn’t believe what he was hearing. Aiden had flipped out on Ethan when Ethan had taught him. Aiden was such a hypocrite.

“No, he said I was too new to learn.” Liam's tone shifted from disappointed to cajoling as he continued. “But I bet I could learn it from you. You’re a really good teacher.”

Isaac tried not to let the compliment go to his head as he remembered why Liam felt that way. “I need to tell you something.”

“Ooh, is it a werewolf thing?!” Liam’s bed squeaked. Was he literally bouncing with excitement?

“Yeah, it’s a werewolf thing.” Isaac answered, mindful to keep his voice low as he glanced up to make sure the doorman across the lobby still wasn’t paying attention to him; he wasn’t. “It’s about why you, uh, trust me.”

“I thought that was ‘cause we’re pack?”

“It is but…it seems like you trust me a little more than the rest of the pack?” Isaac cringed. This was so awkward to talk about.
“Well yeah. I know you the best, and you’ve always been there for me.” Liam’s voice was soft and affectionate. “You almost died protecting me the night I was turned.”

“I was there for you first.”

“Yeah.”

Isaac felt a warm flutter around their packbond and vowed he wasn’t going to mess this up for Liam the way Derek had with him.

“So, you developed this thing called a First Bond with me.”

“What’s that?”

“Basically what it sounds like. Your first bond in the pack. It’s stronger than other packbonds, and it makes it easier for you to trust me. Ethan explained it to me last night.”

“You didn’t already know?” Liam sounded surprised.

“Nah, I’d have told you sooner if I did.” Isaac frowned and picked at a button on the sofa. “Derek never told me, and Scott doesn’t know either. You should have bonded with Scott instead of me because he’s your alpha, but things were...weird.”

Liam laughed. “I like you better than Scott,” he answered with only a hint of self consciousness.

“That’s because of the First Bond.”

“Well good, because trusting you seems like a better idea than trusting the possessed super alpha that almost killed me.”

There was so much wrong with that statement. Yeah, Iron Claw was evil, but Scott was way more trustworthy than Isaac. Guilt stabbed Isaac’s gut. Iron Claw wasn’t the only one who had almost killed Liam. Isaac was such a dishonest asshole.

“I need to tell you something else.”

“Okay.”

Isaac swallowed and tightened his grip on the phone. This could ruin everything. He took a deep breath and blurted it out.

“Aiden suggested killing you that night!”

What the fuck?! That’s not what I meant to–

“I know.”

“Wait, you know?”

“Yeah, he told me. He said you would probably tell me to try and turn me against him.” Liam paused before continuing in a pointed voice, “But I’m sure you just wanted me to know the truth, because I know you wouldn’t try and ruin my friendship with Aiden. I know you wouldn’t do that to me.”

“So...you forgave him?”

“Disappointed?” Liam’s tone was colder than it had been all morning.
“No...well, yeah, but no. I think it’s pretty cool of you to be able to look past that.”

“Thanks, but I mean, he didn’t even know me before that night, and he said I was pretty bad off and in a lotta pain.” Liam’s voice was distant. “I don’t remember any of that. But I know if you hadn’t taken so much of that pain, if you hadn’t—”

“Liam, can we please not talk about this? It was a bad night. I don’t wanna relive it.”

“Yeah man, of course. Just...I appreciate it. I’m really happy you’re my First Bond.”

Isaac’s stomach felt like it was being ripped apart. Liam deserved so much better. He sighed in relief as his phone buzzed with a text notification, and he saw Lydia’s car through the window. “I gotta go. Lydia’s here.”

“Oh. Okay. Text me if you wanna hang out.”

“Will do.” Isaac hung up fast before Liam could figure out anything was wrong.

Lydia eyed Isaac with focused attention as he walked out of the building and got in her car. She smirked at him as he put on his seatbelt, and he shuddered as he realized his underwear was poking out of his pocket.

“So are we going to talk about the fact that I’m picking you up in front of your ex’s?” She asked as she pulled away from the curb.

“Ethan isn’t my ex.”

“Because you’re back together?” Her tone was even and non-judgmental.

“Because we’re just friends.”

“Isaac, we’re just friends, and we’re not having sex.”

Isaac chuckled and gave her a cheeky grin. “Is this your way of asking me for sex? Because the answer is yes.”

She pursed her lips and flipped her hair over her shoulder. “You know answering his booty call means you're not over him?”

“It wasn’t a booty call.” Isaac cleared his throat and shrugged. “We went out, as friends, and one thing lead to another.”

“Uh huh.” She rolled her eyes. “Because going out with someone and then having sex with them is the hallmark of an ended relationship.”

“I didn’t say we had sex.”

“You basically did.”

Isaac nodded, conceding the point. “We did. But uh, it was a threesome so it doesn’t count.”

“What?!”

Isaac spent the next several minutes filling her on the events of last night without going into explicit details. By the time he was done they had pulled up to his house.
“You know this isn’t sustainable, right?”

Isaac gave her an innocent look and patted the car’s dashboard. “You could get a hybrid.”

“Isaac.” Her voice was steel. “I obviously mean your relationship with Ethan.”

Isaac huffed and slapped the dashboard again, this time in frustration. “Well I could get a hybrid too. Friends with benefits, what’s wrong with that?”

She turned off the car and gave him a sympathetic look. “You have feelings for him.”

“What’s wrong with that?” Isaac repeated in a small voice.

“Nothing, but you need to be honest with yourself about it. Either you can accept his past and the history you have together or you can’t.”

“I know...but I don’t know.”

Isaac was glad that he would be spending the evening with Stiles. It pretty much guaranteed that he would barely think about Ethan. He considered mentioning that to Lydia, but he didn’t want her to start in on him again about telling Stiles that he had feelings for him. That would be a disaster that could potentially wreck their friendship, and Isaac wasn’t willing to risk it. He reached for the door handle. “Thanks for the ride.”

“You’re not at all curious what Deaton and I determined about the moon glass?”

“Oh yeah.” Isaac flushed with embarrassment. He was so wrapped up in his personal drama that he had forgotten. “What’d you find out?”

“That network of chambers is an archive room of the different supernatural creatures the Argents have killed. It’s for their more exotic or notorious specimens.”

“In other words, they wouldn’t archive me or Liam since we’re just betas, but they probably would with you since you’re a banshee or Scott since he’s the True Alpha.”

“Exactly. They’d want whatever general information they could get about banshees to study them, and they’d want to know about Scott specifically to find out what made him special and how to defeat a True Alpha.”

“So...they’d keep your heads in display cases like they did with that, uh...?” Isaac waved his hand.

“Wendigo.”

“Right.”

“Possibly, but I think Gerard just wanted a trophy in that case, or perhaps they wanted to study its teeth. Generally they keep a record of anything they knew about the creature along with any special possessions or artifacts related to it.”

“And those glass panels with the moonlight were a druid’s possessions?”

A smile curled Lydia’s lips and she gave Isaac a meaningful look. “A darach’s.”

Isaac’s eyes widened. “You mean it could be the one who’s possessing Stiles?”

Lydia shrugged. “I don’t know, but it seems plausible. Deaton says darachs aren’t very common, and
we didn’t come across any others.”

“Not even Ms. Blake?”

Lydia shook her head. “It looks like Allison’s dad quit keeping up with the archive after...everything that happened.”

That made sense. Chris Argent’s wife and sister had died and his father had turned out to be a traitor. Then Allison had ended up possessed, and they’d had to leave the country. Isaac could see why paperwork and filing weren’t at the top of his priorities list.

“So who’s our mystery darach?” Isaac asked, folding his leg under him and turning in his seat.

“His name was Douglas Durge. Gerard’s mother killed him in 1949.” Lydia’s smile faltered. “Unfortunately that’s about all we know so far. Most of the Argents’ notes keep referring to a journal Durge kept, but Deaton and I couldn’t find it.”

“Stiles had it,” Isaac answered with a slow nod as the pieces fell into place.

“What? How?”

“Apparently the darach stole it along with the moon glass yesterday. Stiles didn’t find it till he got to school.”

“This is fantastic! We need to read it right away.”

“The darach hid it.”

“Right, that’s why we didn’t see it when we found the moon glass.”

“No, I mean the darach took over again and hid it somewhere after Stiles found it.” Isaac groaned and let his head fall back against the car window. “We looked everywhere for it, and we think it’s still at school but...” Isaac threw up his hands in frustrations.

“We need that journal. It might hold the key to finding out how to undo his making.”

“I was gonna hang out with Stiles tonight anyway. I’ll ask him to come over early and we can go back to the school and look some more.”

“No!” Lydia grabbed Isaac’s arm. “You can’t tell Stiles about this, or Scott.”

“What? Why?”

She glowered at him. “The darach knows what Stiles knows, and we don’t want him to know we’re onto him. He might hide it somewhere else, or destroy it, or accelerate whatever plans involved stealing it and the moon glass in the first place.”

“Fine, but Scott–”

“Is possessed too. Who knows what Iron Claw would do with this information?”

“I don’t think there’s anything he can do.”

“Maybe, but maybe not.” She gave him a serious look and held eye contact. “If we’re going to beat them, we need to stop letting them know all of our plans.”
“I guess,” Isaac muttered. He didn’t like keep secrets from Scott or Stiles. It felt like he was being disloyal to them.

They made plans to meet up tomorrow at the school to look for the journal and decided that they would get Malia and Liam involved too. Isaac liked that idea. It would be the first time they worked together as a pack.

Scott and Melissa were sitting down to a late breakfast when Isaac walked in. After changing his clothes, he joined them, relieved to eat food that he could identify just by looking at it. The three of them had a pleasant morning before Melissa had to leave for work. Isaac and Scott spent the afternoon studying, and then Isaac got ready for his evening with Stiles.

He was surprised he had to ‘get ready’ at all. He thought they would just pick up some Mexican food and hang out with Scott until it was time for him to go in his mountain ash circle for the night, but Stiles texted saying that Isaac should get dressed up. However, he wouldn’t say where they were going. Isaac found it odd, but then again one of the things he liked most about Stiles was how unpredictable he could be. Whatever Stiles had in mind, Isaac was sure it would be fun.

Chapter End Notes

I’m sorry this chapter took longer than usual. I’ve been sick for the last couple of weeks. I had also originally hoped to include Isaac and Stiles’ actual date in this chapter, but I didn’t want to delay posting any longer, and I needed to develop these plotlines with Ethan and Aiden, Liam, and the darach, so now that that’s out of the way, next chapter will focus exclusively on Isaac and Stiles’ date. Anyway, please let me know what you thought of this chapter if you have a chance.

On another note, I think we can all agree last week’s episode was pretty rough, but I was so stoked that they made scent masking an official canon thing that werewolves can do! I feel so prescient, haha!

Also, if you’re curious, I’ve been releasing short weekly stories inspired by the 6B episodes:

Hellfire – Jordan/Halwyn smut

The Edge of Corruption – Brett/Liam fluff and smut

The Edge of Terror – Brett/Liam fluff

Note: Those stories contain spoilers for 6x11, 6x12, and 6x13 respectively.
You guys, I got hit by a giant hurricane, and I’m not gonna lie – it was pretty lame. Anyway, now I’m back, and Isaac and Stiles have a date to go on!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

“I think you better wear a tie,” Scott said as he leaned in the doorway of Isaac’s room.

“A tie?” Isaac frowned but dutifully buttoned the top buttons of his red dress shirt. “Is Stiles gonna wear a tie?”

“He’s gonna try,” Scott answered with a chuckle. “He texted me awhile ago. He’s having trouble tying it. I know how but...” He held up his right hand and wiggled the nub of his missing index finger.

Isaac’s stomach clenched in distress, but he didn’t want to make Scott feel self conscious so he kept things casual.

“I’ll do it for him when he gets here,” he answered, turning to his closet and debating whether he wanted to wear his navy tie or his black tie. He was wearing gray slacks with a black belt and shoes, so he decided to go with the black tie and also slipped on a charcoal vest. He was glad it was late October and cool enough that he wouldn’t get overheated.

Scott tapped a message on his phone and then looked up. “Awesome, I just let him know.”

“I can’t picture Stiles in a tie.” Isaac tilted his head and tried really hard but– nope, it was inconceivable.

Scott laughed as he walked further into the room and squeezed Isaac’s shoulder. “Don’t hurt yourself.”

Isaac rolled his eyes at Scott in the mirror and set about tying a crisp knot, grateful that Cam had taught him how to do it the summer before he shipped out.

“You look really dapper, man,” Scott said with a grin, hand still lingering on Isaac’s shoulder. “Stiles is gonna flip when he sees you.”

“Thanks,” Isaac answered, fussing with the cuffs of his shirt and wondering why Stiles would care how he looked. Isaac was excited to see Stiles all dressed up, but that was for obvious reasons that didn’t apply to Stiles. “Do you know where we’re going?”

“Yeah, but I can’t tell you. He wants it to be a surprise.

Isaac shook his head. Stiles was so weird. Why would he want it to be a surprise?

“So this other werewolf you met—”

“Brett,” Isaac supplied, tucking his tie into his vest.
“Yeah, Brett.” Scott nodded. “You’re sure his pack is peaceful?”

“Ethan said they weren’t a threat.” Isaac shrugged. “And Brett was, uh, nice.”

He’d given Isaac multiple orgasms. That had been pretty nice of him. #GoodFirstImpressions

Scott snickered and nudged Isaac’s shoulder. “You thought he was hot. I can tell by your scent.”

“He was hot,” Isaac agreed with a smirk. Should he tell Scott they’d hooked up? It seemed like something his alpha and best friend might be interested in knowing, but then he’d also have to tell Scott about Ethan, and that could get...complicated.

“I wanna meet with their alpha.” Scott frowned and rubbed absently at his nub. “But maybe now isn’t the best time.”

Isaac wrapped an arm around Scott’s back. He was going to leave it at that, but Scott leaned in for a hug so Isaac went with it, squeezing Scott close and tilting his head so Scott could scent his neck.

“I’m glad you explained about First Bonds,” Scott said when the embrace had ended. “I thought this was” –He gestured between them– “just a regular werewolf packbond, so when it didn’t feel the same with Liam and Malia, I thought something was wrong.”

Isaac sat on his bed and Scott joined him. “Does it bother you about me and Liam?”

“I dunno.” Scott shrugged one shoulder and glanced idly across the room at the open doorway. “I guess not. It’s more that it bothers me about me and Liam. And Malia.”

“What do you mean?”

“I’m not, like, mad that you and Lydia are close with Liam and Malia.”

Isaac hadn’t thought about it before but he supposed Malia was closer with Lydia than anyone else in the pack, certainly closer with her than Scott.

“I’m a little mad that they’re both so close with Aiden,” Scott continued with a scowl.

Isaac cringed. That was indeed infuriating.

“But mostly I’m just disappointed I’m not closer with them, but I know that's my fault.”

“What? No it’s not.”

“It kinda is. I haven’t spent any time with them. It’s better that at least they have you guys than no one.”

“You couldn’t help that,” Isaac answered.

“I guess not. I just...”

“What?” Isaac bumped his knee against Scott’s and held his gaze when he looked up.

“I feel helpless, and like a crappy alpha.”

“Scott, no. You're amazing. You--”

Scott gave Isaac’s arm a gentle squeeze and shook his head. “I don’t wanna talk about it tonight. I
want you to go out and have fun with Stiles.”

“But I’m not going to just–”

Scott flashed red eyes at Isaac, but there was a playful smirk on his face. “That’s an alpha order.”

Isaac wanted to argue, or at least laugh, but instead he dropped his eyes and nodded.

Scott chuckled and shoved at Isaac’s shoulder. “You’re so easy, man.”

“Na uh,” Isaac answered, bumping Scott’s leg again.

Scott stood up, tugging Isaac to his feet with him. “C’mon, Stiles is here.”

“I don’t hear...” Isaac trailed off as the sound of Stiles’ Jeep rumbled in the distance.

They were both waiting by the front door when Stiles walked up. Scott opened it before Stiles could knock.

“Dude, that’s so creepy. You gotta stop...” Stiles’ heartbeat faltered as he turned his head toward Isaac. “Wow,” he whispered.

Isaac’s breath rushed from his parted lips. To say Stiles looked incredible would have been an understatement. He wore a pair of brown slacks and a deep blue button-down shirt with the sleeves rolled up. His shirt was fitted and tapered down from his wide shoulders to his narrow waist, which was further accentuated by a sleek belt. His dark hair was meticulously styled with his bangs raised and gelled into messy clumps. His chocolate eyes seemed deeper, richer somehow; they sparkled with warm flecks of amber and gold, burning brighter as he looked Isaac up and down from head to toe. Even his skin seemed to have a smooth, creamy glow about it.

Isaac’s face crinkled into a smile as he took in the one aspect of Stiles’ appearance that was adorably out of place and yet perfectly reflective of him: his tie. It was light blue and decorated with tiny sailboats, and it hung twisted and knotted around his neck, jutting out at odd angles.

“You look amazing,” Stiles whispered. He wrapped his arms around Isaac and pressed his face against Isaac’s shoulder.

Isaac whimpered under his breath and clutched Stiles against him as tight as he dared. He ran his hands up and down Stiles’ back, his fingertips sliding against the silky smooth fabric of Stiles’ dress shirt and reveling in the gentle curve of his spine and the warm, hard flesh surrounding it. Stiles radiated strength and vulnerability in equal parts, and it made Isaac yearn to keep him wrapped up forever, to shield him from anything that might hurt him and to spend an eternity exploring the firm, warm planes and lean, corded muscles of his upper body.

Stiles hummed and tilted his neck, and – aww fuck, Isaac throbbed in his pants as Stiles scent shifted from a background delight to an all encompassing delicacy. The caffeinated buzz that was so quintessentially Stiles sparked and tingled as it lit up the pleasure centers of Isaac’s brain, hanging like a warm blanket over his synapses. An excited, toasty-sweet happiness snapped and popped from Stiles’ pores, making Isaac’s whole body quiver as he dragged the bridge of his nose along Stiles’ jawline and inhaled. Even the druidic fragrances of rain, sap, and sage that didn’t belong in Stiles’ scent profile beckoned to Isaac’s animal nature, making him giddy. The entire glorious blend was overlaid by a mild ocean and spice cologne that Isaac had never smelled on Stiles before.

“So, uhm” –Scott cleared his throat– “it’s gettin’ kinda late and the sun is setting.”
Isaac and Stiles pulled back but remained close, clutching each other’s arms. Stiles’ mouth curled into
an impish smile as he followed Isaac’s line of sight to his jumbled tie. “I had some trouble.”

Isaac snickered and trailed a slow, heavy hand over Stiles’ shoulder and across his collarbone,
bringing his fingers to rest on the soft, twisted fabric. “I’ll fix it for you.”

“Yeah?” Stiles whispered, stepping closer until the fronts of his thighs brushed Isaac’s.

“Yeah.”

“Yeah.” Scott tugged Stiles away and nudged him toward the stairs. “How ‘bout you guys do that
after we do the mountain ash ring?”

Isaac’s cheeks burned as he followed his packmates up the stairs. He was making a fool of himself
and if he wasn’t careful Stiles might realize he had feelings for him.

After securing Scott in the mystic barrier and bidding him goodnight, Isaac and Stiles went to Isaac’s
room.

Stiles choked as he tugged at the knot around his neck.

“Stop, you’re going to strangle yourself.” Isaac pulled Stiles’ hand away from his throat and guided
him to the bed. “Sit.”

Stiles grinned and did as he was told, spreading his legs so that Isaac could stand between them as he
worked.

Isaac tried not to feel self conscious about the intimate position. He knew Stiles didn’t mean anything
by it. It simply served a logistical function so that Isaac wouldn’t be teetering precariously over Stiles’
knees while he unfastened the necktie. Nevertheless, it was hard to ignore Stiles’ thighs pressing
against his legs, the heat rising from Stiles’ core, or the long column of Stiles’ throat as he tilted his
head back.

“So what’s with the sailboats?” Isaac asked to distract himself as he hooked the claw of his index
finger into the tight knot and used it to work the fabric loose. If he were human he might have had to
resort to biting at the knot; this seemed more dignified and less gross.

“It was either this or a black tie with orange pumpkins for Halloween,” Stiles answered, resting his
hands on Isaac’s hips.

Isaac flinched then leaned into the touch. Stiles was affectionate. That was all this was. “Didn’t they
have normal, solid colored ties?”

“Well yeah but those woulda been really boring.”

“I’m wearing a solid colored tie.”

“And you’re really boring,” Stiles whispered under his breath. He cocked his head and winked when
Isaac growled at him.

“So where are we going anyway?” Isaac asked as he at last finished unknotting the tie.

“I want it to be a surprise in case you don’t like it.”

“Wait what?” Isaac asked as he flipped Stiles’ collar up and pulled the tie free so he could shake it
out and smooth away the wrinkles.
“Well that way you can’t back out,” Stiles answered with a cheeky grin as Isaac re-looped the tie around his neck.

Isaac laughed and rolled his eyes. “I promise not to back out if you tell me.”

“Okay, so you know how we enjoy a good hearty meal, and also like solving murders?” Stiles squeezed Isaac’s legs with his thighs.

“Yeah, I-I uh like that.” Isaac’s fingers grazed Stiles’ chin as he pulled the end of the tie through the loop he’d created.

“I found a way to combine the two!” Stiles declared, bouncing on the bed and tightening his grip on Isaac’s hips to steady himself.

“That seems risky.”

“It’s not a real murder.” Stiles’ eyes twinkled with mischief. “It’s a murder mystery dinner theater!”

“Whoa, that sounds really cool!” Isaac grinned at Stiles, the back of his hand brushing against Stiles’ chest as he straightened the now neatly tied tie.

“Whew! I was worried you’d think it was lame. There’s a place downtown that does it. It’s kinda swanky so I didn’t want us to seem out of place.”

Isaac sniggered and tapped one of the sailboats on Stiles’ tie. “I’m sure we’ll fit right in.”

Stiles laughed and held onto Isaac’s waist as he got off the bed, slotting their legs together and standing straight up into a hug.

A sigh slipped from Isaac’s lips and the semi he had been fighting for the last five minutes swelled to full mast as Stiles wreted against him. Miraculously Stiles didn’t seem to notice Isaac’s hardness and wiggled closer, maintaining the vertical snuggle and leaving Isaac little choice but to wrap him up in a tight embrace. It lasted an absurdly long time and Isaac was about to suggest they cancel their plans and spend the rest of the night cuddling and watching Netflix when at last Stiles let go and pulled away.

They traded affectionate looks and – fuck, why couldn’t they just be a couple? It was beyond unfair that Stiles was straight.

Isaac was buzzed on Stiles’ scent and horny as he grabbed his wallet and phone off his desk. After poking their heads into Scott’s room to say goodbye, they made their way downstairs and out of the house.

Isaac looked at Stiles in confusion as he followed Isaac to the passenger side of the Jeep. “Did you come to the wrong side by accident? Or did you want me to drive or something?”

Embarrassment flared in Stiles’ scent and he licked his lips. “I’ll drive, but uh, while I’m here anyway, lemme just go ahead and open that door for ya.”

Isaac stepped back as Stiles leaned past him and opened the door. “Thanks,” he mumbled as he got in. To his surprise Stiles also shut it for him before hurrying around to the driver’s side.

On the way to the restaurant Isaac filled Stiles in on the First Bonds stuff that Ethan had explained to him, as well as the fact that there was a second wolfpack in Beacon Hills and that he had met one of them. He had to resist the urge to also tell Stiles what Lydia had found out about Douglas Durge
likely being the darach that was possessing him.

They weaved their way through the series of one-way streets that comprised downtown Beacon Hills until they pulled up to a building with a checkered orange and black awning and a sign that read *Sherlock’s Steaks and Seafood* with a hat and pipe in the logo. Stiles left the Jeep idling and they climbed out. After greeting them, a valet handed Stiles a claim ticket and drove off in the Jeep.

“This place looks really fancy,” Isaac whispered as they walked inside. The restaurant featured a vaulted ceiling, marble floors, and a luxurious ambiance complete with dim lighting and soft, classical music playing in the background.

“I toldja,” Stiles answered with a hint of pride in his voice.

“I don’t know if I can afford it.”

“Don’t worry about it,” Stiles whispered before smiling at the maître’d, an older man in a crisp white shirt and a black bowtie, vest, and slacks. “We have a reservation for two for Stiles Stilinski.”

The man snorted and looked down his nose at the reservation book in front of him. “I don’t see it, sir,” he said in a patronizing tone.

Stiles stood his ground and remained calm. “I think Don Peterson made it for us. He’s a friend of the family’s.”

“Oh, you’re Mr. Peterson’s guests?” The man’s demeanor changed and he gave them a warm smile. “Let me just call and tell him you’re here.”

The maître’d placed a call on an old-fashioned landline and then took them to their table. It looked out onto a raised stage about ten feet away. A heavy red curtain was drawn around the stage, but Isaac heard the actors and backstage team chatting as they finished their preparations.

“No cheating!” Stiles gave Isaac’s foot a light kick.

“I didn’t hear anything about the play, I swear.” Isaac held up his hands and grinned. He really hadn’t heard anything script related, and had instead caught bits and pieces of last minute stage directions, a discussion of where the cast was going for drinks after the performance, and some gossip about one of the actors having an affair with the director. Isaac gave Stiles the scoop on that last tidbit.

“I hope you like this place,” Stiles said as he closed his menu.

“I think I will. The food smells incredible.” Isaac tilted his head toward the kitchen and took a long whiff. “But these prices are crazy.”

“It’s okay, my dad set everything up. It’s gonna be on the house. The guy who owns this place was his college roommate.”

“Oh cool.”

“Yeah, seriously. Don’t even look at the prices.”

Isaac decided to follow Stiles’ advice and ordered the surf and turf. Stiles selected the ribeye, and they got an order of crab cakes as an appetizer.

“I’m excited to see tonight’s play,” Stiles said as he thumbed through the program that had been inset
in their menus. “They do a different production every three months.”

Isaac picked up his copy of the program and looked it over.

**The Harvey Wallbanger**

*The Harvey Wallbanger: 3 parts vodka, 6 parts orange juice, and 1 part Galliano.*

This simple recipe proves fatal for a Houston novelist hosting a hurricane party amidst the chaos of Hurricane Harvey. Suspicion immediately falls on the mysterious stranger whose car stalled in front of the house just before the storm, and the guests lock her in the den. With the streets flooded and 911 calls going unanswered, it seems like a supreme stroke of good luck when a police officer miraculously shows up to offer assistance. Yet before the officer can question the stranger, she’s found dead in the seemingly locked room. Now it’s up to the cop and the remaining party guests to determine who the killer is before the body count rises along with the flood waters. Could the murderer be the novelist’s new husband, an up-and-coming politician with a dark secret? Could it be his jilted ex-lover who still owns half the house? What about the next door neighbors who harbor deep-seated resentments? How about the publishing agent who was desperate to find a way to break the novelist’s contract?

Order a round of Harvey Wallbangers for your table, be sure to save room for dessert, and watch this spellbinding mystery unfold for your entertainment!

Isaac glanced at the cast list and production information, but set his program aside as he recalled something Stiles had said yesterday afternoon as they were leaving school.

“So what did you wanna talk to me about?”

Stiles’ head snapped up, a deer-in-the-headlights look on his face. “What?”

“Yesterday you said there was something you wanted to talk to me about. I thought that’s why you wanted to go out tonight?”

“Oh uh, it-it is.” Stiles fidgeted in his seat, opened his mouth as if to speak, but then grabbed his glass and took a sip of soda.

“You’re making me nervous.” Isaac leaned forward and dropped his voice. “Is this about the darach?”

“No, it doesn’t have anything to do with him.” Stiles waved dismissively but bumped his half-empty glass in the process, knocking it sideways.

Isaac’s hand shot forward and righted the glass before it could hit the table. A couple of ice cubes bounced into the air. One came to rest on the tablecloth beside Stiles’ fork while the other landed on the floor and skidded under the neighboring table.

“Thanks.” Stiles grinned at Isaac and wrapped his hand around the glass, his fingers interlocking with Isaac’s.

Isaac smiled back, heart fluttering. Stiles’ touch was warm and the glass was cold. It made his head spin. He started to withdraw his hand but stopped as the scent of Stiles’ arousal tickled the back of his throat.
“What?” Stiles asked, his grip tightening over Isaac’s.

They were holding hands around the glass. It was fucking weird. It was also making Isaac’s cock hard, and quite possibly Stiles’ too if his scent was anything to go by.

“You um...” *smell like you still haven’t gotten off since before your coma.*

Stiles arched his brow, his thumb stroking Isaac’s knuckles.

“Aayyye, Stilesey!”

Isaac flinched and pulled his hand away as a heavyset, middle-aged man with sagging jowls approached their table.

“Hey Uncle Don!” Stiles gave the man a wide smile and held out his hand.

The man took Stiles’ hand but also squeezed the back of his neck. After a moment he turned his attention to Isaac. “You must be Stiles’ b–”

“–friend Isaac,” Stiles cut in, giving the man a look Isaac couldn’t interpret.

The man chuckled as he shook Isaac’s hand. “Whatever you say, Stilesey.”

“It’s good to meet you, sir.”

“Yeah, yeah, you too, Isaac.” He slapped Isaac’s hand with his free one before letting go. “Did you get an appetizer?” He snapped his fingers and waved at their server. “Dustin, get these boys some shrimp skewers.”

“We ordered the crab cakes,” Stiles said.

“Crab cakes?” Don shook his head and grimaced. “Overpriced, overspiced, overcooked.” He smiled at the neighboring table as a different server set down a plate of crab cakes. “You’ll love ‘em! They were named best crab cakes in Beacon County three years running.” He turned back to Isaac and Stiles and stage whispered, one hand pressed against the side of his face, “Horse manure. You want the shrimp skewers. Dustin!” He shouted across the restaurant at their server, snapping his fingers again. “Where are those shrimp skewers?!”

After making small talk for a few more minutes Don scuttled away, promising their appetizer would be up shortly.

“Uncle Don can be” –Stiles shrugged and looked after the man with an amused smile on his face– “boisterous sometimes.”

The crab cakes *and* shrimp skewers arrived a little while later. Isaac did indeed find the crab cakes overspiced, but he used Ethan’s flavor-isolation technique to concentrate on the crab meat itself and managed to enjoy them anyway. The shrimp skewers were delicious, and Isaac made a point to savor every flavor note with his enhanced senses.

Just as their entrees arrived, the lights went down, signaling the start of the play. For the first ten minutes of the play Isaac had trouble concentrating on the dialogue. He was too distracted watching Stiles out of the corner of his eye and with taking in the props, background, and performance aspects of the play. Then the novelist sipped his drink and keeled over at the table just as the windows rattled and thunder clapped. Isaac was fully engrossed in the plot until intermission.
“Who do you think did it?” Stiles asked excitedly as the lights came up.

“I’m thinkin’ the ex did it to inherit the house.”

“Would you like a refill, sir?” Dustin asked as he cleared their empty plates.

“No way!” Stiles said, waving a hand.

“Oh.” Surprise flitted over the server’s face. “Okay. How about a glass of water?”

Isaac laughed. “He was talking to me,” he said, shaking his head fondly at Stiles.

“Oh yeah, sorry. I’ll have a refill, and let’s see the dessert menu, please.”

“So why can’t it be the ex?” Isaac asked once Dustin had left.

“The ex still had feelings the novelist. He wouldn’t have killed him.”

“So you think maybe the husband did it because he was jealous?”

“Nah, I’m pretty sure it was the stranded stranger.”

“But she’s dead too,” Isaac answered.

“Yeah, see I think the cop snuck in through the window, killed her, and then pretended to arrive to investigate.”

“Why would he do that?”

“She was his accomplice. I don’t think he’s a real cop. He keeps messing up protocol, and he doesn’t have a way to contact the station. I think they were a couple of looters and she was there first to case the house. When the novelist became suspicious she killed him, and then the phony cop killed her so she wouldn’t rat him out when she was arrested for real later.”

“I dunno, Stiles. That seems really convoluted.”

“You just watch!”

Isaac and Stiles decided to split a slice of raspberry cheesecake. Once again their food arrived just before the lights went down and the curtain went up, signaling the second act of the play. Isaac couldn’t believe it, but Stiles’ theory about the stranger and the cop proved correct.

After the play was over, Don came by the table again to ask if they had enjoyed their meals, and he and Stiles chatted about the sheriff for a few minutes before Isaac and Stiles got up to leave, and he walked them out.

Stiles pulled the valet ticket for the Jeep out of his pocket but stopped. “You feel like going for a walk? Winnipeg Park is just a couple blocks away.”

Isaac agreed and they strolled to the park. They were quiet on the way. Isaac sensed Stiles’ anxiety and brushed their shoulders together as they walked, but he didn’t pressure Stiles to talk. Whatever was on his mind he seemed unwilling to blurt out casually. Maybe he’d feel more like discussing it if Isaac were patient and waited for him to bring it up on his own terms.

“I don’t know if it’s safe to be around me,” Stiles said quietly as they stepped off the sidewalk and onto the dirt path that led through the park’s front gate.
“I’m not worried about that,” Isaac answered, rubbing Stiles’ back and leaving his hand in place.

“I know,” Stiles whispered, leaning into Isaac’s touch, “but maybe you should be. I tried to sneak out of the house last night.”

“To go where?”

Stiles laughed and kicked a rock. It skipped twice along the path before landing in the grass. “I don’t know.”

“What?”

“I didn’t try to sneak out. The...”

“Oh.” Isaac squeezed Stiles shoulder and guided him toward a bench.

“My dad heard him and caught him at the front door. He had a kitchen knife.”

“Oh my god.” Isaac sank heavily onto the bench and pulled Stiles down with him, holding his forearms and pressing their knees together. “Why didn’t you tell me sooner? Is your dad okay?”

“He’s fine. I didn’t wanna spoil the night. Dad wrestled the knife out of his hand and I woke up soon after.”

“Okay, so” –Isaac slid his hands from Stiles’ arms down to his palms. He squeezed Stiles’ hands and held eye contact– “everything’s fine.”

Stiles huffed and pulled away. “It’s not fine. I could have killed him. I could have killed you, or Scott, or Melissa the last time I stayed over. I can’t do this, Isaac. I can’t put you guys in danger.”

Stiles ran a rough hand through his hair and glared at the ground. “I already tried to kill Scott once.”

“What? What are we gonna do?” Stiles turned his angry scowl on Isaac. “This isn’t like the kanima, or the first darach, or Peter running amok. I’m the problem. Me and Scott. What are we supposed to do about that?”

“You wait. You hang on until me and Lydia and Ethan–”

“Ethan?”

Isaac’s cheeks burned but he continued. “–until we figure out how to fix this.”

“Yeah, I guess.” Stiles looked away, and when he spoke again his tone was emotionless. “My dad had a lock installed on my door today, and bars put on my windows.”

“That...seems like a good precaution.”

Stiles laughed, sharp and bitter. “Yeah, I get to be a prisoner in my own room.”

“Scott’s been–”

“I know. It makes sense. I just hate it.” Stiles' phone buzzed. He looked at it and smiled.

“What’s up?” Isaac asked.
“It’s my friend Kiki. She wants me to come to a drag show at Jungle.”

“You wanna go?”

Stiles shook his head. “Nah, I’m not just gonna bail on you.”

Isaac laughed. “I meant I’d go with you.”

“Oh!” Stiles cocked his head in surprise. “I didn’t think you’d want to.”

“Sure, I would. I’ve never seen a drag show before. It sounds fun.” Isaac was curious what it would be like.

They walked back to the restaurant, got the Jeep, and headed to Jungle. They took off their ties before going in, and Isaac also removed his vest.

“Are we overdressed?” Isaac asked as they stood in line.

Stiles chuckled. “It’s a drag show. Everyone is going to be overdressed.”

Stiles texted his friend Kiki again and a few minutes later a drag queen taller than Isaac came outside and got them out of line. She shrieked and threw her arms around Stiles, air kissing him dramatically but leaning back, careful to avoid smudging her heavily made up face.

Isaac knew he was staring but he couldn’t help it. She had to be at least six foot five in her stiletto heels and her huge blond wig added another four or five inches. The ridges of her natural brows were barely visible beneath the layers of makeup, and her fake brows had been penciled on with a sharp precision. She had on ruby red lipstick to match her fake nails and wore a glittery silver dress and costume jewelry diamonds on her ears, neck, fingers, and wrists.

“Ooh, who’s this tall drink of water?” she asked, tipping her hand at Isaac.

Stiles introduced them, and they followed Kiki into the club and past the bouncer who handed them over-twenty-one wristbands without checking their IDs.

“You want a beer, honey?” Kiki asked Stiles as they took their place at the bar with the other drag queens.

Isaac thought Stiles was going to accept, but he glanced at Isaac and shook his head. “No thanks.”

“I don’t mind,” Isaac whispered, knowing that Stiles had declined because of Isaac’s alcoholic father.

Stiles smiled and shook his head as he slid an arm around Isaac’s waist and leaned against him.

Isaac couldn’t help the grin that broke across his face. They were in a gay bar with their arms around each other. Everyone would probably assume they were a couple, and that thought made Isaac very happy even if it could never happen for real. He couldn’t believe how oblivious Stiles was about the message he was sending.

“Mmm, Stiles, you look absolutely delicious tonight!” A drag queen with dark skin, smoky gray eyeshadow, and a black wig said as she trailed her manicured fingers over Stiles’ chest. She smiled at Isaac and winked. “Fill his behind.”

Isaac choked. “Excuse me?”

She laughed, low and breathy. “My name, sweetie. It’s Phyllis B. Hind,” she said, articulating each
They made small talk with Miss B. Hind and Kiki until an older looking drag queen in a red bouffant wig, thigh-high green boots, and an orange mini-skirt elbowed her way into the group. “Five minutes ladies,” she said in a raspy voice.

“Thanks, Ida,” Phyllis said as she set her drink on the bar and straightened her dress.

“Kiki, you’re up after Sugar.”

“Ugh, that sloppy queen.” Kiki held up her hand and flipped her hair.

“Save the attitude for your song, girl,” Ida said as she sashayed away from them and toward another group.

“Ida’s been performing since the 70s,” Phyllis said, pulling a compact out of her purse.

“Wow,” Isaac answered.

After completing her circuit of the bar, Ida got a microphone from the DJ and the music went off, arresting everyone’s attention. Her high heel boots clicked against wooden steps as she climbed onto the stage that lined the wall by the DJ’s booth.

“Who’s here to have some fun tonight?”

The crowd cheered and clapped.

“And who’s taking a hot, hung man home with them tonight?”

To Isaac’s surprise Stiles clapped and wooed along with the crowd.

“Ooh there’s some thirsty bitches in here tonight!”

There were some catcalls and Stiles shifted so that he was standing fully in front of Isaac and leaning back against him. Isaac went with it and wrapped his arms around Stiles, folding his hands over Stiles’ hard stomach.

“I’m Ida Banger and I’ll be your madam for tonight. Our first lady of the evening doesn’t spit or swallow – she swishes! Put your hands together for Miss Sugar Alley performing Katy Perry’s ‘Swish Swish.’”

A slender drag queen with huge fake breasts under a crop-top basketball jersey flounced onto the stage in time to the music. Rather than wearing a wig like the other girls she had her own hair cut short and dyed platinum blond in accordance with Katy Perry’s latest style. She wore tiny black hot pants and danced just a little too fast for the beat of the song as she lip synced along with the lyrics.

“That bitch is such a hot mess. She didn’t even tuck.” Kiki clicked her tongue as she borrowed Phyllis’ compact and checked her lipstick.

“But her shirt’s too short to tuck in,” Isaac said, watching her sway and bounce on stage.

“Ooh, Stiles, where’d you get this one?” Kiki asked, trailing her fingertips down Isaac’s arm until they stopped at his hands over Stiles’ stomach. “And are there more like him?”

Stiles laughed and tipped his head back against Isaac’s shoulder so he could whisper in his ear. “She was talking about Sugar’s bulge.”
Isaac’s eyes widened as he noticed the thick outline and plump basket Sugar was sporting in her tight shorts. At first it was confusing seeing someone with a big, prominent package strutting around on long, smooth legs with a jiggling chest and a face full of makeup, but after about three seconds heat pooled in Isaac’s gut and something clicked into place in his brain and – yep, Sugar was hot!

Even if he hadn’t been enjoying the performance, Stiles’ ass pressed against his crotch would have ensured that he was rock hard. It was kind of amazing that Stiles hadn’t noticed, but he didn’t seem fazed as he occasionally wiggled and shifted in Isaac’s arms. Maybe he couldn’t feel Isaac through their pants, but Isaac could sure as hell feel him.

“Are you having fun?” Stiles whispered.

“I am,” Isaac answered, fighting back a moan as Stiles fidgeted.

“Good.” Stiles’ fingers interlocked with Isaac’s, the edges of their hands resting against the top of his belt buckle. He turned his head and bared his neck.

A thrill of excitement pulsed through Isaac’s body and he was about to seal his mouth over the exposed skin when the club erupted in applause and Stiles let go of his hands as he too clapped. Sugar’s song was over.

Kiki huffed dramatically and glared at Stiles.

“Just being polite,” he answered in a playful tone.

Ida returned to the stage and raised the microphone.

“Next up I want to introduce a classy lady known for her grace, poise, and sophistication…but we’re stuck with Kiki La’Moan instead.”

The crowd laughed and Kiki rolled her shoulder and tossed her head at Ida before blowing kisses at the audience.

“You guys, I don’t want to spill the tea about Sugar and Kiki but give it up for Miss La’Moan as she performs Taytay’s hit ‘Look What You Made Me Do.’”

Kiki sauntered onto the stage and broke into an energetic rendition of the song, complete with sassy facial expressions aimed at Sugar and lewd pantomimes. It was hysterical, but she nailed the dance moves.

“Wow, she’s really good,” Isaac said.

“Yep!” Stiles pumped his fist in the air and howled as the song came to an end.

Isaac let go of Stiles and clapped enthusiastically, adding his own howl with just a hint of a supernatural warble in it.

“Knock it off!” Stiles whispered, elbowing Isaac in the chest.

Isaac laughed and nuzzled his face against the side of Stiles’ head as he resumed holding him.

After Kiki exited the stage, she and Sugar feigned a slap fight and then took a bow in unison for the audience. They went to the opposite end of the bar together and ordered drinks.

Ida returned to the stage, holding her phone up and tapping at it furiously. “Sorry, I’m just updating my Twitter.” She groaned dramatically. “Damn autocorrect. Hunks and homos, this is Covfefe T.
Wheat performing Miley’s ‘Wrecking Ball.’”

The music started and a young drag queen who looked barely older than Isaac and Stiles tumbled onto the stage with a giant beach ball that had been spray painted black.

When Covfefe was done, Phyllis B. Hind performed Nicki Minaj’s “Anaconda.” There were a few more songs after that and then the drag show ended and the regular club music resumed. They chatted with Stiles’ friends for awhile, but then the drag queens left to get changed, and Isaac and Stiles were alone.

Isaac was in trouble. He had spent so much time holding Stiles during the show that he could barely keep his hands off of him.

“Do you wanna dance?” Isaac asked, going with the impulse as soon as it hit him so that he wouldn’t second guess it.

Stiles’ face registered surprise and his heartbeat stuttered. Isaac’s suggestion must have made him uncomfortable.

“Never mind, I just–”

“I’d love to.” Stiles grabbed Isaac’s hand and led them onto the dance floor, winding and weaving through the thick crowd of dancing guys.

Isaac was pretty sure some of the guys he was sliding past were hot. He was pretty sure some of them smelled like lust and pheromones. He was pretty sure Stiles wasn’t the only person in the club with warm skin and an elevated pulse rate. He couldn’t be sure. His senses tunneled and everything disappeared except Stiles’ fingers in his palm, Stiles’ narrow waist and perky ass in his field of vision, Stiles’ throbbing heart, and his tingling, aroused scent in Isaac’s nostrils.

Aroused. Stiles was so fucking aroused. Isaac had no idea what was setting him off, but there was no mistaking the musky-sweet, silky tang that enveloped his body, buzzing and sparking along with his usual crisp, caffeinated aura. God, even Stiles’ horniness was hyperactive.

Isaac growled under his breath and gripped Stiles’ hips as he turned to face Isaac.

Stiles let out a strangled gurgle and clung to Isaac’s forearms.

“Sorry,” Isaac said, letting go as he realized how needy and aggressive he was being. Stiles might have been holding his arms to stop him.

“No, I...” Stiles didn’t finish his statement, simply licked his lips and wrapped an arm around Isaac’s waist as he straddled his thigh and gyrated in time to the beat.

Stiles was erect. Isaac had already known in an abstract way, but it became mind-blowingly concrete as Stiles ground against Isaac’s thigh.

He hasn’t gotten off in a long time. That’s the only reason this is happening. He can’t help it. Don’t read into it.

“I can’t believe this is happening,” Stiles whispered, fingers curling into Isaac’s belt.

He doesn’t mean it to sound that intense. He’s just commenting on how strange it is that we’re dancing together.
Isaac moaned in the back of his throat as Stiles slid all the way up his thigh and looped his other arm around Isaac’s neck. He quit supporting his weight, relying on Isaac to hold him up as he bounced and writhed against Isaac’s body and dropped his head back, once again baring his throat.

Isaac couldn’t help it. He was a werewolf and Stiles was...was his.

He closed his mouth over Stiles’ soft, hot skin and sucked, keeping his fangs away from Stiles’ pulse point, but letting his tongue lick and prod with abandon. The packbond in his chest went wild, rabbiting and glowing, calling futilely to a reciprocal bond that didn’t exist, couldn’t exist in the human.

Stiles couldn’t answer the call supernaturally, but he answered it every other way. His hand slid inside Isaac’s collar and clutched at his skin. His leg wound around Isaac’s calf and clenched his groin harder against Isaac’s thigh. His scent flooded with a mix of joy and lust and swaddled Isaac’s brain in warmth.

*Oh fuck YES! Yes. Yes. Yes.* Nothing in the world mattered but dancing with Stiles, pressing Stiles’ hard, lean body against his own and marking Stiles’ throat.

**Marking Stiles’ throat.**

Isaac’s stomach sank as the cold reality of the situation crashed over him. He couldn’t mark Stiles’ throat. Stiles wasn’t his, and just because he was being exceedingly cool about possessive werewolf behavior didn’t mean it was okay to give him a fucking hickey. How would they explain that to Scott and the rest of the pack?

Isaac opened his mouth and raised his head, taking deep breathes and trying to block out Stiles’ literally intoxicating scent. Isaac was lust-drunk and he needed to calm down and get a hold of himself before he screwed up their relationship.

“Gotta stop,” Isaac whispered to himself aloud, mouth hovering by Stiles’ jaw.

Stiles froze and his body went tense. A moment later he slid down Isaac’s thigh and stood up on his own, letting go of Isaac’s neck and waist. He must have realized Isaac had regained enough control not to try to stop him.

Things were tense between them for the next several minutes. They kept dancing but they didn’t make eye contact; they didn’t make body contact. Stiles floated just beyond Isaac’s personal bubble, and they kept their hips well back from each other.

Fuck, Isaac had made things so awkward. He was about to suggest that they leave the club when a hand landed on his shoulder and a scent he recognized tickled his nostrils.

“Playa’s gonna play,” Brett whispered into Isaac’s ear, amusement coloring his tone. He placed one hand on Isaac’s shoulder and the other on Stiles’ and turned them toward him, falling into sync with their movements.

“Oh hello, guy who wants to dance with us,” Stiles said to Brett, just a hint of anxiety in his tone. He leaned closer to Isaac, re-establishing contact and sending Isaac a clear nonverbal message.

Isaac understood it perfectly and wrapped a protective arm around Stiles’ body, shifting him away from Brett and positioning himself between them. Nevertheless, Brett wasn’t actually a threat and Isaac didn’t want Stiles to think he was.

“Hey, man,” Isaac said, winding his other arm around Brett and giving him a quick hug. He was
okay with it when Brett kissed his cheek. Isaac turned back to Stiles and gave him a reassuring smile. “This is Brett, the guy I told you about.”

Realization flickered across Stiles’ face and he held out his hand to Brett. “Oh, the new werewolf.”

“Dude!” Brett shot Isaac a surprised look and anger flared in his scent.

“It’s okay, he’s our pack’s...Uh, he’s our...Stiles.”

“What’s a Stiles?” Brett asked, looking between them with one eyebrow crooked.

“I’m a Stiles.” Stiles wiggled his still extended fingers, and Brett finally took his hand and gave it a quick shake.

“He’s pack,” Isaac said.

Brett gave Stiles a cautious look, but shrugged, a grin lighting his face. “Dance with me.” He wrapped his other arm around Isaac and pulled him closer, away from Stiles.

“I’m with...I mean we’re toge– Uh, Stiles and I...”

“It’s okay,” Stiles said, rubbing Isaac’s back between his shoulder blades. “I need to use the restroom anyway. I’ll be right back.”

“So, you have two boyfriends,” Brett said, his hand slipping from Isaac’s waist down to his ass.

For a fleeting moment Isaac thought about objecting, but then he yanked Brett against his body and groped him.

“I’m so horny,” Isaac whined into Brett’s ear, savoring the way Brett’s crotch dragged against his own.

“Yeah, I picked up on that,” Brett answered before kissing and nipping along Isaac’s jaw.

Isaac angled his body, trying to block what he was doing from view as he slid his hand inside Brett’s pants and underwear. Brett was already half-hard and rapidly swelling. Isaac wasted no time rolling back Brett’s foreskin and tickling his smooth, spongy cockhead, hoping to eek out some precum before he had to stop. It didn’t happen.

“Dude, seriously, not in the middle of the club.” Brett bucked against him once, then tugged Isaac’s hand out of his pants.

Isaac didn’t feel any shame as he rubbed his palm over his nose and took a hit on Brett’s pheromones.

“Stiles isn’t my boyfriend,” Isaac said, falling back into step with Brett’s dancing and recalling what Brett had said before Isaac felt him up. “And neither is Ethan.”

Brett laughed and shook his head at Isaac. “Your love life is such a mess.

“They’re just my friends.”

“What are we?”

Isaac shrugged. “Friends?”
Brett grinned and pressed a kiss to Isaac’s lips. “You are such a fun friend.”

Isaac snickered and cupped the back of Brett’s head, pulling him in for another kiss, this one open-mouthed and sloppy.

“So buddy, threesome with Stiles?” Brett asked as they pulled apart, a hint of gold ringing his blue irises.

“Stiles is straight.”

Brett did a double take and smirked. “Then he’s not very good at it.”

“What do you mean?”

“Have you smelled him?”

Isaac let out a dreamy sigh and arched his hips against Brett’s. “Yeah.”

“He’s coming back,” Brett whispered, nodding his head to the side, “and he’s as horny as you are.”

“I know, but it’s not for me.”

Brett groaned and quit dancing. He placed a hand on Isaac’s chest and gently pushed him back. “I’m rooting for you here, Isaac. Please have an honest conversation with at least one of your friends.” He made air quotes around the word ‘friends.’

“I don’t know what you’re talking about.”

“Of course you don’t.” Brett clapped his hand on Isaac’s shoulder and squeezed it. He smiled at Stiles as he rejoined them. “He’s all yours.” He smirked at Isaac and added in a werewolf whisper, “For tonight.”

Brett walked away, and Isaac wrapped his arms around Stiles. He leaned their foreheads together and looked into Stiles’ warm brown eyes, relishing the familiar flutter of emotion that washed over him. It was soothing. Isaac was no less horny, but horny wasn’t all he felt now.

Stiles broke rhythm in favor of outright hugging Isaac. “You wanna go back to my house?”

Isaac nodded, still lost in Stiles’ eyes.

Stiles’ hand slipped into Isaac’s again as Isaac led them out of the club. They forgot to let go once they were outside.

“This was a really good night,” Isaac said, discreetly checking out the tent in Stiles’ pants as they strolled hand-in-hand through the parking lot toward the Jeep. Isaac was just as horned up, but apparently they were simply not acknowledging their condition.

“It’s not over yet.” Stiles answered looking at Isaac’s waist without the discretion Isaac had exercised. He was probably just curious.

Isaac assumed their erections would go down while they were in the Jeep on the way to Stiles’ house, but then Isaac adjusted himself, and then Stiles adjusted himself, and then Isaac needed to adjust himself again, and then they were basically rubbing themselves through their pants the whole way back and chatting about school like it wasn’t happening.

“My dad’s working tonight,” Stiles mumbled as they parked in his driveway.
That was a relief.

Isaac examined the heavy lock on Stiles’ bedroom door as they got to his room. It was designed such that it could be pulled into place and set from the inside, but then only reopened from the outside.

“Yes, we can’t close my door unless we want to spend the night together.”

Isaac couldn’t help the smirk that curled his lips. Spending the night locked up with Stiles in his bedroom wouldn’t be the worst fate that Isaac could imagine.

They left the door halfway open, and Isaac sank into Stiles’ desk chair while Stiles turned on his TV and flipped through channels. Isaac took a long, deep breath, savoring Stiles’ scent in the room the way he had the last few times he had visited, but noting the distinct absence of any trace of semen. He was almost positive now that Stiles hadn’t cum since his coma. It had been right under a week since the coma happened, and almost three days since Stiles had woken up. What was he waiting for?

“There’s nothing good on,” Stiles said, turning the TV off and setting the remote on top.

Isaac shrugged. He wasn’t in the mood to watch TV anyway. His stomach tightened and he gripped himself through his pants. Stiles was still raging as he stood by the bed. He glanced at Isaac and bit his lip as he rubbed his tent.

“Can we cuddle?” Stiles asked, voice tight with tension.

Isaac nodded and stood up. Stiles was staring straight at his waist. Was Stiles so horny that even Isaac was looking good to him? Isaac yawned and stretched, standing on his toes and arching his hips, basically waving his clothed manhood at Stiles.

Stiles let out a throaty whimper and began unbuttoning his shirt.

“What are you doing?” Isaac asked, his heart thudding as Stiles’ chest came into view.

“Just making myself comfortable.” Stiles voice was so tight he struggled to get the words out. “Do you... wanna...be....c-comfortable?”

Isaac didn’t answer, just fumbled with the buttons of his shirt and stared as more and more of Stiles’ lean torso came into view. He normally had a patch of hair on the center of his chest between his pecs, as well as a thick treasure trail descending from his navel, but they were missing tonight, leaving Stiles smooth from the waist up.

They finished taking off their shirts at the same time, dropping them to the carpeted floor with a soft crinkle that thundered in Isaac’s ears.

Stiles rubbed himself, pressing a heavy hand over his bulge and making his brown slacks dip in the process, revealing the gray waistband of his underwear along with more of his smooth, lightly tanned pelvis. “Let’s get on the bed.”

Oh god, was this really happening?

“I-I wanna be really comfortable.” Isaac unbuckled his belt with trembling hands.

Stiles gasped and then he was tugging with clumsy fingers at his own buckle.

Isaac could barely get his fly open and almost gave up and ripped it loose. At the last second the
button slipped through the cloth slot. Isaac never took his eyes off Stiles while he worked on it.

Stiles unzipped his pants, revealing a sliver of gray fabric that made Isaac want to jump with joy. Stiles gave him a nervous look, his hands gripping the waistband of his slacks.

Isaac did his best to look calm and reassuring as he nodded at Stiles, but his whole body was trembling as he too thrust his thumbs into his waistband.

Their eyes met for the briefest second, then they were back on each other’s waists.

Stiles gave a quick shove and his pants fell off his hips, revealing the outline of his cock in his boxer briefs. Three little interconnected wet spots had formed near the tip of his erection, which was pressed against his left thigh. The damp patches were a deep, dark gray, contrasting with the light steel that comprised the rest of his underwear. His balls hung heavy in the stretch of fabric between his thighs, and he smelled so good Isaac was lightheaded.

Stiles’ cock visibly pulsed in his boxer briefs as Stiles stared at Isaac’s exposed black trunks.

Isaac stepped out of his pants and kicked them away, and Stiles mirrored the action, drawing Isaac’s attention to his bare legs, his very bare legs. They were shaved as smooth as his stomach and chest.

“So um…” Stiles sat on the foot of the bed and patted the space next to him.

Isaac took a seat beside him, letting his knee brush against Stiles’ smooth one. It was soft, and Isaac had to resist the urge to rub it out of curiosity. Then Stiles’ hands were on Isaac’s bare chest and he was pulling Isaac backward on the bed.

Right, they were going to cuddle.

*Holy fuck!* Isaac was going to get to touch Stiles *a lot*.

He gripped Stiles’ knee and slid his hand up Stiles’ thigh as they lay back sideways across the bed.

Stiles let go of Isaac and propped himself up on his elbow, staring into Isaac’s eyes.

Isaac trailed his fingers over Stiles’ side, but froze as he saw the intensity in Stiles’ gaze.

“Stop me if you don’t want this,” Stiles whispered, leaning forward.

Everything stopped. Isaac’s fingers, his heart, time itself – the whole world held its breath as Stiles’ lips grazed Isaac’s.

Chapter End Notes

...pation

This was a big chapter for Isaac and Stiles so any and all feedback is very much appreciated!

Next chapter will be the sex chapter for Isaac and Stiles’ first time. I have lots of things in mind, but please feel free to drop last minutes requests and suggestions if you like. I’m planning to post on 9/20 (but sooner if possible) to coincide with the one year
anniversary of this story! It’s been an amazing year, and I doubt I would have continued
the story without all the support and feedback from you guys – so a very warm and
grateful thank you from me to each of you!
The Dock of the Bay

Chapter Notes

I started plotting this story in September of 2015 and wrote the first half of chapter one at that time...then I left it sitting on my computer for a year until I picked it back up, finished the first chapter, and posted on September 20th of 2016. I’m calling the one-year anniversary just a couple of days early and posting this ‘anniversary chapter’ now. It’s the first part of the Isaac and Stiles mini smut arc and has some important developments for their relationship. There’s a slim chance I’ll be able to post the second part on the 20th, but I can’t be certain and would rather be early than late to mark the occasion.

My heartfelt thanks to everyone who has read, commented, kudoed, or bookmarked in the past year. It’s kept my motivation and enthusiasm for the project high and is the primary reason this story has come as far as it has.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Reality melted around them as Isaac’s mouth moved against Stiles’ mouth. Warm puddles of consciousness pooled in Isaac’s stomach and babbled in his chest. Perception smoldered and sparked in his mind. Sensation blazed across his face. Nothing made sense but slotting his lips between Stiles’ and caressing the sensuous line of slick, pillowy flesh pressing against him. He angled his head and deepened the kiss, slipping his tongue past Stiles’ lips.

Stiles gasped and curled his tongue around Isaac’s as he clutched Isaac’s shoulders, drawing him closer, pulling his body on top of him.

Awareness flickered back into Isaac’s upper body as it connected with Stiles’ warm skin. That awareness shifted to Isaac’s knee as it slotted between Stiles’ thighs and brushed the throbbing fullness in Stiles’ underwear.

The world gushed back into crisp definition.

Isaac felt everything: Stiles’ fingers on his chest; the plush bedspread fisted in his hand near Stiles’ shoulder; the worn coil of springs in the mattress pressing back against his elbow; the gentle drag of hot cotton against his skin as it separated his thigh from that glorious fullness in Stiles’ boxer briefs – oh god, that fucking fullness.

Isaac licked the roof of Stiles’ mouth and shifted his hips, grinding their clothed erections together.

“Uhnmm!” Stiles trembled and squeezed Isaac's shoulder.

Isaac tried to lean back to make sure Stiles was okay with what they were doing, but before he could Stiles spread his legs and hooked them around Isaac’s waist, holding Isaac’s crotch against his. Needy fingers pressed against Isaac’s face as Stiles slid his tongue over Isaac’s and into his mouth.

Everything quaked. Isaac’s chest, Stiles’ dick, Isaac’s thighs, Stiles’ tongue – their whole bodies shook and shuddered against each other.
Isaac wiggled his hips and bore down, rubbing relentlessly back and forth and up and down over Stiles’ cock and balls until their erections were both leaking, and the dry slide had become a damp pull. Isaac wasn’t sure if he could have smelled their mingled fluids and pheromone-soaked crotches as a human, but he desperately hoped that Stiles could because it was perhaps the single hottest scent in the world.

Stiles let out a muffled moan and dug his ankles hard into Isaac’s ass as he lifted his hips and writhed with a focused intensity. His heart was pounding and his arousal was all but condensing into droplets in the air around them. His balls moved against Isaac’s, drawing higher, and his cock was so hard it almost hurt to thrust against it.

Isaac broke the kiss and wrapped his hands around Stiles’ hips, pinning him to the bed and away from his groin.

“No!” Stiles face was a mask of torment and betrayal. “I need to get off.”

“You will.” A muscle in Isaac’s stomach tightened; all he wanted was to watch it happen. “But we can do better than this for you. Better than dry humping and cumming in your underwear.”

Stiles took a deep breath and his pupils widened. “You’re right. I want more than that for our first time.”

“F-first time?” Isaac’s face bloomed with warmth and his chest fluttered. Did that mean there would be a second time? A third?

“Yeah, I mean...” Stiles turned his head against the mattress and looked away, baring his throat in the process. “You want more, ri--”

Isaac latched his mouth over Stiles’ neck and nipped with blunt teeth before letting his fangs extend and holding them against the skin without biting down. He rumbled a low, possessive growl. He had never had the courage to do this with Allison or Ethan, but it felt right with Stiles. Fuck, it felt so right. Now Isaac was the one about to cum in his underwear.

“I’ll take that as a yes.” Stiles’ tone was happy with just a tinge of fear and anxiety.

A tinge was too much. Isaac retracted his fangs and sat back on his ankles, willing his eyes back to human blue as he trailed a slow hand along Stiles’ smooth inner thigh. “I’m sorry. I got carried away. I didn’t know you, you know...felt this way.”

Stiles huffed and sat up. “Dude, are you serious? I did everything but spray paint, ‘I want to bone Isaac Lahey’ on my locker – and don’t think that wasn't gonna be my next move.”

“But I thought you were straight.”

“I thought you were straight.”

“I’m bi!” They declared in unison.

Isaac laughed, unable to keep the grin off his face as he leaned in and captured Stiles’ smiling lips with his own. He pulled back before things could heat up again. “So you want more than to just, uh, bone me, right?”

“Um, yeah.” Stiles rolled his eyes but ran his hand down Isaac’s arm. “I want everything with you, Isaac. I want you to be my boyfriend.”
Isaac’s face was in danger of splitting if he grinned any wider, and his chest felt freakishly warm and full. He dipped his head and caught Stiles’ mouth in another kiss, this time also wrapping his arms around Stiles and rubbing his back. It was slow and tender, but energy buzzed in Stiles’ muscles. After a few moments Stiles squirmed and broke the kiss.

“So about that boning...”

Isaac arched an eyebrow at Stiles, trying to play it cool even as heat surged through his body.

“I wanna do it.” Stiles’ face was innocent, pleading. “I mean why wait? It’s not like we need to get to know each other better or something.”

Isaac gave up the pretense that Stiles’ suggestion wasn’t life changing in the best possible way. “Hell yeah!” He shoved his black trunks down his thighs and raised one knee to slip them off but paused as Stiles gasped.

“Holy fuck. I assumed you were a show-er.”

“What?” Isaac tried not to feel self conscious as he finished shedding his underwear and tossed them on the floor.

“Yeah, ‘cause when I saw it in the locker room, and that time in your room, it was really big, so I thought you were a show-er, but” –Stiles licked his lips and shook his head as he stared unblinking at Isaac’s cock– “you’re a grow-er after all.”

Isaac rolled his eyes but didn’t hide the proud grin on his lips or fight the urge to discreetly lean back and thrust his hips forward, showing off for – who was it again? Oh yeah, his new boyfriend!

“Fuck Isaac.” Stiles’ rough, lusty tone made Isaac quiver. Stiles groaned in the back of his throat, lips parted.

Isaac liked the attention, but he had other priorities right now. “So will you...?” He nodded at the outline of Stiles’ cock in his gray boxer briefs. He wanted to stare and groan too.

Stiles hooked his thumbs in the sides of his waistband but stopped, anxiety thickening in his scent and partially dispelling the dense cloud of arousal. “I could blow you first if you want or, you know, we could do whatever.” Biting his lip, Stiles glanced at Isaac’s cock then down at his own package.

Isaac understood and knee-walked closer on the bed. He gently gripped each of Stiles’ arms. “Can I see you?” he whispered, caressing Stiles’ biceps with his thumbs and smiling at him.

Stiles moaned and pressed an open-lipped kiss to Isaac’s mouth before tipping his head down and eying their pressed together cocks. “Well this doesn’t make me feel insecure at all.”

“What are you talking about?” Isaac rolled his hips, grinding his length against Stiles’. He almost
came when Stiles reached between them and gripped their shafts, his other hand landing on Isaac’s ass.

“Don’t be modest, Isaac. You’re huge and I’m—”

“Hot as fuck!” Isaac kissed him, then curled his fingers around the end of Stiles’ cock, nudging Stiles’ hand away so he could play with Stiles’ loose foreskin. He rolled it up over Stiles’ rounded helmet and worked it back and forth until Stiles was shaking and leaking beneath him, never taking his eyes off what Isaac was doing. “God, it’s beautiful, Stiles.” Isaac nosed at the side of Stiles’ jaw, turning his head so he could whisper low and dirty in his ear. “I fucking love your cock. I could play with it all night.”

“R-really?” Stiles squeezed Isaac’s asscheeks and thrust into his hand.

“Yeah, this foreskin...” Isaac rolled it all the way over Stiles’ engorged cockhead, noting that there was room to spare. “I wanna try something.”

“Whatever it is the answer is yes!” Stiles bucked harder in Isaac’s hand. His flushed red tip poked out through the loose folds before disappearing again as Isaac pressed it down with his thumb and followed it back inside. “I need to cum,” Stiles whined.

“Me too.” Isaac was so turned on he could hardly breathe. He let go of Stiles and got on his knees, motioning for Stiles to get up too.

They knelt on the bed facing each other and Isaac guided their cockheads together. They both moaned as their sensitive tips met with a wet kiss and drooled against each other.

“Oh my god. I am so close.” Stiles clung to Isaac’s shoulders and trembled, his cock waving, draping a bead of precum over Isaac’s shaft and the top of his glans. “It’s been so long since I got off.”

“Yeah, I noticed that.”

Stiles raised his head and frowned. “What do you mean you noticed?”

“Oh um...” Isaac’s cheeks heated and he shrugged dismissively. “I can tell by your scent, and the lack of, uh, a certain other scent in the room.”

Stiles looked confused.

“You know, a scent that would normally be in your wastebasket...in a wad of tissues.”

Stiles huffed and smacked Isaac’s arm. “Dude, that’s so creepy.”

“Sorry,” Isaac mumbled. “I can’t help it.”

Stiles grumbled, but his eyes lit with lust as he slid his erection over Isaac’s and kept going until Isaac’s weeping cockhead pressed against the hot, wrinkled folds of Stiles’ sack just below the root of his dick. Oh fuck, Isaac was drooling on Stiles’ balls!

Stiles tickled the underside of Isaac’s flared tip with two fingers, gathering the precum and using it to massage Isaac’s quivering length as he rubbed his thumb over the flat of his own shaft.

Sharp jolts of pleasure arced along Isaac’s length and up his spine. How could someone’s hand feel this good?

“You’re so big,” Stiles whispered as he reached the end of his own erection and scraped the pad of
his thumb over his shiny, round cockhead before his slick digit slipped off the edge and onto the remaining wide gap between his tip and Isaac’s bushy pelvis.

Isaac throbbed and shook as Stiles wrapped his fingers around the space and worked it back and forth, jerking just the base of Isaac’s dick.

“So wide and thick too.” Stiles brought his other hand in on the action, pressing his erection down harder against Isaac’s and stroking the sides as his fingertips played with the leftover space on Isaac’s shaft.

Isaac’s cock was bathed in warmth and straining for release. Just when he was sure he couldn’t hold back any longer – and part of him absolutely wanted to blow all over Stiles’ smooth balls – Stiles let go.

“How big are you anyway? I’m about average.”

Isaac took a deep breath to calm down as he eyed Stiles’ equipment. Average seemed right. He looked approximately Brett’s length, maybe a little shorter, but also a little girthier. “I’ve never measured mine.”

Embarrassment flushed Isaac’s face. Was that weird? He had always assumed he was about average until he started seeing other erect cocks in person he could compare it to.

“I think we have a tape measure in the garage.”

Isaac laughed. “Stiles, that’s not what I wanna do right now.”

“Oh, right. Yeah, no me either.”

“So how long has it been since you got off?” Isaac asked, dropping the pitch of his voice and enjoying that that was a question he could ask Stiles now. They had only been boyfriends for about ten minutes, but Isaac was already all about it.

“Since the night before...the incident,” Stiles answered.

That put it right at a week ago, which definitely seemed to be outside of Stiles’ typical pattern.

“How come?” Isaac asked, tapping Stiles’ bloated cockhead with a gentle finger. The red had deepened into an angry purple. It was shiny and fat and gorgeous. Isaac wanted to sit on it.

“The darach. I’m – we’re – not exactly alone, you know?” Stiles lifted his head and looked at Isaac from under worried eyelashes. Did he think Isaac was going to freak out and call this off?

“Yeah well, fuck him,” Isaac answered, tugging a bead of precum off Stiles’ tip and smearing it into his pubes.

Stiles laughed and leaned closer, grinding against Isaac’s hip. “I’d rather you fuck me.”

“Y-you want me to fuck you?” Isaac couldn’t help the way his eyes flared or the way he emphasized the word fuck. Forget sitting on Stiles’ cock, fucking him would be so much better!

“Yeah, I really do.” Stiles didn’t look up, just stared at Isaac’s equipment, lust billowing around him like a curtain. When he finally did look up, his face was ravished with need and he lunged forward, closing his mouth over Isaac’s.

Isaac held Stiles close and stroked his back but almost immediately trailed down his spine and onto
the swell of his ass, the ass he was going to get to fuck, the first ass he was ever going to get to fuck. God, he just wanted to slid inside now.

Stiles bucked and throbbed against him, removing the little hesitancy Isaac had remaining. His fingers curled into Stiles’ crack and massaged and kneaded the firm flesh. Stiles was so smooth. Even his ass crack was smooth. Isaac probed deeper until he found Stiles’ hole and pressed the pad of his index finger against it.

“I’m gonna cum soon!” Stiles declared as he pulled back, impaling himself on Isaac’s finger. His hot ring of muscle clamped around it, and Isaac saw stars. “We better hurry.”

“I don’t wanna hurry.” Isaac smirked and pushed his finger just a half inch deeper into Stiles’ snug, blissful heat. “I wanna take my time.”

“Isaac, I can’t.” Stiles voice was a tight whine and his whole body tensed, including his ass.

“I know.” Isaac flashed amber eyes at Stiles. “Let’s take the edge off. Then we can really enjoy ourselves.”

“Oh.” Stiles eyes widened and he smirked back at Isaac. Isaac was sure Stiles’ eyes would have been glowing if he had been a werewolf. “So, about what you were doing earlier...”

Isaac reluctantly pulled his finger out of Stiles’ ass so he could realign their cocks, sliding down Stiles’ shaft and backing up on the bed until just their tips were pressed together. “It’s called docking. I saw it in some porn.”

“It’s so hot thinking about you watching gay porn!” Stiles licked his lips and rubbed his cockhead against Isaac’s as he slowly slid his foreskin up. “And yeah, I’ve seen it too.”

Isaac sighed. It was absurdly hot thinking about Stiles watching gay porn.

“I’ve always wanted to try it,” Stiles said as his purply cockhead disappeared beneath his foreskin and the end of the folds made contact with Isaac’s glans.

Isaac throbbed, and he felt but couldn’t see himself leaking against Stiles’ slick helmet.

“Come forward,” Stiles requested, holding his foreskin in place. He had managed to cover three quarters of Isaac’s cockhead.

Isaac grunted and thrust directly against the end of Stiles’ erection, burying the rest of his glans and grinding their swollen, wet slits together as he stared down at the beautiful bulge of skin encasing them.

Stiles’ hand shook and his heart rate accelerated as he stretched things taut and managed to hook completely around Isaac’s coronal rim and onto the edge of his shaft.

Isaac wanted to look at it for longer – fuck, he wanted to look at it forever – but Stiles closed his mouth over Isaac’s and initiated a deep makeout session.

Stiles’ tongue was quick and aggressive in Isaac’s mouth, and Isaac made a game of trying to pin it in place as he wrapped his hand over Stiles’ on their cocks, ensuring they stayed together as both boys bucked and writhed against each other.

Stiles’ heart pounded harder and harder. Their tongues moved faster and faster. Their glans got wetter and wetter. Suddenly Stiles broke the kiss with a ragged gasp and arched his hips, slamming
his cockhead against Isaac’s as he throbbed harder than he had all night. He moaned and scrunched up his face as he erupted in the tight space around them, coating Isaac’s glans in the hottest, thickest jizz he had ever felt. Isaac swore Stiles was going to blast it right down his cockslit but instead it gushed out of the end of Stiles’ foreskin and sprayed Isaac’s shaft and pubes.

Isaac threw his head back and roared as his privates were covered in Stiles’ cum. The sharp, dense erotic scent of Stiles’ semen, the pulsing wet throb of his glans against Isaac’s, the hot, creamy texture and satisfying sloosh – they subsumed Isaac’s consciousness as white heat engulfed him and he flooded their tight space with even more cum before pulling back and breaking contact, desperate for a greater range of motion as he came.

Stiles was still cumming. He spatred a long rope across Isaac’s abs and two shorter ones into Isaac’s bush. A second volley hit Isaac’s hip and dribbled down his thigh. Isaac fucking loved it and payed Stiles back in kind, shooting all over his chest and stomach and dousing his crotch. Just as their orgams were tapering off, Isaac howled and came harder in one more fierce spurt, determined to cover Stiles with his scent.

Stiles looked down at his cum-slick torso and dipped a finger into his sticky navel. He tasted Isaac’s seed and sighed. “For the record, next time you can give me a facial.”

“Same,” Isaac answered, smearing a handful of Stiles’ ejaculate over his lips.

Stiles jerked his slippery cock, ignoring the way he dripped all over the navy blue bedspread beneath them. It was spattered and soaked. “I’m still really frickin’ horny.”

“Good.” Isaac gave the most wolfish grin he could manage. “Because we’re just getting started.”

Chapter End Notes

I hope you guys enjoyed this chapter and what Isaac and Stiles got up to. I wanted it to be hot and also not like anything Isaac’s done in the story up to this point, but I’ve never written smut featuring docking before so I hope I did it justice. Next chapter will of course feature Isaac topping Stiles.

I hope all the smut in recent chapters hasn’t become tiresome. The next major plot arcs for the second third of the story are about to get rolling and they’re going to be really intense and action-packed. Also, fair warning, quite a bit darker than the first third, so I want the characters to have some fun while they can!

Feedback is greatly appreciated and thanks again for a great year!
A Two-Man Sex Party

Chapter Summary

It’s the one-year anniversary of *Iron Claws and Fragile Hearts*. To celebrate, you are all cordially invited to attend A Two-Man Sex Party!

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Isaac surged forward and latched his mouth over Stiles’ lips. Winding an arm around Stiles’ waist and the other around his upper back, Isaac lifted him off the bed and lay him down.

Stiles gasped and broke the kiss as Isaac settled on top of him, grinding their slick bodies together. “I like that.”

“Yeah?” Isaac nipped at the underside of Stiles’ throat and thrust against his erection.

“Yeah, I mean, *that* –Stiles tipped his head back and clutched Isaac’s biceps– “But also when you moved me like that.” Stiles’ cock throbbed. It showed no signs of deflating now that Stiles had gotten off. Isaac could relate. He was only getting harder as he considered all the erotic possibilities awaiting them.

“Oh.” Isaac grabbed Stiles’ shoulder and hip and rolled them over, so that Stiles was sprawled out on top of him. “You like that, huh?”

Stiles bit his lip and nodded. He moved to lean back, but before he could Isaac sat up, depositing Stiles in his lap and angling his erection so that it slid into Stiles’ crack.

Stiles whimpered and flexed his ass, wiggling his cock and balls against Isaac’s stomach as he kneaded Isaac’s pecs. “You’re so strong.”

“You’re so hot.” Isaac sealed his mouth over Stiles’ neck and ran his hands up and down Stiles’ back as he bounced him in his lap. Stiles’ warm, snug channel gripped Isaac’s length, and his hole winked against Isaac’s shaft.

“I have lube in my nightstand.” Stiles waved an arm toward it, but became distracted as his gaze caught on Isaac’s shoulder and bicep. He rubbed a heavy hand over Isaac’s upper arm, squeezing and stroking before letting go and tracing his index finger over the muscles. “Just put it in now. Fuck me.”

Isaac’s cock strained and pulsed in Stiles’ crack. The offer was appealing, but Isaac knew better than to accept it. He needed to take his time getting Stiles loose and ready. Besides, exploring Stiles’ body and making him desperate for Isaac’s cock wouldn’t exactly be a burden.

“Not yet.” Isaac caught Stiles’ earlobe between his lips and tugged.

Stiles moaned and bounced harder, his legs spread. Isaac’s cum-slick cock slipped and slided around Stiles’ crack; only the hug of Stiles’ hot cheeks kept it in place.
Isaac let out a moaning growl and reclaimed Stiles’ mouth. Stiles was fucking irresistible like this, naked in Isaac’s lap, covered in his seed and drenched in his scent, bumping and grinding against Isaac’s abs, writhing and squirming on Isaac’s cock.

Stiles slid further back, dragging his hole over the rim of Isaac’s cockhead.

Isaac panted down Stiles’ throat and reached between their torsos to gather a handful of cum. He slathered it with urgent fingers against Stiles’ hole and over his own cockhead. He let Stiles’ tight, puckered mouth kiss and caress his glans as he fed it their combined juices.

Stiles groaned and broke the kiss. “Isaac, fuck me or fucking finger me.”

Before Isaac could respond, Stiles bit Isaac’s lower lip and shoved his tongue back into Isaac’s mouth. It was all the encouragement Isaac needed. He scraped more cum off his shaft and from within Stiles’ valley and worked it into Stiles’ hole, using it for lube as he breached Stiles with his middle finger.

Stiles moaned and bounced, and Isaac tried to draw pain away just in case. There was none, just a twinge of discomfort and a mild sting that Isaac knew from experience was probably nice. He let Stiles have it as he pushed deeper, up to the second knuckle, and curled his finger as he probed Stiles’ silky-hot recesses. He found what he was looking for and tapped it with the pad of his finger.

“Oh, Isaac, yes!” Stiles rolled his head back and clenched his ring of muscle around Isaac’s finger as if to hold it in place. “Rub my prostate. I can never reach it properly.”

“You’ve played with it before?” Isaac asked, lips brushing Stiles’ Adam’s apple as he gently tapped and stroked the pliant bundle of flesh deep inside Stiles.

“Yes! Yes!” Stiles fist a clump of Isaac’s hair and tugged his head back until their eyes met. He gave Isaac an innocent, casual shrug. “Yep.”

Isaac smirked and twisted his finger, wiping the smug look off of Stiles’ face and making him gasp.

“Yes! Yes!” Stiles seemed to mean it this time as he bounced wildly and kissed Isaac.

Isaac was careful to keep from jamming Stiles with his finger or applying too much force. They were still in the early stages of preparation, even if Isaac’s cock was screaming that now was the perfect time to enter Stiles’ hot, slick hole.

The pressure on Isaac’s erection was good, but it was becoming too much. He broke the kiss and lifted Stiles up, keeping his finger buried as he pulled his cock free and let it slide alongside Stiles’.

“Ahh yeah!” Stiles’ hands were all over Isaac’s biceps and a new flare of arousal crowded its way into the already dense air of the room.

Isaac couldn’t smell anything but their cum and Stiles’ lust, and he was doing his best not to focus on the intoxicating cocktail to keep it from clouding his judgment. He couldn’t risk getting carried away and hurting Stiles. He needed to stay clear-headed and attuned to Stiles’ body.

“Mmm, second finger,” Stiles pleaded as he stared at their erections and jerked them together. “Uhn! I want this in me.”

“Yours or mine?” Isaac asked with a teasing lilt as he crooked his finger and ground Stiles’ prostate with the knuckle.
Stiles yelped and dug his thighs into Isaac’s hips, panting and pressing his forehead against Isaac’s. He took a breath and let out a shaky laugh. “Don’t think I haven’t tried to get mine in.”

“How could you think that would be physically possible?”

“I saw a video on Tumblr.”

Isaac made a mental note to look for that video later and withdrew his finger from Stiles. A whimper of protest escaped Stiles’ lips but became a moan as Isaac lifted Stiles and climbed to his knees.

Stiles draped his arms around Isaac’s neck and nuzzled his head. “We going somewhere?”

“Your nightstand.”

“All that way, huh?”

Isaac laughed and bounced Stiles in his arms a few times just to make him happy before laying him at the head of the bed within reach of his nightstand. “Help yourself.”

“Don’t mind if I do.” Stiles groped Isaac’s balls and stroked his cock.

Isaac helped himself too, and they lapsed into staring at each other and exchanging handjobs for a few minutes. Eventually, lube forgotten, Isaac sprawled on his stomach between Stiles’ legs and licked his cock.

“Oh god! Why didn’t I think of that?” Stiles asked, eyes squeezed shut.

“Because it’s physically impossible too,” Isaac answered, breath gusting over Stiles’ balls.

“Dude, you seriously need to dig deeper on Tumblr.” Stiles shivered and ran his hand through Isaac’s hair as Isaac kissed his balls. “But uh, I mean I wanna suck you.”

“Sorry, me first.” Isaac inhaled along Stiles’ shaft, letting the pheromones blanket the back of his mind as he took Stiles into his mouth with a noisy slurp. He moaned as he tasted the mix of their merged seed on Stiles’ cock. *Fuck,* they were good together.

“Oh wow, Isaac! Ohh!” Stiles’ fingers tightened in Isaac’s hair. “This is my first blowjob.”

Resolve tightened in Isaac’s gut and he sucked harder and dropped lower, intent on making it as good as possible for Stiles.

“You look so hot like that.”

Isaac made eye contact with Stiles and smiled around his cock.

“F-f-fuck!” Stiles’ hips stuttered but didn’t arch off the bed.

*Aww fuck it.*

Isaac grabbed Stiles’ hips and impaled his throat. He gagged and choked around Stiles’ shaft but didn’t ease up. He had taken about three quarters of Stiles’ length and with a final burst of determination he lurched down and swallowed the rest, pressing his nose against the soft, pale skin of Stiles’ pelvis.

“You don’t have to do that.” Stiles voice was tight with pleasure and his fingers were tangled in Isaac’s hair.
Isaac hummed and coughed, bobbing erratically as he tried to get used to the burn and the sensation that his air supply was cut off. It wasn’t. He took ragged breaths through his nose and let himself concentrate on the scent of sex enveloping Stiles’ crotch.

“Seriously man, your eyes are watering. You should stop.” Stiles words offered Isaac a reprieve, but his tone begged to stay rammed down Isaac’s gullet forever.

Isaac sputtered and eased Stiles’ hips away from his face. Stiles didn’t struggled but his groan of disappointment confirmed Isaac’s interpretation of the situation. If Isaac hadn’t been choking he’d have laughed at Stiles’ misinterpretation as he ruthlessly yanked Stiles forward and slammed him against the back of his throat.

Stiles wailed and clawed with human fingers at Isaac’s skull.

Isaac felt himself leaking against the bedspread even as he got lightheaded from a combination of pheromones and limited oxygen. He knew his technique was sloppy and that there must be a better way to deep-throat someone than to just force it down his throat, but Stiles sure as hell wasn’t complaining and the throbbing, burning ache that blazed in Isaac’s sinuses and blurred his vision was totally worth it. He thrust Stiles hips up and down, pummeling himself until Stiles’ will power faded and he began face-fucking Isaac with abandon.

After a couple of horrible-awesome minutes, Stiles cursed and slammed deep down Isaac’s throat, locking his head in place and trembling as he took shallow breaths.

Isaac didn’t understand. Stiles hadn’t–

“Whew, that was close.” Stiles guided Isaac’s head up, hissing and whining as each inch dragged out of Isaac’s lips. When at last Isaac was sitting back up, trying to catch his breath, Stiles dramatically wiped his brow with his hand and sighed. “I almost came again.”

“You could have.” Isaac coughed and cleared his still burning throat. He wanted to sip a glass of water, but fuck if he was going to interrupt what they were doing to ask for one. He shrugged at Stiles. “I woulda swallowed.” Well choked and swallowed.

Stiles shook his head and ghosted his fingertips over Isaac’s collarbone and throat. “I wanna cum again while you’re fucking me.”

Isaac licked his dry lips and smiled. He liked that idea very much.

Stiles’ face lit up and he got on his knees. “Lemme suck you.”

Isaac hesitated. He wanted that too, but now that Stiles had brought up fucking again all he could think about was Stiles’ ass. He hadn’t seen his hole yet, only fingered it.

“Please?” Stiles add when Isaac didn’t move.

“Oh sorry.” Isaac smirked at Stiles and lowered the pitch of his voice. “I was just thinking about your asshole.”

Stiles’ eyes widened and he looked flustered, smug, and nervous in rapid succession. Isaac was about to say something to reassure him when Stiles’ eyes narrowed and glinted with mischief. He spun around and got on his hands and knees, arching his back and popping his ass back. “Whaddya think? Do ya’ like it?”

Isaac gurgled and choked like he had a cock stuffed down his throat. Stiles’ ass was perky and
smooth, each round globe full and irresistibly squeezable. Isaac didn’t try to resist. He grabbed handfuls of Stiles’ ass and jiggled it up and down as he stared in awe at Stiles’ hairless, wide open crack. It was spread, showcasing his rosy pink, cum-smeread hole. Isaac’s tongue warred with his cock over which would get to touch it first. Isaac’s tongue won out as his brain cautioned him that his cock couldn’t be trusted to resist every instinct it had.

Stiles shuddered and gasped as Isaac’s mouth made contact. “Holy fuck, I didn’t think you’d be willing to do that!”

Willing?!

After lapping up the first bit of their seed, Isaac puckered his lips and pressed them to Stiles’ pucker, sucking and slurping as Stiles opened for him and leaked more cum into his mouth.

Stiles moaned and twitched on the bed, grinding back against Isaac’s face and reaching for his cock. Isaac felt the vibrations in his chin as Stiles jerked himself off. Isaac growled and pushed Stiles’ hand away. He wanted Stiles’ cock and ass all to himself. He strayed from Stiles’ hole long enough to lick a wide swath down Stiles’ taint as he took over stroking his cock. Stiles’ sack had been his next destination – Stiles needed to experience having his balls in someone’s mouth – but then he glanced up and saw Stiles’ hole again and it was all over. The edges were getting puffier and rosier, and how the hell was Isaac suppose to keep his lips off all that? He mentally promised to suck Stiles’ balls later and made a beeline back to his hole.

“Oh my god!” Stiles’ voice was deep and lust-drunk as he reached back and spread his cheeks wider for Isaac, his fingers brushing the sides of Isaac’s face in the process.

Isaac tongue-fucked Stiles until the hand he was using to polish Stiles’ cockhead was nice and wet with precum. He smeared it over Stiles’ opening and plunged his finger in. Isaac’s cock shook, desperate to claim that tight, silky-wet heat for itself.

“Stop or you’re gonna make me cum.”

Isaac’s finger stilled just as it made contact with Stiles’ prostate.

“No that hand!” Stiles was panicked and trembling.

It took Isaac a moment to realize he was still rhythmically jerking Stiles with his other hand. He let go and jerked himself instead. His cock wasn’t impressed, especially with Stiles clamping around his finger and shimming back, showing off what it was missing.

“Finger me!”

Isaac spent the next minute or so doing precisely that until Stiles edged away and knee-walked forward.

“Wha?”

“Lube.” Stiles disengaged from Isaac’s hand and scrambled to his nightstand. He fumbled in the drawer for a few seconds before tossing a bottle of lube backward over his shoulder.

Isaac snagged it out of the air.

“Hey, um...do we need a condom?” Stiles asked, peering back at Isaac and holding up the foil-wrapped object. “I don’t have a Magnum unfortunately. Will you even fit in a regular condom?”
Isaac’s stomach turned over and his cheeks warmed. That was one of the nicest questions he’d ever been asked. He also wasn’t sure. He and Allison had used Magnums. He had assumed they were leftover from her relationship with Scott, but either way they were the only kind he had ever worn.

“I dunno. I guess I can try.”

Stiles frowned and sat back on the bed, denying Isaac the view he had come to depend on. Isaac’s cock and finger twitched with disappointment.

“But we don’t need one right?”

“Well, I mean obviously pregnancy isn’t a concern, and I can’t catch or transmit any STDs so...” Isaac shrugged.

“So would you be willing to put it in bare?” Stiles looked at Isaac’s erection in a way that made him feel completely objectified...it was one of the nicest looks Isaac had ever gotten.

“Would you be willing to let me finish with it in bare?”

Stiles’ heart skipped a beat and then hammered in his chest as he gave a slow nod, still staring at Isaac’s cock.

“Then I guess we’re in business,” Isaac answered, trying to play it cool. His cock had zero chill and insisted on spurring a bead of precum on Stiles’ bedspread.

“I’m gonna suck you like a popsicle tomorrow before you go home, but let’s just do this. I can’t wait any longer.” Stiles grabbed the lube and flipped open the cap. He poured a generous amount in his hand and tossed the bottle to Isaac before stretching out on his back with his head against the pillow. He raised his knees and pressed the flats of his feet against the mattress, legs spread and hips raised.

Isaac watched with rapt attention as Stiles reached between his legs and slid a slick finger into his puffy pink pucker. He curled it around the rim and tugged at the edges a few times before jamming his middle finger in next to it and grimacing.

“Whoa whoa, what are you doing?” Isaac caught Stiles wrist and stopped it from moving as he sat back on his ankles between Stiles’ thighs.

“I know we both wanna get started but let’s just do this. I can’t wait any longer.” Stiles leaned forward and pecked his lips. “You’re a virgin, so–”

“I’m the virginest virgin in Beacon Hills.”

“So–”

“My picture’s in the dictionary next to the word ‘virgin.’”

“Anyway–”

“I’m like a one-man abstinence only campaign.”

Isaac growled and flashed his eyes at Stiles. “Do you wanna lay there talking about your virginity or lose it?”

“The second one please,” Stiles answered with a decisive nod.
Isaac slid his hand down Stiles’ wrist and into his palm. He squeezed the base of Stiles’ fingers where they disappeared into his body and smiled at Stiles. “Okay, gently finger yourself some more. It won’t hurt now.”

Stiles’ face flushed and the corners of his lips curled up. He scissored his fingers as Isaac leached the mild pain away. They worked their hands in tandem, the tip of Isaac’s forefinger nestled between the v of Stiles’ probing digits.

“It feels really good,” Stiles whispered.

“Yeah,” Isaac answered as the ache died away and he focused on committing this perfect moment to memory – leaning against Stiles’ raised leg, sharing the intimacy and eroticism with him. “Add a third finger.”

Stiles couldn’t reach so he drew his knees up to his chest and lifted his hips higher. It was unbearably hot and Isaac had a front row seat as Stiles curled his ring finger beneath the other two, creating a triangle as he worked it inside.

Isaac drew away the resulting ache and flinched as Stiles’ heat haloed his own finger on the next in stroke. He poured more lube against the heel of his hand and funneled it into Stiles’ hole.

Stiles sighed and rubbed his other hand down his smooth stomach and pelvis. He teased his cock as he impaled himself deeper on his fingers.

“So what’s with all the hair removal?” Isaac asked, trailing the fingers of his free hand over Stiles’ supple shin and calf.

“Oh, uh, I thought maybe this” –Stiles let go of his cock and waved his hand around– “would happen. So I wanted to be prepared for you.”

“What do you mean?”

“Well you know, you’re used to having sex with Allison, with a girl, so I thought...”

“That I’d be grossed out by your body hair?” Isaac asked, laughing through the question. “Stiles, you look really hot like this, and I’m very into. Thank you for doing it. But I’d also be super turned on if everything was natural, or groomed to whatever level you want.”

“You would?”

“Of course.”

Stiles exhaled, and Isaac wasn’t sure if it was a huff of irritation or a sigh of relief. His scent offered no clue; that was still one hundred percent horny. “I hated doing it. It took forever and now it feels weird.”

Isaac snickered. “Wait till it starts growing back.”

Stiles glared and exhaled again and – yep, definitely irritation this time.

“But it’s really sexy and I’m glad you did it,” Isaac said, rubbing his thumb over Stiles’ smooth taint.

“You just said you didn’t care.”

“It’s not that I don’t care. It’s that I’m very enthusiastic about both possibilities. It’s awesome that I’ll get to experience you with both, and everything in between.”
“I’m gonna remind you that you said that in a couple weeks when you need your werewolf healing to recover from my leg stubble.”

“Deal.” Isaac laughed, fluttery with happiness at the notion that all this would still be going on in a couple of weeks.

“So um, unless you think we should add my pinky and the rest of my hand and get into a whole different kind of activity, I think we’re ready to go.” Stiles was three-fingers deep in his ass and moving freely with no more burn for Isaac to siphon.

Isaac tugged Stiles’ hand away from his opening and moan-growled, his stomach tightening with need.

“What?” There was a tinge of worry in Stiles’ voice but he made no move to shift out of the vulnerable position. Instead he grabbed two pillows from the head of the bed and slid them under his hips, presenting himself even more fully to Isaac.

Isaac swallowed and answered around the fangs that had erupted in his mouth at the sight. “You’re really open, and really wet, and really red.”

“And that’s all a good thing right?”

Isaac rolled blazing eyes at him, then cringed at just how out of control he was getting. He had never tried to control the shift with Ethan or that time Brett was in the mix, but he had always held back with Allison and knew he needed to with Stiles as well.

“What is it?”

“Just...really excited. Hold on.” Isaac held up a clawed hand and took deep breaths until the points retracted and he was looking at it with cool eyes. His toes wiggled against the bedspread as his hind claws re-sheathed themselves, and his mouth had more room when he spoke again. “Got it.”

“You’re so good at control,” Stiles said with a warm look.

“I won’t hurt you,” Isaac promised as he picked up the lube and slathered some all over his erection.

Stiles chuckled. “I know that.”

Isaac’s resolve to remain fully human was tested as he lined up to Stiles’ glistening, open ring of muscle only to have it flex and wink its slick, rosy recesses at him. Isaac whimpered and bit his lip with human teeth.

“See. Good control.”

“Jerk.” Isaac smirked and shook his head at Stiles without looking up as the tip of his sensitive nerve-bundle made blissful first contact with Stiles’ opening. Pure pleasure sparked throughout his glans and throbbed up his shaft.

“What are you talking about? I was just showing you that I have good control.” Stiles clenched his hole again, this time gripping the end of Isaac’s engorged cockhead in his hot, silky flesh.

“Aahh!” Isaac shuddered and fought the urge to slam in and bury himself in Stiles’ wet heat.

“Mmm, that feels good.” Stiles flexed again and slid minutely lower, taking another half inch of Isaac’s swollen head.
Isaac gritted his teeth and pinned Stiles’ hips against the pillows. He couldn’t take Stiles’ teasing when all he wanted to do was slide home and ravish him. He took another deep breath and remembered what was at stake. “Okay, I’m gonna push the rest of the head in.” Stiles’ hole already seemed stretched to accommodate the first half of Isaac’s plump knob. The wider, flared base would require some effort. “It might hurt, but I promise I’ll take it all away as fast as I can.”

Stiles brushed Isaac’s side with his calf. “I trust you, and you don’t have to take any.”

Isaac didn’t answer, just curled his toes into the bedspread and eased forward, grinding his nerve-packed bundle into Stiles’ silky resistance until he popped through the ring of muscle and it hooked tight and pulsing around his rim. Isaac couldn’t breathe it felt so good.

Stiles yelped and fist the bedspread.

Isaac’s brain kicked back into gear, and he concentrated on his dick, right at the rim where shaft met cockhead, where Stiles was still throbbing so good and so hot against him.

Isaac yelped the way Stiles had as pain jolted his tip and electrified his cock in a sharp burn. He closed his eyes and let it wash over him, reminding himself that this was what he was good at.

Stiles moaned and slid lower, his scent relaxing as he dragged his ring of fire a couple inches lower on Isaac’s shaft. Isaac didn’t have the heart to tell him to slow down or stop, and even though his shaft was on fire, his knob was now fully cushioned in the most amazingly tight, wet chamber he had ever felt, and he wasn’t sure he wanted to slow down.

“Oh fuck, is it supposed to look like that?” Stiles’ voice was laced with panic. “You better stop taking it.”

Isaac opened his eyes, aware of the burning amber heat, but proud that he was winning the battle to hold back his fangs and claws. He glanced down at the black lines of pain creeping out of his bush and following the veins in his lower stomach higher. His abs twitched and spasmed involuntarily as the tendrils twined around his navel and burned their way into the valleys of his stomach.

Stiles let out a strained sigh and his cock quivered, leaking a puddle of precum against his own stomach.

“You like how it looks?” Isaac couldn’t blame him. He liked how hard and sculpted his abs looked, contorting as they were and draped in the black mesh.

Stiles radiated embarrassment but nodded.

“Then just enjoy the show,” Isaac said sweetly as he curled his fingers around Stiles’ cock, stroking it and slowly but relentlessly burying himself to the hilt in Stiles’ ass. By the time he was done, sweat was dripping down his body and the vines had reached all the way to his neck. More importantly, Stiles’ was moaning nonstop and writhing on the bed.

Isaac slid back out as gently as he had sheathed himself until just his bulging coronal rim was tugging at Stiles’ ring of muscle. Isaac could take Stiles’ pain now, but Stiles would be sore later. That knowledge kept Isaac from surging back in at a faster pace now that the vines were withering and he had acclimated to their burn. Isaac’s ass twitched with interest and he knew that at this point he’d have outright liked the hot throb if it were concentrated in the right part of his body.

Stiles’ hand landed on Isaac’s on his cock and pulled it away. Stiles was sweating too and his pupils were completely dilated. “Getting close. Can you cum in me yet?”
Isaac’s breath caught in his throat and his hips stuttered, causing him to give Stiles’ the last few inches too hard and too fast. Stiles’ gasped in pleasure and Isaac gasped in...a different kind of pleasure.

“A few more minutes,” Isaac answered, *pleaded*, now that he was right in the sweet spot and every nerve in his body was humming with stimulation.

Stiles groaned and eyed his drooling, flushed cock.

Isaac smirked and pinned Stiles’ hands against the mattress by his sides. “I’ll help you not touch it.”

“Then fuck me harder.”

Isaac worried his bottom lip between his teeth and considered doing it. Good god it would feel amazing, but–

“I don’t wanna hurt you.”

“It hasn’t hurt at all since we first started.”

*That’s what you think.*

“It will later if we get too rough,” Isaac answered.

“I’m supposed to be sore after my first time right?” Stiles whined and dug his ankles into Isaac’s ass. “Rail me.”

“Stiles–”

“Rail me!”

“Stiles, I–”

“Rail me!”

“STILES.”

“Rail me! RAIL ME!”

He kept repeating it like a mantra until Isaac found himself quickening his thrusts and plunging in and out at a smooth, steady pace.

“Yes, YES! Oh my fuck, thank god I didn’t come yet!” Stiles bounced and jerked on the bed, hips arching and shaking in a bid to meet Isaac’s thrusts and take him deeper. The pillows were keeping him from the leverage he needed.

Isaac grunted and wrenched them out from under him. By the time he had flung them away, Stiles’ hand was already going for his cock. Isaac swatted it away and re-pinned it against the bed. “Not yet.”

“I know. I just can’t help it.” Stiles moaned and used his newfound range of motion to keen against Isaac’s waist and wiggle on the next in-thrust. “Fuck me harder. Fuck me like you’re not gonna break me.”

“But I *might* break you,” Isaac answered, gritting his teeth and forcing himself to stay in check.
“You won’t. I trust you.”

Isaac growled and snapped his hips for the first time, adding more force than was needed to re-sheathe himself.

Stiles yelped and threw his head back, baring his throat.

Possessive instinct coursed through Isaac’s body, and the tips of his fangs burst from his gums. He couldn’t do it. He had to fight the impulse. He was much too worked up to safely have his mouth anywhere near Stiles’ skin.

“Lower your head,” Isaac pleaded, locking his cuticles around his claws, stopping them from extending even as his fangs slid into position. Isaac’s eyes were an inferno.

“You like it.” Stiles tipped his head further back and angled his hips on Isaac’s cock, which was now hurtling in and out of him at what bordered on reckless abandon.

Isaac growled and released Stiles’ hands so he could lift Stiles’ hips and better control the angle of his thrusts. “Jerk yourself off.”

Stiles didn’t move. His body went slack and he opened his mouth in a strangled wail as Isaac pummeled the place deep inside him where he knew Stiles’ prostate was.

“Stiles, jerk yourself off,” Isaac repeated, tension rising in his voice as he felt himself riding an ever taller wave of turbulent pleasure. It was about to crest, and Isaac wanted Stiles to crest with him, but he couldn’t jerk Stiles without breaking the frenetic, precise rhythm that was making them both pant and grunt like morons. “Stiles!”

Stiles shook his head and closed his eyes as he clenched around Isaac’s cock.

Isaac shrieked and plunged to the bottom as the wave broke. Before he knew what he was doing, he corkscrewed Stiles’ hips, twisting Stiles’ limp body around his erupting, white-hot cock the way Brett had done to him the night before. Isaac had the presence of mine to at least grind against Stiles’ ball of nerves while he used him so shamelessly to enhance his own release.

A strangled moan bubbled out of Stiles’ throat, and Isaac watched in amazement as Stiles’ erection quivered, and shook, and dribbled – first precum, then a milky white mix, then–

“Naagghh!”

Thick, creamy cum spurted out of Stiles like a fountain, and he moaned louder and louder until he was shouting about how good it felt and all the awards Isaac’s cock deserved.

Isaac sighed in relief and focused on pumping everything he could into Stiles as he gradually came down from his high.

Stiles mumbled a string of garbled syllables that even Isaac’s enhanced senses couldn’t decipher.

Isaac picked Stiles’ up and cradled him against his body. “What?”

“I said, I’m like the least virginy virgin in Beacon Hills.”

Isaac chuckled.

“They’re gonna have to move my picture to the entry for ‘sexually active.’”
Isaac kissed Stiles’ cheek but didn’t interrupt his ramble.

“I’m like a one-man sex party.”

“One man?” Isaac arched his brow at Stiles.

“A two-man sex party!” Stiles corrected, grinning and melting against Isaac’s chest as their lips met.

Chapter End Notes

Thanks again for a reading and for a great first year!

Feedback is greatly appreciated!
Okay boys and girls (especially boys), buckle up. This chapter contains some disturbing imagery.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Isaac moaned and fisted the bedspread as Stiles licked his way up Isaac’s shaft and flicked the underside of Isaac’s cockhead with his tongue.

“You like that?” Stiles asked, dark eyes glinting in the low light as he jerked the base of Isaac’s cock.

“Mmmmm!” Isaac nodded against the pillow and arched his hips, chasing Stiles’ blissful grip.

“Good.” Stiles grinned wickedly and twisted his hand, making Isaac whimper and tremble. “You want my mouth?”

“Yeah.” Isaac bucked harder, savoring the tug of Stiles’ palm against his sensitive skin. “Oh yeah, suck it!”

Stiles licked his lips and waggled his eyebrows before dropping his head and sealing his mouth over Isaac’s glans.

“Mmm yes!” It took all Isaac’s willpower not to thrust deeper as he throbbed and leaked precum against Stiles’ tongue, but this was Stiles’ first blow job; he didn’t want to rush him. “Can you take a little more?” he asked, keeping his voice as gentle and undemanding as he could.

Instead of answering, Stiles sank lower, his full, pillowy lips caressing the top few inches of Isaac’s length.

“Ohh, that’s good.”

Stiles rose up, then slid back down, taking just a little more of Isaac’s shaft.

Isaac winced but didn’t say anything as Stiles’ teeth grazed his delicate flesh. He didn’t want to discourage him.

Stiles made a contented sound in the back of his throat and smiled around Isaac’s cock, his eyes glimmering with excitement.

Isaac smiled back and tried to hide his discomfort as Stiles bobbed his head faster and scraped Isaac’s shaft harder. His mouth seemed to be drying out as well. The slick slide of Stiles’ lips had become a rough drag.

“Careful,” Isaac requested through gritted teeth.

Stiles tightened his hand around the root of Isaac’s cock, and bobbed all the way down to his fingers.

Isaac squirmed and clawed the bedspread. The back of Stiles’ throat felt like sandpaper.
“L-let’s stop.”

Stiles didn’t slow down, just kept dragging his teeth up and down Isaac’s length.

Isaac could hardly breathe from the strain of not crying out. It proved too much when Stiles nicked the rim of Isaac’s cockhead with his front teeth. Isaac yelped and took a shuddering breath. “Stop!

Terror chilled Isaac’s body as Stiles lifted his eyes. They were glowing with silver light. Before Isaac could react, Stiles clamped his mouth around Isaac’s cock like a jagged vice.

Isaac screamed and sat up. He tried to pull himself free from Stiles’ now bloody lips, but Stiles was somehow stronger than he was and not only maintained his excruciating bite on Isaac’s erection but managed to hold Isaac back with one hand.

“Stop! STOP!”

A cruel laugh rang in Isaac’s ears despite Stiles’ cracked, bloody lips remaining sealed around his shredded manhood.

“Stiles. Stiles, please.” Isaac thrashed and twisted on the bed, wailing and struggling to get free, but succeeding only in yanking enough of his cock out that Stiles was now gnawing on his glans.

A weight landed on Isaac’s shoulder, and as it shook him, the silver in Stiles’ eyes shone brighter and brighter until it had engulfed the entire room. A scream sliced through the thick, shimmering gray fog, and Isaac howled as he was wrenched back into consciousness.

The sheriff stood on the opposite side of the bed beside Stiles, a hand on each of their shoulders and concern etched across his face. Warm yellow light spilled in from the hallway, and Isaac felt more seeping from his own eyes. He closed them and took a breath, willing his features back to human form.

“Are you boys okay?”

They had both sat up. Stiles was shivering and panting, his shirt wet with sweat. Isaac rubbed his back and pulled him against his chest, casting an embarrassed half-smile at the sheriff. It was awkward, but there were probably worse things the sheriff could catch Isaac doing than consoling his son.

“Nightmare,” Stiles mumbled, turning his head to look at his dad but remaining pressed against Isaac’s body.

The sheriff furrowed his brow. “And you too, Isaac?”

Isaac nodded, praying Stiles’ dad wouldn’t inquire about the content of his dream.

The sheriff hesitated, studying the way Isaac was holding Stiles. After a moment he cleared his throat. “Well I’ll leave you guys alone then. I need a shower.” He was still dressed in his uniform and the scent of the station hung fresh and vivid in the air around him. He must have just gotten home. “I’m going to re-lock the door,” he said to Stiles, rubbing and then patting Stiles’ shoulder before letting go, “but call me if you need anything.”

Stiles nodded and the sheriff left the room, his exit punctuated by the metallic clang of the lock on the outside of the door as it fell into place and the room was once again cloaked in darkness.

Isaac shifted in the bed as he brushed the sweat-damp hair out of his face. Did the sheriff know that
Isaac and Stiles had just had sex? The dense cloud of pheromones, cum, and lust filling the room might as well have been a flashing neon sign to Isaac’s senses. His gut twisted in horror as he caught another scent in the air: blood, his own blood.

Isaac swallowed and clenched his eyes shut, his heart pounding in his ears. He had to be imagining it. He wasn’t in any pain, and it had just been a dream.

“You’re so tense.” Stiles rubbed Isaac’s side with the arm that was wrapped around Isaac’s back and snuggled closer. “Do you wanna talk about your nightmare? Mine was so fucked up!”

“Stiles, turn on the light,” Isaac said, voice trembling.

“What is it?” Stiles let go of Isaac and flicked on the lamp on his nightstand.

Isaac took a shaky breath and flexed his penis, squeezing his PC muscle the way he would if he were interrupting a stream of urine. Everything responded normally, but there was an unmistakable wetness around his crotch. He grabbed the edge of the blanket and threw it back.

“Aaahh!” Stiles jumped to his knees on the bed and waved his arms. “Oh my god! Oh my god! Oh my god!”

The front of the pajama pants and the tail of the t-shirt that Stiles had lent Isaac to sleep in were soaked with blood.

Isaac’s stomach lurched as he lifted the shirt and pulled the elastic waistband out away from his body, barely aware of the sound of Stiles’ door being unlocked. It was all he could do not to pass out at sight of his genitals and thighs covered in sticky, drying blood.

“What the hell?!” The sheriff’s voice exclaimed.

Isaac yelped and released the elastic band of his pants, letting it snap back against his lower abdomen as his shirt also fell into place. He wasn’t sure, but he didn’t think the sheriff had seen anything except his stomach.

“What happened?” The sheriff’s tone was strong but held an undercurrent of urgency as he motioned at Isaac’s bloody clothes.

“Oh, bathroom,” Isaac muttered as he climbed out of bed and hurried from the room, avoiding eye contact.

“Are you okay?” the sheriff called after him.

“I think so,” Isaac yelled back, rushing down the hallway and flinging Stiles’ bathroom door open.

He leaned his head against the wall and focused on his anchor. He wasn’t in danger of wolfing out so much as having a normal human panic attack, but it nevertheless helped as he concentrated on memories of his dad tucking him into his childhood bed and reading to him. Once he had calmed down, he took off the pajama pants and surveyed the damage.

There wasn’t any. Whatever injuries had been present to cause the bleeding had already healed, leaving nothing but tacky blood behind. He licked his finger and rubbed it across his unengorged dickhead, smearing away some of the blood. It felt normal; the sensitivity was fine. He cupped his balls and rolled them around in his sticky red sack – normal. He trailed fingertips through his blood-matted pubes – no cuts or wounds.
He sighed and let the relief wash over him. Deciding he should also let water wash over him, he took off his sleep shirt and climbed in Stiles’ shower. There was no trace of red left in the water by the time Stiles knocked and called to him through the door.

“Come in.”

The door creaked open and Stiles raised his voice over the noise of the shower. “How bad is it?”

“It’s perfectly fine,” Isaac called back.

“Seriously? Lemme see.” The door clicked shut.

Isaac shrugged and turned off the water before pulling back the shower curtain.

Stiles’ eyes widened and his heart rate accelerated. Images of the dream flashed through Isaac’s mind when Stiles licked his lips, but Isaac snapped back to reality as Stiles reached out and gently took hold of his soft dick. He lifted it up and examined it from all angles.

They smirked at each other as Isaac began to swell in Stiles’ hand.

“We should probably test it out just to be safe,” Stiles said with a lopsided grin as he hefted and bounced Isaac’s semi in his palm.

“What about your dad?” Isaac asked, wrapping his fingers around Stiles’ hand as he reached full tumescence.

“Oh yeah.” Stiles cringed and let go. “Lemme just go tell him you’re okay. I’ll come back as soon as he goes to his room.”

Stiles turned to leave and it was Isaac’s turn to cringe as he hobbled to the door.

“Are you okay?”

Stiles turned back and shrugged one shoulder. “Really sore, but the reason why totally makes it worth it.”

Guilt constricted Isaac’s chest as Stiles left the room. Isaac had carried Stiles to and from the bathroom when they had showered after sex. He had seen Stiles limping a little as he got them their pajamas before bed, but he had thought Stiles would be better when they woke up. If anything he was walking even more gingerly.

Isaac closed the shower curtain and finished rinsing off while he waited for Stiles to return, his cock going soft in the meantime. Messing around had seemed like a good idea with Stiles’ hand on his dick, but now the notion made him feel selfish. He was out of the shower and drying off when Stiles knocked and came in without waiting for a response.

“What?! Noooo! Shower fun!” Stiles frowned and set a fresh pair of pajamas on the counter by the sink.

“I’m good, Stiles,” Isaac answered, drying his chest and intentionally letting the towel hang over his waist.

“Please.” Stiles’ face was vulnerable as he stepped into Isaac’s personal space and gripped his biceps. “I’m guessing we had the same nightmare.” He exhaled an agitated breath. “I don’t want that to be the last sexual thing we remember about tonight.”
“Do you wanna talk about it?”

“Not until after I suck you off.” Stiles pulled his shirt over his head and set it atop the new pajamas he’d brought.

Shirtless Stiles was quickly becoming one of Isaac’s favorite things. He raked his gaze over Stiles' smooth, lean torso, not looking away as he tossed his towel on the counter with the clothes. Now that his hands were free he wasted no time exploring the gentle musculature of Stiles’ chest, relishing the warm panels of his pecs and grazing his thumbs over the pert little buds of Stiles’ nipples.

Stiles’ hands were on Isaac’s hips, his own thumbs tracing Isaac’s v-lines. Isaac’s bare erection brushed Stiles’ covered one. Stiles’ pupils were blown with lust when he raised his head. “Get back in the tub.”

Isaac did as requested and watched transfixed as Stiles peeled off his tented pajama bottoms and added them to the pile by the sink. His foreskin was rolled back, revealing his pink tip. Isaac’s attention broke as Stiles hobbled to the tub. “I’m sorry.”

“I’m not.” Stiles laughed and gripped Isaac’s cock. “I’m wondering just how stupid it would be to ask you to fuck me again right now.”

“I’m not doing that.”

“I didn’t think you would, but as soon as I’m not sore anymore...” Stiles gasped and clenched his jaw as he bent his knees and made to sit on the edge of the tub. “Okay, maybe I’ll take a day or two to enjoy not being sore, but then.”

Isaac grimaced on Stiles’ behalf and grabbed his elbows, arresting his movement. “Yeah, I don’t think that’s a great place for you to sit right now.”

“But I wanna suck you,” Stiles whined. His scent pulsed with anxiety and he looked up at Isaac. “You trust me to right?”

Isaac frowned. That answered whether or not Stiles had had the same nightmare. “Of course I trust you. You’re not the darach. But lemme suck you instead. You can do me another time. I promise my dick’s not going anywhere.”

“Unless I bite it off,” Stiles mumbled under his breath.

Isaac coughed. “You really need to work on your dirty talk.”

Isaac helped Stiles into the tub and turned on the shower, positioning him so that the warm water was spraying against Stiles’ lower back and flowing over his ass to help ease the soreness. Isaac knelt in front of Stiles and took him in his mouth. While he sucked, he curled his fingers into Stiles’ crack and leached the pain away. Fuck, there was much more than he had expected and it held an unsettling torn sensation. He cursed himself for giving in to his lust earlier and being so rough.

“Oh my god!” Stiles’ fingers tangled in Isaac’s wet hair. “That feels so good.”

Isaac gagged as Stiles’ cock hit the back of his throat, but after slowing down and swallowing around it a few times, he powered through the reflex, managing to suck Stiles with minimal choking. A tingle of excitement fluttered in Isaac’s stomach. He was getting better at giving blow jobs.

Stiles gripped Isaac’s head harder and bucked his hips. Isaac flinched as the pain traveling up his arms intensified and the change in pace made him sputter, but he pulled Stiles forward and ground
his nose against Stiles’ smooth pelvis, encouraging him to use Isaac’s throat as he saw fit. A wave of
instinctual discomfort undermined his enthusiasm. His wolf had liked dominating Stiles. It didn’t feel
as good being submissive with him as it did with–

Isaac pushed the name aside and sucked with renewed vigor, overcoming his instinct and his guilt,
and instead focusing all his attention on servicing Stiles.

“I’m gonna– I’m gonna– I’m gonna!”

He did. Stiles shrieked and fired his load down Isaac’s throat. Stiles had already cum twice that night,
and this third load didn’t seem very big. Isaac had no trouble swallowing it and keeping Stiles firmly
seated inside his throat as he trembled and rode out the waves of his orgasm.

The sounds Stiles was making had Isaac’s own cock quivering to be touched, but Isaac refused to let
 go of Stiles’ ass and risk any pain dampening his moment or its immediate afterglow.

Stiles panted as he pulled out of Isaac’s mouth. “I hope my dad didn’t hear me.”

Isaac cringed, but he was too worked up to let it stop him from jerking himself off. He kept his left
hand curled in Stiles’ crack, his middle finger pressed directly against Stiles’ puffy hole as he
siphoned the sore throb. He wrapped his right hand around his needy shaft.

“Wait, I wanna jack you off.”

“No time.” Isaac shook his head and stroked himself with a mad frenzy. He needed to get off while
he could still taste Stiles’ cum in his mouth, still hear Stiles’ moans reverberating in his ears.

Isaac gasped and threw his head back, squeezing Stiles’ ass and accidentally penetrating Stiles’ hot
outer ring with his fingertip as he sprayed cum between Stiles’ legs and into the stream of water
cascading off his body.

Stiles stroked Isaac’s cheek and rubbed his shoulder as he kept shooting. “Are you still...?” Stiles
lifted one leg to get a better view of Isaac’s spurting cock. “Whoa, do you always cum that much?”

Isaac shrugged. It wasn’t that much. His load was already dribbling to a stop, and his orgasm had
tapered from full-body spasms of pleasure to gentle tremors of warmth. It wasn’t like he had had a
moon’gasm or something.

“Wait a minute, is this one of the ways your senses are enhanced?”

“Yeah, I guess so.” Isaac stood and wrapped his arms around Stiles.

“Werewolves are so not fair!”

Isaac laughed and kissed him.

They finished showering, and Isaac took his time patting Stiles dry, careful to avoid hurting him and
refusing to let him bend and twist for himself. Stiles didn’t exactly protest very much, and a constant
grin occupied his face as Isaac proceeded to dry himself. He helped Stiles back into the pajamas he
had been wearing and dressed himself in the new pair, the bloody ones he tossed in the laundry
hamper. When they were done Isaac carried Stiles back to his room.

“I really like this. It’s kinda making me hard again,” Stiles said as Isaac laid him on the bed.

“I can tell.” Isaac pecked Stiles’ lips and pulled the covers over him. Stiles’ happiness smelled like
sweet, creamy coffee, and his arousal was a shot of espresso.

“Wanna mess around one more time?” Stiles asked as Isaac rounded the bed and climbed in on the other side.

Isaac snickered. “Are you sure you’re not a werewolf?”

“Try teenage guy having sex for the first time.”

“Ahh, the other insatiable beast.”

Stiles backhanded Isaac’s chest. “You’re the teen wolf.”

Isaac rolled his eyes. “That sounds weird. Besides, I’m pretty sure if anyone’s the teen wolf it’s Scott since he’s the alpha.”

Stiles chuckled, but then the humor drained from his face. “Hey, are you sure you wanna sleep with me.”

“Isn’t it a little late to ask that?”

“No, I mean...you know.” Stiles fussed with the blanket. “I don’t know how he did what he did, but it’s obviously dangerous for you.”

Isaac rolled onto his side and rubbed Stiles’ chest. “I’m sure he can’t do it twice in one night. He’s never been able to do it at all before.”

“He’s getting stronger. I can feel it.” Stiles laced his fingers with Isaac’s and held Isaac’s palm over his heart. “Right here. It’s like a cold void.”

Isaac rubbed the spot and made eye contact with Stiles. “I’ll protect you.”

“Isaac–”

“I will.” Isaac flashed his eyes. Fuck the darach. Isaac would chew his face off the next time he dared to show it...well, as soon as Isaac figured out how to separate it from Stiles’ face.

Stiles didn’t look convinced.

“I mean it. I can lucid dream. I’ll kick his ass. He just caught me off guard because it was the first time.”

“Isaac, it was my dream. I don’t think you can lucid dream in my dreams.”

“Well maybe I can.”

“You sure you wanna bet your penis on that?”

Isaac flinched and resisted the urge to cover his crotch. “I’m not leaving you.”

Stiles smiled, but it didn’t reach his eyes and his scent remained distressed. Was it Isaac’s imagination or did the fragrance of sap and rain intensify?

“Okay, close the door and let’s try this again.” Stiles nodded at the open doorway.

Isaac pretended he wasn’t nauseated with fear as he got up and locked them in the room. Stiles
turned off the bedside lamp as Isaac returned to bed.

“Sweet dreams,” Stiles whispered.

A chill ran down Isaac’s spine. “Sweet dreams.”

Chapter End Notes

Feedback is greatly appreciated!
Isaac awoke to the sound of Stiles’ bedroom door being unlocked. He lifted his head as the sheriff eased the door open.

“Morning,” the sheriff said with a small nod as they made eye contact.

“Morning,” Isaac repeated, his cheeks warming. Not only did he have an erection, but it was pressed against Stiles’ ass through their pajama bottoms. They were on their sides with Stiles spooned against Isaac’s front. The sheriff couldn’t see what was happening under the covers, but Isaac knew and it was awkward.

“Breakfast in about a half hour if you want it,” the sheriff said.

“Thanks.”

Isaac waited until he heard the sheriff descended the stairs before he snuggled closer to Stiles and woke him by wiggling his toes against the arch of Stiles’ foot and tickling his stomach.

“Uhgnn!” Stiles flailed awake, his leg and arm jerking in the air.

Isaac chuckled and tightened his grip, holding Stiles in place against his body and nuzzling the side of his head.

Stiles groaned and draped an arm over his face. “Why’d ya wake me?”

“It’s morning. Your dad opened the door.”

“Cool. Let’s go back to sleep.”

Isaac brushed his lips against Stiles’ ear. “He’s making breakfast.”

“Breakfast?!” Stiles’ head snapped up, and his body tensed with interest.

“Yeah, better get up.”

Stiles giggled. “Oh I’m already up.” He shimmied back against Isaac’s lap. “Feels like you are too.”

Isaac closed his eyes and sighed as twinges of pleasure quivered throughout his core. He extended his hearing to confirm that the sheriff was downstairs clanking around in the kitchen. Satisfied that they had a measure of privacy, he ground his erection against Stiles’ ass and stroked his thumb over Stiles’ stomach. “Can I touch you?” he whispered, his hand trailing lower but staying above Stiles’ waist.

“Yeah,” Stiles whispered back, his arm darting under the covers.

Isaac slid his hand down and rubbed Stiles’ length through his soft cotton pants. Before his fingers could wrap around Stiles’ clothed cock, Stiles was already pushing the waistband down his thigh and wiggling back.

“Still sore?” Isaac asked as Stiles hissed and flinched.
“Yeah.” Stiles reached back and tugged at Isaac’s pajamas. “And still worth it. Pull down your pants.”

Isaac didn’t argue. Within seconds they both had their pajamas down to their knees, and Isaac’s cock was sandwiched in Stiles’ crack.

“Mmm, rub my hole with it.” Stiles stroked himself under the covers and writhed against Isaac’s erection.

Isaac arched his hips and pressed his tip against Stiles’ cleft, maintaining the glorious pressure as he dipped into Stiles’ hot, smooth valley. By the time his glans grazed Stiles’ wrinkled pucker, the first bead of precum had formed on his slit. He gave his cock a long, tight stroke, grinding his wrist against Stiles’ supple asscheeks as he leaked slick fluid onto Stiles’ soft, puffy folds. The heat radiating from Stiles’ body and onto Isaac’s cockhead made him whimper and rub more urgently.

Stiles brushed the back of his hand, the one he wasn’t jerking off with, against Isaac’s palm where it rested on the bed in front of them.

Isaac laced their fingers together and bit his lip as Stiles let out a ragged breath and ground his whole body back against Isaac’s. Even the soles of his feet and the backs of knees pressed against Isaac’s skin.

“I don’t care if I’m sore. Fuck me.” Stiles squeezed his ass around Isaac’s shaft and his hole fluttered and throbbed on Isaac’s cockhead.

“We can’t.”

Stiles groaned. “I knew you were gonna say that.” He jerked himself faster. “Then how ’bout just the tip?”

“What?”

“Just sorta nudge the tip in and jerk off into me.” Stiles whined and canted his hips back, digging Isaac’s bloated knob a fraction of an inch deeper. “Gah, it’s so big.”

Isaac trembled and took shallow, frantic strokes over the base of his shaft, his wrist rabbiting against his hairy pelvis and Stiles’ smooth ass. “You feel that, Stiles?” he whispered into Stiles’ ear. “You feel me leaking all over your hole?” He rubbed his cockhead in a wide circle over Stiles’ opening, smearing precum over Stiles’ wrinkled folds, then grinding his slit right against Stiles’ tight, hot opening, pushing just a little harder than he should have.

“Fuck.” Stiles squeezed Isaac’s fingers and raised his knee as he rocked and bounced on the end of Isaac’s dick. “Put the head in. Please, put the head in.”

Isaac thrust as far as he could until he felt Stiles’ muscles straining around him. “I can’t go any deeper without hurting you.” He felt himself drooling into Stiles as he stroked the base of his erection. “But I think I can get some cum in you.”

“Yeah?” Stiles voice was strained and the slap-slap rhythm against his own crotch was frenzied.

“Oh yeah. It’s like you’re kissing my tip.” Isaac gasped as Stiles proceeded to do just that, flexing his puckered ring and gripping Isaac’s sensitive tip with his pillowy tight muscles. “I’m so close.”

“Do it, Isaac. Cum. Cum in me!” Stiles yelped and his asscheeks clenched hard around Isaac’s shaft as he threw his head back against Isaac’s chest and came under the covers.
"Ughnn!" Isaac growled and his fangs extended as the thick, rich tang of Stiles’ seed reached his nostrils. With one more strained grunt he burrowed his engorged glans deeper into Stiles’ swollen pucker and a full bodied warmth poured over him. He trembled and gasped as his first volley squirted into Stiles’ tight opening and squelched back down his cockhead and shaft.

Instinct took over and Isaac rolled Stiles onto his stomach and climbed atop him, pinning him to the bed and throwing back the sheets as he kept unloading. It felt too good to hold still; Isaac rode the back of Stiles’ thighs, thrusting quick and sloppy in Stiles’ cum-slick channel and spraying the back of Stiles’ gray t-shirt with a thick rope of pearly jizz.

A sharp wave of pleasure tore through Isaac, signaling that he had at least a few more seconds to enjoy the bliss. He spread Stiles’ asscheeks wide open and stared with absolute want at Stiles’ cummy hole as he smacked it with his still erupting cockhead, blasting again and again on Stiles’ opening and struggling to resist the urge to plunge inside and breed Stiles properly.

As cum dribbled down Stiles’ taint and onto his balls, Isaac reached beneath him and tugged Stiles’ cock back between his legs, enjoying an explicit view of everything as his orgasm tapered off. He traced a creamy line down Stiles’ sack and along his shaft, oozing the last of his cum directly against the flared underside of Stiles’ sticky, rosy-red cockhead.

“Fuck, that was awesome!” Stiles said once Isaac had collapsed against his thighs, indicating he was done. “You cum so much. God, it was like a warm shower.”

Isaac panted and retracted his fangs so he could place open-mouthed kisses along the back of Stiles’ neck.

“Finger some into me.”

“Wha?” Isaac felt euphoric at the notion, and just in general. “Are you sure?”

“Absolutely, I want it in my ass all day.”

Isaac nuzzled his forehead against the back of Stiles’ head and gently bit the back of Stiles’ neck with blunt teeth before sitting back across his thighs again and studying his handiwork.

“Fuck, I like the way this looks.” Isaac heard the dangerous rumble in his own voice.

Stiles raised his ass higher and arched his back. “Take a picture if you want.”

“Seriously?”

“Totally.” Stiles laughed. “As long as you promise to jerk off to it later.”

Isaac scoffed. He’d be lucky to make it home before that happened. He jumped off the bed and found his discarded slacks from the night before. His phone was still in the front pocket, and he ignored his messages in favor of rushing back to the bed and snapping several pictures of Stiles’ smooth, tan ass, cock, and balls spattered in his cum. In a few of the pictures Isaac posed his own glistening tip against the evidence of his release.

“I want copies.”

“You got it,” Isaac answered, tossing his phone on the bed, then gently rubbing his ejaculate into Stiles’ hole with his thumb. He leached away the soreness as he worked.

“Stiles, Isaac, are you coming?” the sheriff shouted from downstairs. “Breakfast is ready!”
Isaac jumped and his stomach lurched into his throat. He had forgotten Stiles’ dad was in the house. Stiles’ heart rate accelerated too, but then they looked at each other and snickered.

“We’ll be right there, Dad,” Stiles called back, amusement plain in his voice, at least to Isaac’s ears.

They quickly cleaned up with the sheets – which Stiles would have to change yet again – and Stiles put on a new t-shirt. He also tucked a tissue in his crack to absorb any leakage.

Isaac groaned in frustration and pulled off his pajamas.

“What are you doing?” Stiles asked.

“No way can I get soft with you smelling like my cum.” Isaac waved his rigid erection at Stiles before pulling on his pants from the night before. “This’ll hide it better.”

Stiles nodded and smirked at Isaac. “Dad knows we’re together by the way?”

Isaac’s eyes widened. “What? Already?”

“Yeah, I told him last night. He knew we were going on a date, so he asked how it went.”

Isaac frowned. He hadn’t even known they were going on a date.

By the time they made it downstairs, plates of food were waiting for them, one with a glass of orange juice beside it for Isaac and the other with a cup of coffee for Stiles. Isaac felt guilty for keeping the sheriff waiting, but he had already started eating his own breakfast, so Isaac supposed it wasn’t too much of a burden. They exchanged greetings and took their places, Stiles sitting carefully enough to make Isaac’s guilt flare again.

“So did you boys have fun?”

Isaac choked on his eggs and burned his nostrils as he took an ill-advised swig of juice.

“Just because you’re a werewolf doesn’t mean you need to eat like an animal, Isaac.” The sheriff chuckled and patted Isaac’s arm. “So, I take it your date last night was fun?”

“Oh last night,” Stiles said. His eyes widened and he continued with exaggerated casualness. “–was a lot of fun. Thanks for asking, Dad.”

Isaac cringed at the way the sheriff arched his brow and looked between them.

“You better both hope you never end up in an interrogation room.”

Isaac bit back a groan and pressed a hand to his forehead, covering his face and staring down at his food.

“I’m happy for the two of you, and I want to remind you to take things slow and treat each other with respect.” The sheriff cleared his throat. “Now, what the hell happened last night with the darach?”

Isaac sank lower in his chair. That change in topic was no less embarrassing and quite a bit more traumatic.

“He somehow gave us both the same very horrible nightmare,” Stiles answered.

“And it involved Isaac bleeding from...” The sheriff took a sip of coffee. “Bleeding?”
“Yeah,” Stiles answered. Isaac reluctantly looked up and nodded in confirmation.

“So how did he make it actually happen outside of the dream?”

Isaac and Stiles looked at each other and shrugged.

“We don’t know,” Stiles answered.

The sheriff gave Stiles an appraising look. “Is that also why you’re walking...carefully?”

Isaac’s jaw dropped, but Stiles gave a vigorous nod and hid his face behind his coffee cup. “Yep, sure is.”

The sheriff hesitated and his scent filled with discomfort and concern. “Maybe you should go to the doctor.”

Now it was Stiles’ turn to choke on his eggs. “I-I don’t think that’s necessary, Dad,” he said between coughs. “I’m fine. I-I’ll be fine.”

“Stiles—”

“No, really!” Stiles held up his hands, wide eyed and terrified. “It’s not that bad. I promise.”

The sheriff sighed and frowned. “We need to figure out how to stop this monster.”

Oh god, my cock’s the monster.

“I wish we could just put a bullet in its head,” Stiles answered.

Isaac yelped and crossed his legs.

“Or lock it up forever,” the sheriff added.

“Forever’s a long time,” Isaac muttered, poking at his hash browns.

Once they had finished their breakfast, Isaac checked his messages. He had two missed calls and a voicemail from Melissa. He immediately called her back, torn between worrying something was wrong and anxiety that he was in trouble for something. He had texted to let her know where he was, and she had never minded him sleeping over at Stiles’ house in the past.

Melissa answered on the second ring. “Did you get my message? I’m on my way to pick you up now.”

She didn’t sound mad but definitely tense. Fear clenched Isaac’s gut. What had happened? Had Iron Claw hurt Scott?

“I didn’t check it yet. What’s going on?”

“Everything’s fine.” Her tone matched her words, but the thump of her heart said there was more to it. “The caseworker the state assigned for your adoption called this morning. She wants to come over and see the house and meet us all.”

“When?” Isaac asked, struggling to get the word out. She could take him away – from the Mc Calls, from his pack, from Stiles, from Eth–

“In less than an hour.”
“Less than an hour?!”

“She wanted to see us on a regular day without us preparing very much.”

“But I’m not even home.”

“I’ll be there in about five or ten minutes.”

Isaac said he would be ready and hung up. He filled Stiles and the sheriff in on what was happening and hurried upstairs to gather his things.

“It’s gonna be okay,” Stiles said from the doorway as Isaac put on his socks and shoes.

Isaac opened his mouth to snap at Stiles but held back the sarcastic remark. Stiles was his boyfriend now; if he couldn’t give Isaac banal encouragement who could?

Stiles walked into the room and took a seat beside Isaac on the bed. Their hips brushed and Stiles rubbed Isaac’s back.

Isaac took a long, deep breath. Stiles’ scent was grounding and the steady rhythm of his heart reassuring.

“This is a good thing,” Stiles said softly. “It gets you one step closer to officially living with Scott and Melissa for good.”

“But if it goes wrong–”

“It’s not gonna go wrong.”

“But if–”

“Isaac.”

When Isaac looked up, Stiles cupped his face and leaned in for a kiss.

Isaac sighed and smiled against Stiles’ lips when they separated. “Well this is new.”

Stiles laughed and bumped Isaac’s shoulder. “I can’t wait to tell people.”

Cold dread rolled over Isaac. Ethan. Ethan was a person, a person who really shouldn’t hear the news from anyone but Isaac.

“Uh, actually could you?”

“What?”

“Wait to tell people.” Isaac gave Stiles an apologetic look. “I just, uhm...I need a little bit of time to...”

“Oh.” Understanding lit Stiles’ face. “You’re not ready to come out.”

That wasn’t it, but Isaac didn’t respond as he bent to tie his shoe, hoping to buy himself a little more time while he figured out what to say. He needed to level with Stiles and tell him what had been going on with Ethan – but what had been going on with Ethan? They were just friends, right? That’s what they had been calling it...Why did it suddenly feel like that had been a stupid thing to call it?
“Hey, relax.” Stiles squeezed the back of Isaac’s neck and nudged Isaac’s knee with his own. “I can wait. Take your time.”

Isaac sat up and frowned at Stiles. “Stiles, it’s not that. I-I just, I need to figure something out.”

“I get it,” Stiles pulled Isaac in for another kiss, but the blaring of a horn interrupted them.

“I’m sorry.” Isaac jumped up and grabbed his dress shirt off the floor. His vest and tie were still in Stiles’ jeep but he could get them later.

“It’s fine.” Stiles stood and followed Isaac out of the room. “There’s no one I’d rather be secret boyfriends with.”

Isaac stopped at the top of the stairs and turned back. He couldn’t mislead Stiles like this. He opened his mouth to tell him everything, but the insistent wail of Melissa’s horn pierced the air before he could get the words out.

“Go impress the adoption lady with how much of a McCall you are. We’ll talk later.”

Isaac nodded, his mouth too dry to speak. Stiles was right. He needed to focus on making a good impression on this lady for the sake of his pack...for the sake of his family.

Chapter End Notes

Hey you guys, I want to recommend a couple of scorching hot Stisaac stories by other authors that inspired the smut scene at the beginning of this chapter. The part with Isaac giving Stiles ‘just the tip’ was inspired by the smut one shot Blue Shell, which is a threesome fic that includes Scott also getting in on the action. The part with Stiles and Isaac having a meal with Stiles’ dad while Stiles is full of Isaac’s cum was inspired by a scene from Come See About Me, which is perhaps my all-time favorite multi-chapter Stisaac fic. You guys should check those stories out if you like Stisaac smut or Stisaac in general. I usually try to keep my smut scenes all original, but those two scenes have stuck with me for literal years, and I couldn’t resist doing my own short homage to those Stisaac moments, but I assure you their versions of those smut themes were better and more comprehensive.

Also, please note that these characters are fictional. In real life, Isaac taking those sexually explicit pictures of Stiles would have been a crime since Stiles isn’t a legal adult. Unless all subjects are consenting adults, please never take, send, receive, or possess sexually explicit material.

Anyway, feedback on this chapter would be greatly appreciated! Also, I usually don’t like to make promises in case I can’t deliver, but I promise at least one more update by the end of this coming weekend. You guys should throw stuff at me if I fail.
“So how was your date with Stiles?” Melissa asked as she backed out of the Stilinski driveway.

Isaac clicked his seatbelt into place and raised his head. “You knew?”

“Scott told me this morning.”

“So Scott knew?”

Melissa laughed and furrowed her brow. “You didn’t know Scott knew? He said last night before you left, you talked about where Stiles was taking you and what you were wearing.”

Isaac absently trailed his fingers over the collar of the red dress shirt in his lap. In retrospect it did seem like Scott had known about the date...Isaac hadn’t. “I thought me and Stiles were just going out as friends.”

Melissa sucked air through her teeth and gave Isaac a sympathetic look as she pulled up to a stop sign. “So then I take it it didn’t go well?”

Isaac huffed out a small laugh and grinned at her. “No, it did. I just didn’t know beforehand. We’re uh, we’re together now.”

“Honey, that’s wonderful!” She smiled at him and patted his back. “Congratulations!”

“Thanks,” he answered, returning the smile. He wanted to keep talking about the date, maybe tell her about the play they had watched at dinner or the drag show at the club, but all too soon the reality of their present situation crashed back in. “So, uh, this caseworker lady, if she doesn’t like us–”

Melissa gave him a stern look. “She’s going to like us.” She squeezed his shoulder. “She’s going to like us.”

“Yeah, but if she doesn’t–”

“She will.” Melissa’s grip tightened on the steering wheel and her scent pulsed with anxiety.

“Sorry.” Isaac felt bad for making her worry, but it did feel good that she wanted him enough to worry in the first place.

“This is going to go well.” She squeezed his shoulder. “But if it doesn’t we’ll deal with that too.”

Isaac nodded and got lost in his thoughts for the rest of the ride.

Scott was in the garage rifling through the rolling tool cabinet when they got home. A smaller toolbox and a stack of drop cloths were on the ground by his feet. He waved as they pulled in and met Isaac at the car door as Isaac got out.
“Stiles texted me.” He grinned and pulled Isaac into a tight hug. “This is so awesome! My two best friends, my brothers, are dating.”

Isaac cringed and patted Scott’s back. “When you phrase it like that...”

“Oh yeah no, I hear it now.” He laughed and squeezed Isaac one more time before letting go. “And don’t worry, he told me you’re not ready to tell people, so I won’t say anything.”

Isaac coughed and looked away. “Thanks.” His eyes alighted on the rigid black sleeve where Scott’s missing finger would have been. “What’s this?” he asked, gently taking hold of Scott’s hand and examining it more closely. It had an elastic quality to it to allow for good blood flow, and it fully covered what felt like Scott’s finger, but must have been an insert.

“Mom, got it for me from the hospital to cover my nub, so people won’t know.”

“That way we won’t have to explain it when he gets his finger back,” Melissa said, pressing the button to close the garage door and speaking over the resulting rumbling as it descended into place. She had put just enough emphasis on the word ‘when’ to leave no room for argument, not that Isaac or Scott would have argued. They all needed to believe it was only a matter of time until Scott was fully intact again.

“Does it hurt?” Isaac asked, rubbing his thumb over the rigid sleeve and squeezing Scott’s real fingers.

“It’s kinda itchy and it feels weird, but nah.” He wiggled the whole thing up and down. “I just can’t bend it.”

“Which would be normal if you were healing from an injury,” Melissa said.

Isaac nodded to himself. If he hadn’t known better it would have seemed as though Scott’s finger were injured but present.

“C’mon, we have a lot to do,” Melissa said as she walked toward the door leading into the house.

“What’s that for?” Isaac asked, nodding at the stack of drop cloths and the toolbox as Scott picked them up.

“To cover all the bloodstains and carvings in the bathroom.”

“Oh yeah, I forgot about that,” Isaac said as he followed Scott into the house. Iron Claw’s macabre vandalism had started blending into the background, and Isaac couldn’t even remember consciously noticing the gruesome etchings the last time he had used the downstairs facilities. That realization was terrifying since it meant this nightmarish situation was becoming normal to him and because they would need to look at everything in the house through fresh eyes if they were going to fool the caseworker.

“The cover story is that we’re having the bathroom renovated,” Scott said as they walked through the laundry room.

“What if she peels back the cloth?” Isaac asked.

“We’ll tell her the first contractor flipped out over a price dispute and messed things up for revenge.”

“A contractor named Iron Claw?”
“Yeah, we’re thinking Iron Claw Hammer was the name of the factious business.”

“Let’s hope it doesn’t come to that,” Isaac said with a laugh as he followed Scott into the bathroom to help him hang the drop cloths. Before they could start, Melissa yelled down the stairs for Isaac to go get ready instead, and Scott assured him he had things under control in here.

A bittersweet smile formed on Isaac’s lips as he entered his room and shut the door. Everything was right where he had left it and just how he liked it. He was happy here. He had learned to be happy again in this room, in this home with the McCalls. His life had shifted from an unhappy existence punctuated by occasional moments of contentment to a baseline sense of security and comfort interspersed with periods of outright joy. A tightness closed around his throat. He didn’t want to leave.

His phone buzzed with a message from Liam that he didn’t bother opening once he noted the phrase ‘been texting Aiden’ in the banner. He sighed and tossed the device on his bed. He’d text Liam later after the caseworker left. The last thing he needed right now was to get himself worked up worrying about his packmate’s inexplicable friendship with that evil asshole.

**Friendship.** Ha, as if Aiden were even capable of that. He was just using Liam and Malia to get closer to the pack. It hurt. Aiden had already killed two people Isaac cared about, and Isaac could barely breathe from a combination of crippling terror and seething rage whenever he thought about how Liam and Malia were intentionally exposing themselves to that same risk. Goddammit they should have known better! He couldn’t lose them too.

**FUCK!**

He growled and heaved his balled up dress shirt into the laundry hamper. He sat down on the edge of his bed in the slacks and t-shirt Stiles had lent him, lifting the shirt away from his neck and sniffing Stiles’ scent on the collar to calm himself. Everything was crashing down around him. He was about to lose Scott and Melissa, his pack was in mortal danger – if only Aiden were the most serious threat they were facing – and somehow Isaac needed to find a way to tell Ethan that he was with Stiles, and to tell Stiles that he had been with Ethan.

A knock on his door snapped him from his brooding.

“Come in,” he called, already aware that it was Melissa.

“I heard you wolfing out.”

“Sorry,” he mumbled, more because he should have been getting ready than because he thought she was mad that he had been growling.

“Talk to me about it,” she said as she took a seat next to him on the bed and rubbed his back.

Isaac turned toward her, and a wave of emotion rolled over him.

“I don’t wanna lose you,” he said, surprised by the quiver in his voice. “Or Scott, or Stiles, or anyone. I jus...” He trailed off as his fragile composure slipped.

“Oh honey, you’re not going to lose us.” She wrapped her arms around him, enveloping him in a scent that smelled heartbreakingly like home, like a home Isaac couldn’t keep.

“I always lose people,” he whispered, struggling not to squeeze her too hard as he returned the embrace. “My mom, Camden, my dad, Derek, Erica, Boyd, Cora...Allison. Everyone. They all die or leave. And now I’m gonna—” His chest heaved. “I’m gonna be taken away.”
“Listen to me.” She pulled back, hands gripping his shoulders. “You are not going to be taken away. This is where you belong. We just need to let the caseworker know how much we all want you here.”

Isaac nodded and wiped his eyes with the heel of his palm. “I’m sorry for freaking out.”

“Don’t be.” She left one hand on his shoulder and closed the other over his folded hands. “Reassurance is what families are for.” She laughed and smoothed an unruly tuft of hair on the side of his head. “Now get ready. The caseworker might not find your just-woke-up look as endearing as I do.”

He laughed and smiled. “Thanks.”

She kissed his forehead and ruffled his hair, which seemed counterproductive under the circumstances, but he didn’t protest.

Isaac descended the stairs a little while later dressed in a brown sweater and slacks with his hair meticulously styled. Scott was still in his room getting ready, and Melissa was tidying up the living room.

“Honey, can you go spread the tablecloth out?” She nodded toward the dining room table and returned her attention to the couch. The cushions were clawed and torn from Scott’s earliest fugue states but looked okay flipped over.

Isaac frowned as he took in the state of the table with more critical eyes. It was gouged and scarred, but would be passable with the tablecloth. Once he was done, he straightened the chairs and double checked them for any signs of damage. There wasn’t any, but he found a dead grasshopper in the seat of the least used chair in the back corner. As he grabbed it, the doorbell rang.

“I’ll get it,” Melissa called, anxiety thick in her voice and her heart rate picking up.

Isaac closed his eyes and took a couple of calming breathes as Melissa and the caseworker, who introduced herself as Priscilla Newcastle, greeted each other.

Melissa called for him to come and meet her, and Isaac gasped as he opened his eyes and saw the dead grasshopper he was still holding. He whipped his head back and forth, desperate for somewhere to stash it. It would make a mess in his pocket if it got crunched up.

“Isaac?”

He grimaced and closed his hand around the lifeless husk, concealing it in his palm as he walked into the living room.

“Hi, I’m Ms. Newcastle. You must be Isaac.” She was a middle-aged woman with dark skin and swaths of silver in her black hair. She wore a crisp gray pantsuit and smelled of stale coffee and faded perfume, but her smile was friendly and genuine as she extended her hand to him.

Frick. The grasshopper was in his handshaking hand.

“I’m actually more of a hugger!” Isaac exclaimed as Scott came thundering down the stairs.

“Oh.” She tensed for a second as he threw his arms around her but then returned the exuberant greeting. From behind her, Melissa and Scott were looking at Isaac like he had three heads.

Isaac pressed the bug against the base of his fingers as he opened his hand and showed them what he
was holding. Melissa paled and Scott cocked his head in confusion. As Ms. Newcastle let go, Isaac flung the insect at Scott, who caught it out of the air.

“I’m happy to meet you, ma’am.” Isaac took her hand and gave her his most charming smile.

“You too, Isaac,” she answered. When the greeting was over, she turned and smiled at Scott. “Hello, I’m Ms. Newcastle.” She held out her hand to him. “You must be Isaac’s foster brother.”

“Yup.” Scott gave a doofy nod, pretending not to notice her raised palm. “I’m Scott.”

She smelled offended as she lowered her hand, and Scott must have noticed too because he gasped and widened his eyes dramatically as if just realizing he had snubbed her.

“I’m a hugger too!” Scott announced as he stepped forward and wrapped his arms around her.

Isaac raised his hand to get Scott’s attention so he could throw the bug back, but Scott’s eyes had already landed on his mom.

“Don’t. Don’t,” she mouthed trying to wave him off. It was too late. He tossed the grasshopper into the air at her, but his missing finger must have affected his aim because the deceased insect whizzed by and landed on the floor behind her.

“What an affectionate family,” Ms. Newcastle remarked as she let go of Scott.

Melissa lunged to the floor to hide the bug as the caseworker turned.

“Aww Mom, did you drop your earrings again?” Scott asked innocently.

“Yes, maybe they rolled under the coffee table,” Melissa answered, sliding her hand under the table and apparently securing the departed grasshopper away once and for all.

“Um...I think they’re on your ears,” Ms. Newcastle told her.

“Oh!” Melissa laughed and tapped her earlobes as she stood up. “How silly of me.”

“She’s used to those big dangly earrings that you can feel,” Isaac commented, trying to strengthen the excuse. “You know the ones with the hoops and stuff hanging off of them.”

Melissa side-eyed him. “Yes, I love earrings like that. These tasteful studs are just so hard to get used to.”

“Well they certainly suit you,” Ms. Newcastle said pleasantly.

“Thanks, please come sit down.” Melissa motioned toward the couch. “May I get you something to drink?”

“Coffee if you have it, but I don’t want to put you out.”

“Not at all, I’ll be right back.”

Isaac sat on the opposite end of the couch from Ms. Newcastle and Scott took the armchair near Isaac that Melissa usually sat in.

“Oh Scott, what happened to your finger?” Ms. Newcastle asked.

“Weightlifting accident.”
“Cooking mishap.”

Scott tsked and shook his head. “I should have known better than to try to workout while I was chopping carrots.”

“I see.” Ms. Newcastle’s face was unreadable and her scent uncertain.

“But Isaac’s been great through all this!” Scott gave Isaac an affectionate smile. “He’s been so helpful with all those little, uh, fingering tasks that come up.”

“Oh.” Ms. Newcastle arched her brow.

“I couldn’t imagine not having him around.” Scott’s voice caught in his throat, and he looked at Isaac before continuing. “It’s awesome having him living here.”

“Scott’s my best friend,” Isaac said softly, returning his alpha’s intense gaze before redirecting his attention to the caseworker. “Him and his mom have done so much for me, and” –He took a breath and forced himself to get the words out despite how uncomfortable it was to discuss such personal matters with a stranger– “I love them. They’re my family.”

Scott reached over and patted Isaac’s back and squeezed his neck. “We love him too.”

Ms. Newcastle gave them a warm smiled and laughed. “I was just trying to make small talk, but that’s very helpful to know. Thank you.”

Melissa returned with the coffee and Ms. Newcastle shifted to reach for a coaster. “Oh my, I think I’m stepping on something.”

They all groaned as she nudged the coffee table aside, revealing the dead grasshopper protruding from beneath the toe of her shoe.

Ms. Newcastle then began the interview process and asked them various questions about their daily routine and how the family was adjusting to Isaac’s presence. When she was done, she asked to see the rest of the home.

Isaac and Scott exchanged smirks as she readily believed the bathroom renovation excuse and didn’t try to peel back the drop cloths. She also seemed pleased with the other downstairs rooms and didn’t question the tablecloth or take any notice of the flipped couch cushions, but Isaac’s heart skipped a beat when they went upstairs and she asked to poke her head into Scott’s room.

“It’s okay,” Scott whispered at werewolf levels, his hand on Isaac’s shoulder.

Isaac had to resist breathing an audible sigh of relief as she opened Scott’s door to reveal a completely ordinarily looking bedroom. Scott’s bed was back in its old position against the wall instead of dragged out into the center of the room. It was neatly made and covered by a large, forest green bedspread that hid all the bloody sins that lay beneath. A rug Isaac recognized from Melissa’s room had been placed over the blood-mottled carpeting. It looked out of place to Isaac, but Ms. Newcastle was unfamiliar with the room and had no reason to question it.

Isaac was much more relaxed as they entered his own room, which was tidy and well organized.

After Ms. Newcastle briefly examined the guest bathroom that Isaac used and Melissa’s room, the group returned to the living room.

“Can I get you another cup of coffee?” Melissa asked.
“Oh, I know where the kitchen is now,” Ms. Newcastle said with a laugh.

Melissa accompanied her anyway as they discussed Beacon Hills High School and Isaac’s grades.

“This is going so well!” Scott whispered, bouncing on his toes and clapping Isaac’s shoulder.

“It really is!” Isaac grinned back. He couldn’t believe this was actually going to work out.

As if to prove him wrong, a soft thump overhead caught their attention. Isaac’s gaze snapped toward the ceiling. It had come from the outside of the house, right by his room.

“What was that?” Scott tensed and squared his shoulders.

A chill ran down Isaac’s spine at the quiet squeak of his bedroom window being raised. Light footsteps pattered on the floor above them. Someone was in Isaac’s room. They were being attacked by an unknown intruder and–

“It’s Liam.” Isaac growled under his breath as he recognized the rhythm of his packmate’s heart.

“Isaac?” Liam called out in a shouted wolf whisper.

“Down here, but you can’t–” Isaac quit talking as Melissa and Ms. Newcastle walked out of the kitchen. He didn’t want to be seen whispering at the stairs, but surely Liam would hear the unfamiliar person and go back out the way he had come.

“There you are!” Liam exclaimed in a normal voice.

Isaac looked helplessly at Scott and then over at Melissa and Ms. Newcastle as the excited beta trotted down the hallway.

*Oh god, please don’t–*

Liam reached the end of the landing but instead of turning and coming down the stairs, he sailed over the railing and landed in a crouch behind Isaac and Scott in the middle of the living room.

*Fucking showoff!*

“Aaah!” Ms. Newcastle jumped back, dropping her coffee cup. Isaac watched it smash against the floor along with his chances of getting adopted.

“Oh...you have company.” Liam’s cheeks were bright red as he stood up and gave an awkward wave at the caseworker.

“Liam, what are you doing here?!” Scott’s voice was barely shy of a growl and Isaac trembled at the alpha fury reverberating through it.

Liam swallowed and backed up like he’d been slapped, his scent thickening with distress and his heart racing.

“What *are* you doing here, Liam?” Melissa’s tone was more reasonable but laced with obvious anger as she guided Ms. Newcastle around the chunks of glass and the puddle of coffee toward the couch.

Isaac glared and folded his arms as Liam made eye contact with him.

Liam took another step back and let out a growl that could thankfully pass as a rough sigh. His fingers twitched by his sides and the skin around his lips bulged as his fangs partially descended.
Crap. Everyone was mad at Liam, and it was making him feel defensive and cornered, not a great
combination for a newly turned werewolf with anger issues. Isaac unfolded his arms and forced his
face into a more neutral expression as he stepped forward, trying to channel a sense of calm through
his and Liam’s packbond and counting on his status as Liam’s First Bond to help. “It’s okay, Liam.
I’m glad to see you.”

“You are?” Liam tilted his head. His heart rate slowed slightly and the lumps under his lips
disappeared.

No, dumbass, you just fucking ruined everything!

“Yes,” Isaac answered, meaning it as he concentrated on their bond. Liam was pack and Isaac
himself felt calmer focusing on just him. He also didn’t hate how excited Liam had been to see him
or the way he was responding to Isaac’s positive attention.

A vulnerable look formed on Liam’s face and he raised his hands out by his sides in question.

Isaac laughed and nodded, closing the remaining distance between them and wrapping Liam up in a
fierce hug, trying to physically draw the tumultuous emotions out of him.

“Who is she?” Liam wolf whispered, going slack in Isaac’s arms.

“A caseworker with the state. She’s here about my adoption.”

Liam tensed and let go, agitation flaring through their bond.

“Wow, you really are a hugger,” Ms. Newcastle said with a nervous laugh as Liam and Isaac
separated.

“I’m a hugger too!” Scott declared stepping toward Liam.

Liam narrowed his eyes and rumbled at Scott.

“But uh, I better go cleanup the coffee.”

Scott went to the kitchen, stopping to pick up the larger pieces of glass on the way.

“I’m sorry I startled you.” Liam crossed the room and offered his hand to Ms. Newcastle, who stood
and took it.

“Liam’s been on this...gymnast kick lately,” Melissa said as Ms. Newcastle sat back down. “That’s
why he jumped off the stairs.” She cut him an irritated look. “I keep telling him he needs to be more
careful.”

“But we were just upstairs and he wasn’t there.”

“I climbed in through Isaac’s window.” Liam snickered, his eyes bright with mischief. “Part of my
gymnast training.”

Ms. Newcastle frowned and gave him a stern look. “You need to be more careful, son. I’m sure you
feel invincible at your age, but that doesn’t mean you’ll shake it off if you break your leg.”

Liam giggled. “You might be surprised.”

Isaac cleared his throat and dropped a hand on Liam’s shoulder.
“But I’ll be careful, thanks.”

Ms. Newcastle nodded, apparently satisfied, and returned her attention to Melissa. “I do have a few more things I’d like to go over with you.”

“Of course.” Melissa glanced at Isaac and Liam. “Why don’t you guys go upstairs and discuss Liam’s training?”

“I’ll come with you when I’m done here,” Scott said. He had returned with a towel and a bottle of carpet cleaner and was sopping up the mess.

“Actually I’ll need you for this too, Scott. Then I’ll have a few more questions for Isaac before I leave,” Ms. Newcastle said.

“Okay, call me when you’re ready,” Isaac said with another carefully crafted smile before taking Liam upstairs to his room.

“You think Scott’ll be mad that I growled at him?” Liam asked as he flopped across Isaac’s bed.

“Probably.” Isaac didn’t think so. He knew how guilty Scott felt about the whole situation with Liam, but that wasn’t the point. “You’re not supposed to growl at Scott.”

“He was being a dick.”

Isaac growled at Liam, but sat down beside him.

“Are you mad at me?” Liam’s scent hinted at genuine concern as he sat up and looked at Isaac.

“Yeah. Don’t growl at Scott and don’t call him names.”

“No, I mean for coming over.” Liam scuffed his sneaker against the floor and dropped his eyes.

Isaac wanted to say yes. Liam had nearly ruined everything but...

“No, I’m here whenever you need me,” he said softly, kicking at Liam’s foot.

Liam looked up and grinned. “Because we’re pack?”

“Yeah, because we’re pack.”

Liam launched himself at Isaac, knocking him backward across the bed and mock growling.

Isaac laughed and rolled them over, easily pinning the inexperienced beta against the mattress.

Liam tilted his head back and went slack.

A surge of energy coursed through Isaac, and he instinctively scented Liam’s exposed throat but resisted the urge to nip at Liam’s skin. They weren’t animals after all.

“You didn’t have to do that,” Isaac said, taking a breath and sitting back, a rush of power still pulsing in his muscles.

“It felt right,” Liam said with a shrug as he sat up too, “and Aiden likes it when I do that.”

Isaac almost swallowed his tongue. “You do that with Aiden?!”

Liam shrugged. “Sure, when we tussle and he wins...which is always.” He frowned. “Can you teach
me how to beat him?"

Isaac ignored the question and flashed his eyes. "Do not do that with Aiden."

"Why?"

"Because he isn’t pack."

A pout formed on Liam’s face and he huffed. "He feels like pack."

Isaac’s heart pounded in his ears and his hands shook against the mattress.

"Are you okay?"

"What do you mean he feels like pack?" Isaac demanded through gritted teeth.

"Well not like you," Liam said in a rush, scooting closer on the bed. "I can tell we have that First Bond thing going but—"

"Do you have a bond with Aiden? A packbond?"

Liam fidgeted and looked away. "Yeah, I think so."

Rage quaked through Isaac’s body. He clamped his eyes shut and balled his hands into fists. He couldn’t roar, not with Ms. Newcastle in the house.

"Please don’t be mad at me."

Isaac’s packbond with Liam thrummed with anxiety from Liam’s end.

"Please, I didn’t do it on purpose." Liam’s fingertips were light but insistent on Isaac’s arms. "He’s just a good friend, and we’ve been spending a lot of time together."

"He tricked you," Isaac said around his fangs as he re-opened his eyes.

Liam shook his head. "He didn’t ask me to or anything. It just kinda happened."

"You could have stopped it."

Liam shrugged one shoulder and gave Isaac a tight smile. "I didn’t really want to."

Isaac growled.

"I know you don’t like him." Liam frowned and bumped Isaac’s knee. "But c’mon, man, besides you he’s the only person who’s really been there for me."

"Scott—"

"Scott?" Liam folded his arms. "Really you wanna bring up Scott? He’s terrifying half the time."

"Well Stiles or Lydia—"

"Aren’t werewolves, and they’ve been too busy to pay attention to me."

"Fine, then Malia—"

"Has problems of her own."
“Ethan. Ethan could have helped you.”

“Ethan isn’t pack either.” Liam smirked at him. “Or have you forgotten that?”

“We’re not having this conversation.”

“Come to think of it, you’ve been keeping Ethan pretty busy.”

“Hey. I’m serious. Drop it.”

“No.” Liam’s voice was playful and he lightly punched Isaac’s shoulder. “Just tell me, do you like him?”

“Do I like him?” Isaac smirked and rolled his eyes. “What are we twelve?”

“No.” Liam’s voice was playful and he lightly punched Isaac’s shoulder. “Just tell me, do you like him?”

“Do you looooove him?” Liam purred, leaning into Isaac obnoxiously.

Isaac hopped off the bed, letting Liam fall over sideways. Liam sat up and gave Isaac a serious look. “You know you can trust me, right? I won’t tell anybody, and it’s not like I care if you like a werewolf who isn’t pack.”

Isaac sighed and extended his hearing to confirm that Scott was still engaged in the conversation downstairs with Ms. Newcastle, and not paying attention to him and Liam.

“I don’t know, okay?” Isaac reclaimed his spot beside Liam.

“Don’t be ashamed.” Liam patted Isaac’s leg.

“I’m not ashamed.”

“I can smell it on you.”

“I taught you that,” Isaac said, hoping to distract Liam.

Liam sniffed the air. “Pride,” he said with a nod. “Aiden taught me that one. But yeah, you taught me shame and guilt...why is that again?”

Isaac gave him a hot glare. “Because Aiden’s a shameless, remorseless monster.”

Liam growled, but his scent didn’t indicate anything more than irritation mixed with sympathy. “Or because you get lost in your head and feel guilty about stuff you shouldn’t.”

Isaac scoffed. He was pretty sure he was supposed to feel guilty about having feelings for two guys at once, especially since he was dating one of them, but he wasn’t going to tell Liam that. Let him think it was because Ethan wasn’t pack.

“I got your back if you wanna be with him and the others don’t approve.” Liam bumped Isaac’s shoulder and gave him an earnest look, his bright blue eyes sparkling with sincerity.

“Thanks, man.” Isaac pulled Liam in for a hug because apparently that was how their dynamic worked. Isaac liked it. He liked the way Liam’s torso melted against his own, even as he gripped Isaac’s back with supernatural force. Isaac inhaled long and slow through his nose, savoring Liam’s personal scent and picking through the snarl of residual emotional scents clinging to him. It was fucking overwhelming. “Why were you so worried earlier?”
Liam let go and pulled back, a stung expression on his face. “Did you not read my texts?”

Isaac angled his head back in the direction of the muffled voices coming from the living room. “I’ve been kinda busy.”

“Oh right. Well it’s about Aiden.”

Isaac threw his hands up. “Is everything about Aiden?”

“I can’t get in touch with him. I’ve been texting him since last night, and I even called him once and he’s not responding.” Liam wrung his hands in his lap and pulsed with unease. If there was any doubt remaining that he had formed a packbond with Aiden it had just been dispelled. “I don’t know what to do. I can’t think of any reason he’d be mad at me or, like, avoiding me, so that must mean something’s wrong, and I just—”

“Liam, whoa hey, calm down.” Isaac draped an arm around Liam’s shoulders as he sensed how close he was to falling apart.

“Malia hasn’t heard from him either, and I don’t wanna worry her so I can’t keep asking, and I thought it would be weird if I texted Ethan.”

“Why would that be weird?”

Liam furrowed his brow. “He’s not pack.”

Isaac rolled his eyes and picked up his phone to check his messages. “I don’t have any new texts from Ethan. He would tell me if something was wrong.”

“Do you think we should go over there?”

“I’m kinda surprised you haven’t already.”

Liam shrugged. “They’re on the seventh floor. I can’t climb that high.”

“There’s an elevator inside.”

“I don’t wanna seem like some needy kid,” Liam mumbled.

Isaac was about to respond when Melissa called for him to come down.

“Sit tight.” He squeezed the back of Liam’s neck before getting up. “I’ll call Ethan when I’m done with the adoption lady.”

“Wait.” Liam’s heart stuttered and he grabbed Isaac’s arm. “You’re not gonna leave are you? They’re gonna let you stay, right?”

Isaac replayed the events in his head since Ms. Newcastle had arrived, appraising her comments, body language, and general attitude. A tingly warmth washed over him and he let out a relieved sigh.

“Yeah, I think everything’s gonna be okay.”

Chapter End Notes
I hope you guys enjoyed this chapter! I tried to build extra humor into it and give it a nice, positive vibe because like I’ve been saying, things are going to start getting darker soon, so I want the characters to have that foundation.

Also, quick thanks to Uthizaar for helping me figure out the finger sleeve thing for Scott, and for generally being awesome! Go check out his stories, you guys. They’re amazing!

As always, thanks for reading and feedback is greatly appreciated!
The remainder of Ms. Newcastle’s visit went smoothly. She asked Isaac a few more questions about his home life and said she would be in touch about the next phase of the process. When Melissa pressed her about what they could expect, she cracked a smile and told them not to worry. After she left, they breathed a collective sigh of relief and group hugged before breaking apart to put the house back in (dis)order.

Scott announced he would remove the drop cloth from the downstairs bathroom, but Isaac intercepted him by slinging an arm around his shoulders and wolf whispering in his ear. “We need to talk about something after Liam leaves.”

Scott’s brows drew together and he nodded. “Is everything okay?”

“I need to call Ethan. I’ll fill you in when we’re done.”

Isaac returned to his room to find Liam pacing beside the window and clutching his phone.

“I called again...it’s going straight to voicemail.”

Isaac stepped into Liam’s path and squeezed his upper arm. He opened his mouth to make a joke about Aiden being too big an asshole to die but thought better of it as he picked up on Liam’s barely contained fear and anger. Instead he rubbed Liam’s arm and focused on centering his own emotions so he could project a sense of calm through their bond.

It worked. Liam took a breath and some of the tension eased from his muscles.

Isaac pulled his phone from his pocket to make the call, but before he could Liam caught his eye and spoke.

“Shouldn’t I be able to feel if he’s okay through our packbond?” Liam chewed his bottom lip. “I can’t. I can feel, like, a-a sense of him, but not where he is or if he’s okay.”

“Yeah, packbonds are complicated.” Isaac tried to keep the anger that burned in his gut due to Liam discussing his packbond with Aiden from bleeding through into their own bond. “I’ll explain it more to you later. Let’s just find out what’s going on.”

Liam nodded and gripped Isaac’s upper arm the same way Isaac was gripping his. Pack power surged through their connected limbs, and their bond hummed. They maintained the hold as Isaac called Ethan.

He answered on the second ring.

“Hey.”

It was a small word, but Isaac trembled and his stomach fluttered at the flirtatious smirk it carried. Liam sniggered and gave Isaac a knowing look. Isaac glared and let go of Liam’s arm.

“Hey, is Aiden okay?”

Ethan paused for a beat before answering. “Can’t say I was expecting that question.”
“I have Liam here. He’s freaking out.”

Liam growled and shoved Isaac’s shoulder.

“Oh shit. I was going to text him and Malia but I forgot.”

Liam’s heart stuttered, and Isaac could almost feel the blood run cold in his veins.

“He’s fine.”

Liam closed his eyes in relief, and warmth buzzed through their connection.

“We had a fight and I threw him against a wall. His phone got smashed.”

“What?” Isaac laughed out loud and grinned, ignoring the way Liam’s eyes snapped open with alarm.

Ethan laughed too. There was a snarl in the background. “Aiden wants to talk to Liam.”

Liam’s face lit up, and he held his hand out with a grabby motion. It was obnoxious, but Isaac reluctantly passed him the phone.

“Hey man.”

Isaac cringed at Liam’s faux-casual tone.

“Hey. So my brother’s a raging dickhead.”

Liam barked out a sharp laugh. “Yeah, I figured everything was fine.”

Isaac blinked at him.

Aiden snorted. “I need to teach you to hide your heartbeat if you’re gonna lie like that.”

Liam bounced on his toes and grinned. “Yeah, you do!”

Aiden laughed. It was cruel and condescending, but Liam didn’t seem to realize that. “Sorry dude, you’re still too young.”

Liam huffed and his face scrunched with offense. “You said you learned when you were just a kid.”

“Too young as a werewolf. We can try in a couple months.”

“But—”

“You need to learn the basics first.” Aiden’s tone was laced with an ersatz authority that made Isaac want to reach through the phone and punch him in the face.

Liam’s expression darkened with irritation, but his shoulders sagged and his stance signaled compliance.

“But I guess we could do some training today.”

“Really?!” Liam’s emotions flipped back to eager and excited. That smug asshat was jerking him around.

“Yeah, but I don’t have a phone so you’ll have to track me. Meet in the woods east of our loft in
twenty minutes. Howl when you get here and I'll howl back. Then it's on.”

“Alright!” Liam all but jumped up and down.

“Liam, wait.” Isaac grabbed his forearm as he handed the phone back. “We have that search at the school this afternoon for the darach’s journal.”

“Oh yeah.” Liam’s grin widened. “Today’s gonna be fun! That’s at four, right? I’ll make sure we’re done by then.”

“Hello?” Ethan’s voice called through the phone.

Isaac raised a finger, signaling Liam not to leave. “Hey, I need to work something out with Liam, but um, can I call you back?” Isaac took a long breath. “We need to talk.”

Ethan sighed too and his voice was heavy as he answered. “Yeah, we do. Talk to you in a bit.”

They hung up and–

“Are you gonna tell him how you feel?” Liam whisper-shouted.

“No.” Isaac sat on the edge of his bed. Liam didn’t know any of the details about his...whatever it was with Ethan, and Isaac wasn’t going to tell him, but he did decide to give him an honest answer. “I’m going to tell him we can’t be anything but friends.”

“Uhn!” Liam folded his arms and shook his head. “You’re making a mistake. You’re way into him, dude. Just go for it.”

Isaac grunted and rolled his eyes. “Thanks for your input.”

“Think about it, okay?” He shrugged, palms up. “I gotta go meet Aiden.”

“Wait.” Isaac patted the space next to him on the bed.

A conflicted expression crossed Liam’s face as he looked between the bed and the window. “Okay, but we have to hurry. I don’t wanna keep Aiden waiting.” He sat down, his leg brushing Isaac’s.

“What’s up?”

_Aiden, Aiden, Aiden._ Isaac took dark joy in his next words.

“I have to tell Scott about your packbond with Aiden.”

“What?!” Liam’s jaw dropped and he gave Isaac a hurt, betrayed look.

So much for joy.

“He’s your alpha. He needs to know if you’re forming bonds with strange” _evil, homicidal, egotistical_ “omegas.”

Liam’s eyes sparked amber and a burst of rage filled the air. “Aiden’s not some strange omega. He’s a friend of the pack.”

“Scott needs to know.”

Liam growled and his fangs dropped into place.
“Stop.” Isaac held Liam’s shoulder and flashed his eyes.

Liam rumbled and glared at Isaac’s fingers, but after a moment he whimpered and pouted his bottom lip as his eyes cooled.

Isaac inwardly celebrated the victory but kept his face stern.

“I thought you would have my back,” Liam muttered, staring at the floor.

Isaac tightened his grip and shook Liam’s shoulder. “I will always have your back. That’s why I have to tell him. You can’t keep a bond like that a secret from your alpha.”

Guilt twisted in Isaac’s gut, but he told himself that it was different with him and Ethan because he had specifically not formed a packbond with Ethan.

“Is Scott gonna hurt me?” Liam smelled scared, but there was a tinge of angry defiance in his scent.

“What?” Isaac gripped Liam’s other shoulder and rubbed his thumbs over Liam’s biceps. “No way. Scott would never hurt you.”

Liam cocked his head and gave Isaac a sarcastic look.

“That was Iron Claw, not Scott.

“You know they’re the same person, right?”

Isaac pursed his lips and let go of Liam. “They’re not.”

“Fine. Is Iron Claw going to hurt me for having a packbond with Aiden?”

Isaac scooted closer on the bed and caught Liam’s eyes. “No one is going to hurt you.”

Liam’s lips curled in an acknowledgment of Isaac’s words, but then re-formed into a frown. “Is he gonna make me break the bond?”

Isaac hesitated. It was tempting to let Liam stew until he talked to Scott himself, but their own bond ached with worry, and a protective instinct coursed through Isaac. He patted Liam’s upper arm. “I don’t think he even can. I guess I need to confirm that with Ethan or Deaton, but I think packbonds are permanent. Even when things get bad and the connection goes dormant, it’s still there.”

A weight lifted from Liam’s shoulders. “Really?”

“Yeah, you remember all that stuff I told you about Derek? How he kicked me out, quit being my alpha, and then just left town?”

Liam nodded.

“Well that broke our First Bond, but even now I still have a packbond with him.”

Liam gasped and his eyes filled with terror. “Our First Bond can be broken?”

“Yeah but–”

“It’s the only thing keeping me from freaking out!” Liam took a ragged breath and rubbed the heels of his clawed hands down his thighs. “I feel like I’m gonna snap and tear someone apart. If I didn’t have our First Bond, I think I’d go on a rampage. If it’s breaks–”
“It’s not gonna break.”

“Yours broke with Derek!”

“Hey, look at me.” Isaac waited until Liam made eye contact. “I’m not gonna make the mistakes Derek made. This” –he gestured between them– “is important to me. I’m not gonna fuck it up.”

Liam nodded and fell silent. Then he lunged at Isaac and knocked him off the bed.

They landed in a heap on the floor with Liam mock growling, shaking, and nuzzling under Isaac’s throat.

A warm tingly feeling washed over Isaac, and he sniffed Liam’s hair as he held him with a strength that would have crushed a human. “I gotcha.”

The mess of emotions boiling off of Liam gradually simmered into contentment, and he let go and climbed to his feet.

“Oh, I’m gonna go hang out in the woods with Aiden. You can tell Scott if you want.”

Isaac chuckled as Liam unceremoniously crossed the room and jumped out of the open window.

Isaac was about to call Ethan back when he saw a message from Stiles.

Stiles: Isaac McCall?

Isaac: Lahey pride 4ever! But the meeting went ok. I think she likes us.

They traded a few more texts, and Isaac gave Stiles more details about Ms. Newcastle’s visit. Then he called Ethan back.

“Can you come over?” Ethan asked after they had exchanged greetings. “I want to tell you what’s been going on in person.”

Ethan’s mysterious text. Isaac hadn’t thought about it since he had left Ethan’s loft yesterday morning. He felt guilty. Whatever was happening was a big deal to Ethan, and it was also a big deal that he was willing to confide in Isaac.

“Yeah, um, there’s something I wanted to talk to you about anyway.”

Ethan said he would come pick Isaac up, so Isaac changed out of the dressier clothes he’d worn to meet Ms. Newcastle and into more casual clothes. He tried not to think about the difficult conversation he was about to have with Ethan as he went to find Scott. Discussing the situation with Liam and Aiden wouldn’t be pleasant either, but it needed to be done, and at least it would keep him occupied.

Scott was coming upstairs as Isaac was going down. He said they were finished downstairs, but that he needed to put his room back the way it had been.

“So what’s up with Liam?” Scott asked as he peeled back the unblemished forest green bedspread to reveal his bloodstained sheets.

Isaac went to the foot of the bed and grabbed the end of the bedspread to help Scott fold it. There were fewer brown stains here since Iron Claw had primarily bled Scott’s upper body. “We have a problem.”
The corner of Scott’s mouth twisted and the sleeve covering his fake finger twitched. “What is it?” Isaac hated himself for adding another burden to Scott’s life, but Scott needed to know.

“Liam formed a packbond with Aiden.”

“Oh.” Scott’s face remained impassive as he reached across the bed for the rest of the bedspread. Isaac tilted his head and took a breath. Scott smelled more disappointed than anything else.

Isaac met Scott beside the middle of the bed, and they pressed their corners together. “What should we do?”

“I’ll talk to Aiden and try to get a read on him.” Scott rotated the bedspread and they repeated the process.

“I think he’s using Liam and Malia to get close to the pack,” Isaac said as they finished.

“Yeah.” Scott set the folded bedspread on his desk and hunched over Melissa’s rug. “You and Ethan have been getting close too.”

Isaac flinched and scrambled to figure out what to say, but Scott shrugged and gave him a smile.

“And so have me and Ethan.” Scott rolled up the rug, letting silence form while he worked.

Isaac squatted down and held the rug steady. He was more comfortable now that he wasn’t looming over his alpha. “He’s not using us.”

“I know that. I like Ethan.” Scott’s fingers brushed Isaac’s hand as he shifted to take the end of the rug. “They’re omegas. It’s instinct for them to get close to a pack that isn’t hostile.”

“So...are you saying you don’t mind?” Isaac grabbed the other end of the rug and they lifted it.

“They saved you and Liam’s life on the full moon, probably Lydia and Malia’s too.”

Isaac chuckled as he backed into the hallway. “Oh I dunno. Lydia had something planned with those chemicals we stepped in in the basement.”

Scott laughed as they entered Melissa’s room. “Yeah, good point. Maybe she would have gotten herself and Malia out safely.” They set the rug down in front of Melissa’s bed and unrolled it. “Ethan also took care of me the night I lost my finger. He was great.”

“Yeah, Ethan is...great.”

Scott clapped Isaac’s shoulder as they walked out of the room. “That’s not a bad thing.”

Isaac was eager to change the subject. “So Liam and Aiden—”

“I don’t think the problem is Liam and Aiden,” Scott said as they re-entered his room. “It’s Liam and me, and I don’t know what to do about that.”

“Can’t you talk to him?”

“And tell him what?” Scott nodded at the bed and they dragged it into the center of the room, making space for the mountain ash ring that would need to encircle it that evening. “That it’s safe to be around me?”
“Well yeah.”
They sat on Scott’s bed.

“I don’t think it is.” Scott fidgeted with his hands in his lap. “Every evening when the sun goes down I wonder if this’ll be it, if Iron Claw will take over for good.”

“Scott, no.” Isaac gripped Scott’s forearm and rubbed it with his thumb. He channeled reassurance through their bond. “We’re going to defeat him.”

Scott covered Isaac’s hand with his own and looked up at him with mournful eyes, a wrinkled forehead, and drawn lips. “I don’t know if that’s true this time. It feels like we can’t win. Like it’s only getting worse. Allison, Stiles, and me sacrificed ourselves to stop one darach...now we’ve replaced her with a new one and brought Iron Claw and Kate back.”

Isaac turned and brushed his knee against Scott’s thigh. “You sacrificed yourselves to save your parents – and it worked. You stopped Deucalion too.”

“I don’t know what to do.” Scott pulled his hands away and eyed the black sleeve covering his finger. “I only have one idea, and it’s not a very good one.”

“What is it?”

Scott sighed and dropped his hands into his lap. “We could cut off all my fingers.”

Isaac shuddered and shook his head. “Yeah, that’s not a good idea.”

“If it saves people...”

“We don’t even know if that would work. I don’t think it would. It’s more likely that we’d have to cut off Iron Claw’s claws while they’re out.”

“Yeah, I guess.” Scott hung his head.

Isaac frowned. His packbond with Scott was throbbing with despair. That’s when he remembered that he wasn’t only Liam’s First Bond. He shifted closer on the bed so that their sides and thighs touched, and gently drew Scott’s head against his chest.

“It’s going to be okay,” Isaac whispered, stroking Scott’s hair and clutching his shoulder. “We are going to defeat him, and you’re going to get your life and your finger back.” Isaac nuzzled his face against the top of Scott’s head and whispered his final words into his hair. “I promise.”

Scott trembled and clung to Isaac’s back. He took a ragged breath, then a smoother one, and soon his breathing was slow and deep and the ache had drained from their bond.

“You’re a good brother,” Scott whispered, his grip tightening around Isaac.

Warmth bloomed in Isaac’s chest, and he closed his eyes to soak in every detail of this moment – the steady thump of Scott’s heart; the crisp, toasty-rich aroma of security in his scent; the firm, anchoring weight of his body wrapped around Isaac’s; the soft, silkiness of his hair against Isaac’s face.

“You’re a good brother too,” Isaac pressed a silent kiss to Scott’s scalp. “And an amazing alpha. No one is ever going to take that away from you.”

“I don’t think Liam and Malia believe that,” Scott mumbled against Isaac’s chest.
Isaac shrugged and trailed his hand over Scott’s shoulder and down his side. “They’re new. They’ll learn.”

“I haven’t been there for them,” Scott whispered.

“You haven’t been able to be, but that’s temporary.” Isaac pushed confidence through their bond and left his end open, inviting his alpha to draw all the strength and power he could take.

Scott squeezed Isaac’s back and pushed power to him instead, filling him with a burst of warm energy that made his eyes glow and the tips of his fingers tingle.

Isaac found Scott’s hand and curled his fingers over it, letting the emotions surging through their connection communicate what he felt.

They sat like that until the doorbell rang and Isaac’s phone buzzed in his pocket.

“That’s Ethan. We’re, uh, getting together.”

“Cool.” Scott disentangled himself from Isaac and sat up.

“He has something he wants to talk to me about.” Isaac stood and stretched. A niggling uncertainty wiggled in the corner of his mind as he looked at Scott. “But I can cancel.”

It would be a dick move to Ethan, but it would give Isaac a reprieve from telling him about Stiles, and nothing felt more important than supporting Scott.

“Nah, it’s fine. Go ahead.”

The doorbell rang again.

“Coming!” Isaac shouted louder than was necessary for Ethan’s supernatural hearing. “You’re sure?”

“Yeah, Mom’s leaving in a couple hours for her shift, so it’ll be nice to have some alone time.” Scott’s scent pulsed with self consciousness and–

Oh.

Isaac gave Scott a quick hug and hurried to let Ethan in.

“Hey.” Isaac was overcome with an unexpected burst of affection as he opened the door and found Ethan standing in front of him with his hands in his pockets, thumbs sticking out, and a distinct vulnerability in his scent.

“Hey,” Ethan answered, a playful smile lighting his handsome face but none of the anxiety leaving his body.

Isaac didn’t over-think it for once, just stepped forward and wrapped Ethan up in a tight embrace. “You okay?”

Ethan shook his head and turned his face against Isaac’s neck.

Isaac dragged slow, heavy hands up and down his spine. “You wanna come in?”

Ethan shook his head again. “Let’s go back to my place. Aiden’s out with Liam so we’ll have more privacy.”
Duel twinges of guilt and uncertainty stabbed Isaac’s chest. “For talking?”

Ethan chuckled and pulled away, a smirk on his face. “Yeah, for talking.”

Isaac locked up and followed Ethan to his motorcycle at the end of the driveway.

Isaac spent the first half of the ride trying to touch Ethan as little as possible. He hung onto Ethan’s waist by necessity but kept space between the front of his body and the back of Ethan’s.

“Do you already know?” Ethan whispered as they pulled up to a red light, his voice laced with pain.

“Know what?”

“Nothing.”

Ethan sounded so hurt and desperate that Isaac lifted his hands and rubbed his chest. He was dressed in a thin, mint green cotton v-neck. The material was soft beneath Isaac’s fingers, and the flesh underneath was warm and firm.

Heat pooled in Isaac’s stomach, and his resolve slipped. Touching Ethan was blissfully familiar and the strong, wide expanse of his back, inviting. The last time they had been in this position Isaac had laid his head there. He grazed the side of his face against the space between Ethan’s shoulder blades, and Ethan drew in a sharp breath and leaned back.

When the light changed and they barreled down the road, it felt all too natural to snuggle closer and trail his fingertips over Ethan’s sternum and his thumb over Ethan’s collarbone.

Ethan rumbled with satisfaction and his scent shifted to one of contentment.

Isaac knew better, but he took deep breaths and held them for longer and longer, savoring Ethan’s happy aroma and the way it made his insides tingle. He had done that. He had made Ethan happy. It felt good. Ethan deserved to be happy.

Isaac refused to think about the way he was going to break Ethan’s hea– make Ethan not happy.

Ethan parked and turned off his motorcycle.

“We’re here,” he said, lacing his fingers with Isaac’s on his chest.

Dammit. Isaac needed to yank his hands away before Ethan got the wrong idea.

“Yep.” He squeezed Ethan’s fingers and pressed his forehead to the back of Ethan’s neck.

Ethan lifted Isaac’s hand and kissed his palm.

“That’s just one of those friendly palm kisses between buddies, right?”

“I’ll understand if you don’t want to see me again after today,” Ethan whispered against Isaac’s skin.

Wait what?

Utter anguish seeped from Ethan’s pores and before he knew what he was doing, Isaac had trailed kisses up the back of Ethan’s neck and against the short hair covering the base of his skull.

“Let’s go inside,” Isaac whispered.
Ethan radiated pain and vulnerability, and Isaac instinctually wrapped a protective arm around his waist as they walked through the parking lot and into Ethan’s building.

“What happened?” Isaac asked while they waited for the elevator.

Ethan shook his head and leaned closer. He nuzzled his face in the crook of Isaac’s neck, and a small measure of the anguish thrumming through him diminished.

Isaac guided him onto the elevator and held him close as they rode to Ethan’s floor. An eerie sense of déjà vu crept up Isaac’s spine. A week ago their positions had been reversed. Isaac had been emotionally broken and draped around Ethan for support in this same elevator as a result of Iron Claw’s savage attack on Stiles and Isaac’s complete failure to protect him, as well as Isaac’s guilt about Scott and the way he had–

“I betrayed someone I cared about.” Ethan’s voice was thick with pain.

Isaac rubbed Ethan’s hip and pressed against him. “It’s gonna be okay.”

“I think when I tell you, it might destroy our friendship once and for all.”

Isaac scoffed as the elevator chimed and the doors slid open. “Yeah, that’s not gonna happen.”

Ethan pulled away, and Isaac followed him down the hall. Ethan’s scent was a snarl of negative emotions, and even his heartbeat seemed to thump with a rhythm of despair. As Ethan stopped in front of his door and slid his key into the lock, Isaac wrapped his arms around him from behind and pulled him back against his chest, squeezing him as tightly as he had held Liam and Scott back at the house.

“You’re not gonna lose me,” Isaac whispered into Ethan’s ear. “Whatever happens, whatever you did, we’re friends and I’m not going anywhere.”

Ethan gripped Isaac’s arms and turned his face, nuzzling it against Isaac’s. “I trust you.”

“I trust you too.” Isaac kissed Ethan’s cheekbone just below his eye.

They entered Ethan’s loft and went to his sofa in the living room. It was the first time Isaac had sat there. He had been all over the kitchen, dining area, and of course Ethan’s bedroom, but they had never kicked back in the living room before.

“Look at this.” Ethan opened a text conversation and passed his phone to Isaac.

The first message was from Friday night while Isaac and Ethan had been out on their friend date:

Rick: So you’re an omega bitch now. How fucking poetic. We’re coming for justice you evil piece of backstabbing shit.

Ethan had received the second message yesterday afternoon:

Rick: Ever wonder what Aiden’s liver looks like? You’ll find out soon. We’re gonna make you eat it.

A third message had been sent last night:

Rick: How’s California this time of year? Just packing for our flight. Can’t wait to see you.

A picture text had arrived minutes before Ethan had picked Isaac up. He must have seen it while he waited for Isaac to come to the door. It featured a younger Ethan, shirtless and wearing lime green
board shorts at the beach as he walked along the shore with a blond guy in red board shorts. Their hands were laced together by their sides and the blond had his head turned as he regarded Ethan with a look of intense admiration. The sun was low on the horizon, casting everything in a warm, golden light. The message beneath the picture had arrived with the same time stamp as the photo and was the most recent in the conversation.

Rick: *How did it feel?*

Isaac handed Ethan his phone back and shifted closer on the sofa, his arm around Ethan’s shoulders.

“Who’s Rick?”

Ethan let out a shuddering breath and stared at the hardwood floor between his feet.

“He was my first boyfriend. I killed him.”

Chapter End Notes

Next chapter should be out more quickly. I don’t know if I can do it, but I’m going to try to transition from biweekly to weekly updates since this coming section of the story will be more intense and action-packed. As always feedback is greatly appreciated and thanks for reading!

Also, my friend Uthizaar wrote an amazing, super hot smut story called “Under the Moonglow” featuring his take on what Aiden/Liam might be getting up to during their training sessions at night in the woods. Make sure to check it out! It’s in the “Works inspired by this one” section that automatically appears at the end of the most recent chapter of this story.
“Who’s Rick?”

Ethan let out a shuddering breath and stared at the hardwood floor between his feet.

“He was my first boyfriend. I killed him.”

Isaac’s stomach lurched and a chill rolled down his spine, but he didn’t take his arm from around Ethan’s shoulders.

Ethan turned his head and drew in another shaky breath. His brow was furrowed with anguish and his chocolate eyes were wide with pain. His mouth had pulled into a thin, stiff line, and the tangy, sour scent of his guilt was so thick in the air that it made Isaac’s nostrils burn and his throat close as it coiled in his gut.


Ethan tensed and resisted Isaac’s efforts to draw him against his chest. “You want details?”

Isaac rubbed Ethan’s back and refused to take his cold, angry tone personally. “Whatever you want to tell me.”

“What you want is to hear that it was self defense.” Ethan stared straight ahead, his body rigid as he spoke in the same cold tone. “You want me to say that I had no choice. That he was evil. That I was protecting myself or Aiden.”

Isaac didn’t answer. He didn’t move as he waited for Ethan to continue.

“That’s not what happened.” Ethan turned to him, his eyes glowing icy blue and his face stony. “He wasn’t dangerous. He wasn’t a bad person...and I murdered him in cold blood.”

Cold blood. It rushed through Isaac’s veins and made the tiny hairs on the back of his neck stick up. For the first time in a long time Isaac remembered who Ethan was, the way Ethan had kidnapped and tortured him, mind-raped him and tried to kill him when Braeden had rescued him. He saw Boyd’s face as the life drained away from it, recalled the dead look in Erica’s eyes from his recovered memory. Ethan was a monster.

Isaac licked his lips around his bulging fangs. His eyes glowed with golden heat, dispelling the cold terror with hot fury.

“You can leave,” Ethan said quietly, turning away. “Take my bike.”

Isaac stood and glanced at the kitchen counter where Ethan had left his keys.

*Take my bike.*

The words rang in Isaac’s ears, reminding him of the last time Ethan had spoken them to him, right in this very room.
“I’m sorry I ever hurt you. I would take it back if I could.”

“I don’t need to hear your heartbeat to know that, jackass.”

“Isaac, I’m trying—”

“I know that! I know you’re trying.”

“We can—”

“No, Ethan, we can’t. This is too hard, for both of us. Just stay away from me, okay? Please.”

Ethan had pressed his keys into Isaac’s hand and rubbed his thumb over Isaac’s fingers. “Take my bike.”

Isaac shook his head. Everything with Ethan had been so difficult back then. It had felt impossible to stay with him, to work through their problems...to forgive him. Now leaving felt impossible. It was too difficult to be angry at Ethan. He had been a monster, but he wasn’t anymore, not even close.

Isaac dropped into a crouch in front of him and cupped his neck, forcing him to meet his eyes.

“I forgive you, Ethan, for everything you did to me and my pack. I know that’s not what you’re feeling guilty about right now...but if it helps.”

Ethan closed his eyes and opened his mouth. A gasping sob slipped out. “It helps a lot.”

Isaac stood, pulling Ethan up with him and into a tight hug. He nosed at Ethan’s ear and kissed the space just below it where jaw met neck. “You’re not that guy anymore. You’re a good person.”

Ethan’s body trembled, his breathing harsh and erratic. Barely a week ago Isaac would have been terrified of being confronted with someone lost in so much emotional pain, but a lot had happened since then, and Isaac knew firsthand how much it helped to get those feelings out. He and Ethan weren’t pack, but his need to comfort Ethan was instinctual all the same.

“Stop trying to hold it back.” Isaac stroked the base of Ethan’s skull with his thumb and locked his other arm tight around Ethan’s waist. “I’m not going anywhere.”

Ethan looked at him one more time, his jaw clenched and his eyes dry as they met Isaac's with a silent question.

Isaac felt his own gaze soften as he gave a reassuring nod. “It's okay.”

Ethan released a halting breath and hooked his chin over Isaac's shoulder. A moment later he dissolved against him, a wave of turbulent emotions gushing out and flooding the room.

Isaac held him through it, his hands slow and steady as they traveled up and down Ethan's arms, under the back of his shirt, along his sides and over his hips. Isaac knew that it hurt being an omega, and he was desperate to soothe Ethan's touch-starved werewolf senses as much as he could.

As he touched Ethan, a sharp, quivering ache burned in the corner of Isaac's chest that he associated with his connections to his packmates. It hurt to keep that final, crucial area closed off from Ethan. It hurt to connect with him on such an intimate human level while denying their wolves the joy and security of a packbond. It hurt to leave Ethan wallowing in the painful isolation that came with being an omega.

But it had to be done.
Ethan wasn't pack, and that was a very important distinction to maintain. Ethan's pack status wasn't Isaac's call to make. Scott would forgive him if he made the connection anyway, but he wouldn't forgive himself. And so he fought against the blinding impulse to bond with this werewolf that he cared so much about, tearing himself in two as he fully surrendered to his human emotions and lavished Ethan with affection even as he wrapped a cold blanket around the raw, aching tendrils in his chest that longed to reach out to Ethan and form a permanent supernatural bond.

“Aiden tried to stop me.”

“What?”

Ethan pulled back. He sniffled as Isaac caressed his face and wiped away the tears. He looked so innocent with his emotions lain bare and his dark, soulful eyes tender and glistening. Isaac didn’t care who Ethan had killed or what he had done; this was the real Ethan and he was beautiful and good. Isaac would never doubt it again.

“Deucalion ordered us to kill them, Rick and Megan.” He covered Isaac’s hand on his cheek and squeezed his fingers. “Aiden said we should run instead.”

“So you didn’t have a choice.” Isaac tried to keep the vindication out of his voice.

Ethan sighed and started to pull away but stopped when Isaac’s hands dropped to his hips.

“I did have a choice,” he whispered, his gaze breaking from Isaac’s and a fresh cloud of shame and guilt filling the air between them. “Aiden gave me a choice. I chose wrong.”

“I’m sure you–”

“He didn’t kill her. Megan, Rick’s sister, Aiden was dating her...and he let her go.” Ethan took a sharp breath and stared at the ground between their feet. “He’s never killed anyone he cares about.”

“I don’t understand. I–”

“I know. I keep telling you he’s loyal but you won’t believe me.”

“He’s an asshole,” Isaac answered, rubbing Ethan’s shoulders to keep the words from stinging.

“Yeah.” Ethan laughed. “But I should have listened. He was right.” He raked a hand through his hair and sat on the couch. “I didn’t think we could get away from Deucalion, but we should have tried because I know I’ll never get away from what I did.”

Isaac sat beside him, angling his body and tugging Ethan against him. This time Ethan didn’t resist, instead laying his head on Isaac’s shoulder and lifting his legs onto the couch so that he was half lying on Isaac.

“Will you tell me the whole story?” Isaac trailed his fingers down Ethan’s side and hooked his thumb into one of Ethan’s belt loops. “From the beginning?”

Ethan nodded and took a few moments before speaking.

“I-I don’t want this to sound like I’m making excuses, but I want you to understand where I was coming from.”

“Okay.” Isaac nuzzled Ethan’s head. He wanted to understand too.

“After Keith killed our family and took over our old pack, he spent the next three years abusing us.”
Ethan froze and lifted his head.

“Go on,” Isaac answered, ignoring the smell of whiskey and the sound of broken glass that reverberated in his mind. He tightened his grip on Ethan and kissed his forehead.

“I guess one act of revenge against my family, however violent, wasn’t enough for him. So he kept getting his revenge on Aiden and me daily.” Ethan bit his lip and lowered his eyes. “That type of thing messes with your head.”

“Yeah.”

“When I was a kid, I used to think the world was this wonderful place, and all I wanted to do was make it even better.” Ethan lay his head on Isaac’s chest. “But after three years of listening to my bones break over and over, to my brother howling in agony, to Keith laughing in perverse glee...all I wanted was revenge. I wanted to make him suffer the way Aiden and I had suffered. I wanted to destroy him for what he did to my family.”

Ethan fell silent for a few moments, leaving Isaac to relive his own revenge fantasies.

“When Deucalion showed up and taught us how to merge and kill them...it wasn’t enough. I wanted it to be, but” –he sat up and gave Isaac an apologetic look– “I was still filled with anger and bloodlust.”

Isaac nodded.

“I’m sorry.”

Isaac shrugged and squeezed Ethan’s shoulder. “We’re not talking about me. What happened with Rick and Megan?”

“Deucalion used our anger and resentment as a weapon. He made us think that that was all life was, just a cycle of hurting people before they could hurt you, that it was all about power and vengeance, and that him and Kali and Ennis were the only ones we owed any loyalty to.”

Isaac frowned, unsure of how similar their situations were. Derek hadn’t acted quite like that, but he had emphasized the importance of pack loyalty above all else, and he had tapped into Isaac’s, Erica’s, and Boyd’s anger and resentment about their past to make it feel acceptable when he ordered them to fight Scott and go after Lydia when he thought she was the kanima. *Lydia.* She was one of the most important people in Isaac’s life, and there had been a time when he was fully prepared to kill her because his alpha had said so.

“I should have known better. That’s not how we were raised. But it feels...it feels like a lifetime since we were back home with our family, since violence was only something that happened on TV and in video games, and not something we watched happen to the people we love...not something we perpetrated on other people.”

Isaac frowned and his thoughts strayed to his final visit with his mom in the hospital on the evening before she died. It felt like much longer ago than eight years. Violence hadn’t immediately become a part of Isaac’s life once she was gone, but the events that led to his abuse and eventual transformation into a werewolf had been set in motion. Isaac liked being a werewolf, but it was violent. He wondered what it was like being a werewolf since birth and growing up in a non-violent environment.

“It was our first mission with Deucalion. We had just turned sixteen and killed Keith and our old pack to become alphas. I think we were drunk on the newfound power and what felt like freedom
even though it wasn't.” Ethan laced his fingers with Isaac’s and traced his thumb over Isaac’s knuckles.

Isaac recognized the action for what it was: a request for reassurance. He kissed the top of Ethan’s head and squeezed his hand. “Whatever you tell me isn't going to change anything,” he whispered, confident it was true. He didn’t care what Ethan had done. Ethan was his.

Ethan sighed and some of the tension eased from his muscles.

“We were in Florida, just outside Fort Lauderdale. There was a large and powerful pack there. Rick and Megan’s mom, Leslie, was the alpha. Deucalion wanted her to join us, so he enrolled us at Rick and Megan’s high school and had us get close to them. Rick was our age. Megan was a year older. He was my first” --he swallowed-- “everything. My first boyfriend. My first real crush. My first kiss. My first…time.”

“You were in love with him.” Isaac patted Ethan’s hip.

“No, I don’t think so,” Ethan answered in a detached voice. “It didn’t feel like it did with Danny or with--”

Isaac wouldn’t have been able to hear Ethan’s next word if he hadn’t been a werewolf.

“--you.”

Isaac blinked as a warm chill, a happy terror, washed over him. Had Ethan really just said that he was--

Ethan cleared his throat. “Anyway, I cared about him, and I was completely infatuated. I mean, you saw the picture, he was really hot, and he was fun to be with. He had this...light that I hadn’t been around in a long time. It was wholesome and compelling. The world was still that wonderful place for him that it had stopped being for me, and I think I let myself get lost in the fantasy for awhile. I pretended I was just a normal guy crushing on a cute boy and sneaking out at night to meet him on the beach.” Ethan laughed and something approaching happiness sparked in his scent. “The two of us and Aiden and Megan spent the full moon together that month, wolfed out and running across the wet sand, splashing through the midnight surf, rolling around and chasing each other.” Ethan’s scent became bittersweet. “He wasn’t just an assignment; he was my boyfriend.”

“So what happened?” Isaac asked softly.

“The fantasy ended.” Ethan’s voice was distant as he stared at the blank television screen mounted to the wall across from them. “Rick’s mom wouldn’t join the pack.”

“So you...”

“Deucalion had a party.”

“A party?” *to celebrate murdering them?*

“He had been dating – *courting* as he called it – Leslie, so she trusted him. He hosted a party and invited her and all the adult members of her pack to the house where we were staying. Kali and Ennis were there at the party too, but he had arranged for Aiden to be out with Megan, and Rick and I were alone at his house.”

“So you knew ahead of time?”
“Oh yes,” Ethan whispered, voice tight, “it was premeditated and in cold blood.”

Isaac rubbed Ethan’s chest, his thumb curling under the edge of his v-neck and massaging his warm, smooth skin. “You wouldn’t do that now, and I know you didn’t want to then.”

Ethan shook his head. “That doesn’t bring Rick back.”

Isaac wanted to ask questions, but he waited for Ethan to resume the story when he was ready.

“The plan was for Deucalion to get Leslie alone at the party and spring everything on her, tell her she had a choice to make: She could kill her pack, take their power, and join us, but Rick and Megan would get to live...or we would kill them all.”

“But she wouldn’t join?”

“No.” Ethan let out a ragged sigh. “I really thought she would for Rick and Megan’s sake. I knew he would hate me when he found out, but I didn’t think it would come to...”

“I think” –Isaac licked his lips and brushed his thumb over Ethan’s collarbone– “it’s an impossible choice to make for someone who’s a good parent and a good alpha. I mean the conflicting instincts...”

“Yeah, I know,” Ethan said quietly. “What we did was unconscionable.”

“But Aiden let Megan go?”

“Yeah.” Ethan breathed the word against Isaac’s chest. “The night before everything went down, after Deucalion told us the plan, he came to my room and said we should just run away right then and there. That we weren’t” –Ethan let out a dry laugh– “killers.”

“You’re not,” Isaac whispered.

“Isaac–”

“You’re not. You’re more than that.”

“I wasn’t that day.” Ethan disentangled himself from Isaac and sat up. “I was a coward. I was afraid of Deucalion. When we joined the alpha pack, he said it was for life, that we could never leave and that if we tried he would hunt us down...but not to kill us.”

The look on Ethan’s face made Isaac’s blood run cold, but he had to ask. “What did he say he would do?”

“Make us watch while he took turns torturing us until we killed each other to make it stop.” Ethan’s tone was emotionless and his eyes were distant with imagined horrors.

Isaac grabbed Ethan’s arms and shook him out of his daze. “Then you were protecting yourself and Aiden.”

Ethan shook his head and looked away. “Aiden was right. We should have run...everything changed after that.”

“What happened?” Isaac whispered.

Ethan flashed his icy blue eyes at him.
“But you were an alpha.”

“I felt it.” Ethan smirked and continued in a humorless voice. “Killing Keith and the others in my old pack felt good.” The tips of Ethan’s teeth extended into half-fangs. “It was justice. But with Rick it was murder. I haven’t...” Ethan’s cheeks flushed and his eyes cooled to a troubled brown. “I haven’t been able to feel good about myself since.”

Isaac wrapped him up in a hug and kissed his neck. “Trust me, there’s a lot to feel good about.”

“I haven’t told you about it yet,” Ethan whispered.

“I don’t need to hear any more.”

“No.” Ethan pried himself out of Isaac’s grip and glared. “I want to tell you what I did.”

“Okay.” Isaac glared back and took Ethan’s hand. “But I meant what I said. It’s not going to change anything between us.”

Ethan drew in a deep breath and let it out slowly, visibly calming himself. “I convinced Aiden that we needed to wait. If Leslie joined us, Rick and Megan would live and the killing of the rest of her pack would be on her hands, not ours.”

Isaac arched an eyebrow but stayed silent.

Ethan laughed bitterly and shrugged one shoulder. “Yeah, Aiden didn’t buy that either. He wanted to leave that night and send them a warning message as soon as we were outta town.”

“Aiden?”

Ethan pushed his hand away and frowned. “Yeah. Aiden.”

Isaac gave Ethan a small apologetic nod and shifted closer on the couch.

“I was a mess that night when I got to Rick’s house. He noticed of course, and I couldn’t lie to him, so I just said it was a pack problem, and Deucalion would know and be mad if I told him.” Ethan stared at the sliver of couch cushion between them. “I don’t know why I said that. I should have just come clean. That’s pretty much what Aiden did when Megan realized something was wrong.”

Isaac covered Ethan’s knee with his hand. “You should have never had to be in that position.”

“But I was, and what I did is on me and no one else.” Ethan reached for Isaac’s hand but pulled his own away at the last moment. “I kept waiting for the text that it was all over, that Leslie had killed her pack and I could leave. I was prepared to break Rick’s heart, but...” He let out a sob.

Isaac wrapped his arms around Ethan and resisted his efforts to pull away.

“I broke his neck instead.” Ethan trembled and sputtered. “Two words. Deucalion sent two words: Kill him – and I did. I fucking did.”

Isaac tried to tug Ethan’s head against his shoulder, but he wouldn’t budge. He met Isaac’s eyes with glowing blue ones.

“I kissed him. And my hands landed on his neck and his chin and–and I didn’t even think. I-”

“Ethan–”
“I killed him, Isaac!”

A tear rolled down Isaac’s cheek as Ethan clung to the front of shirt and broke down in shuddering sobs. Isaac thought the story was over but–

“I covered his mouth and nose so he couldn’t breathe, and I kept his neck twisted at the wrong angle so it couldn’t heal.”

“Deucalion was the one who–”

“I freaked out when it was over.” Ethan laughed, sharp and fast. “I tried to revive him. I did CPR. Over and over–”

“Ethan–”

“Aiden found me at their house and dragged me away from the body.”

Isaac didn’t know what to say, so he held Ethan and rubbed his back.

Ethan pulled his head back and met Isaac’s gaze with red-ringed eyes and a tear-streaked face. “Aiden was disappointed in me. He didn’t say it, but it was obvious. He didn’t think I would go through with it...I didn’t either.”

“Was Deucalion mad that Aiden had let Megan go?”

Ethan flinched and nodded. “Oh yes. He punished Aiden...a lot. But he was p...” Ethan sniffled and lowered his head to Isaac’s chest again. “He was proud of me, so he let Aiden off easy. Megan and the other teens and the kids in the pack fled town, and he didn’t even care enough to go after them.”

Isaac nodded as the pieces fell into place. “So I’m guessing those texts aren’t really from Rick, but from Megan using his number?”

“Yeah,” Ethan whispered, nudging Isaac backward on the couch and shifting on top of him. “I couldn’t bring myself to delete him from my phone. I guess she kept his account active.”

Isaac spread his legs so that Ethan could lie between them. He ran his hand down the side of Ethan’s face and nuzzled his chin against the top of his head.

“I don’t deserve this.” Ethan trembled and snuggled against Isaac’s chest.

“Yes, you do,” Isaac whispered, squeezing Ethan close with one hand and trailing his other hand up and down Ethan’s back.

“She’s coming to kill me...and I might let her.”

“I’ll stop her.” Isaac stroked Ethan’s cheek and let his eyes flare with heat. If they had to turn cold and blue to do it, then so be it.

Chapter End Notes

Feedback is greatly appreciated! I am still planning to try to accelerate the posting schedule, but realistically it probably won’t happen till after the New Year since the
holidays are rather disruptive.
“Thanks for the ride,” Isaac said as he climbed off the back of Ethan’s motorcycle in the school parking lot. Malia and Lydia were sitting a couple dozen feet away on a bench along the sidewalk that led to the main entrance.

Ethan smirked at him, the corners of his eyes crinkled and his scent creamy-smooth with affection. “So I’ll see you tonight?”

Isaac licked his lips and nodded. “Yeah.”

Ethan’s smirk softened into a smile and he stood, straddling the motorcycle. Isaac realized what he was doing a half-second before it was too late and turned his head as Ethan leaned into his personal space. The kiss landed on Isaac’s cheek and Ethan cleared his throat and looked away as he withdrew and sat back down.

“Uh, bye.” Isaac bent and kissed Ethan’s cheek too. Maybe it wouldn’t be awkward if Isaac pretended this had always been how he planned to bid Ethan farewell.

Ethan furrowed his brow and blinked and – nope, it was still awkward.

Isaac breathed a sigh of relief as Ethan puttered out of the parking lot and whipped onto the road with a noisy rumble.

After Ethan’s story about what had happened with Rick, Isaac had sat with him as he reminisced about their brief relationship and about Rick in general. Once he had gotten it out of his system, Isaac had tried to distract him by filling him in on Ms. Newcastle’s visit that morning and the next steps in the adoption process.

They had also discussed Isaac's plans to search the school for the darach's journal with Lydia, Liam, and Malia that afternoon. Ethan had offered to help, but as tempted as Isaac was to let him – after all Ethan was indisputably more experienced at scent location than the rest of them, and Isaac didn't exactly hate spending time with him – he had politely rejected Ethan's offer, and thankfully Ethan hadn't pushed it. Isaac wanted to keep the search a pack activity, minus Scott and Stiles unfortunately.

Isaac and Ethan had spent the remainder of their time together sitting on Ethan’s couch watching TV. For such a mundane activity it had felt weird as hell, and almost every time Isaac had opened his mouth it had been with the intention of telling Ethan about his relationship with Stiles. He couldn’t do it. Ethan smelled too vulnerable, and he kept looking at Isaac like he was the only thing holding him together. It was pretty damn obvious that Ethan no longer viewed them as just friends, and Isaac himself felt more like he was trying to work up the nerve to tell his boyfriend that he was cheating on him than to tell his friend that he had entered a new relationship. It didn’t help that Ethan was being touchy feely or that he kept trying to reassure Isaac that he was okay, apparently misinterpreting Isaac’s anxiety as worry about Megan and her pack’s revenge plans – and part of Isaac’s anxiety was about that, but the rest was about the news he had to deliver.

Ethan had invited Isaac over for dinner that night, and of course Isaac wasn’t stupid enough to have dinner alone with Ethan, but Aiden and Malia were going to be there too, and since he still needed to
find a way to tell Ethan about Stiles he had reluctantly accepted. Ethan had been surprised by his casual willingness to share a meal with Aiden. Isaac was surprised too, but he figured he deserved to be punished for what he had done, and there was no harsher punishment than enduring Aiden’s company. In fact perhaps Isaac was being too hard on himself. He had accidentally strung someone along, not set fire to an orphanage or drowned a basket of puppies. Did he really deserve a night with Aiden as penance? Anyway, it had seemed important to Ethan, and the last thing Isaac wanted was to disappoint him any more than he already had to.

“Liam here yet?” Isaac asked, ignoring the knowing look Lydia shot him and the way she glanced after Ethan. She was wrong for once. Nothing had happened between them. All the dinners in the world with Aiden couldn't atone for something as egregious as cheating on Stiles, and there was no way Isaac was going to let that happen.

“Not yet,” she answered.

“What’s with her?” Isaac asked, nodding at Malia. Her eyes were closed and her legs were crossed underneath her on the bench.

“She’s meditating.” Lydia smiled at her. “It’s something I’m teaching her to help with her control.”

“Is it working?”

“Well she hasn’t reacted to you, has she?”

Isaac stepped closer to the werecoyote and waved a hand in front of her face, half-expecting her to strike at him. She didn’t. “Ma–”

“Don’t say her name. You’ll break her concentration. It’s the only thing she listens for.”

Isaac arched his brow. “Really?”

Lydia nodded.

“Oh damn, what am I gonna do with all this deer meat?” No response. “Whoa, and why is Aiden sending me all these nudes?!” Still nothing.

Lydia snickered. “Satisfied?”

Isaac shrugged.

“She’s improving.” Lydia angled her body toward Malia and regarded her with concern. “I just hope she’s ready for tomorrow.”

“Do you think she is?” Isaac asked. Tomorrow would be Malia’s first day of school. “She won’t be able to meditate in the middle of class.”

“No, but she can step out and regain her composure.” Lydia frowned. “I checked her schedule. She has three classes without anyone in the pack or Aiden or Ethan. Those are the ones that worry me.”

A twinge of anxiety twisted in Isaac’s stomach as he realized something. “It’s Liam’s first day as a werewolf tomorrow too. He’s a year younger than us, so I don’t think he has any of the same classes. But we do all have cross country practice together after school.”

“At least he’s used to having classes and going to school. She hasn’t been in eight years.”

Isaac eyed his new packmate skeptically. “I’m surprised she’s even going to high school, much less
starting two months into the year as a junior.”

Lydia bristled at the comment. “She’s smart, and she needs to spend time with people our age, especially her pack. Her dad considered having her home schooled until she could get her GED, but Aiden and I convinced him otherwise.”

Isaac’s eyes widened. Lydia could certainly be persuasive, but he couldn’t reconcile the image of the stern man he had briefly met the previous weekend taking parenting advice from Aiden. It also simply didn’t seem like very good advice.

“Won’t she be incredibly behind academically?”

“Yes, but I’m planning to talk to Morrell tomorrow about shadowing her for this week. That way I can help her adjust and get up to speed with her classes.”

“Isn’t it...” Isaac hesitated but continued when Lydia gave him an expectant look. “Isn’t it weird for you spending so much time with her? You know, since she’s seeing Aiden?”

Lydia took a long breath, her scent filling with distress. “Yes, but I can’t control who either of them date.” She glanced at Malia with a look Isaac couldn’t interpret. Wistful? Fond? Protective? “Besides, I think they’re good for each other. They don’t have any baggage, and he really is her anchor.” She giggled and shook her head. “All of him. She makes him happy too.”

Isaac sniggered and rolled his eyes. “Do they even do anything but fuck?”

Lydia pursed her lips, but they twitched with amusement. “Do you and Ethan?”

Isaac glared at her and shot a nervous look at Malia. Her eyes were still closed and she showed no indication that she was aware of their conversation.

“We’re friends.” He folded his arms, legitimately offended. “We hang out and do other stuff too.”

Lydia shrugged one shoulder and smiled. “So do they, and it’s really none of our business.”

The smile didn’t reach her eyes and she smelled sad. Isaac’s irritation drained away as he crouched beside her and brushed the backs of their hands together. He understood that she was trying to be reasonable and supportive, and as much fun as it would have been if she had sat there badmouthing Aiden to him, he didn’t want to instigate anything that would make her feel worse.

She squeezed his hand and tugged it onto the edge of the bench beneath her own. Her hazel eyes softened as he tilted his head and gave her his cheekiest smile.

“We’re not going to have sex anymore,” Isaac whispered.

Lydia laughed, low and playful, and trailed her fingertips over his knuckles. “Well damn. That fantasy was short lived.”

“Oh god, where was that offer six months ago? He cleared his throat. “Me and Ethan aren’t going to have sex anymore.”

She smirked. “Sure you’re not.”

“I’m with Stiles now.”

“What?!”
“You remember I told you we were going to hang out last night? It turned out to be a date...and now we’re official.”

“Oh my god!” She squealed and clapped her hands.

Isaac glanced at Malia again. If that hadn’t disturbed her concentration nothing would.

Lydia hugged him, enveloping him in excited joy. It was tangy and sweet, and smelled incredible against the backdrop of her floral perfume.

He hugged back as tightly as he dared, touched that she cared enough to have such an emotional response to his relationship.

“So how did Ethan take it?” she asked, growing serious as she sat back.

“Oh uh...” Isaac dropped his eyes to the ground. “I haven’t told him yet.”

“Auh!” She swatted his shoulder. “You hung out with your ex–”

“Not my ex.”

She waved a dismissive hand. “Fine your friend with benefits” –she curled her fingers into air quotes– “without telling him you’re in a new relationship? Isaac, that’s frankly very shady.”

“I’m having dinner with him tonight, and–”

Her jaw dropped and she blinked at him. “Oh my god, you’re a terrible boyfriend!” Her face hardened. “You can’t do that to Stiles.”

Isaac scowled. “I’m only seeing him to tell him about Stiles. And Aiden and Malia are going to be there too.”

“What?” Malia’s eyes snapped open, and she shifted on the bench, shaking out of her rigid posture. “What about me?” She looked around. “Are we ready to start? Where’s Liam?”

Isaac swallowed and gave Lydia a panicked look.

“What’s wrong?” Malia asked him, cocking her head.

Lydia rolled her eyes. “Isaac’s nervous about the dinner he’s going to have with you and Aiden and Ethan tonight.”

She wasn’t lying. Isaac was very nervous about that.

“It’s okay.” Malia smiled reassuringly. “Aiden’s cooking, not Ethan. We’ll be fine.”

Isaac snickered. “Have you tried Ethan’s cooking before?”

She grimaced and nodded. “Once...it made me miss the days when I used to eat roadkill.”

They shared a laugh, and Lydia gave them a confused look before changing the subject. The next few minutes were spent chatting about what Malia could expect for her first day of school with Isaac and Lydia giving her tips. During the conversation Lydia kept catching Isaac’s eye and throwing him pointed looks. He ignored her. It wasn’t like he was trying to get out of telling Ethan about Stiles. He was going to do it. He just needed to work up to it.
It was a relief when Aiden’s motorcycle revved into the parking lot with Liam riding on the back.

Liam hopped off and waved at them as he removed his helmet, which Isaac was pleased to see him wearing. He didn’t like that Aiden wasn’t also wearing a helmet. His utter indifference to Aiden’s risk of head injury notwithstanding, it set a bad example for Liam for him to go without one. Never mind that Isaac himself only sometimes wore a helmet when he rode with Scott or Ethan. He trusted their driving; Aiden probably drove like a maniac.

Liam hung the helmet on the handlebars and grinned at Aiden. His claws glinted in the sunlight as he raised his hand into the air as if to swipe. Aiden snarled and held his palm up with his claws also extended and the muscles in his forearm and bicep bulging. They growled and slammed their hands together with a resounding clap. Then, hands still clasped, Aiden stood and Liam leaned forward. Their chests collided in a bizarre werewolf bro-hug and they slapped each other’s backs and mock-growled.

“Your cheek kiss with Ethan was much less ridiculous,” Lydia whispered.

“Tell me about it.”

Malia crossed the grass and stood on the pavement beside the motorcycle as they finished.

“Make the yellow sauce I like for dinner.”

Aiden chuckled. “It’s hollandaise sauce, and it won’t go with what we’re having.”

“Make it anyway.” Malia slung a long leg over the motorcycle, and Aiden sat and scooted back, making room for her to climb into his lap. She gyrated her hips, grinding against him in her thigh-high denim shorts and kissing his neck.

“I can’t say no to a request like that.” He trailed his hands down her back and squeezed her ass.

“I know.” She bounced and nodded innocently at him. “That’s why I asked this way. I wanted to increase my odds.”

Aiden tilted his head and smirked. “Well played.” He kissed her.

Isaac turned to Lydia with concern.

She swept her hair back and shrugged. “His hollandaise sauce is really good.”

“It sure is!” Liam declared as he joined them by the benches. “I’ve had his sauce too. It’s creamy yet mouthwatering.”

“I can’t believe we’re talking about actual sauce,” Isaac muttered.

Liam’s forehead creased with confusion, but he shrugged and shifted closer to Isaac.

Isaac growled as their shoulders brushed.

“What?” Liam frowned at Isaac but didn’t move away.

“You reek.”

Liam flushed with embarrassment. “I got sweaty in the woods.”

Isaac grumbled but draped an arm around Liam. The fabric of his t-shirt was damp across his
shoulders, and his face and neck glistened with perspiration, but that wasn’t the problem. The offensive odor was Aiden. By the smell of it, they had spent the entire afternoon wrestling and rolling around together. Possessive rage bubbled beneath Isaac’s skin as he rubbed brisk fingers over Liam’s back and pressed the sides of their bodies together, desperate to mask Aiden’s scent with his own. Liam was supposed to smell like pack, not like a smug, sauce-making psychopath.

“Awww, I’m glad to see you too!” Liam grinned and threw his arms around Isaac, burying his face against Isaac’s chest. “Sorry I smell bad.”

Isaac tucked his chin over Liam’s head and squeezed him tight. Aiden and Malia were still saying their goodbyes, so Isaac shot Aiden a dirty look and flipped him off before stroking Liam’s back with the same hand.

Aiden smirked and winked at Isaac as he drew Malia closer and ran his hand through her hair.

Asshole.

Lydia laughed and shook her head at Liam. “Why is it you had to act like you were going to tear Aiden’s head off before you could hug him, but you have no trouble cuddling up to Isaac?”

Liam turned his head to look at her, rubbing his cheek across Isaac’s chest. “Isaac’s my First Bond. You wouldn’t understand ‘cause it’s a werewolf thing.”

“Oh, I see.” She nodded sarcastically.

Liam tipped his head up and smiled sweetly at Isaac as he clung to his back. Isaac returned the look with unguarded affection, and their packbond throbbed and hummed, shooting off sparks behind Isaac’s eyes and soothing away every bit of his jealous anger. Liam was right; it was a werewolf thing. Lydia wouldn’t understand.

“Okay, do you two have Stiles’ scent?” Lydia asked, directing the question to Liam and Malia once Aiden had left.

“I’ll know it when I smell it,” Malia answered.

“I think I will too,” Liam said, uncertainty coloring his voice.

“He smells like rich, dark roast coffee bathed in sunlight and sweetened with honey. There are also notes of sage, sap, and rain from his darach possession. The effect is like sunshine on a spring morning in a little cafe overlooking the woods.”

Everyone gaped at Isaac.

He coughed and shrugged. “But uhm, yeah, I’m sure you’ll know it when you smell it.”

“What kinda journal are we lookin’ for?” Malia asked.

“Brown I think,” Isaac answered.

Liam giggled and side-eyed him. “What’s it made out of?”

“Oh, leather, and he said it was dated from the 1940s, so the pages probably smell old and musty.”

Lydia unzipped her purse and took out a folded square of paper. “I’ll show you around the school and we’ll do a walk-through of your classes while we look,” she said to Malia.
Malia nodded and they split up with Isaac and Liam setting off to do a lap around the perimeter of the school grounds while Lydia and Malia entered the main building.

“Slow down,” Isaac shouted to Liam as the eager new beta jogged away. “We need to be thorough not fast.”

“It’s okay, I smell fast!” Liam called back over his shoulder.

Isaac huffed and sprinted after him, closing the distance in a few strides and snagging the back of Liam’s shirt. “You’re not doing it right.”

Liam stopped and folded his arms, a pout forming across his bottom lip.

Isaac patted Liam’s shoulder and tilted his head. “Like this.” He took a deep breath through his nose as he slowly turned in a semicircle.

“Aiden says I have to use more than just my nose when I’m tracking someone, and that if I go too slow they’ll get away.”

Isaac glared at him. “Yeah, well I don’t think the journal is moving around or making much noise.”

Liam furrowed his brow and nodded. “You have a point. I think he might agree.”

Isaac growled and grabbed Liam’s arm, dragging him forward. “What do you smell?”

Liam sniffed the air and exhaled slowly. “You, our pack, your mom, grass, bird poop, that social worker from this morning, like fifteen other people’s scents I don’t recognize, and a piece of orange.”

Isaac glanced at the slice of fruit a few feet up ahead on the sidewalk where it was teeming with ants. He clapped Liam’s back. “Good job. It’s more like twenty or thirty people’s scents but it’s hard to differentiate them until you get used to them. I don’t know most of them either, but they smell like people I’m used to smelling around school. If you really concentrate you can begin to decipher their moods, cosmetics, clothes, and stuff like that. Someone spilled some milk over there before the weekend.” Isaac pointed first into the grass, then over at the flowerbed planted around the base of a nearby tree. “And don’t forget nature smells like that pine tree and the flowers. There’s some rats or mice or something living nearby too.”

“Wow!” Liam grinned and gave him an impressed look before his face fell. “Do I really need to pay attention to all that?”

“Nah, not in general, and you got most of the things anyway. Just try to passively watch out for scents that seem out of place, but leather and paper aren’t unusual enough to stand out, so you need to be more careful while we’re looking. Also, you said you smelled our pack. Stiles is in our pack, so he might blend in, but you really need to look for his scent specifically.”

Liam frowned. “It’s like a collective pack scent.” He sniffed a few times. “No wait, I can pick out Lydia and Malia if I try.” He took another long whiff and his face lit up. “And now I smell Ethan and Scott on you, and Aiden on me...but I don’t think I smell Stiles.”

“Ethan and Aiden aren’t–”

“Yeah, I know.” Liam sighed and they resumed walking down the sidewalk that framed the front of the school. “So how’d things go with Ethan? Did you cockblock yourself like you wanted?”

Isaac groaned and shoved Liam's shoulder. “He’s going through something so I didn't bring up the
just-friends thing yet.”

Liam’s heart accelerated and anxiety filled the air between them. “You mean that crazy pack that wants to hurt them?”

Isaac probably shouldn’t have been surprised Aiden had confided in Liam – he was clearly using him to try to infiltrate the pack after all – but it still caught him off guard. “Yeah.”

“We have to protect them.”

“Yeah.”

Liam did a double take. “Oh...I thought you were gonna argue.”

Isaac shook his head and his eyes flared with heat. “If that bitch comes near Ethan, I’ll tear her throat out.”

“That’s the spirit!” Liam bumped Isaac’s arm with his fist.

They continued chatting as they completed their circuit around the school and entered the sophomore hallway. Liam pointed out his locker as they passed it, and Isaac laughed and pointed out his own from the year before. As they sniffed around a display case containing trophies, Liam brought up a new topic.

“So can you come to dinner on Tuesday night? My mom keeps bugging me to have you over.” Liam’s tone was casual, but his scent was full of nervous anticipation.

It was adorable and Isaac made a point of bracing himself against Liam’s shoulder as he stood on tiptoes to check the top of the display case. “Yeah, Tuesday night sounds good.”

“Awesome!” Liam punched the air and grinned. “It’s gonna be fun.”

“Yes, it will.” Isaac squeezed the back of Liam’s neck as he guided him down the hall. “Oh hey, I just remembered I wanted to ask you something too.”

“Hmm?”

“Do you know a guy named Brett from Devenford? I can’t remember what his last name is but he’s about my height, wavy brown hair, blue...” Isaac trailed off as Liam’s eyes flashed amber and his hands closed into fists.

“I hate that guy.” He growled in the back of his throat.

Isaac’s stomach dropped and a wave of cold guilt washed over him.

“How do you know him?” Liam demanded, anger billowing from his pores.

“I met him Friday and saw him again yesterday.”

“What?!?” Liam’s mouth dropped open, fangs protruding from his lips. “How?”

“How’s not important.”

“I wanna know how you met him!” Liam’s eyes blazed with fire and his fists tightened by his sides. “TELL ME!”
Isaac let his face shift as he stepped into Liam’s space. “Stop.”

A muscle in Liam’s jaw twitched and his whole body quivered with energy. His brow thickened and his face turned feral. An instant later he lunged forward and slammed against Isaac’s chest, his claws curling through Isaac’s shirt and puncturing the skin beneath.

Isaac had been ready for it and had squared his stance. The force of Liam’s strike was too strong to resist completely, but Isaac only budged about a foot before he countered the assault, knocking Liam backward and pinning him against the wall with his hands clamped around Liam’s biceps.

Liam snarled and dug his claws deeper into Isaac’s chest, ripping through his pectoral muscles and slicing open one of his nipples.

“STOP!” Isaac roared in Liam’s face.

Liam curled his lips back and snapped at Isaac with his fangs, but Isaac held him out of range.

“STOP!” Isaac tamped down his anger and forced his eyes to cool. He needed to regain his composure and help Liam calm down. “Stop.”

The rage didn’t dissipate from Liam’s body, but a human gasp shuddered from his mouth. “CAN’T.”

“Yes you can.” Isaac brushed a finger over Liam’s bicep as he held him in place.

Liam tightened his grip on Isaac’s chest, shredding more skin and muscle, but it seemed less like an attack and more like he was clinging to a lifeline. He closed his mouth, lips bulging but fangs covered. “TRYING.”

“I know,” Isaac whispered, ignoring the sharp, burning pain and the rivulets of blood that trickled down Liam’s arms and dripped from his elbows to the floor between their feet. “Breathe with me like we did on the phone the other night.”

Liam shook his head, trembling and growling, but the growls were more ragged and less hostile, and he struggled against Isaac with less force than before.

“Breathe in and hold it.” Isaac took a long, deep breath.

Liam took a short, clipped breath through his nose.

“Almost.” Isaac channeled calm through their packbond and chanced easing his grip on Liam enough to rub his arms.

It was a mistake.

Liam snarled and sprang forward, slamming Isaac against the wall on the opposite side of the hallway and savagely raking his claws down Isaac’s chest and into his ribs, carving out deep gashes.

Isaac howled with fury and clamped his arms around Liam. For a split second he meant to tear Liam’s back open and hurl him to the ground, but then Liam shuddered against him and their packbond throbbed with fear. Isaac’s anger evaporated in an instant, and he instinctively wrapped Liam up in a tight hug and nuzzled his ear. “You’re safe. I’m not gonna hurt you. We’ll figure this out.”

Liam growled and shook but the pressure on Isaac’s ribs eased. “Breathe?”

“Yeah, breathe,” Isaac whispered, rubbing Liam’s back. “In.”
They inhaled together and held it, their chests expanding against each other.

“Out.”

Liam’s breath tickled Isaac’s neck, and Isaac shuddered as he realized that Liam could have gone for his jugular.

“In.”

Isaac banished the ridiculous notion as he trailed his hand down Liam’s spine.

“Out.”

Their packbond surged with security and trust from both directions. A few scratches were one thing, but Liam would have never seriously injured Isaac.

A few minutes later they were sitting on the floor in the hallway facing each other. Liam was fully human now, and Isaac’s chest and sides had quit bleeding.

“I don’t know what to say,” Liam mumbled, staring at his lap.

“Say you’re sorry.”

Liam looked up and gave Isaac a tentative smile. “I am. I’m very sorry.”

“Okay.” Isaac gripped Liam’s shoulder, but then in a burst of affection cupped the side of his face. “You’re forgiven.”

“Really?” Liam nuzzled Isaac’s hand and gave him a look that was fraught with tortured emotions. “You don’t hate me?”

“Ptah!” Isaac grazed his thumb across Liam’s cheekbone. “I hate you so much. I can’t possibly understand what you’re going through or relate at all.”

Liam sniffled and surged forward, wrapping his arms around Isaac’s neck.

Isaac hugged him with inhuman strength and tried not to freak out about how tightly their packbond was wrapped around his heart. Part of Isaac wanted to run out of the school and hide until he got some emotional distance, but Liam needed him and that trumped all else.

Liam’s lip trembled as he pulled back. “If I had done that to my parents...or to Mason...”

“You wouldn’t have,” Isaac answered, confident he was right. “You knew it was okay to rage out on me.”

“This was not okay.” Liam’s face crumpled as he dropped his gaze to the blood-soaked remnants of Isaac’s shirt and the raw, healed-over skin visible through the tatters. His heart pounded and his eyes glistened as he lifted his hands and studied the gore caked beneath the nails of his sticky red fingers.

“Stop.” Isaac grabbed Liam’s hands and kept his fingers covered as he flicked away the biggest chunks of flesh with his thumb. “We’re gonna figure out who your anchor is and—”

“Brett ruined my life.” Liam tugged his hands away and crawled forward to prop himself against the wall next to Isaac. “That’s why I freaked out. It—it smelled like you liked him, like, you know, liked him.”
“Yeah...I had sex with him.” Isaac draped his arm around Liam’s shoulders in an attempt to keep the words from stinging. “I didn’t know you hated him or I wouldn’t have.”

“You had sex with him?!” Liam glared at Isaac before lowering his head and collapsing against Isaac’s side.

“Liam–”

“I’m okay.” His voice was harsh and animalistic, but his fingers were soft as he hooked them into the holes of Isaac’s shirt. “I’m pissed but I’m okay.”

Isaac rubbed his back. “What did he do?”

“He blamed me for losing a game we should have won. Said I let too many players get past me.” Liam sat up and shrugged. “I did.”

“Everybody has an off game.”

Liam laughed, sharp and bitter. “Him and the rest of the team took me out to the old abandoned zoo and put me in one of the enclosures.”

“What? Why would they–”

“They pelted me with lacrosse balls.”

Isaac snarled and dragged Liam back down against his chest, wrapping protective arms around him. Fuck Brett and his stupid bedroom eyes and rippling abs. Isaac was going to kick his ass the next time he saw him.

Liam sighed and relaxed into the embrace, laying his head on Isaac’s shoulder. “I always had anger issues, but they got a lot worse after that. I fouled out every game until Coach cut me from the team.”

“Is that why you changed schools? So you could be on our lacrosse team?”

“No.” Embarrassment thickened in Liam’s scent.

“What happened?” Isaac asked softly, massaging Liam’s shoulder with his thumb.

“That all happened last season. I assumed I’d be allowed to play this coming season, so I practiced every day, and I made sure to keep my grades up, and I stayed the hell away from Brett and the rest of the team as much as I could...Then a few weeks ago Coach told me I could forget about playing this year, that he’d never let me back on his team.” Liam’s hand closed into a fist, tearing more of Isaac’s ruined shirt. “I was so fucking mad. I didn’t plan it or anything, but I-I trashed his car. I busted all the windows and I wailed on it with my lacrosse stick until some of the guys pulled me away...I was expelled the next morning.”

“Liam, I–”

“I know I fucked up.” Liam raised his head. His eyes were damp and unfocused. “My parents were so frickin’ ashamed of me, they couldn’t even look at me. I’ve been in anger management ever since, and it was helping, but now–now it’s like all my progress is destroyed and I never–” Liam gasped. “I can’t–” He trembled and his eyes blazed amber as if to burn away the tears that threatened to fall. “I never know when I’m gonna explode. And I hate it! I don’t wanna be that guy.”

Isaac gently pried Liam's hand away from his shirt and uncurled his fist. “Then it’s a good thing you
became a werewolf."

“What?!”

Isaac smirked at him. “My life sucked until I became a werewolf. I had no control over anything when I was human.” He squeezed Liam’s hand. “But now everything is so much better.”

“Yeah but you...” Liam curled his other arm around Isaac’s leg. “Before you lived with Scott and Melissa you were... Our situations are really different. My parents are always there for me.”

Isaac shrugged. “Learning control is learning control. And you’re doing really well.”

Liam huffed and pulled his hands away so he could wave them at Isaac’s chest. “Look what I did to you!”

“Yeah, to another werewolf who could take it. And you stopped. This is the worst it gets, Liam.” Isaac caught his eye and held it. “It only gets easier from here, I promise. Once we figure out who your anchor is you’re gonna be able to control yourself like a boss.”

Liam cocked his head and gave Isaac a thoughtful look. “Maybe it’s you. You stopped me and calmed me down.”

Isaac laughed and tugged the wet, bloodied shirt away from his skin. “Yeah, you wouldn’t have done this if I was your anchor.”

“Oh.” Liam’s face fell. “Then I guess that rules out Aiden too.”

Cool relief followed by seething anger poured over Isaac as he recalled Liam’s description of how Aiden had corralled him during the full moon and traded blows with him until Liam had worn himself out and given up. “Yeah, not Aiden,” Isaac said between clenched teeth.

They fell silent, and Isaac assumed Liam was pondering who his anchor might be, but when he spoke he changed the subject.

“So why did you have sex with Brett anyway?”

Isaac laughed and smirked at him. “Take a wild guess.”

Liam groaned. “Ugh, why do my friends always think Brett’s hot? He’s so lame. Besides you’re crushing on Ethan.”

“Oh, uh, Ethan was involved too.”

“Involved?”

Isaac shrugged. “Threesome.”

Liam gaped at him. “Seriously? And yet you’re trying to convince everyone and yourself that you’re just friends with him?”

“It was a friendly threesome.”

“And you would have to pick Brett to do it with,” Liam muttered. He folded his arms and gave Isaac a pleading look. “Please don’t date him. It would really bother me.”

Isaac licked his lips and focused on keeping his heartbeat steady. He wanted to tell Liam about his
relationship with Stiles, but Liam wouldn’t understand considering that Isaac had just announced that he’d had a threesome with Ethan and Brett earlier this weekend.

“I’m not going to date him,” Isaac answered, “and do me a favor and don’t tell anyone about this stuff with Brett or Ethan. I don’t want– It’s, uh, personal.”

“Yeah, of course.” Liam bumped their shoulders together. “I guess Brett must be bisexual. He used to have a girlfriend.”

“Yeah, I’m pretty sure he is,” Isaac answered, recalling that Brett had been dancing with both a guy and a girl when they had met, and that he had seemed interested in both. Pride rushed over Isaac. He and Ethan had turned Brett’s head. Although that might have been in part because they were also– “Hey, did you know Brett’s a werewolf?”

Liam gasped and choked, sputtering out heaving coughs.

Isaac patted his back.

“No way.” Liam clenched his fists and his eyes blazed with golden fire. “There’s no way he’s a werewolf. That’s too much of a coincidence.”

“Dude, it’s Beacon Hills.”

“But–”

“Liam, we wolfed out together. I’m positive.”

Hurt replaced the anger on Liam’s face and he pouted. “You wolfed out with him?”

Isaac snickered and cocked his head. “Does that bother you more than the sex?”

Liam stared off into space for a moment and nodded. “Yeah, I think it does.” He worried his lower lip. “Do you think that’s like a pack thing?”

“I guess.” Isaac shrugged.

“So is he an omega?” Delight flickered across Liam’s face.

“Nah, apparently there’s a pack of Buddhist werewolves on the other side of town.”

“Are you screwing with me?” Liam angled his head toward Isaac’s chest and visibly listened to his heartbeat.

Isaac chuckled and assured him he wasn’t.

They decided to go to the locker room and change into their gym clothes since Isaac’s shirt was shredded and Liam’s had also gotten bloodstained. Before they got up, Liam peeled his over his head and used it to wipe up as much blood as he could from the floor.

Isaac became distracted the moment Liam took off his shirt. He had an amazing body and even in fall still sported a rich, golden tan. His biceps flexed and relaxed as he worked, the thick muscle straining and bulging beneath his smooth skin. His shoulders were strong and rounded, flowing gracefully up into the subtle arch of his trapezius muscles. A dense sprawl of dark hair trailed across his upper chest and clavicle, thinning out over his sternum and pecs as if to line and showcase the hard swell of muscles without obscuring them. His nipples made Isaac’s fingers twitch to play with them. They were pert little brown nubs that graced the centers of dark circles of supple flesh.
Isaac’s gaze tracked lower and he watched the sinews of Liam’s stomach rhythmically tighten and contract as he scrubbed at the stubborn red smudge on the floor.

“You think there’s a mop around here?”

Isaac cleared his throat and forced his eyes up to Liam’s, missing the opportunity to properly gawk at the swirl of fuzzy hair decorating Liam’s navel and the outline of his hipbones as they descended into his pants.

“You can leave it like that. That’s hardly the worst thing that’s happened to this school. Someone’ll find it in the morning and clean it.”

Liam frowned and grunted but quit scrubbing and rose to his feet. He tucked his shirt in one of his back pockets and smiled shyly at Isaac. “Can I have a hug?”

Isaac swallowed and his heart stuttered as he involuntarily raked his eyes over Liam’s body before enveloping it with his own.

“Thanks.” Liam took long, deep breaths and went slack in Isaac’s arms, forgoing squeezing him in favor of melting against him.

Isaac moaned as quietly as he could and angled his hips away. Liam was by far one of the most delicious treats that had ever melted on Isaac.

“Thank you,” Isaac answered with a laugh. The front of his body tingled with pockets of warmth where Liam’s bare skin pressed against his own through the holes in his shirt.

“Hmm? For what?” Liam pulled back and tilted his head, innocent confusion written across his face. 

Fuck. Isaac was such a creep for making this sexual, especially since it wasn’t remotely like that for Liam. Oh yeah, and Isaac had a boyfriend, not to mention another guy he needed to set the record straight with.

*I’m a dickbag.*

Isaac smiled at Liam and rubbed heavy hands across his back and down his shoulders. “Just for being you. I’ve been a lot happier since you’ve been in the pack.”

Liam’s face lit up, his bright blue eyes sparkling as he flashed a toothy grin. “I really love being a werewolf in spite of everything, and that’s pretty much all because of you.”

Warmth coursed through Isaac’s body until–

“And Aiden.”

Isaac growled and Liam laughed – *laughed*, the little asshole.

When they got to the locker room they both threw away their shirts, and Isaac spent a few minutes at the sink washing away the worst of the blood on his torso. He frowned as he took off his blood spattered pants and put on a pair of athletic shorts. He hoped the stains would come out. The loss of the shirt wasn’t a big deal, but the pants were only a couple of months old and one of his favorite pairs.

Liam had already changed into a sleeveless workout shirt and was eying Scott’s locker by the time Isaac was done.
“What’s up?” Isaac asked, trying to figure out what Liam was reacting to.

“This is Scott’s locker right?”

“Yeah.”

“I don’t smell anything.”

Isaac snickered. “Probably a good thing.”

“No, like, I don’t smell anything coming from it. It’s like a blank space.”

Isaac stepped closer and hovered his nose right in front of the ventilated slats. Liam was right; it was like sniffing a void, but that didn’t mean there was nothing to perceive coming from the locker. Isaac’s blood ran cold as he detected a soft, whining buzz just within the edge of his range of preternatural hearing.

“Do you hear that?”

“Hear what?” Liam asked, pressing his head to the metal. “Oh wait, now I do. I don’t know what it is, do you?”

Isaac knew. He would have recognized that awful sound anywhere, despite it being the quietest he had ever heard it.

“It’s the druid amulet.”

“You mean the druid amulet that Stiles stole from that creepy supernatural museum place and wore when he was trying to ritualistically murder Scott in his sleep that one time while all those weird grasshoppers were attacking your house, but then Iron Claw grabbed Stiles and broke his arms like a bunch and bit him super hard, and he was in that coma for awhile and everyone was all ‘Oh no! Stiles is gonna die or turn into a werewolf! Ahhh!’ and you guys couldn’t take the amulet off him because Lydia was convinced it would be hella bad if you did, and she musta been right because it did end up healing him, so it seems like a case of all’s well that ends well, except maybe it’s not because now it’s back and mysteriously sucking all the scent out of Scott’s locker, and that’s kind of ominous – that druid amulet?”

“...yeah, that one.”

“Thought so.” Liam nodded. “What do you think we should do?”

Isaac considered their options for a moment before the answer came to him. “We should get Lydia.”

Chapter End Notes

I hope you guys enjoyed this chapter! There’s a chance I’ll be able to get another chapter out between Christmas and New Year. Things are going to heat up on all fronts very soon, and I’m super excited for the coming week in story time! They’ll be a lot more danger and drama.

I hope Liam’s ‘that druid amulet?’ ramble at the end wasn’t too character breaking. It was just meant as a little humor moment as well as a quick, playful way to re-summarize
those story events for readers since it’s been awhile. I won’t do that type of thing often and he’ll go back to normal next chapter.

**About Character Ages/Years:**

You may have noticed that I made Liam a year older in the story than he was when he joined the show. He’s a sophomore not a freshman, and Isaac, Ethan, Stiles, Scott, Lydia, Malia, Aiden, and Danny are all juniors. Likewise the rest of Liam’s cohort – Mason, Corey, Brett, and Hayden – are also a year older and sophomores. Basically since the show skipped Liam, Mason, and Corey ahead a year in the final season anyway, I decided I’d rather just make them closer in age to the others from the start. That’s not a story retcon; I was always considering doing that so I intentionally kept Liam’s age/year ambiguous until now. I just personally think it works better for Liam to have spent a full year at Devenford and then transferred in his sophomore year instead of only spending a few months and transferring in his freshman year.

I think that also fixes an incongruity with the canon timeline as it relates to sports seasons. Season 1 has lacrosse starting in January, and it continues through season 2 all as the same sports season (Scott, Stiles, and the gang are sophomores). Seasons 3A & 3B are the next fall/start of a new school year (junior year for the older pack) and feature cross country instead. Season 4 then has lacrosse starting again in January. I’m a lot less clear on the sports seasons/times of year in 5, 6A & 6B, and it looks like by 6B they have lacrosse happening at the start of the school year in the fall instead...which seems completely inconsistent to me, but anyway for the sake of this story I'm assuming cross country is always in the fall and lacrosse is always in the spring...which would mean that Liam couldn't even have played a single season of lacrosse at Devenford since lacrosse wouldn't have been happening the first semester of his freshman year, and then he's at Beacon Hills High for the second half of his freshman year/his actual first high school lacrosse season...yet we know that he did play lacrosse at Devenford. So yeah, to me it just all makes a lot more sense if Liam and the others are a year older.

Anyway feedback on this chapter (or if you just want to weigh in on the timeline, lol) is greatly appreciated and Merry Christmas/Happy Holidays everyone!
Abstinence Only

Chapter Notes

Sorry you guys. This chapter was meant to be about twice this length, but I’ve been sick the last week and this was all I could manage.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Isaac called Lydia and explained the situation about the lack of scent coming from Scott’s locker and the telltale hum of the druid amulet. A few minutes later, she and Malia entered the boys locker room.

Malia crinkled her nose and looked around. “This room smells disgusting. Why would anyone come in here?”

“To change their clothes,” Liam answered.

“I’d rather change in the hallway,” she responded.

Liam’s eyes widened and he nodded. “I think the guys would be okay with that!”

Isaac swatted Liam’s arm and glared at him. “That was disrespectful.” He snickered and shrugged. “True, but disrespectful.”

“I don’t understand.” She looked to Lydia for help.

“They want to see you naked,” Lydia answered, cutting a sharp glare at Isaac and Liam.

“Oh, I feel the same way!” She grinned at Isaac and Liam. “But not in here. It smells bad. Let’s go in the hall.”

Lydia sighed and urged Malia closer to the row of lockers where Isaac and Liam stood. “We need to focus on the amulet. Can you hear it too?”

Malia frowned but stepped near enough to hover her ear in front of Scott’s locker over the ventilation slats. “Yes.”

“Friday at Deaton’s, didn’t Stiles say he was going to return the amulet to Ezra?” Lydia asked Isaac.

“I guess he didn’t get a chance to this weekend.” Isaac’s cheeks warmed. He was partly responsible for keeping Stiles busy.

“So let’s open the locker and see what’s going on,” Malia said.

“Hmm.” Isaac leaned over and held his ear beside the locking mechanism as he slowly turned the numbered dial. “If I listen carefully I think I can hear when the tumblers click into place.”

“Dude, that’s so cool!” Liam bounced on the balls of his feet and patted Isaac’s back.

“Unnecessary,” Malia pushed Isaac out of the way and gripped the handle of the locker. With a screeching, metallic crumple she wrenched it open. “There.”
Isaac gaped at her. “You just broke Scott’s locker!”

“He can use one of these other ones.” She swept an arm around the locker-filled room. “Or change in the hallway with me.”

“Look.” Lydia pointed to the interior of the locker. Sitting atop Scott’s gym clothes, deodorant, and other sundry items was a brown leather journal with the druid amulet resting on it. Dim amber light spilled from the stone and reflected off the silver setting and silver chain that coiled around it.

Everyone eyed the amulet speculatively for a few seconds until Liam shrugged and reached past Isaac to snatch it off the journal.

“Liam!” Isaac grabbed his arm, alarmed at the prospect of his packmate coming into contact with the mystic item.

Liam looked up at him and withdrew his hand slowly, still clutching the amulet. “I’m fine. It feels weird, and I don’t like holding it, but it doesn’t hurt.”

Malia sniffed Liam’s arm and tilted her head. “I can’t smell you.” She glanced back at the balled up clothes in the locker. “But now I can smell the journal and Scott’s stuff.”

Isaac looked between Liam and the locker; she was right.

“The darach obviously wanted to mask the journal’s scent so we couldn’t find it,” Lydia said. “That way he could come back later and reclaim it when no one was around.”

“So why didn’t he?” Malia asked.

“He tried,” Isaac answered as the pieces fell into place. “Stiles told me that his dad caught him trying to creep out of the house on Friday night. Then last night, he...uh...” Isaac shuddered and his dick shriveled closer to his body as he recalled the way the darach had terrorized him with that sex dream gone gruesome. “He took control for awhile last night too, but he couldn’t go anywhere.”

“He was probably going to try again tonight,” Lydia said.

“I wonder how he knew the combination to Scott’s locker,” Liam said, “or was that some kind of magic?”

“He knows what Stiles knows, and I think Stiles might just know Scott’s locker combo,” Isaac answered, recalling the way Stiles had casually typed Scott’s password into his laptop a couple of weeks earlier. “He probably thought we’d be less likely to check Scott’s locker, which is true. We did check Stiles’ gym locker and regular locker on Friday.”

“Okay, so, we win and now we have the journal,” Malia said, pulling it out. “What now?”

Isaac pulled his phone out of the pocket of his athletic shorts and groaned. “Now we leave. We’re supposed to have dinner with the twins in less than forty minutes.”

“That’s plenty of time to get there,” Malia answered.

“I need to go home and change,” Isaac crossed the short space to the changing bench in the middle of the room and grabbed his bloodstained jeans, once again hoping they could be salvaged.

Everyone filed out of the room, and Lydia turned and addressed Isaac as they walked down the hallway. “I was going to give you both a ride there but—”
“I can give Isaac a ride!” Liam said, squeezing Isaac’s shoulders and rubbing the base of Isaac’s neck with his thumbs. “My mom should be here to pick me up pretty soon. She won’t mind.”

“Thanks.” Isaac patted Liam’s fingers and leaned into the touch, eager to reaffirm that there were no hard feelings about the incident they’d had earlier.

As they stepped out of the school’s main doors, Malia held the journal out to Lydia. “You’re gonna take this right? I don’t want it.”

“Yes, I’ll–”

She gasped and the brown leather book slipped from her hands as she touched it. With a muted thump, it landed atop one of her open-toed shoes. She didn’t react, instead staring blankly into the distance, her heart racing.

“What’s happening?!” Malia gripped Lydia’s arms, but before she could shake her, Isaac pulled her back.

“She’s having a vision. Don’t interrupt her.”

“Is it safe?” Malia asked, wide eyed with a tinge of panic in her voice.

“Yeah, it’s safe,” Isaac answered with a reassuring smile.

Malia continued to eye Lydia nervously until she snapped out of it, trembling and disoriented.

Isaac stooped to retrieve the journal, then wrapped an arm around Lydia’s shoulders. “What did you see?”

“It was Stiles.” Her voice was breathy and full of fear as she leaned into Isaac. “Well it was the darach. He stabbed someone right here on the steps.”

“Who?” Malia asked, looking around like she expected it to play out at any moment.

“I couldn’t see his face, just that he was wearing a navy blue sweater.”

“But it was a guy?” Isaac asked.

“I think so. He seemed to have a masculine build.”

“So what’s the problem?” Malia shrugged. “We’ll just tell all the guys we like not to wear navy sweaters and they’ll be fine.” She took out her phone. “I’m gonna text Aiden now.”

Isaac frowned at her. “We should probably stop random innocent guys from getting stabbed too.”

“Oh. Sure.” She glanced up before resuming typing. “If I see it happening, I’ll stop it.” When she was done with her message she thrust her phone at Lydia. “Is this right?”

Isaac read the screen over Lydia’s shoulder. *If you Where navel sweetener you will b stabbed.*

“Autocorrect changed some words. Is that how they’re really spelled?”

“It’s perfect!” Isaac said with a grin.

Lydia smacked his chest and tried to stop Malia from sending the message, but it was too late.
“Do you still want this?” Isaac asked Lydia, holding the journal up and patting her shoulder with his other hand. “If not, I can take it home and hide it.”

Lydia took a calming breath and shook her head. A look of determination settled across her features even as unease continued to radiate off her. “We need to read it and find out how to undo the darach’s making.”

“I’ll read it,” Isaac answered, eying the thick tome and hoping the darach had a large handwriting.

Lydia gave him a soft smile as she tugged it away from him. “You have that dinner tonight, and I read much faster. It’s fine.”

“You want this too?” Liam pulled the amulet out of his pocket and offered it to her. “I don’t like it. It makes my skin twitch.”

“Yes, I’ll take it.”

Isaac inwardly chuckled. Lydia was now keeping the druid amulet, the darach’s journal, the mysterious panels of moon glass, and Iron Claw’s claw. A little more and she could start her own supernatural museum. Perhaps Ezra could give her some business tips.

The girls left, and Liam called his mom to make sure she was on her way. Isaac texted Ethan while he waited.

Isaac: I might be a little late

Ethan: [face with monocle emoji]

Isaac giggled, picturing Ethan actually wearing a monocle and making an exaggerated expression of indignation.

Isaac: I can’t help it. I have to go shower and change.

Ethan: K, text when you’re ready and I’ll come pick you up.

A flush of heat swept down the front of Isaac’s body. He always enjoyed riding on the back of Ethan’s motorcycle. Come to think of it, he probably shouldn’t do that considering his relationship with Stiles. He decided not to respond at all. If he got home before Scott was tranced out for the night, he could ask about borrowing his bike.

“She’s just a couple blocks away,” Liam said as he slid his phone back into his pocket. He glanced at Isaac’s bare legs and frowned. “Are you cold?”

“Not really,” Isaac answered. He was still warm thinking about that hypothetical motorcycle ride with Ethan. Fuck, he needed to stop thinking about Ethan that way.

Liam’s scent filled with guilt, and he pinched at the blood-spattered jeans that were draped over Isaac’s arm. “I’ll pay for you to replace your clothes.”

“Don’t worry about it,” Isaac said as convincingly as he could. He didn’t have much money of his own, and he didn’t want to stick Melissa with the cost, but he also didn’t want to turn it into a big deal and make Liam feel worse than he already felt.

Liam started to say something else but stopped as an SUV pulled into the parking lot.

“You sit up front, man.” He slapped Isaac’s back.
Isaac would have been more comfortable sitting quietly in one of the middle or rear seats, but he dutifully opened the passenger door and nodded at Liam’s mother as he climbed in.

“Isaac, it’s so nice to see you.” Mrs. Dunbar’s smile was warm, and her scent revealed genuine delight. “Liam talks about you all the time.”

“Mom.” Liam grumbled, but it was a true grumble and not a growl.

“Which way?” She asked as she stopped at the parking lot exit.

“Right,” Liam said before Isaac had the chance. He bounced in his seat. “Hey Mom, guess what?”

“What?” She smiled at him in the rearview mirror as she turned onto the road.

“Isaac says he can come to dinner on Tuesday!”

“That’s wonderful!” She sounded almost as enthusiastic as her son. “Will any of the rest of the pack be there?”

“Just Isaac.”

“What about—”

“Just Isaac, none of the rest of the pack.” Liam cleared his throat and pointed at a side street. “You can turn here. Can’t she turn here?”

“Oh, Isaac, what happened to your pants?” Mrs. Dunbar asked after a few seconds, pretending to notice the bloodied jeans he was holding in his lap for the first time.

Isaac resisted the urge to laugh. She had noticed them when he first got in, but had apparently decided to let him get settled before asking.

“And Liam why are you wearing a workout shirt?” She frowned, concern coloring her voice.

“We just had a little, uh, spill while we were at school,” Isaac answered, sensing his packmate’s distress and trying to cover for him.

She arched an eyebrow at Isaac. “A spilling of blood?”

Isaac winced. He had hoped the stains wouldn’t be identifiable in the dim evening light.

“Liam, what happened?” She asked in a no-nonsense tone as she looked at him in the mirror.

“I lost control and hurt Isaac.” Liam’s voice cracked on the word control, and so did something in Isaac’s chest.

“It wasn’t a big deal,” Isaac said, catching Mrs. Dunbar’s eyes as she stopped at a stop sign. “Left here, please. He did a great job calming down, and he’s still getting the hang of things. He’s doing really well.”

A measure of tension eased from her face, but she was still upset. “Was anyone else hurt?”

“Just Isaac,” Liam answered quietly, filling the cabin with rancid shame. “He didn’t even claw me back.”
The cool, minty scent of her relief billowed in the air, partially diluting Liam’s shame and making it more bearable in the SUV. She gave Isaac a grateful smile.

“I’m worried about sending him to school tomorrow.”

“Mom, I’ll be fine!” There was a whine in Liam’s voice that had Isaac fighting to keep a straight face, but his mirth evaporated as he made eye contact with the anxious parent and realized he was expected to weigh in.

“Uh, take a right here, please,” Isaac said to buy some time.

“I don’t think this is a good way to go,” Liam commented.

“It’s a back way.” Isaac added a growl under his breath that was low enough for only Liam to hear.

“Do you think another couple of days would help?” she asked.

“I won’t say no to a couple more days off school.” Liam laughed, but there was a tinge of distress in his tone and a flare of disappointment in his scent. He was trying to play it off.

“I think he’s ready,” Isaac said with a confident nod. “He really is doing great.” He gave Liam a proud smile. “And the whole pack is going to be there to back him up.”

Liam grinned and leaned forward in his seat so he could clap Isaac on the shoulder. “Yeah, plus Aiden’s gonna come pick me up tomorrow and take me to school.”

“Oh good!” Mrs. Dunbar exclaimed, her scent lighting up with delight.

“Wonderful,” Isaac said between clenched teeth.

Liam chuckled and sat back in his seat.

“Did you find that journal you were looking for, honey?”

Isaac blinked, surprised Liam had told her about that.

“We sure did! And it was being guarded by that magic necklace I told you about.”

“Guarded?” She asked, alarmed.

“Well, more hidden I guess. It was so freaky! It was creating this smelless bubble around the journal so we couldn’t find it. But then I realized it was weird that we couldn’t smell anything coming from Scott’s locker.”

Mrs. Dunbar covered her mouth and snickered.

“Isaac was gonna crack the combination like in the movies by listening to the tumblers” –Liam slapped Isaac’s arm– “But then Malia just ripped the locker open.” –he mimed the action in the air– “She’s a badass like Aiden. That’s why they’re dating.”

“Does that mean you’ll be able to defeat the...evil druid and save the sheriff’s son?”

“Darach, Mom, and Stiles. You gotta remember this stuff.” Liam rolled his eyes at Isaac. “And yep, Lydia’s super smart and she’s gonna figure out how to unmake him tonight.”

“Thank god,” she mumbled under her breath, another burst of relief filling the vehicle. She smiled at
Liam in the mirror again. “Way to go noticing the lack of smell coming from Scott’s locker, honey.”

“Yeah, we wouldn’t have found it without him.” Isaac’s chest filled with pride and he channeled it through his packbond to Liam. “He might have saved some lives.”

Liam yipped with delight and sat back in his seat. “Isaac and Aiden are just really good teachers, and besides, we still gotta figure out who’s gonna get stabbed in the sweater.”

“Stabbed in the sweater?!”

“This is my street,” Isaac said, motioning for her to take a left.

“Isaac, you still have my phone number in case something happens at school tomorrow, right?” Mrs. Dunbar asked.

Isaac double checked his phone and confirmed that he did to put her at ease. She also told Liam to send him Dr. Geyer’s number just in case.

“Thanks for the ride, Mrs. Dunbar,” Isaac said, half-distracted as they pulled into the McCall driveway, and he noted Stiles’ Jeep parked in its usual place.

“Anytime, dear, and let Liam know if you have any requests for dinner on Tuesday.”

Liam got out too and they exchanged a quick hug before he climbed into the passenger seat.

Isaac hurried to the front door and unlocked it, excited to see his boyfriend.

Stiles was waiting for him as he walked in and wasted no time fisting the front of Isaac’s t-shirt and pulling him in for a kiss. He moaned into Isaac’s mouth and cupped the back of his head.

Isaac sighed and flicked his tongue over Stiles’ as he gripped Stiles’ waist, stopping himself from groping Stiles’ ass in case he was still sore.

Stiles, however, showed no such restraint as he shamelessly writhed against the front of Isaac’s body and ground their hips together.

Isaac was fully hard by the time a cough from the couch alerted him that they weren’t alone. He jumped back. “Oh, hi Scott.”

“I missed you,” Stiles said sweetly. Then he waggled his eyebrows and lowered his gaze to the raging tent in Isaac’s loose shorts. “I missed you too.” He licked his lips, curled his fingers around Isaac’s erection, and gave it a few tugs. “Let’s go to your room.”

Isaac shuddered, utterly confused by the conflicting waves of lust and mortification sweeping over him. “Scott–”

“Oh Scott doesn’t care.” He worked his thumb over Isaac’s tip through his pants.

“I’ll just be down here with the TV turned up,” Scott mumbled, pointedly not looking at them.

“C’mon, we’ll be quick. I just wanna blow you for the first time before you go meet Ethan.”

“What?!”

Stiles shrugged, guiding Isaac toward the stairs. “You’re having dinner with him tonight, right?”
“Y-yeah.”

“He was here awhile ago,” Scott said, scrolling through his phone.

“W-w-why-would he be here?”

“C’mon, we’ll talk about it after I swallow your cum.”

“Dude!” Scott snapped his head up to glare at Stiles, but immediately dropped it again. Isaac was still raging in his gym shorts.

“What? I know Allison swallowed too.”

Isaac’s gaze shot back to Scott. “You told him that?”

“I didn’t *tell* him that. He figured it out.”

“Like how I know Allison’s favorite position was reverse cowgirl.”

“What?” Isaac furrowed his brow.

“See, now I know Allison’s favorite position wasn’t reverse cowgirl.”

Isaac’s mind raced as Stiles led him upstairs by the arm.

“Turn on a movie, Scotty. Something nice and loud with plenty of explosions.”

“I guess I could rewatch *Transformers*,” Scott mumbled as Isaac and Stiles left.

“Doesn’t he need to go in the mountain ash ring soon?” Isaac whispered as they hurried down the hallway to his room.

“Yeah, so we have to make this fast. I just really need to suck your fucking cock.”

Isaac growled and slammed the bedroom door behind them. The last three minutes had been a whirlwind and he was struggling to make sense of everything that had happened, but as Stiles dropped to his knees in front of him, nothing seemed to matter except focusing on the glorious moment he inexplicably found himself in.

Stiles sighed and rubbed his face against the bulge in Isaac’s shorts as he clutched fistfuls of the material. With a brisk yank he pulled the shorts and Isaac’s underwear down his thighs and moaned. “Fuck. *Yeah!* There’s that big, gorgeous cock!”

He lunged for it like he meant to devour it, swallowing the top half in a violent burst, then gagging and sputtering as he backed off and pressed sloppy kisses all over the slick shaft.

“Stiles!” Isaac curled his fingers into Stiles’ hair, fighting the urge to let his claws out.

Stiles bobbed, licked, and slobbered as he fumbled with the fly of his jeans.

“Let’s stop and take our clothes off,” Isaac said between broken gasps as he lost himself in Stiles’ mouth.

Stiles slurped on Isaac’s cockhead, only stopping long enough to answer. “No time.”

Isaac banged his head against the wall as his eyes rolled back. By technical standards Stiles wasn’t
giving a good blowjob. Ethan, Allison, and Brett all had far more refined techniques. It didn’t matter. The breakneck pace, the fact that only five minutes ago Isaac had been sitting in a car not remotely thinking about sex, and the frenzied enthusiasm with which Stiles was sucking him had him thrown into complete system overload.

Isaac opened his eyes and stared down at Stiles. He had gotten his cock out through the fly of his pants and was pounding it with as much urgency as he was blowing Isaac. It was all just so much, and Stiles’ mouth was so wet, and everything was so right.

“I’m gonna–”

Before Isaac could finish his warning, Stiles grunted and came all over Isaac’s ankle, shoe, and the floor.

“Nauhh!” Isaac’s hips snapped forward, and Stiles gagged as a wave of throbbing warmth gushed over Isaac’s body and out of his cock.

The come down was just as sloppy and clumsy as everything else, with Isaac slumping to the floor beside Stiles, still sputtering the last of his cum against his thigh. Stiles had swallowed some of it, but at least twice as much had dribbled down his throat and the front of his shirt. Meanwhile, Isaac’s legs were still tangled in his shorts, and he was sitting bare-assed in a pool of Stiles’ cum with more of it seeping into his sock and coating the tiny hairs around his ankle.

“Go get showered,” Stiles said between panting breaths. “I’ll get everything cleaned up here and put Scott to bed.”

Isaac chuckled. “Don’t forget to read to him and turn on his nightlight.”

Stiles wiped the cum off his chin and smacked Isaac’s chest with the same hand. “I’m gonna tell him his brother’s a smartass.” He licked his lips. “A tasty smartass.”

Isaac grinned and kissed Stiles. They lapsed into a brief make out session before Stiles pulled away and stood up. “Go.”

Isaac toed off his shoes and kicked his shorts off before streaking down the hallway to the bathroom.

He tried not to panic as the inevitable questions pulsed through his mind during his shower. Why had Ethan come to his house when he knew Isaac wouldn’t be home? It had to be to see Scott but why? Had Stiles said anything about their relationship to Ethan? Had Ethan said anything to Stiles about their...not-a-relationship?

No one seemed mad at Isaac. Stiles obviously wasn’t, and Ethan had sent him a playful emoji text like normal. Scott didn’t seem disappointed in him. All he could do was stay calm and remind himself that he hadn’t done anything wrong. He hadn’t been with Ethan since starting his relationship with Stiles, and he was going to come clean to Ethan about what was going on, **tonight**.

After he was showered and dressed, Isaac joined Scott and Stiles in Scott’s room.

“You look good,” Stiles said as Isaac walked into the room. Stiles had changed into one of Scott’s t-shirts.

Scott huffed at Stiles. “Keep it in your pants, dude.”

Stiles grabbed his discarded shirt from the floor beside Scott’s desk chair where he was sitting and flung it at Scott.
Scott yelped and jumped back as the shirt pelted him in the chest. “Ooh gross, not the sex shirt!” He tried to throw it back at Stiles but it deflected off the mountain ash barrier and landed on the foot of his bed.

Stiles dissolved into laughter. “I washed it.”

“You rinsed it. I can still smell Isaac’s, uhm, essence all over it.”

“Just shoot me now.” Isaac buried his burning face in his hands.

“I’m not mad at you,” Scott said. “Stiles is the one being gross.”

“Stiles, get the shirt,” Isaac told his boyfriend.

“But—”

“Get the shirt!” Isaac and Scott said over him in unison.

“Geez, werewolves are so bossy.” He hopped out of his seat and reached across the mountain ash barrier to retrieve the garment.

“So uh, why was Ethan here?”

“I’ll tell you about it on the way,” Stiles answered, still standing. “We need to get going.”

“W-we?” Oh god, was Stiles joining them for dinner?

“Yeah, Ethan said he’d come get you, but I told him I’d drop you off on my way home.” Stiles reached back over the ring of mountain ash and squeezed Scott’s shoulder. “Night buddy, see you tomorrow.”

Isaac and Scott exchanged goodnights, and Isaac followed Stiles from the room and down the hall.

“What else did you guys talk about while he was here?”

“Huh?” Stiles glanced back at Isaac as they descended the stairs. “Oh, we didn’t talk about that while he was here. I texted him while you were in the shower.”

“Oh. Cool.”

Stiles and Ethan were texting now. What good news.

Stiles laughed as they walked out of the house and Isaac locked up. “Don’t worry, I didn’t say anything about us dating. I know you don’t want him to know.”

“What?!”

Stiles wrapped his arm around Isaac’s waist as they walked down the driveway to his Jeep. “I meant what I said this morning. I’m not going to rush you to come out or go public with our relationship. Until you’re ready Scott and my dad and Melissa are the only people who know.”

“I told Lydia.”

“Oh good.” Stiles chuckled and leaned his head against Isaac’s upper arm. “She would have figured it out tomorrow at school in like five minutes anyway.”

“Yeah probably.” Isaac laughed, relieved that after tonight he wouldn’t have to worry about keeping
the secret.

“I’m really glad you’re having dinner with Ethan tonight,” Stiles said as unlocked Isaac’s door and opened it for him.

“You are?” Isaac asked, climbing into the passenger seat.

“Yeah, he really needs someone right now, and you and Scott are kind of his only friends.” Stiles closed Isaac’s door and rounded the Jeep to get in. “Of course now that I have his number I’m going to get to know him better,” he said, resuming the conversation as he started the engine. “Guy seems alright to me. He’s been good to you and Scott and the rest of the pack.”

“So he told you about–”

“Rick?” Stiles finished quietly as he backed out of the driveway. “Yeah, and how Megan and what’s left of her pack are coming for them. He came over this afternoon to let Scott know since rogue werewolves are going to be in his territory.” Stiles laughed and checked his mirrors before backing onto the street. “Scott has territory. I think he’s as freaked out about that idea as I am.”

“He told you...what he did?”

The humor left Stiles’ face and he nodded as he made a turn. “Yeah, he was really torn up about it. I think he half-expected Scott to order him and Aiden to leave town.”

“Scott wouldn’t do that.”

“Of course Scott wouldn’t do that. He gave him a hug and told him we’d figure things out.”

A flood of relief and appreciation washed over Isaac. Scott was the best alpha. He was literally the best alpha, the True Alpha, but even if he weren’t, Isaac was sure he would still be the best alpha.

“I think Ethan deserves to join the pack,” Stiles said, breaking the brief silence that had descended on the Jeep, “but I’m not okay with Aiden joining. I don’t trust him. I can’t believe we just got him away from Lydia and now he’s got his claws in Malia.”

“And Liam,” Isaac muttered.

“And Liam,” Stiles agreed. “My dad told me about that bar fight he caused too. He’s trouble and I don’t think that’s going to change. He’s not going to change. I know Ethan won’t join without him, but I don’t know where that leaves us. Scott’s wants this to be unanimous.”

Isaac’s heart missed a beat. “Is Scott planning to hold a vote on letting them in?”

“No, but only because he knows how it would go. We talked about it after Ethan left. I told him I might abstain from voting against Aiden, but even that’s iffy...I really don’t want him in our pack.”

“I won’t abstain.” Isaac let his eyes flare with amber heat.

“Yeah, we didn’t think you would.” Stiles reached across the cab and patted Isaac’s chest. “You think you’ll be able to abstain from kicking his ass tonight?”

Isaac laughed and let the points of his fangs hang out as he grinned at Stiles. “We’ll see.”

Chapter End Notes
Feedback is greatly appreciated!
There was something insidious about the darach’s heartbeat. It was like Stiles’ but with the wrong rhythm. The first thump was too hard and the second thump too soft, as though it were building up energy for something dastardly. Iron Claw’s heartbeat was sinister too. It was quieter than Scott’s, as though Iron Claw kept it partially hidden so he could pounce on his victims from the relative hush.

Aiden’s heartbeat was just as vile as the uncanny twins of Isaac’s other enemies. It was strong and steady like Ethan’s, but it lacked the distinctive reverberating thump that put Isaac at ease around Ethan. The unnerving difference set Isaac’s teeth on edge as Aiden opened the door of the loft.

A scowl was etched across the former alpha’s face as he wordlessly stepped back for Isaac to enter. Despite the scowl, he looked good and he smelled happy. If Isaac hadn’t already hated him, he might have enjoyed stepping through his personal space. As it was he half-expected Aiden to attack him.

“Ethan’s on the phone,” Aiden said in a neutral tone as he closed the door behind Isaac.

Isaac instinctively extended his hearing to Ethan’s room and caught the familiar tenor of his voice before tuning out again in respect of his privacy.

Malia nodded to Isaac. She was standing in the kitchen holding a whisk and a large ramekin. An array of ingredients were spread out on the counter around her: cracked eggs, a stick of butter, a bottle of lemon juice, and shakers of seasoning. The aroma of potatoes baking in the oven made Isaac’s stomach rumble. “Aiden’s showing me how to make his holiday sauce.”

“A hollandaise sauce,” Aiden corrected as he reached around her to dip his finger in the yellow concoction. He puckered his lips and sucked the sauce off the pad of his finger.

A flush of warmth spread across Isaac’s skin. Aiden and Malia were standing very close, his biceps bulging beneath the cuffs of his rust red t-shirt, and her smooth, shapely legs stretching impossibly high in her denim shorts.

“Delicious,” Aiden murmured against the shell of her ear.

“Yeah.” Isaac cleared his throat as they both looked at him. “It, uh, smells good from here.”

Malia nuzzled back against Aiden as she sampled the sauce for herself. She licked her lips, and Isaac tried not to stare. “Mmm, I did a good job.”

“Yeah, you did,” Aiden answered, his hands on her hips.

She turned to face him and gripped his ass as she writhed against him. “Let’s go to your room and have sex to celebrate.”

Isaac choked and Aiden cut him a sharp look.

“Oh, I’m sorry. Lydia’s still teaching me about manners.” She curled a leg around the back of Aiden’s thighs and gyrated against his waist. “Would you like to join us for sex, Isaac? I didn’t mean to make you feel left out.”
“Um, no thanks.”

She tilted her head and scented the air. “Really? Because I can tell you want to. Is this one of those situations where I’m supposed to ask two or three times to be polite before you accept?”

“If he does accept, I’m going to cook our dinner,” Ethan said with a laugh as he walked out of his room.

“Oh no!” Malia gasped and lowered her leg as she separated from Aiden. “I’m sorry, Isaac, I don’t know how good you are in bed, but I know how bad Ethan is in the kitchen. It’s not worth it.”

“I wasn’t going to go along with it,” Aiden told her as he gathered up the ingredients she had used for the sauce.

“But I’m curious about threesomes.” She looked between Aiden and Ethan, the sweet, earthy scent of her desire thickening in the air. “How about the three of us?”

Both brothers shuddered dramatically.

“No,” Ethan said.

“Definitely not,” Aiden answered.

“But isn’t tonight all about the two of you getting along better? This could help.”

“Sticking with no.” Aiden tossed the eggshells in the trash.

“Damn.” She frowned but then her face lit up. “Ooh, I know, how about the two of us and Lydia? You used to like having sex with her. I bet you’d still enjoy it.”

Aiden smirked at her as he washed his hands at the sink. “Sure, go ahead and set that up.”

“Sweet!” She threw her arms around him and kissed him. “I’m so lucky to be dating a guy who’s willing to hook up with his ex.”

“Yeah, he’s a real keeper,” Ethan drawled as he crossed the room to Isaac.

Aiden flicked water at him.

“Hey,” Isaac said quietly as their eyes met.

“Hey.” Ethan leaned in for a kiss, but Isaac dodged it by lurching forward and hugging him instead.

Isaac whimpered at how good it felt, at the way their bodies seemed to mold together and all but melt against each other. Ethan’s muscles were firm and warm beneath the soft cotton of his slate blue v-neck. It was Isaac’s favorite color and the same shirt Ethan had worn the night they had sex for the first time. That realization sent the blood rushing to Isaac’s crotch.

“Easy now, we’re not alone,” Ethan whispered into Isaac’s ear, a tinge of smugness in his voice.

“Dick,” Isaac whispered, nosing at the space beneath Ethan’s jawline and drawing his scent as deeply into his lungs as possible.

“Asshole,” Ethan whispered with a playful lilt. He might as well have stuck his hand down Isaac’s pants for the effect it had on him.
Aiden clanked a skillet against the stove and growled. “Do I need to get the hose?”

“Where would the hose go? And would they take off their clothes if they got wet?” Malia eyed Isaac and Ethan up and down as she slid her hand under Aiden's shirt and rubbed his stomach. “How similar are you and Ethan naked? I wanna know if I'm picturing it right.”

“Stop picturing it.” Aiden tugged her hand away and checked the timer on the oven.

Isaac forced himself to end his embrace with Ethan and avoided eye contact with everyone as he went to the bar separating the kitchen from the living room, intent on obscuring his arousal behind it. Yet, while he was avoiding everyone’s faces that left his eyes free to wander across Ethan’s swollen bulge as he joined Isaac at the counter.

Fucking visible outlines.

Ethan nudged his shoulder against Isaac’s and gave him a roguish smile. “Brett says hi.”

“Is Brett what you call your penis?” Malia asked as she leaned on the bar across from them.

“It’s not,” Ethan answered, unperturbed.

Isaac gaped at her, but his hand furled into a fist on the countertop as anger replaced surprise.

“What’s wrong?” Ethan asked, bumping his hip against Isaac’s.

“He hurt Liam.”

Aiden was bent over pulling food out of the refrigerator, but his head snapped up at Isaac’s words.

“Who hurt Liam?”

The way Aiden’s body tensed and his eyes narrowed, Isaac almost believed he cared, but he was probably just being nosy. Isaac answered anyway for Ethan’s sake. “Brett and the guys from the Devenford team trapped Liam in an abandoned zoo enclosure and pummeled him with lacrosse balls after a game they lost last season.”

Surprise flashed across Ethan’s face, and a growl rumbled from Aiden’s throat.

Malia shrugged. “Was it his fault they lost? He might have had it coming.”

“He didn’t have it coming.” Isaac glared at her, then shifted his attention to Ethan. “Why were you talking to Brett anyway?”

“Where does this guy live?” Aiden set a plate of steaks on the counter with a thunk. The scent of raw meat blended eerily well with the bloodlust wafting from his pores. It figured he would look for any reason to attack someone. “Is he that werewolf you fucked from the Buddhist pack?”

“Oh that guy?!” Malia grinned and glanced over Isaac’s shoulder to the area of the room where Isaac had blown Brett, and Ethan had unloaded across his back. She took a deep breath and sighed happily. “His pheromones are incredible. Can I have his number?”

Aiden flinched and jealousy spiked in his cloud of primal, aggressive emotions.

Isaac crowded closer to the counter and discreetly slid his hand into his pants to adjust the uncomfortable angle of his erection. Aiden’s primal, aggressive emotions smelled very similar to Ethan’s primal, aggressive emotions, and Isaac associated that scent with clutching hands, snapping hips, power-laden commands, and best of all the throbbing, satisfying ache of a big cock plunging
inside him and fucking him till he was stretched wide and dripping cum. If anything the scent of
Aiden’s aggression was even more raw and dangerous.

“Where does this guy live?” Aiden repeated, yanking a bundle of asparagus out of a wispy grocery
store produce bag. Isaac had masked his scent as soon as Aiden’s began affecting him, so no one
paid him any attention.

Ethan shook his head and held eye contact with his brother. “You are not fighting with a member of
Satomi Ito’s pack, much less her adopted son.”

*Adopted son?*

“Oh *that* guy. I hated that guy.” Aiden growled and turned on the water at the sink to wash the
asparagus. “He was such an arrogant prick.”

Malia giggled. “Speaking of pricks...”

Aiden laughed and rolled his eyes at Malia before smirking at Ethan. “You see what happens when I
deprive her?”

Images of Malia naked and wild-eyed, her breasts heaving as she rode Aiden’s sweaty, muscular
body flashed through Isaac’s mind. He made a point of saving those visuals for later as he turned to
Ethan. “Why did you call Brett?”

“To get Satomi’s number so I could warn her that Megan and her pack are coming for us.” Ethan’s
eyes filled with the same tortured regret as earlier that afternoon, and Isaac’s lust faded in an instant.
Ethan’s sadness was the ultimate boner-killer. He rubbed Ethan’s back and fought the urge to wrap
him up in his arms.

Aiden glowered as he shut off the water and shook the asparagus. “It’s none of her damn business.
We’re in Scott’s territory.”

“We’re omegas, Aiden, and we routinely cross into her territory too. We can’t afford to piss her off.”

“So what did she say?” Isaac asked quietly, squeezing the back of Ethan’s neck. It was a purely
platonic gesture of support and totally didn’t make Isaac’s fingers tingle.

“She was vehement that there was to be no bloodshed in her area.”

“Does that include Brett?” Aiden asked with a dark smile as he chopped the ends off the asparagus
spears.

“Does it?” Isaac inquired innocently. He wasn’t only feeling protective toward Ethan. Brett deserved
an ass-kicking for what he had done to Isaac’s packmate.

“You like Brett. Stay out of the drama between him and Liam.” Ethan’s tone rang with enough
authority to make Isaac’s eyes drop in submission...and his cock twitch with interest. Ethan
addressed Aiden in the same tone but to less effect. “And don’t you even think about picking a fight
with someone else. We’re in enough trouble as it is.”

“Well that’s not exactly my fault, now is it?”

Ethan winced and looked away.

Isaac opened his mouth to rip into Aiden, but to his surprise Aiden frowned at Ethan and the bitter
tang of...remose leaked into the air.

Isaac and Aiden accidentally made eye contact, and Aiden’s face hardened. “How do you like your steak cooked?”

Isaac smirked at him. “By someone I trust.”

Aiden smiled, the tips of his fangs extending. “Then I’ll just let Ethan cook yours.”

Isaac’s eyes widened and his stomach turned. “Medium rare, please.”

Ethan swatted Isaac’s arm and laughed. The tension in the room eased and–

“I don’t understand why you smell so guilty,” Malia said.

Ethan’s shoulders sagged, and Isaac couldn’t help but wrap his arm around them and glare at Malia.

“You remember what I told you about his ex-boyfriend?” Aiden said quietly as he seasoned the steaks.

“Yeah.”

“That’s why.”

Malia furrowed her brow. “But didn’t your alpha say you had to kill him?”

Ethan nodded without looking up.

“And didn’t he threaten to do horrible things to you and Aiden if you ever disobeyed him.”

“Yes.” Ethan gave her an irritated scowl.

“Then I don’t understand.”

“He feels guilty anyway,” Isaac squeezed Ethan’s shoulders and tried to silence her with his eyes.

“Oh. That’s stupid.” She patted Ethan’s arm where it rested on the counter. “Ethan, your feelings are stupid.”

Ethan’s heartbeat and scent disappeared, and he pulled away from Isaac and strode out of the room. His door clicked shut a moment later.

At first Isaac was too stunned by Malia’s behavior to react. He was about to go after Ethan when Aiden raised his palm and shook his head.

“I’ll talk to him,” Aiden said as he washed his hands at the sink.

Isaac wanted to protest but didn’t. He and Ethan were friends, but Aiden was his brother and he had lived through the ordeal with him. As much as Isaac hated it, it was Aiden’s place to talk to Ethan, and he didn’t want to intrude.

“You want me to come with you?” Malia asked cheerfully.

Aiden didn’t look at her as he walked out of the room. “No. Stay here.”

Malia followed Aiden with her eyes until he disappeared from view. “That’s weird. I think he’s upset with me.”
“Uh yeah, do you not see what you just did?”

“No?” She frowned and shook her head. “What did I do?”

“You hurt Ethan’s feelings.” Isaac couldn’t keep the anger out of his voice.

“His stupid feelings.” She stretched out against the counter. “He shouldn’t feel that way. I was helping.”

Isaac took a deep breath. “You can’t tell someone their feelings are stupid.”

“I can’t?”

“No.”

“Even if they are?”

“Yes.”

“That’s a dumb rule.” She sniffed the air and her face fell. “Wait, you’re mad at me too?”

Isaac folded his arms and nodded.

“Because you care about Ethan’s stupid feelings?”

“Yes,” he answered with a clenched jaw.

She growled and slapped the countertop. “Ugh, being a human is so complicated! All I wanna do is have sex outside under the moonlight, sleep inside on a bed, and chase the occasional deer or two, but everyone has all these weird expectations for me. My dad won’t let Aiden sleep over, I’m not supposed to tell Ethan his feelings are stupid, and Lydia’s trying to make me wear a bra to school tomorrow. How does any of that make sense?”

Isaac’s anger deflated as his fragile packbond with Malia fluttered with despair and frustration. Their bond was too fragile. She had been his packmate for slightly longer than Liam, yet this was their first one-on-one conversation since he had gone to her house to confirm to Scott that he was okay with her joining the pack.

“I’m sorry.” He unfolded his arms and leaned against the bar so they were at eye level. “I know you need more support.”

Malia looked down at her chest and sighed with irritation. “Fine, I’ll wear that damn bra.”

“I meant from me.”

“Normally I’d take you up on that, but I’m not in the mood right now. You can support them later.”

Isaac stared at her chest and got lost in a fantasy before shaking his head to clear it.

“Let’s try this again.” He made eye contact and gave her a reassuring smile. “I know it’s overwhelming being a human after all those years living by yourself as a coyote.”

“It is.” She let out a long breath. “I wasn’t trying to hurt Ethan’s feelings. I wanted to make a good impression on him tonight.”

“Really?” Isaac arched his brow, surprised that she was bothering...and also at the way she had gone
about it.

“Yes, I’m grateful to you and Ethan for finding me and giving me my life back, and we’re getting along fine” —she motioned between them— “but Ethan is more distant.”

“It’s because you don’t have a packbond with him,” Isaac answered.

“No, I think it’s because he doesn’t like it when I have orgasms.”

Isaac’s eyes widened. “I’m pretty sure he doesn’t mind that.”

Malia shook her head insistently. “No, he does. My orgasms make him very grumpy. Aiden’s orgasms piss him off too. They had a huge fight about it on Friday.”

“He just wants to be able to sleep.”

Malia clicked her tongue. “Who ever heard of sleeping through an orgasm?”

“But they’re not his orgasms.”

“That’s why I asked him to join me and Aiden, well part of the reason. I think he’d mind our orgasms less if he had some with us.”

“That is logical,” Isaac conceded, “but you know he’s gay, right?”

“I know, that’s why Aiden would be involved. Ethan could enjoy Aiden’s body, Aiden could enjoy mine, and I’d get to have them both. It would be perfect!”

Isaac snickered and gave up arguing. “That would be hot.”

“Right?!” She smacked Isaac’s arm and shook her head wistfully. “I don’t know why they’re not into the idea.”

“ Weirdos,” Isaac agreed with a nod.

“And it’s not like you and Ethan are monogamous.”

“What?!”

“Well you’re not, I mean unless you really suck at it.”

“Oh uh, we’re just friends.”

“But you had that threesome with Brett.” She laughed. “I smelled you all over the apartment. You smell good too by the way, although unless it would make Ethan mad, I think you should get off more. You’re always so full of pent up sexual frustration. It’s like your thing. Liam always smells angry, and you always smell horny.”

Isaac’s cheeks burned and he looked away. “I always smell horny?”

“Always.” She squeezed his shoulder and ran her hand down his arm, her thumb stroking his bicep. “Like right now.”

Isaac swallowed as she swept her hair back with her other hand and trailed her fingers across her throat and down her chest.
“I know you want” –she caressed his forearm– “to support me.”

“Malia, I–”

“Come support me, Isaac.” She pressed her thumb into his palm and massaged his knuckles with her fingertips.


“I just became human after eight years, and I’m experiencing everything for the first time. I’m not ready to settle down, and he gets that. We have an open relationship.” She tilted her head and gave him a sultry smile. “And you and Ethan are just friends so...”

“I can’t.” Isaac pulled his hand away and stepped back.

She glanced meaningfully at the raging erection he was sporting.

“Oh I could.” He spread his hands over his tented crotch. “But it wouldn’t be fair to–” Stiles! Ethan! “Aiden.”

Her face fell and a burst of shame filled the air around her. “You’re right. He can’t stand you. Even if it wouldn’t be cheating, it would be wrong with you. I got carried away. I’m sorry.”

“No harm done,” Isaac answered, taking a deep breath and trying to relax.

“Yeah, but now we’re both horny.”

“We already were.” He winked at her.

“That’s true.” She nodded and realization sparked in her eyes. “Hey, maybe that’s my thing too.”

“I think it might be,” he answered.

“At least it’s better than Liam’s thing.”

“Oh for sure,” Isaac said with a laugh.

They both sighed and stared off into the distance. Isaac wasn’t sure about her, but he was thinking about Liam’s thing. After a little while, they smiled at each other and shared a knowing look.

“So what did you mean earlier about the point of tonight being for Ethan and Aiden to get along better?” he asked.

“That’s why they set this up and invited us. Basically they have a truce, and part of the deal is Aiden putting up with you, and Ethan not getting mad at me when I have loud orgasms. You can have a loud orgasm too, and Aiden’s supposed to tolerate it.”

“They actually had these negotiations?”

“I’m parenthesizing based on what Aiden told me, but that’s the gist of it. The people they’re seeing have to be welcome, and they won’t fight over stupid stuff.” She furrowed her brow. “I don’t know if that includes Ethan’s feelings or not.”

“You’re paraphrasing,” Isaac said, still reflecting on the twins’ truce.

“Oh I’m sorry.” She stood up straight and her scent disappeared. “I’m still turned on. I didn’t mean
“No, that’s not—”

“You’re still paraphrasing too by the way.” She licked her lips and sniffed the air. “We’re probably making each other paraphrase.”

Isaac blinked at her but then sealed off his scent. “Better?”

“No, but yes.” She groaned and turned around, leaning backward against the counter and looking at Isaac over her shoulder. “Do you think I should tell my dad the truth about what I am? Lydia and Aiden think I should wait, but I think they’re biased because their dads are dead.”

“My dad’s dead too,” Isaac answered quietly.

“Oh, then I guess I’ll ask Stiles or Liam. Their dads are alive and know about us.”

“You should talk to Scott too.”

“Is his dad alive? I thought Melissa was a single parent.”

“He’s alive, but he’s not involved in Scott’s life. I just meant you should talk to Scott about it because he’s your alpha.”

They looked up as Ethan’s door opened and the twins walked out.

“Yeah sure, I’ll get his opinion,” she shrugged at him before smiling apologetically at Ethan. “I’m sorry I brought up your stupid feelings.”

Isaac groaned and covered his face with his hand.

“It’s okay, I feel better now.” He reclaimed his place at the bar beside Isaac.

Acting on impulse, Isaac hugged Ethan and scented his neck. He smelled good, relaxed and content. The only unpleasant scent was Aiden but...well Aiden didn’t smell bad, not objectively, but his scent was full of negative connotations.

Ethan cradled the back of Isaac’s head and kissed his jaw, and all scents except the soft, plush blanket of Ethan’s affection vanished. Pools of warm chocolate filled Isaac’s eyes, and a torrent of emotion swelled in his chest. It felt too good to label, and Isaac trusted Ethan too much to be afraid of it. Whatever it was made him stand there, grinning like an idiot as it consumed him.

The sizzle of meat snapping and popping in the corner of Isaac’s awareness reminded him that they weren’t alone. An instant later he remembered something much more important: Stiles.

Fuck, Isaac wasn’t doing a very good job telling Ethan about his new relationship.

“I have to talk to you about something after dinner,” Isaac whispered.

“Okay.” Ethan stroked Isaac’s cheekbone with the pad of this thumb. “Aiden’s taking Malia home after we’re done eating. We’ll talk then.”

Isaac let out a shaky breath, realizing too late that it blew across Ethan’s lips. “Are you going to take me home?”

Ethan grazed his knee against Isaac’s leg, and cool rings of blue glimmered around the edges his
brown eyes. “Eventually.”

“No rush,” Isaac murmured, lost in how ridiculously handsome Ethan was with his strong yet boyish features and full, pink lips.

Aiden cleared his throat. “Do you like lemon pepper, Isaac? That’s how I was going to spice the asparagus, but I could do a garlic butter. Malia and Ethan like both.”

Isaac’s cheeks burned as he let go of Ethan and took a couple steps back. Everyone in the room was going to wrongly think he had romantic feelings for Ethan. Was that why Aiden was being civil to him, why the twins’ truce had involved making Isaac feel welcome? Did Aiden...did Ethan think there was something going on between them beyond friendship?

“Lemon pepper’s fine.” Isaac shifted awkwardly and added a mumbled, “Thanks.”

Aiden grunted an acknowledgment and reached for the pepper mill.

A smile tugged at the corners of Ethan’s mouth as he looked between Isaac and his brother. Isaac was such a tool for leading him on.

Dinner was ready a little while later, and after plating it Aiden retrieved a decanter of red wine from the table and wine glasses from a cabinet. Isaac cringed, but before he could say anything Ethan separated two of the glasses.

“I am going to have sparkling grape juice.” He threw a smile at Isaac and opened the fridge to get the beverage. Isaac breathed a sigh of relief.

“You’re not even going to try the wine?” Aiden’s tone signaled he was personally offended as he glared at Isaac. “It pairs well with steak, that’s why I got it.”

“Aiden, he doesn’t–”

“I know.” Aiden spoke over his brother. “His old man was an alcoholic, but it’s not like he can even get drunk. Just try it.”

“Drop it.” Ethan’s voice resonated with authority.

Aiden growled at Ethan and gave Isaac a hateful look. He filled the other two wine glasses and shoved one across the bar to Malia. “Here.”

She picked it up, sniffed it, and scrunched her face. “I don’t like it.”

“You didn’t taste it, and you have to try it with the steak.”

Malia shook her head and turned to Ethan as he opened the sparkling grape juice. “Can I have some of your fizzy drink? It smells better.”

“Sure.” Ethan snickered and poured a glass for her.

Rage billowed off Aiden as he grabbed the rejected wine and took it to the sink.

Ethan crossed the kitchen and curled his fingers around the glass just as Aiden was about to pour it out. “I’d enjoy some wine instead. You always choose so well.”

A measure of anger eased from Aiden’s face, but he didn’t say anything as he passed Ethan the glass and took his plate and drink to the table.
Isaac got a glass of grape juice, and they all grabbed their plates and joined Aiden at the table.

Isaac’s mouth watered as he cut into his steak. It was moist, tender, and aromatic, and he couldn’t help but moan as he tasted it. “Muhhn, this is so good.”

Ethan laughed and clapped his brother’s shoulder. “Congratulations, he usually only makes that sound for me.”

Malia smacked her lips and shoveled a large forkful of meat into her mouth. “Mmm, yeah, I’m very satisfied too.”

Aiden sniggered and sipped his wine. “But how’s the steak?”

Malia gave him a dull look and cut a second piece. “I just said it was good.”

Isaac sampled the potatoes next. When he’d first walked in and smelled them in the oven, he thought Aiden was making baked potatoes, but it turned out to be a potato casserole. “This is delicious,” he mumbled, glancing in Aiden’s direction but not making eye contact.

“Wait till you try his asparagus,” Ethan said, giving his twin another proud smile.

Aiden grumbled but his scent filled with pride.

“I forgot the Holland sauce!” Malia jumped up and went to the kitchen. She reheated the sauce and returned a little while later with the ramekin.

“Can I have some?” Isaac asked, eying the yellow sauce and enjoying its creamy, tangy aroma.

“No.” She covered it with her hand and growled at Isaac, fangs bared.

Ethan and Aiden laughed.

“Lydia would be disappointed if you didn’t share, babe,” Aiden said.

“Well Lydia’s not here!” She tossed her head back and dumped the entire dish of sauce all over her plate. “You can lick the bowl if you want,” she offered, pushing it toward Isaac with her fork.

“No, thank you,” he answered crisply as he sipped his sparkling grape juice, which Ethan had bought for him but she was drinking too – but whatever, Isaac wasn’t going to be petty about that.

Ethan’s phone buzzed, and he pulled it out of his pocket. Before he could check it Aiden snatched it away.

He looked at the display and growled. “It’s that bitch again.”

“Lemme see.” Ethan held out his hand.

Aiden shook his head and typed in a passcode. “I’m deleting it and blocking the number.”

“No!” Ethan jumped out of his chair. “Give it back!”

Aiden turned and blocked Ethan’s attempts to reach around him with his elbow as he clutched the device to his chest and tapped at it.

For a moment Isaac considered joining the fray and helping Ethan, but then he realized that...he agreed with Aiden. Ethan got upset every time he read one of the threatening texts, and if he really...
wanted to have just unblock the number again. Even his attempts to yank the phone away from Aiden were half-hearted at best.

“You should have deleted that number two years ago,” Aiden said as he handed the phone back to Ethan.

“It was Rick’s number,” Ethan said quietly as he stared at the screen.

“Yeah, well now it isn’t,” Aiden answered, his fork and knife clinking against his plate as he cut up his food.

Ethan hesitated, but instead of unblocking the number, he slid the device back into his pocket and sat down.

Isaac brushed his foot against Ethan’s under the table and gave him a small smile.

“Thanks,” Ethan muttered, and Isaac wasn’t sure if he was talking to him or Aiden.

“When are you going to get your phone replaced?” Malia asked Aiden. “I just had the most amazing idea! You know how they have cameras on them? We could take nude photos of ourselves and send them to each other over text message!”

Ethan broke into laughter and Isaac facepalmed.

“I bought a new phone after I dropped Liam off this afternoon.” Aiden’s smile widened. “So let’s go for it.”

“You can get in serious trouble if you do that,” Isaac said to his packmate.

“What? Why? It’s my body and my business.”

“It’s still a crime,” Isaac answered, ignoring the hot glare Aiden was shooting him. “Consider it another one of those dumb rules.”

“Ugh, humans are the worst.” She folded her arms and addressed Aiden. “What was that word you used for Ethan the other day?”

“Cockblock,” he answered, smirking at his brother.

“Yeah, that’s it. Humans are cockblocks.” She grumbled and impaled a spear of asparagus with her fork.

“You don’t have a cock,” Isaac pointed out.

“I have a really tiny one. I didn’t know about it at first, but Aiden found it for me.” Her scent flushed with arousal and she grinned at Aiden. “It’s the best thing ever!”

“Happy to help,” he answered, still smirking, “and it’s called your clitoris.”

“Right, my clitoris. I love my clitoris! And Aiden is so good at stimulating it.”

Isaac shifted in his seat as heat pooled in crotch, and a fresh round of vivid images flashed through his mind.

“With his tongue, his fingers, his penis – he really knows how to make my clitoris hum.”
Aiden’s scent dripped with pride. It would have normally annoyed Isaac, but this time he found it sexy.

Ethan groaned. “Can we not discuss your clitoris at the table?”

“See, he hates my orgasms,” Malia whispered to Isaac.

“What?!”

“Well you do.”

“I do not.”

“Toldja he didn’t,” Isaac said, nudging Ethan’s foot again under the table.

“You really don’t?” she asked.

“I really don’t,” he answered in a serious tone.

“I’m enjoying this dinner way more than I expected to,” Aiden commented with a chuckle.

“Me too,” Isaac admitted with a nod, still picturing Aiden stimulating Malia.

Ethan sighed. “It’s going about how I predicted.”

“Fine we’ll talk about something you’re interested in.” She took a big bite of potatoes and washed it down with a noisy sip of juice. “How many people are coming to kill you?”

Ethan’s fork clanked against his plate.

“Malia seriously!” Isaac glared at her.

“What?” She held up her hands and looked around the table. Even Aiden was annoyed. “Lydia says the key to making good small talk is asking people about topics they care about.” She looked at Ethan in confusion. “Do you not care about this topic? Because I think you should.”

Isaac started to object, but Ethan spoke first.

“It is important. I’ve been thinking about it for the last couple days. Megan and her cousin Byron were the oldest wolves in the pack who weren’t invited to Deucalion’s party. There were a couple others about our age or a little younger, and then about six or seven kids.”

“But there were also a couple of adult pack members missing from the body count,” Aiden said.

“Right, another werewolf and one of the humans,” Ethan said. “They must have been babysitting the kids or just didn’t attend the party for some reason. Assuming they left with Megan and the others, and that only the werewolves are going to come to fight—”

“—and only the ones older than about fourteen or fifteen,” Aiden added.

Ethan nodded. “Then that would be Megan, Byron, the adult wolf, the two older teens, and maybe one or two of the kids who are teens now.”

Malia counted them off on her fingers. “So six or seven.”

“Yeah.” Ethan swirled his wine around the glass and swallowed the last of it.
“It must have been a big pack,” Isaac said before popping his final bite of steak into his mouth.

“Wolfpacks vary a lot in size,” Ethan said as he covered his plate with his napkin. “Anything from three or four to thirty or forty.”

“Six to twelve active werewolves and an emissary is about standard.” Aiden pushed away his nearly empty plate. “It gets larger when you include humans, allies, and children.”

Malia scraped the last few slices of potato onto her fork and smeared Hollandaise sauce on them with her knife. “Do werecoyotes form packs?”

“It’s not unheard of,” Aiden answered, “but typically only with their families or if they need to for protection because there are hunters or other threats in the area. There are no true alpha werecoyotes, though of course there are leaders when packs do form. Membership is looser too. Werecoyotes don’t have the same pack instincts as werewolves, so they come and go as they please.”

Malia smiled and rolled her final spear of asparagus through the sauce on her plate. “I like that. I don’t wanna be controlled by a pack.”

“But you have a pack.” Isaac flashed his eyes at her and tried to channel a sense of solidarity through their thin packbond. He had thought his bond with Malia was weaker because he hadn’t spent enough time with her yet, but was this the real reason? “And we won’t control you; we’ll protect you.”

“I can protect myself. I’ll stay with the pack as long as I want and no longer.” She smiled at him, her eyes glowing blue. “But I want to for now.”

Sadness, anger, and fear warred for control of Isaac’s emotions. For now wasn’t the type of commitment he was looking for from his packmate. Everyone always left...or died. Was it even worth bonding with her?

Ethan nudged Isaac’s foot and stroked Isaac’s ankle with his socked toes.

Isaac masked his scent and forced a smile. He could think about Malia inevitably abandoning the pack later. “So is Megan their alpha now?”

The look in Ethan’s eyes said that he recognized Isaac’s question as the deflection that it was, but he answered anyway. “No, not unless she’s somehow become one in the meantime, but she didn’t get her mother’s spark. Deucalion absorbed it.”

Isaac was relieved. The last thing they needed was another homicidal alpha in town. They already had Iron Claw to deal with.

After dinner concluded, Aiden left to take Malia home.

“I’ll help with the dishes,” Isaac said as he stacked his plate atop Malia’s and leaned across the table for Aiden’s.

“Don’t worry about it,” Ethan answered, leaving his own plate and glass where they sat. “That maid service I mentioned is coming tomorrow while we’re at school.”

“Oh yeah.” Isaac snickered as he recalled the disaster area Ethan had made of the kitchen yesterday morning when he had tried to make breakfast. “So I take it you called them for an emergency visit this weekend to clean and get groceries for tonight?”
“Nah.” Ethan plopped onto the couch. “Aiden and I cleaned up and went to the store ourselves.”

Isaac affected a faux-impressed expression as he sank into the space next to Ethan. “Wow, the rich boy had to do something for himself.”

Ethan rolled his eyes and turned to face Isaac more fully, tucking his foot under his leg and leaning back against the arm of the couch. “After Keith killed our family, he moved into our house and we basically became his slaves. Aiden did all the cooking obviously, and I did the groundskeeping. We both cleaned and did laundry and other random shit. He’d beat us when we made mistakes or weren’t fast enough. He used to lend us out to the rest of the pack too. They were even more violent with us, like they were trying to prove they had no loyalty to our family and dead packmates.”

“I-I um...” Isaac’s face was on fire. “I didn’t know that. It was a dumb joke. I shouldn’t have—”

“It’s fine.” Ethan dropped his hand on Isaac’s arm where it was propped on the back couch cushion. “I wasn’t offended. That just seemed like something I should tell you.”

“It did?”

“Yeah.” He gently squeezed Isaac’s elbow and smiled. “I’m serious about being open with you.”

It was a good thing Isaac was already blushing because if he hadn’t been, that comment would have done it.

“Anyway, I think that’s why we kept using the maid service after Deucalion left town. Chores and housework have very bad associations for us, and since we can afford it” –he shrugged– “why not?”

“That makes sense.” Isaac shifted closer, his knee brushing Ethan’s shin through their pants. “I didn’t mean to be judgmental.”

“You weren’t.” Ethan’s fingers dipped beneath the cuff of Isaac’s shirt and massaged the skin there. Isaac needed to set the record straight about his relationship with Stiles right away before his resolve faltered or things got out of hand, but Ethan wasn’t done discussing his childhood.

“Cooking is an exception for Aiden. It’s something he enjoys. Our dad taught him when he was little, and they used to cook together several nights a week up until the murders.”

“He didn’t teach you?”

Ethan laughed, his eyes crinkling. “He tried to a few times, but I’m pretty sure if we hadn’t been a family of werewolves, I’d have given us all food poisoning. My parents didn’t let Gretchen eat anything I made just in case.”

Isaac chuckled, recalling that Gretchen had been Ethan’s human nanny and part of the family.

“Dad taught us about wine too. I know a good bit, but Aiden has more of a knack for pairing it with foods.”

“Wait, I thought...”

“Hmm?”

Isaac hesitated but continued. “Didn’t you say your parents were killed when you were thirteen?”

The smile faded from Ethan’s face. “Yeah, that’s right.”
“Your dad gave you wine that young?” Isaac didn’t bother to keep the judgment out of his tone. That was really fucked up, especially since it sounded like something that had been going on for years before that. He had a mental flash of the twins as eight-years-olds swilling wine.

Ethan withdrew his hand from Isaac’s arm and scowled. “And why shouldn’t he? It had absolutely no effect on us. The culture is completely different for born werewolves in that regard. There’s no such thing as underage drinking or alcohol abuse, and it wasn’t bad for us.”

“Still seems messed up,” Isaac muttered.

“Would it seem messed up if we had been drinking grape juice?”

“Well no but–”

“We basically were, just with a lot more variation and a more nuanced flavor profile.”

Isaac’s frown deepened. Ethan’s argument made logical sense but–

“You shouldn’t drink though,” Ethan said in a softer tone as he bumped Isaac’s leg with his knee.

“I shouldn’t?”

“No. You have understandable negative associations with alcohol. It’s like how I cringe every time I smell mulch, or how Aiden’s heart beats faster when he sees an iron.”

“I didn’t know that.”

“It’s kinda specific.” Ethan shrugged one shoulder. “But my point is, just because I’m never going to like gardening, doesn’t mean there’s anything wrong with other people enjoying it or sharing it with their kids...stabbing the kid in the gut with a garden trowel for over-pruning the rose bushes, that’s fucked up; but teaching them how to plant and water flowers, that’s fine.”

Isaac winced and glanced at Ethan’s midsection.

Ethan snickered and lifted his shirt. “I’m okay now.”

Isaac swallowed hard as he stared at Ethan’s rippling abs and sculpted v-lines. For the first time that Isaac had ever seen, Ethan’s sinewy stomach wasn’t perfectly smooth. A thin line of stubble was just visible against his tan skin as it descended from his taut bellybutton. Isaac didn’t get to have an opinion about Ethan’s treasure trail or lack thereof, but if he had gotten to have an opinion, he’d have requested that Ethan let it grow out. Imagining those short little hairs grazing his cock while Ethan fucked him and he rubbed off on Ethan’s abs was enough to make him audibly whimper.

“You want me to take off my shirt?” Ethan asked in a hopeful tone.

Fuck yeah I want you to take off your shirt! And your pants. And just fucking burn your underwear!

“No, don’t.” Isaac groaned as Ethan released the shirt and let it re-cover his stomach.

Ethan laughed. “I’m getting some mixed signals here, Isaac.”

“That’s what I need to talk to you about.”

Ethan’s face became serious. “Go on.”

“I care about you a lot.” Isaac made eye contact with Ethan, and as soon as he did, his chest
Ethan leaned forward and took both Isaac’s hands in his own. His voice was as nervous and unsteady as Isaac had ever heard it when he spoke. “I care about you a lot too.”

Isaac let out a shaky breath. “That’s why I’m really glad that we’re friends now. But, um, we need to keep things strictly platonic from now on because I’m seeing–”

“No.” Ethan rubbed the back of Isaac’s hands with his thumbs and shook his head. “I can’t do that.”

“What?”

“Isaac, this just friends thing is killing me.”

“What?”

“That threesome with Brett Friday night made me realize something.” Ethan stared into Isaac’s eyes and rumbled in the back of his throat. “I don’t want to share you. I don’t want to be your friend with benefits, and I certainly don’t want to be just your friend.”

Isaac swallowed. “You don’t?”

Ethan released one of Isaac’s hands and pulled the other into his lap, sandwiching it between his own. “I tried, Isaac. I tried to keep my distance because that’s what you said you wanted. And you were right. What we were doing wasn’t working, and we were making ourselves and each other miserable.”

“Yeah,” Isaac whispered, regret pulsing through him. He had been such a dick to Ethan, and had been so ashamed of himself for what they were doing.

Their eyes locked and Ethan’s voice was thick with emotion as he spoke. “But that’s not how it is anymore. We’re not bad for each other now. You forgave me.”

“I did,” Isaac answered, needing to reaffirm it, unable to bear the thought of resentment or animosity between them.

Ethan raised Isaac’s hand to his lips and kissed his fingers. “I couldn’t have gotten through this crisis with Megan without you.” His eyes shone with gratitude. “And instead of making me feel worse about Rick, you comforted me.”

Isaac squeezed Ethan’s shoulder with his free hand and massaged it with his thumb. Damn right he had comforted Ethan. He would always comfort Ethan.

Determination formed on Ethan’s face, and his scent pulsed with confidence as he held Isaac’s hand in the air between them, “And I know I make you feel good too. I make you happy.”

“Ethan–”

“Tell me I’m wrong.” He curled his fingers around Isaac’s wrist, and Isaac gasped.

A flood of memories swept over him: that first night in the woods, pine needles and moonlight, running up the side of the cliff with Ethan, Ethan’s arms holding him, keeping him safe from falling, catching him as he stepped backward off the edge.

Ethan’s thumb massaged the bone of his wrist and he thought about the strip show Ethan had put on for him, the way he had kept his distance and placed no demands on Isaac as he performed, the way
he had given Isaac his tank top to cover himself with.

Isaac’s wrist tingled as he remembered their first dinner together, Ethan teaching him flavor isolation and how to super-taste, how to enjoy the moonlight—oh god, and had Isaac ever enjoyed the moonlight! Ethan had given him his first moon’gasm, and he had fucking worshiped Isaac’s body and made him truly appreciate his cock for the first time.

Isaac covered Ethan’s fingers and clutched them more tightly to his skin. Ethan had taught him so much. He had shown Isaac how to mask his scent and hide his heartbeat. He had been there for him after his crisis with Scott. He had given him the rough fuck he needed and the tender aftercare he couldn’t admit he craved. He had come to Isaac’s aid without question against Iron Claw, and he had nearly died protecting Isaac.

And Ethan had opened up. He had trusted Isaac with his past and told him about his family. He had let Isaac see the worst parts of himself, the murderer who had betrayed Rick, the shame and self-loathing he carried as a result. Ethan was honest with him, honest about who he was and what he had done.

And Isaac didn’t even have to open up in return. Ethan already knew him completely. He knew everything about Isaac’s past. He had seen Isaac’s abuse firsthand through Isaac’s own eyes. He understood Isaac’s insecurity and guilt, the gnawing voice in the back of Isaac’s head that told him he was worthless and weak, a selfish waste of oxygen who had turned his loving father into a monster. Ethan knew Isaac’s fantasies too, even the really fucked up ones. He knew Isaac sometimes got off on feeling like shit. He understood Isaac’s baggage and personal demons—and he had known all that before ever pursuing anything with Isaac.

“Yeah, um”—Isaac stared at Ethan’s fingers as he trailed his own over them—“you make me feel really safe and happy.”

“I want you, Isaac.” Ethan caught his eye and gave him a meaningful look. “I want you.”

Isaac let out a ragged breath and tapped at Ethan’s fingers, too overcome to respond directly. “You haven’t done this in a while...I missed it.”

Ethan tightened his grip. It was gentle but firm, strong. “I was holding back.”

“Yeah?” Isaac huffed out a laugh. All that since the full moon had been Ethan holding back?

“I won’t anymore.” Ethan gave Isaac a look that dared him to argue. “We’re good for each other. We’re complicated, but we work.”

“Yeah.” Isaac breathed the word, barely able to get even that much air out of his lungs.

“I want you,” Ethan repeated, eyes glowing blue.

“Yeah.” Isaac nodded. He was getting that message loud and clear.

“So?”

“So?”

Ethan smirked at him. “Can I have you?”

There was something, a little niggling voice in the corner of Isaac’s mind telling him that he had to say no.
...but it was a quiet voice, and every one of Isaac’s other instincts were screaming at him to say–

“Yes.”

Chapter End Notes

I hope you guys enjoyed this chapter. It was obviously a huge turning point for Isaac and Ethan, so any feedback is greatly appreciated!

Also please feel free to weigh in on whether or not you want to see some Ethisaac smut next chapter. I was initially leaning toward no, but now I’m leaning toward yes, but I could still go either way. The next long run of chapters (after the smut if there’s smut) will be very plot heavy. I have quite a lot planned, and I’m very excited to get into it!
Ethan smirked at him. “Can I have you?”

There was something, a little niggling voice in the corner of Isaac’s mind telling him that he had to say no.

...but it was a quiet voice, and every one of Isaac’s other instincts were screaming at him to say– “Yes.”

Ethan’s smirk spread into a smile but faded as he stared at Isaac with focused intent.

Isaac swallowed and stared back. It felt like Ethan was going to consume him.

“Yes,” Isaac repeated, quivering with need and flushing with happiness. Ethan better fucking consume him. “Yes.”

Ethan’s eyes burned a brighter blue, and he surged forward on the couch, his hands on Isaac’s shoulders as he leaned him back and loomed over him. He looked into Isaac’s eyes and growled. It wasn’t hostile, or even aggressive, and Isaac was at a loss for how to interpret it.

Then it clicked.

Ethan’s growl was possessive.

Isaac yearned to touch Ethan, to rub his chest, to hook his legs around Ethan’s waist and writhe against him, but his instincts told him that was the wrong response. Ethan wanted him, and Isaac desperately wanted to be taken. He broke eye contact and went slack beneath Ethan, tipping his head back and baring his throat to the former alpha, praying that Ethan would–

Another possessive growl rent the air and Ethan closed his mouth over Isaac’s windpipe.

Isaac trembled and mewed as a full-bodied wave of euphoria swallowed him – his eyes blazed; his cock throbbed; his toes tingled.

Ethan grazed Isaac’s fluttering pulse with the tips of his fangs, then sucked and kissed at the tender flesh. In the past, danger had accompanied the sensation of sharp teeth on his jugular…and Isaac had liked that; he had gotten off on it. But this was completely different. He didn’t think it was possible to feel safer than he did in this moment. The only thing that rivaled the fuzzy blanket of security that enveloped him as Ethan nipped at his throat was the way his instincts hummed with pleasure as he basked beneath the warm, radiant glow of Ethan’s approval. Isaac was being such a good beta wolf, and he knew it. Derek had turned him, and Scott was his alpha, but it felt like he had been made to submit to Ethan.

“Mine,” Ethan rumbled against Isaac’s Adam’s apple.

Isaac whimpered and arched his neck. It was good, but he needed something else, something deeper. A skittering heat pooled in Isaac’s chest and formed into a wispy, flickering tendril. It reached out to Ethan, calling to him on a level that Isaac had only felt with his–
Ethan gasped and released Isaac’s throat. “Pull it back,” he pleaded in a strained voice. “It hurts too much to fight it, but we can’t...pull it back.”

Isaac closed his eyes and clenched a cold fist around the fragile tendril, snuffing it out. Ethan was right. They weren’t pack. They couldn’t have *that* connection.

“I’m sorry,” Isaac whispered, leaning up as far as he could with Ethan still on top of him. Could Ethan always be on top of him?

“Sorry?” A smile lit Ethan’s wolfed-out face and he caressed Isaac’s cheek, his features gradually shifting back to human. “Are you kidding? I know you didn’t do that consciously, but the fact that you wanted to, that you would...”

“I would.” Isaac wrapped his arms around Ethan’s back and pulled him off his knees so that his full weight bore down on Isaac. “I want you too, Ethan. I want you so much it hurts. It’s just not my decision.”

“I know.” Ethan rubbed Isaac’s chest where the tendril had burned.

“Scott would accept you, but Aiden–”

“Ssshhh.” He kissed Isaac’s chin, then the corner of his mouth, then–

“Mnuhn.”

It was unlike the few other kisses they had shared. It was passionate but not urgent, intense but not overwhelming. Isaac desperately wanted to dial up the heat, to suck Ethan’s tongue into his mouth and insist that Ethan fucking *take* him...but they had time. This wasn’t a stolen kiss in the heat of the moment; this was a pledge of things to come. Packmates or not, what Ethan had said was true: Isaac was his now, and they didn’t need to hurry. They could kiss whenever they wanted. Ethan could take him tonight, or he could take him tomorrow night, or he could take him every single night.

Ethan rubbed Isaac through his jeans, and Isaac knew Ethan was going to take him tonight.

“Bedroom.” His voice, normally silky and seductive was a ragged growl that made Isaac’s hole twitch in anticipation.

“Too far.” Isaac finally succumbed to his desire to wind his legs around Ethan’s waist and writhe against his crotch. *Fuuuck*, Ethan was so big, and Isaac needed him to just shove the whole thing in right now. Never mind the pants Isaac was wearing, Ethan could rip them off. He could shred Isaac’s entire wardrobe as long as he finished claiming him.

Ethan growled again and clamped his hands around Isaac’s hips, grinding the throbbing line of his manhood against Isaac’s ass – *Oh goddamn it, what evil sonofabitch invented pants anyway? Was it Aiden? It was probably Aiden.*

A moment later Ethan lifted him off the couch.

Isaac gasped and wound his long frame around the shorter but much stronger werewolf. He had hated it when they first met, the sheer, overwhelming force of Ethan’s alpha muscles, the futility of fighting against such raw, devastating power. That power had weakened considerably since Ethan had become an omega, but there was still so much left, and now all Isaac wanted to do was surrender to it.

He nuzzled his face against the side of Ethan’s head as Ethan carried him briskly down the hallway
to his room. “Yours,” he rumbled in Ethan’s ear, going slack in spite of the way the dead weight made him harder to carry. Ethan could handle it. Ethan was strong and powerful and good, and Isaac was sure that not even Iron Claw could touch him while he was in Ethan’s arms.

Isaac trembled as Ethan scrapped his fangs up the side of Isaac’s neck and kicked the bedroom door shut behind them.

A second later Isaac was tossed through the air and onto the bed with perfect precision. Ethan’s pillows cradled his head and the plush duvet billowed up around him, caressing his body with softness.

Isaac reached for his belt to unbuckle it, but Ethan growled and flashed his eyes at him.

“Don’t move.”

Isaac whimpered and went still.

Ethan gripped the back collar of his shirt and tugged it over his head in one fluid motion, exposing his lean sinewy stomach and the trail of short stubble that descended from his taut navel. The sleek, patterned waistband of a brand of underwear Isaac didn’t recognize hugged his muscular hips and clung to the deep v-lines that swooped gracefully into his jeans, his bulging jeans. Ethan’s heavy balls were plainly visible in the overfilled basket of his crotch, and the long, thick outline of his erection dominated the entire front and continued off the side of his hip.

Isaac’s fingers, only inches from his own fly, itched to massage his throbbing cock as he stared at Ethan’s arousal through his clothes, but Ethan had told him not to move, and even burning lust couldn’t overpower Isaac’s bone-deep need to comply with the power-laced command.

“Hey.” Ethan’s tone was gentle as he moved to the bed and cupped the side of Isaac’s face.

“Hey,” Isaac whispered, nuzzling Ethan’s hand and staring up at him with what he knew was a goofy expression.

“You get so turned on when I order you around in bed.” Ethan stroked Isaac’s cheekbone with his thumb, and his fingers slid across Isaac’s ear and into his hair. “It feels really good, huh? Hits all your instincts just right?”

“Yeah,” Isaac admitted with a sharp breath. He bucked his leaking cock against the rough, thick confines of his pants. “It feels so good.”

“I like it too.” Ethan leaned over and pressed a heavy kiss to Isaac’s mouth, their lips slotting together then dragging apart. “And I’ve seen your fantasies. I know you want to take it further. You want me to give you rules and punish you when you break them.”

“Yes.” Isaac closed his eyes and exhaled, shaky and excited. “I want that.”

“Me too,” Ethan answered, a dark quality in his voice that was scary and...welcome if Isaac were honest. “But not tonight. I don’t wanna punish you tonight.” Ethan scratched gentle fingertips against Isaac’s scalp and stroked the shell of his ear with his thumb. “I want you to be good for me, okay?”

Isaac turned his head and kissed the smooth skin of Ethan’s inner arm as he looked up at him. Silvery moonlight from the floor-to-ceiling window behind the bed shimmered off Ethan’s handsome, boyish face, and his chocolate eyes smoldered with an affection that took Isaac’s breath away.

“I-I will. You won’t have to punish me tonight. I'll be good. I'll do whatever you tell me.”
“Good.” Ethan stroked the back of Isaac’s head and drew him closer, letting Isaac rub his face against his stomach. “Such a good boy, Isaac.”

Isaac whined in the back of his throat. This was another of his fantasies, one he usually didn’t feel he deserved, but tonight was different; tonight he felt good. He had finally quit struggling against his feelings. Ethan’s praise was his reward...So was Ethan’s stomach. Isaac reverently kissed each hard, glorious ridge of muscle and nosed at Ethan’s shallow bellybutton before licking along the thin, sexy line of stubble beneath it. He wanted to venture lower, but he hadn’t earned it yet.

Ethan leaned over, breaking contact so he could whisper in Isaac’s ear. “You’re not allowed to touch your cock.”

“What?” Isaac’s pulse hammered in his ears. Why was the prospect of not touching his cock so exciting?

“Or your ass, or your balls.” Ethan rumbled and lifted the back of Isaac’s shirt so he could tap at the cleft of Isaac’s crack with his middle finger. “In fact everything from your waist down and your knees up is off limits to you tonight. I’ll touch you there, or I won’t, as I see fit.”

Isaac swallowed and his cock twitched in protest. “Okay.”

“Raise your arms.”

Isaac did as he was told. Isaac was going to keep doing as he was told. He wasn’t submissive in general, but for Ethan it felt unbelievably right. For Ethan he would be the most submissive wolf in all of Beacon Hills, including those pacifist werewolves from Brett’s pack who probably all rolled over and raised their rumps for anyone with glowing eyes.

Ethan stripped Isaac’s shirt off and pushed him back across the bed.

Isaac immediately bared his throat, hoping he wasn’t overdoing it but too turned on not to.

“Good. Boy. Isaac.” Ethan articulated the words slowly, infusing each with honey-sweet praise as he straddled Isaac’s waist and lay across him, pressing their shirtless torsos together. “You’re being so good for me.”

Isaac gasped as Ethan bit the side of his neck just hard enough to make it throb.

“You’d let me do anything to you wouldn’t you?” Ethan rumbled in his alpha voice against Isaac’s throat.

“Anything.” Isaac breathed the word more than said it.

“Good.” Ethan rolled his hips, grinding their erections together through their pants. “I’m not gonna hold back tonight. I’m gonna own that hot little asshole of yours. I’m gonna fuck it as wild and as rough as I want. It’s going to get wrecked, Isaac. I’m going to fuck you till there’s no resistance left. Then we’re going to stop and wait for it to heal nice and tight around my big cock – So I can do it again and again and again.”

Isaac’s pulse thrummed as he gripped Ethan’s ass and dragged him forward, grinding Ethan against his crotch. “Do it!”

Ethan snarled and bit the opposite side of Isaac’s neck. “Let go.”

Isaac dropped his hands to the bed and went slack.
“I thrust. I touch you. Got it?”

“Yes...sir?”

Ethan gusted an amused breath and kissed Isaac’s neck. He lifted himself up, looming over Isaac. “Look at me.”

Isaac did but found it inexplicably difficult to make eye contact. He looked at Ethan’s cheeks instead. “Look at me,” Ethan repeated, authority missing from his tone, replaced by the kind timbre he normally used with Isaac.

Isaac raised his eyes and met Ethan’s gentle brown ones. His cock quit throbbing, but his chest fluttered. It was a fair trade off.

“I know you’re having fun, and I’m not going to take this too far, but just so we’re clear, you can always say no, stop, or slow down – and I will. Instantly. I promise.”

“I know,” Isaac answered, confidently squeezing Ethan’s ass to show him that he understood that Ethan’s commands were confined to the game they were playing, which was clearly on timeout.

“Good.” Ethan kissed him, then tilted his head sideways and nipped at his earlobe. “So good.”

Isaac whimpered and let go of Ethan’s ass.

“Spread your legs for me.”

Isaac spread his thighs, arched his hips, and slid lower on the bed, trying to make himself as receptive as he could to Ethan’s agonizingly slow and gentle thrusts. His ankles twitched and he instinctively raised them off the bed and–

“No.” Ethan growled the word in Isaac’s ear and quit thrusting the moment Isaac’s ankles dug into his hard, denim-clad backside.

Isaac dropped his feet back to the bed, a wave of shame and distress crashing over him. “I’m sorry.”

“It’s okay.” Ethan nuzzled his ear, then kissed along the side of his face. “You’re doing so well. I want you to obey, but don’t feel bad if you mess up.” He pressed a final kiss to Isaac’s mouth then held eye contact.

“But I thought...”

“No shame or guilt, Isaac. That’s the number one rule.” Ethan hooked his hands under Isaac’s arms and gripped the tops of his shoulders as he ground his whole body blissfully hard and heavy against Isaac’s. “This is just for fun, okay? It stops if we're not both enjoying it.”

“Okay.” Isaac smiled at him and bounced his ankles against the hard swell of Ethan’s ass. He writhed against Ethan and cascaded his hands up and down Ethan’s bare back, gripping, squeezing, and massaging the tight cords of muscle and warm flesh. They made out slow and heavy, their tongues sliding and pushing together as their lips compressed and tingled.

Isaac wanted to grab Ethan’s waist and flip them over so that he was on top. He wanted to tear their pants off and demand that Ethan do what he had promised to his hole now...but then Ethan would have to punish him for being a bad wolf, and they had agreed that as fun as that would be, it wasn’t what they wanted tonight. Besides, Isaac’s need to please Ethan and be good for him outweighed his
desire for sexual relief, especially since he knew that sexual relief would happen, and happen spectacularly if he let Ethan do it his way.

When Isaac couldn’t take it anymore – the damp slide of their sweaty chests and stomachs; the blinding pleasure-pressure combination in his pants; the dense, lung-tickling aroma of their mingled arousal – he lowered his hands and feet to the bed and went completely slack, signaling that he was ready to behave and continue their game.

“You think I should let you suck my cock?” Ethan asked, breaking the kiss and resuming his agonizingly slow thrusts between Isaac’s legs.

Isaac’s eyes flared with heat and his heart missed a beat. He wanted that so much, but–

“No, I don’t deserve it.”

“Isaac.” Ethan arched his brow, his tone full of gentle reproach.

“Oh.” Isaac’s already hot face bloomed with new warmth. “You think I do deserve it?”

Ethan’s chocolate eyes did the melty-with-affection thing, and he kissed the apple of each of Isaac’s flushed cheeks. “I think you deserve everything good.”

Isaac smirked at him. “Like your cock?”

Ethan chuckled. “Yeah, like my cock.” He sat up and straddled Isaac’s chest as he unbuttoned his pants.

Isaac’s eyes widened, and he clamped his hands around Ethan’s hips. His pinky and ring fingers pressed against rough denim, while his index and middle fingers caressed Ethan's taut, supple flesh, and the pads of his thumbs played with the sinewy muscles of Ethan’s v-lines.

Ethan stopped with his fly halfway unzipped and arched an eyebrow at Isaac.

“Issac whined and lowered his hands back to the bed.

“Good boy,” Ethan said with a smirk. It was teasing, but it felt good anyway.

Isaac sighed and folded his hands behind his head to keep them out of trouble as he eyed Ethan’s overflowing package of goodies.

Ethan eased his zipper the rest of the way down and slowly spread the flaps of his pants, revealing a pair of snug, slate blue briefs that looked ready to burst against the strain of containing Ethan at full mast.

“D-did you get these for me?” Isaac asked, leaking precum and struggling not to buck or clench his thighs for stimulation. Ethan hadn’t told him not to, but part of being good was understanding the spirit of the rules, and Isaac was clearly meant to surrender control of his pleasure to Ethan.

“Yeah.” Ethan stroked the side of Isaac’s face with the back of his knuckles. “Like ‘em?”

Isaac swallowed and gave a shaky nod. He liked them so much he was about to cum in his pants just looking at them, especially now that Ethan’s pheromones had intensified and Isaac could taste them in his mouth.

Ethan trailed his hand away from Isaac’s face and gripped Isaac’s bicep. He rubbed it for a few seconds before tugging Isaac’s arm out from under his head and guiding his hand to–
“Really?!” Isaac’s heart thundered in his chest as he wrapped his fingers around Ethan’s prodigious manhood through the briefs and stroked him from base to tip. He even got to tickle Ethan’s swollen glans through the thin blue fabric.

“You’ve been very good, Isaac.” Ethan released Isaac’s wrist, implicitly giving him greater freedom to touch.

Isaac reveled under Ethan’s approval and the privilege Ethan was granting him. He beamed a wide, happy grin at him before taking full advantage of his reward and jerking Ethan’s steely hard cock through the soft fabric. It was more than a handful, and even without the briefs in the way Isaac wouldn’t have been able to fully close his fingers around it.

“How did Danny take this beast?”

Ethan laughed and petted Isaac’s head.

Isaac shouldn’t have liked it, but he fucking loved it.

“With lots of lube and prep, and then doggie-style or in the dark with me leaching the pain away.”

Isaac fondled Ethan’s weighty balls and snickered. “You probably gave him an exaggerated sense of his abilities as a bottom.”

“Maybe.” Ethan curled his fingers around Isaac’s wrist.

As much as Isaac relished that sensation, the claim, a wave of disappointment crashed over him. Did he have to stop touching Ethan?

“You’re gonna blow me now.”

OH!

Isaac rubbed his chest, staying away from his nipples just in case the spirit of the rule applied to them too, and watched in awe as Ethan untangled his erection from the blue briefs and slid the material halfway down his hips to meet his jeans.

“Oh god!” Isaac’s voice shook and his cock ached in the tight confines of his pants, drawing his attention to how wet his crotch was. He had soaked himself with his precum. He ignored it. His own cock wasn’t that interesting, not with Ethan’s beautiful behemoth waving in the air a few inches in front of his face. He licked his lips in a slow, exaggerated manner, trying to entice Ethan into his mouth but resisting the urge to take the initiative on his own.

Isaac groaned as Ethan’s erection retreated away from him, but then Ethan was hunched in front of his face, stroking his head and telling him how good he was.

Isaac cooed and kissed Ethan, too caught up in his emotions to hold back.

Ethan returned the kiss, both hands on Isaac’s face as he caressed the roof of Isaac’s mouth with his tongue.

When the kiss ended Ethan pressed their foreheads together and rumbled in a way that made Isaac’s heart stutter.

“Let’s get you propped up,” Ethan said, arranging the pillows behind Isaac’s head and neck.

Isaac lay still and let Ethan set things up to his liking.
“Are you comfortable?”

“Yeah but…c-can I take off my jeans?” Isaac whimpered as his genitals throbbed and the tight denim seemed to constrict around them.

Ethan hopped off the bed and finished shedding his own pants and underwear. His eyes clouded with lust and his nostrils flared as he stared at Isaac’s bulging wet spot.

Isaac arched his hips and flexed his cock. It ached really good, but he did it entirely for Ethan’s enjoyment rather than his own, so he decided it wasn’t against the rules.

Ethan wasn’t complaining. He moaned and played with the bloated red helmet of his cockhead while Isaac continued his show, bucking and whimpering with need, but keeping his hands away from the problem like Ethan had told him.

“Yeah, let’s get these off you.”

Isaac whined and shook his head as Ethan unbuckled his belt. “I, um, just changed my mind.”

“What?” Ethan stopped with the long strap of Isaac’s belt pulled back and regarded him with confusion.

Isaac’s cheeks burned. Ethan was supposed to know his kinks and fantasies; he wasn’t supposed to have to tell him. “I think I’ll have more fun blowing you if I’m...confined. It’s just something random that popped in my head. We don’t have to try it.”

“No, we can.” Ethan’s eyes lit with amusement and he smirked as he finished opening Isaac’s belt but laid the two ends across his waist, leaving his fly closed. “But when we’re done, I am taking you out to play with, and you’re going to be getting off really good tonight.”

“I’m okay with that.” Isaac grinned. It was right up there with the other things he was okay with, like winning the lottery or being given a lifetime supply of scarves.

Ethan vaulted back onto the bed and spread his legs around Isaac’s shoulder, bracing his hands against the window and bathing himself in moonlight as he lowered his cock to Isaac’s lips. He threw his head back and howled as he slipped inside – and Isaac almost came in those damn pants.

Isaac caressed Ethan’s bloated cockhead with his lips and flicked Ethan’s slit with his tongue. He bounced his hips and dug his claws into the duvet as he thought about the fact that all of Ethan’s cum had shot out of this wonderful little slit that Isaac was lapping at, every single load he’d ever made...except the ones that were inside him right now, the ones he was going to pump into Isaac’s ass in a little while.

Isaac raised trembling hands. He had to touch something. He wanted to slide his hand inside his pants, or better yet--

“You can touch me, Isaac.”

Isaac tried to express his gratitude with his eyes as he pressed the palm of one hand against the center of Ethan’s gorgeous, rippling stomach, and wrapped his other hand around the base of Ethan’s thick shaft.

Ethan eased in and out of Isaac's mouth, feeding him just his cockhead and the top few inches beneath it. Isaac’s lips never even got close to his hand. He groaned in frustration and slurped as loud as he could, trying to entice Ethan to plunder his throat.
Ethan stroked Isaac’s cheek. “I don’t wanna choke you.” He smirked down at him. “You already have a mouthful.”

It was true. Isaac did already have a mouthful, but Ethan could ram more in if he tried. He had pushed Brett to his limits on Friday night, and as uncomfortable as it had looked, Isaac would have been more than okay with Ethan face-fucking him that way.

Isaac gagged and clutched Ethan’s abs as Ethan’s tip prodded the back of his throat.

“You’re doing so good, Isaac.” Ethan v-ed his fingers around his cock and covered Isaac’s hand with his own. He stroked Isaac’s pinky with the pad of his thumb as his thumbnail scratched through the trimmed patch of hair covering his pelvis. “Your mouth feels incredible.”

Isaac hummed and slurped.

“I could cum like this.” Ethan’s voice was happy and lazy with only a hint of underlying urgency. “You could get me off.”

Isaac whimpered and looked up at him with pleading eyes. Yes. YES!

Ethan shook his head and patted Isaac’s cheek. “But all my cum is going in your ass tonight.”

Isaac moaned and clenched his hole as if he already had a load to keep inside.

“Fuck Isaac, your arousal is practically dripping in the air.” Ethan withdrew his cock until just the flared rim of his cockhead was hooked in Isaac’s lips. “You want it that bad, huh? You’re that desperate for me to breed you nice and deep now that you’re mine, now that no one else can have you?”

The beginnings of what seemed like a very important thought formed in Isaac’s mind, but then Ethan snapped his hips and plunged in deeper than he had since they’d started, and all Isaac could do was gag and swallow around Ethan’s cock.

“I guess I should thank Brett for putting things into perspective, even though it was all I could do not to tear him apart the other night.”

Isaac massaged the root of Ethan’s cock and trailed light fingertips across his abs in an attempt to soothe him.

“Watching him touch you like that...” Ethan growled and slid his hand from the side of Isaac’s head to the back, clutching him closer. “Watching him fuck you, and” –he snorted and tightened his other hand over Isaac’s on the base of cock– “cum in you.”

Isaac gagged, but this time it was on the spicy, sour burn of Ethan’s jealous rage.

“And I couldn’t even stop it because we were just friends.” Ethan snarled and a jolt of genuine fear arced down Isaac’s spine.

Ethan’s hand was a steel vice on the back of his head, locking him in place against his crotch and limiting his ability to breathe. Ethan’s weight bore down on his chest and shoulders, pinning him to the bed. He was trapped. He was–

No.

Isaac flared his eyes with determination. He was overreacting. He wasn’t trapped. He hadn’t tried to
move yet. He just needed to move.

He pushed his head back against Ethan’s hand and sat up higher on the bed, beyond relieved when Ethan let go and shuffled out of the way – relieved but unsurprised. Of course he wasn’t trapped.

“I’m sorry.” Isaac’s apology came out rough and crackly. He coughed and cleared his throat.

Ethan’s eyes widened and he paled as he shifted into a seated position in front of Isaac. “Shit. No, I’m sorry. I didn’t mean to lose my temper.” He sniffed the air and groaned as he ran a hand through his short hair. “Dammit. You were afraid. I scared you.”

“No.” Isaac didn’t bother to hide his heartbeat. It wasn’t like Ethan was going to believe him either way.

Ethan reached for Isaac’s shoulders but stopped. He caught Isaac’s eye and waited for him to nod his consent before closing the remaining distance.

“I would never hurt you the way I did when I was with the alpha pack.”

Isaac laughed. “I know.”

“I mean it.” Ethan rubbed Isaac’s biceps and gave him an urgent look. “And I know your father used to say he wouldn’t do it again either but–”

“What?!” Isaac pulled back and swatted Ethan’s hands away. “You think I was thinking about my father?!”

“Well, I mean...there was a cycle, and–”

“We’re not in that cycle.” Isaac growled and folded his arms. “That’s the point. That’s why I want to be with you, Ethan. Because you’re not like him. Geez, you don’t have keep trying to earn my trust. You have it. Just don’t fuck it up.”

“I thought I might’ve already fucked it up.” Ethan’s tone was angry, but there was fear in his scent.

“Well you didn’t!” Isaac gripped the back of Ethan’s neck and crashed their mouths together.

The kiss was angry and possessive from both sides, but it gradually mellowed as Ethan rubbed Isaac’s back, and Isaac massaged Ethan’s neck.

“We should stop what we were doing,” Ethan whispered against Isaac’s lips.

“You don’t want to have sex?!” Isaac gave Ethan a horrified look.

“No, I do.” Ethan laughed. “Regular sex, without rules or dominance play.”

Isaac pouted his bottom lip and whined. “I was enjoying that.”

“I was too.” Ethan smiled and kissed him again. “And I want to do it again another time, but I think we need to cool it for tonight.”

“But you’re still gonna ravage my hole and pump me full of cum right?”

“Well yeah, I mean of course.” Ethan squeezed Isaac’s thigh. “Take off your pants.”

Isaac scooted to the edge of the bed and stood to finish undressing.
Ethan knelt behind him on the mattress and hooked his chin over Isaac’s shoulder. He massaged Isaac’s chest, his firm fingertips caressing Isaac’s pecs and pinching his nipples with just the right amount of pressure to neither hurt nor tickle. He drifted lower as Isaac leaned into his embrace and let the jeans fall from his hips. He splayed his fingers across Isaac’s abs and squeezed.

Isaac moaned and turned his head, angling his neck toward the former alpha.

“Mine,” Ethan whispered, lapping at Isaac’s throat and locking one arm around Isaac’s chest. He held Isaac tight as he thumbed at Isaac’s bellybutton, then played with the line of hair descending from it. His fingers darted ahead, down Isaac’s pelvis and under the waistband of his gray boxer briefs.

“Please.” Isaac shuddered and pressed the side of his head against Ethan’s.

“What?” Ethan asked, a laugh in his voice as he twirled his fingers through Isaac’s pubic bush and grazed Isaac’s throbbing shaft with his warm knuckles without gripping him.

“Stroke me.” Isaac followed up the request with a growl. If their game was over, then Isaac was done with whines and whimpers. Ethan needed to fucking jerk him off.

“Ahh.” Ethan kissed Isaac’s jaw, gently unwound his fingers from Isaac’s curls, and–

“Uhn!” Isaac gasped and bit his lip, struggling not to unload. His cock had been neglected for so long.

“Sshh, I gotcha,” Ethan whispered against Isaac’s throat, his hand wrapped snugly around Isaac’s shaft and his index finger caressing the underside of Isaac’s glans. “Let it happen.”

Isaac took ragged breaths and clenched his eyes shut as Ethan stroked him with a relentless precision, dragging his hand over every inch of Isaac’s shaft and tickling Isaac’s leaking cockhead with the soft pad of his finger. “Wanna cum while you fuck me.”

“You will.” Ethan nipped the delicate skin under Isaac’s jaw with blunt teeth. “I’m going to get you off once with my hand, once with my mouth, and once with my cock.”

Isaac panted and opened his eyes, euphoria clouding his vision as he clutched Ethan’s arms and melted deeper into the embrace. The elastic of his boxer briefs stretched and strained as Ethan’s strokes accelerated. The damp drag of cotton across Isaac’s hot, sparking skin was both a relief and yet another source of mind blowing stimulation. Ethan was finally going to make Isaac cum in his pants, well his underwear, and after struggling not to on so many occasions the fact that he could just let go and–

Isaac howled and arched into Ethan’s hand, hyper aware of the moonlight bathing his almost nude body and of Ethan’s grip tightening around his chest, anchoring him as the room exploded in white light.

“You’re so good, Isaac,” Ethan whispered through the warm haze of nothingness.

Isaac yelped as the haze cleared and another intense spasm of pleasure clamped around his cock and squeezed his entire core. Thick, creamy cum sprayed through the crotch of his gray boxer briefs and all over Ethan’s bedroom floor.

“Such a good boy.” Ethan nuzzled the side of Isaac’s head and jerked him harder, ending each stroke by rolling his thumb and forefinger around Isaac’s delicate glans. “Cum harder. Don’t hold anything back.”
Isaac shuddered and pumped along with the next spasm, raising the stream higher and hitting a new peak of pleasure as he spattered the front of Ethan’s dresser with his jizz.

“There we go.” Ethan kissed along Isaac’s jaw and held him tight as he rode out the ebbing waves of his orgasm. “Your next one’s gonna be even better.”

Isaac half-laughed, half-panted, almost scared of the prospect. He was bone weary and exhausted from the first one.

Ethan helped him ease his underwear down and lifted him onto the bed, sprawling him out across his chest and between his legs. Isaac’s cock was heavy but comfortably deflated, even as Ethan’s was ramrod hard against the small of his back.

“We don’t have to do anything else if you’re tired,” Ethan murmured, rubbing Isaac’s stomach.

“I’m okay,” Isaac mumbled, shifting to his side so he could lay his head against the smooth, broad plane of one of Ethan’s pectoral muscles.

“Okay then. I’ll start fucking you right now.” Ethan’s chest and arm flexed and the soft, comfortable weight of the duvet was suddenly draped over them.

“M’kay.” Isaac closed his eyes, enjoying the way the blanket locked in Ethan’s warmth and seemed to concentrate his scent and heartbeat. “Go ‘head n’ fuck me.”

Ethan’s chin nuzzling his head was the last thing Isaac remembered before falling asleep.

Chapter End Notes

*Sigh* This is only part one of this particular Ethisaac encounter I’m afraid, but it was getting rather long for a pure smut chapter and Isaac needed a nap. I plan to update with the second part between this coming Friday-Sunday.

During this week I’m going to be working on my Valentine’s Day story, “Corey Bryant’s Love Potion #69.” It’s a prequel to my Halloween story, “Theo Raeken and the Dildo Demon” and like that story it’s meant as an over-the-top ‘erotic humor’ story with themes of fluff, romance, and friendship. The story universe features Corey, Liam, Theo, and Mason post-canon during their college years. The pairings are Corey/Liam and Theo/Mason with past Corey/Mason and Liam/Theo, but the broken up couples are still on very good terms. So please consider keeping an eye out for it if that sounds intriguing!

Anyway, as always I hope you guys enjoyed this chapter, and feedback is greatly appreciated!

Random Opinion Question: Next chapter is the smut continuation, but when that’s over (so in chapter 59), Isaac is going to be going to the woods for a little (obviously non-erotic) plot-related adventure. Who do you want him to go with, Melissa or Ethan? I can make it work with either one and I'm kinda torn. They are the only two options though.
Hypnagogia. Isaac had learned about it during his research into lucid dreaming. It was the transitional state between wakefulness and sleep. It left Isaac tethered enough to consciousness to be aware that he was wrapped up in Ethan’s arms, his muscles slack with fatigue and his mind too exhausted to snap out of its slumbering fog. Yet it also kept him shrouded deeply enough in that fog not to recognize the contradiction that even as Ethan held him, enveloping him in a warm haze of comfort and security, he was also between Isaac’s thighs, pounding him with a supernatural intensity that left him breathless and throbbing.

“Fuck me harder, Ethan! Oh fuck me harder!” Isaac squeezed his eyes shut and wiggled his hips. He couldn’t endure the tight snarl knotting his insides a moment longer. He needed Ethan to fuck it loose.

“Hey.”

Real-world Ethan nudged Isaac’s head and gently shook him, freeing him from the oppressive fog and bringing him back to the present where he stood a chance of getting relief from the cold, heavy ball in the pit of his stomach.

Isaac opened his eyes and raised his head from Ethan’s chest. He was on his back, sprawled atop Ethan and cocooned within the plush duvet.

“It’s okay,” Ethan whispered beside Isaac’s ear, trailing his hand up from Isaac’s stomach to rub a soothing circle over his heart. “You were grinding and whimpering in your sleep.”

Isaac blushed as Ethan shifted his leg. He was straddling Ethan’s thigh, his asscheeks spread around it.

“I think you were looking for this,” Ethan whispered, flexing his erection against Isaac’s lower back.

Isaac whimpered and shuffled higher on the bed, eagerly nestling the length of Ethan’s cock in his crack and clenching around it. It felt so much better than Ethan’s thigh.

“Wow.” Ethan laughed and bucked his hips. “Don’t be so shy about what you want, Isaac.”
“It’s not a want; I need you to fuck me.” Isaac inched higher along Ethan’s velvety steel shaft until Ethan’s plump glans were against his fluttering hole. He writhed, dragging the edge of his rim back and forth over the mouth of Ethan’s bloated cockhead.

“You’re sure you don’t wanna go back to sleep?” Ethan asked with a teasing lilt as he wrapped his hand around Isaac’s erection, drawing Isaac’s attention to it for the first time since he had awoken. “You were only out for about fifteen minutes. Can’t be very well-rested.”

Isaac growled and threw the restrictive duvet off as he wiggled on Ethan’s knob and took a deep breath, preparing to slam his hips down and impale himself.

“Whoa, not yet.” Ethan let go of Isaac’s cock and gripped his thigh and the center of his back as he lifted him into the air and deposited him on the bed atop the rumpled duvet.

“I need it,” Isaac whined, pouting his lip and giving Ethan the puppy dog eyes that always worked on Scott and sometimes worked on Melissa.

“I’m not gonna fuck you dry.”

“I bet you’ll like the way it feels.”

“I bet you won’t.”

Isaac shrugged. “I’ll heal.”

“Isaac, think about it for just a few seconds.” Ethan smirked at him and shook his head. “Remember the time we got rough with lube? Does this really seem like a good idea?”

Isaac frowned and hung his head. “No.”

Ethan hooked a finger under Isaac’s chin and kissed him. “Come sit on the edge of the bed and let me get you ready.”

Isaac did as he was told, shuffling to the edge of the bed as Ethan hopped off and opened his nightstand. He bent just enough that his asscheeks spread, revealing a touch more inner valley than Isaac had ever seen.

Isaac whimpered in the back of his throat and stroked his cock. Would it be okay to ask Ethan to show him his asshole? Isaac wanted to see it so bad that that brief flash of crack had single-handedly doubled the size and ferocity of the ball of need in the pit of Isaac’s stomach.

“I know you’re desperate for it.” Ethan turned, grinning and shaking his cock at Isaac with one hand as he held the bottle of lube in the other.

Isaac swallowed and nodded as the ball of need sank from his stomach to his ass. Isaac wanted to fuck Ethan, but he wasn’t exaggerating before: he needed Ethan to fuck him. If he didn’t get Ethan’s cock inside him soon, he was going to suffocate from the tight pressure constricting his core. Ethan had to claim him. He had to fuck Isaac wide open and pump him full of cum. It was the only thing that might save Isaac from the jagged lump of frustration growing inside him. Blowing his own load hadn’t offered more than a temporary reprieve.

Ethan set the lube on the bed and grabbed Isaac’s hips. He dragged Isaac’s ass off the edge of the bed, leaving Isaac leaning more than sitting.

Isaac panted in anticipation and spread his legs.
Mischief sparkled in Ethan’s eyes as he leaned in close and curled his fingers around Isaac’s hard, leaking cock. “Remember what I said I was gonna do?”

Isaac bucked into Ethan’s hand and clung to his biceps. “You’re gonna fuck me till my hole is wrecked, and then you’re gonna wait for it to heal and do it all over again.”

“It figures that’s the part you’d remember.” Ethan laughed and pressed their foreheads together, stroking Isaac’s cock as he cupped the back of Isaac’s neck with his other hand. “I won’t do that unless it’s what you really want.”

Isaac snorted. Had Ethan met him?

“I meant the part about getting you off once with my hand, once with my mouth, and once with my cock.”

“Oh, but you can go straight to–”

Isaac gurgled and his eyes rolled back as Ethan sank to his knees...and directly onto Isaac’s cock, plunging it into his hot, wet mouth and swallowing around the tip as it probed the back of his throat.

Ethan slurped his way back up Isaac’s shaft and worked his glans for a few seconds before breaking the seal between it and his lips with a loud pop. “Fuck, you taste so damn good.”

“Uhnn!” Isaac gripped the edge of the mattress as Ethan rubbed the end of his cock across his lips then slid the shaft along his cheek as he buried his nose in Isaac’s pubes.

“You smell even better.” Ethan took long, deep breaths and kept his nose pressed against Isaac’s body as he dipped from Isaac’s pelvis down around his shaft and under his balls.

“Ohh.” Isaac trembled as the bridge of Ethan’s nose gently glided beneath each of his balls, and his sack spread across Ethan’s forehead as he burrowed deeper. “Oh Ethan!!”

“Delicious,” Ethan whispered, mouthing at Isaac’s fuzzy taint and rubbing heavy hands along the insides of his thighs.

Isaac closed his eyes and lay back across the bed as Ethan’s warm, wet lips brushed his tingling opening.

Ethan kissed his asshole a few time and sucked on the puckered mound of muscle before flicking it with his tongue. All the while, he massaged the innermost recesses of Isaac’s thighs with his forefingers, the sides of his hands working the swell of Isaac’s pubis as his thumbs rubbed Isaac’s taint.

Isaac fought to keep his claws sheathed as he squeezed the mattress. The way Ethan was humming and murmuring against him as he teased Isaac’s ring open and breached it with his tongue didn’t just feel good physically, it lit something warm and thick in Isaac’s chest. He was safe with Ethan, comfortable; Ethan wanted him. Isaac felt so wanted he wasn’t sure if he would breakdown sobbing or explode in euphoria.

Euphoria won out as Ethan’s hands finally left Isaac’s thighs and covered his genitals. He massaged Isaac’s balls and pumped his shaft a few times before double fisting Isaac’s cock and stroking it as he plunged his tongue to new depths inside Isaac.

Isaac howled. And trembled. And laughed. And howled again. He was out of breath by the time Ethan’s hands and mouth traded places. Ethan was once again slurping on his cock, only this time a
lubed finger was curled inside him, tugging and teasing his rim.

Ethan was a mother fucking mind reader. Just as Isaac opened his mouth to request a second finger, it was pushing inside him, finally giving him a taste of the stretch he needed even as Ethan’s lips sank lower on his shaft, and his cockhead wedged deeper into Ethan smooth, wet throat.

“G-g-getting...” Isaac squeezed his eyes shut and moaned with abandon as Ethan rode up his shaft and worked his glans with tight lips, swirling his tongue around Isaac’s tip. “Close. Really close.”

Ethan hummed and twisted his fingers against Isaac’s prostate, the knuckles of his other hand massaging Isaac’s taint.

“Ahh! Gaahh– Ohh!” Isaac bounced and bucked, fucking himself in Ethan’s mouth and on his hands as white hot pleasure tore from the tips of Ethan’s fingers and tongue and shot straight up Isaac’s spine and into his brain, tunneling his vision and making his whole body seize and shake.

By the time the tremors had subsided, Isaac was drowned in endorphins and too fuzzy headed to know when Ethan had lifted him back onto the main part of the bed and climbed up next to him. It didn’t matter. All he knew was that Ethan’s lips were right where they were supposed to be, against his own. Ethan’s arms were where they belonged as well, wound tight around Isaac’s waist and back and holding him close.

Isaac tasted himself in Ethan’s mouth, and smelled himself on Ethan’s face. Another flood of emotion crashed over him, and it was a damn good thing Ethan’s lips and arms were where they were supposed to be.

“How was it?” Ethan whispered against Isaac’s mouth once his heart rate had stabilized.

Isaac huffed a laugh and rubbed Ethan’s back. “How do you think?”

“Better than your first one?”

Isaac trailed his fingers over Ethan’s shoulder and across his chest. “Yeah.”

“Good.” Ethan flared his eyes at Isaac and gave him a toothy smile. “Your best one’s gonna come from my cock.”

The desperation in Isaac’s stomach twisted and burned back to life, reminding him that even though he’d had two earth-shattering orgasms, he was yet to get any relief.

“Please gimme what I need.”

“Always,” Ethan whispered, brushing a hand through Isaac’s disheveled hair.

Isaac whined and rolled on top of Ethan, pinning him to the bed and peppering his throat and jaw with kisses.

Ethan let him, even tipping his head back and going slack beneath Isaac in a gesture of trust and submission.

Power surged through Isaac’s body, and he growled possessively as he nipped at the exposed flesh.

“Yours too,” Ethan whispered, arching his throat into Isaac’s mouth the way Isaac had done earlier on the couch.

“Mine,” Isaac affirmed, rumbling and pressing his fangs against Ethan’s Adam’s apple as he inhaled
his scent.

The sparks in Isaac’s chest re-lit and fused into the same flickering tendril as before. It yearned to reach through the sliver of space between Isaac and Ethan and connect their wolves on a deeper level, but Isaac was ready for it this time and immediately snuffed it out with a cold, iron fist. It wasn’t fair to tease Ethan with a packbond that couldn’t form. They could have every connection except that one.

“Fuck me,” Isaac demanded, rolling off Ethan and staring up at the ceiling, eager to replace the ache in his chest with a much more satisfying ache in his ass.

Ethan grabbed the lube and crawled between Isaac’s legs. He slathered a generous amount of the slick fluid all over his cock and worked more into Isaac’s hole with two brisk fingers.

Isaac wrapped his legs around Ethan’s waist and scooted lower on the bed, arching his hips and impaling himself to the knuckles on Ethan’s fingers. “Hurry!”

Ethan laughed. “We have all night.”

“But–”

“And I might fuck you that long.” He winked and pulled his fingers out.

Isaac bit his lip and shifted until Ethan’s hefty cock grazed his thigh.

Ethan gripped his cock and rubbed the head in a circle against Isaac’s hole. His eyes glowed icy blue and his fangs extended. “You’re perfect, Isaac.”

Isaac whimpered and fluttered his ring against the tip of Ethan’s thick, angular head. “Please.”

“Relax,” Ethan whispered, clutching Isaac’s hip as he eased forward.

“Will you” –Isaac licked his lips, his heart pounding– “make me?”

“RELAX!” Ethan roared, blasting Isaac with latent authority.

Isaac gasped and went blissfully slack on the bed, unable to tense up even as Ethan penetrated him with a sharp, agonizing thrust.

Oh fuck! Ethan’s cockhead was stupid big.

Ethan rubbed Isaac’s abdomen and the pain abated, flowing up Ethan’s arms in thick black vines and accentuating his forearms, biceps, and shoulders.

“Don’t you usually do it...directly?” Isaac asked between clenched teeth as the pain burned his ass and blazed across his gut before exiting from his stomach into Ethan’s soothing fingers.

“Yeah, of course.” Ethan winced as the vines arcing up his arms withered and new ones shot up from his v-lines and pelvis. They crisscrossed his abs and flowed across his chest, following the lines of muscle around his pecs and sternum and creeping up his neck.

Isaac sighed in relief as all the discomfort vanished, leaving him stretched and tingling on the end of Ethan’s dick.

“I’d have done it right away, but I thought you wanted some.” Sweat had formed on Ethan’s brow, and his eyes were creased with strain.
“I’ll take some,” Isaac answered, eying Ethan’s torso and openly enjoying the erotic show he was getting. “I wanted to feel the stretch, and the burn was distracting.” He rocked his hips, relishing how securely the thick, wide rim of Ethan’s glans was hooked inside his ring of quivering muscle. It tugged and pulled as he leaned back, not even close to slipping out. No wonder Ethan had to thrust so hard to get it in.

“Isaac.” Ethan’s face scrunched and he took ragged breaths as the black vines flowing around his muscles thickened and accelerated.

“Sorry.” Isaac laughed, caught between giddy and guilty. “It just feels so fucking right.” He held his waist still and tightened his abs as he sat up and stroked Ethan’s chest. “Share some.”

Ethan wrapped his arms around Isaac and held him up as they shared the burn and waited for Isaac’s body to adjust to the girthy intrusion. After a few moments of Isaac drawing it from Ethan’s chest, Ethan simply decreased the amount he was pulling from Isaac’s ass.

Isaac moaned and his head rolled back. “Oh, I like that. That’s just right.”

“Yeah?” Ethan shifted Isaac deeper into his lap, feeding him another couple of inches and stretching him even wider. “So tight, Isaac.”

“I know.” Isaac whimpered, and they both flinched as he flexed around Ethan’s shaft, trying to gauge how much he had left to take – a lot.

“You’re smiling.” Ethan ran his hand down Isaac’s back and squeezed his asscheek.

“Yeah.” Isaac was fucking grinning. He had so much left to take, and it was already perfect.

“You want me to quit helping?” Ethan whispered, curling his fingers into Isaac’s crack and tapping at the place where hole met shaft.

Isaac nodded and closed his eyes. He hissed and moaned as the burn intensified, lighting his whole core on fire and lapping at the perimeter of the jagged snarl of frustration.

“The end of my dick feels so warm and wet.” Ethan kissed along Isaac’s neck and nosed at his ear. “I want the rest to feel this good too. Sit on it for me.”

“But you’re so big,” Isaac whined, still burning and panting.

“And you’re so tight.” His voice was low and debauched as he traced his fingertip against Isaac’s throbbing ring. “It’s wonderful, huh?”

“Yeah.” Isaac pressed his forehead to Ethan’s and whispered against his mouth. “I want the rest. I want it hard and fast.”

“Take it. Sit on it.”

“I can’t.” Isaac trembled and clutched Ethan’s shoulders. The burn was fierce, and as much as Isaac wanted it, he was scared. “Make me.”

Ethan gripped Isaac’s hips and whispered affectionately into his ear. “You’re sure?”

“Please.”

Ethan snarled and wrenched Isaac out of his squatting position and flush onto his lap, impaling him to the hilt in an instant.
Isaac screamed and his eyes blazed with golden heat. He dug his claws into his own palms to keep from gouging Ethan. He had asked for it after all.

“Ohh god yes! That feels so fucking good.” Ethan moaned and rubbed Isaac’s lower back, his thick, steely cock quivering hard inside Isaac.

Isaac groaned and tried to suck air into his lungs.

“You want me to help?” Ethan asked, an edge of concern in his voice and his scent flaring with guilt.

“No,” Isaac answered between gasping breaths, trying to sound like he meant it – because holy fuck did he mean it! He had gone from regretting his decision to reveling in it as a fresh round of endorphins soaked his brain and made him lightheaded. It was so worth it. He clung to Ethan’s shoulders and mewled. “Thank you.”

They were still for a few moments, taking deep breaths and relishing the flood of sensations washing through their bodies.

“Ready?” Ethan whispered, rubbing Isaac’s back.

Isaac nodded, and Ethan lifted him and laid him across the bed.

Ethan’s face was fully wolfed out and danger glinted in his glowing eyes.

“You can say no or stop.” Ethan growled it more than said it, but that didn’t undermine the sincerity. “But unless you do, I’m going to claim you, and I’m going to make it rough.”

“Do it,” Isaac pleaded. He should have tipped his head back in submission, but he couldn’t bear to look away from Ethan’s muscular, sweat-slick torso.

Ethan snarled and snapped his hips. One instant his bulbous cockhead was hooked in Isaac’s rim, the next his pelvis slammed Isaac’s taint with enough force to make his teeth rattle.

“Ahh! Oh god, Ethan.”

The ball of desperation inside Isaac shattered, sending shards of sharp pleasure tearing throughout his core. They were shaken up and rearranged in glorious new ways with every urgent thrust Ethan delivered.

Ethan landed a dozen hard blows against Isaac’s prostate before pausing and growling, making sure he had Isaac’s attention.

“I’m taking you now, Isaac. For myself, for my pleasure.” Ethan changed angles and missed Isaac’s prostate on purpose, ramming a new space inside him.

Isaac yelped and dug his claws into the duvet, panting to control the harsh throb. Ethan made eye contact and gave Isaac a questioning look. Isaac nodded and went slack on the bed. “Use me. Fuck me however you want, Ethan. Don’t even think about me, just make it good for yourself.”

Ethan smiled darkly and snapped his hips again, pummeling the opposite wall of Isaac’s ass and grinding against it. “Gotta keep finding those few tight spots you have left.”

Isaac hooked his ankles around Ethan’s ass and encouraged the rough thrusts, clamping his exhausted muscles as tight as he could around Ethan’s shaft.

“That’s it. Don’t you dare fucking let up until I cum.” Ethan gripped Isaac’s hips and lifted him off
the bed, slamming Isaac’s crotch against his pelvis as he chased his release.

Isaac gritted his teeth and clung to the bedspread as Ethan fucked him like a rag doll, throwing him all over the bed and snarling savagely as he pumped into him over and over, every thrust harder than the last. Isaac’s whole body throbbed and his mind whirled and shifted gears as his singular focus became Ethan’s pleasure. He kept his ankles hooked tight around Ethan’s waist, ensuring he wouldn’t slip out as he devastated Isaac’s channel with increasingly erratic thrusts. Isaac called on every bit of his werewolf strength to keep his battered muscles squeezed snugly around Ethan’s pistoning cock.

“Yes. Yes. YES!” Ethan gave Isaac a look of absolute appreciation and nailed his prostate dead on as he erupted inside him with a primal howl.

Isaac’s beta instincts thrummed with ecstasy as the energy of the former alpha’s release tore through him. He bared his throat but resisted the impulse to go slack against the bed, instead flexing every muscle in his body and desperately hoping Ethan would enjoy the visual as he rode out his release.

“Moon’gasm.” Ethan panted, gripping Isaac’s hips and still pumping into him.

Isaac’s pulse accelerated as he felt himself filling with Ethan’s cum. He clamped down on the base of Ethan’s throbbing cock and struggled to raise a shaking leg to his shoulder.

“What are you doing?” Ethan asked in a tight voice as he helped Isaac turn onto his side and then his stomach without breaking the all important seal between their bodies.

“I want you to mount me,” Isaac answered, grinding his leaking erection against the soft bedspread a few times before raising his ass and encouraging Ethan up with him. “This way nothing leaks out and you can get better leverage to keep fucking.”

Ethan rumbled and squatted around Isaac’s hips. He gripped Isaac’s shoulders and hammered into him with renewed vigor, his cock still quaking and spewing hard.

“You feel so fucking good!” Ethan delivered steady power thrusts, making Isaac’s ass squelch with every impact.

“So do you.” Isaac whimpered. Ethan’s spasming blows sent waves of sensation coursing through his ass and pooling around his prostate along with the thick torrents of jizz Ethan blasted into him.

Eventually, even gravity couldn’t keep Ethan’s bountiful load inside, and with each out-thrust cum dribbled down Isaac’s taint and coated his balls. Soon Ethan’s seed was running down Isaac’s hard shaft and trickling from Isaac's swollen cockhead to the bedspread beneath him.

“I think it’s tapering off,” Ethan said between panting breaths as he rubbed Isaac’s shoulders.

Isaac howled with delight and clamped his fatigued muscles around Ethan’s thick shaft, milking it as hard as he could. His cock and balls were drenched in Ethan’s cum, and he was borderline high on the rich cocktail of pheromones.

“Aah– Ohhh, Isaac!” Ethan collapsed atop Isaac, pressing his sweat-damp forehead against the back
of Isaac’s neck and grinding deeper and deeper into his ass.

Isaac ground back, trying to create a stable surface for Ethan to fuck into, but soon he was hammered flat into the mattress and too exhausted to get up. He sighed and tilted his neck.

Ethan took the hint and bit into Isaac’s delicate flesh.

Isaac yelped and it spurred Ethan to hump him a few more times before they both went still.

Ethan’s weight was a grounding force, and Isaac was disappointed as Ethan got up and rolled back on his ankles, almost but not quite pulling his long cock out of him.

“Turn over,” Ethan requested, his voice tender and happy.

Isaac raised his leg, and Ethan guided it over his head and shoulder as Isaac turned over. Ethan’s bloated knob kept him mostly plugged, but the movement allowed some fresh cum to seep out. Isaac melted onto the mattress once he was on his back again.

“Are you okay?” Ethan traced gentle fingers over Isaac’s glistening abs, which were slick with cum, precum, and sweat, and rubbed his palm over Isaac’s equally coated, ramrod-hard cock.

“Perfect,” Isaac answered, his eyes glowing with a contented heat.

“I’ve never fucked anyone like that before.” Ethan’s face was lit with an excited, boyish innocence.

“You can fuck me like that whenever you want.”

Ethan smirked and ran his gaze up and down Isaac’s spent body. “Don’t tempt me.”

“I will if you’ll do it again.” Isaac stretched, wiggling further onto Ethan’s cock.

Ethan moaned and surged forward, burying himself back to the hilt and giving a few lazy thrusts. “I haven’t gotten you off with just my cock yet, but I’m going to.”

“I know.” A happy certainty washed over Isaac, and he folded his arms behind his head, enjoying the warm hum of the moonlight on his skin from Ethan’s window. He didn’t need to get off again – he was finally satisfied and relaxed – but he didn’t have any doubt that Ethan would make good on his promise and fuck him into his most powerful orgasm of the night.

Ethan let out a long sigh and slowly withdrew from Isaac. Even his thick cockhead slipped out of Isaac’s ravished hole without resistance. Isaac cringed as a flood of semen gushed out after it and soaked the bedspread. He tried to clench and hold it in, but his muscles had given up.

“Wow.” Ethan grinned and ran a finger through the puddle between Isaac’s legs.

“So, I’m thinking we won’t need anymore lube when we start up again,” Isaac said with a smirk as he raised his hips and drew his knees toward his chest, trying to keep the rest of Ethan’s cum inside.

“Fuck.” Ethan’s eyes flared blue and he stared wantonly at Isaac’s dripping asshole. “Does that hurt?”

Isaac laughed and folded his arms under his knees. “I guess technically, but in a really good way. It’s not sore. It just throbs and tingles really nice. How does it look?”

“Like you’d be completely screwed if you weren’t a werewolf,” Ethan said with a snicker as he grabbed Isaac’s wrist and tugged it away from his knee.
“I’m pretty screwed anyway,” Isaac answered with a grin. He gasped as Ethan guided his fingers against his hole. It was puffy and swollen, oozing Ethan’s cum through a gape big enough for Isaac to slip three fingers through without trying.

“You’ll be okay,” Ethan said, squeezing Isaac’s wrist.

“Yeah, I’m not worried about it,” Isaac answered with a ragged sigh as he rubbed the inner edges of his tender, sloppy hole.

“Oh, so you like that, huh?” Ethan asked in a low voice as he trailed his fingers down Isaac’s hand and curled them inside Isaac’s fucked-out opening.

Isaac’s stomach flip flopped, and he hesitated before giving Ethan a sly smile and nodding. He spread his thighs wider and arched his hips, opening himself as much as he could as they played with each other’s slick fingers inside him. His mouth dropped open and his eyes rolled back as Ethan tangled their fingers together and probed deeper and higher, roughly massaging Isaac’s prostate.

Ethan sat on his ankles between Isaac’s legs and they spent the next several minutes jerking themselves off while they both abused Isaac’s wrecked asshole, making it squish and tingle, burn and throb. Isaac was on the edge of a third orgasm when Ethan pulled their cummy fingers out and held them against Isaac’s thigh.

“Why?” Isaac whined and gave Ethan a betrayed look, reluctantly stilling his hand on his cock.

“You need to heal so I can fuck you some more.”

“You can fuck me like this.” Isaac wiggled his hips and pulsed his swollen, battered opening.

Ethan groaned and got on his knees. He slipped his fat cockhead into Isaac’s slick, loose ring and rubbed it with the pad of his finger.

Isaac wiped his messy hand on his pubes and stomach and tucked it under the swell of his ass, raising himself higher for Ethan as a telltale skittering signaled that his werewolf healing had kicked in, and his hole pulsed and tightened.

“Aww fuck yeah.” Ethan swallowed and rotated his hips, rolling his glans in a heavy circle around Isaac’s throbbing rim and pushing back against the accelerated strain that was trying to close around him. “You’re gonna be like a virgin again in a few minutes.”

“Not with you inside me,” Isaac answered, scooting down the bed and impaling himself mid-shaft on Ethan’s erection.

Ethan sank fully inside Isaac with a wet squelch and leaned over him, hands on either side of Isaac’s shoulders in a sort of push-up position. “Hey.”

“Hey,” Isaac answered, smiling up at Ethan and wrapping his arms and legs around him.

“I know tonight’s been intense. Are you good with everything we’ve done so far?”

“Yes.” He kissed Ethan and nestled their foreheads together.

“I got selfish a while ago when we were fucking.”

“Yeah.” Isaac laughed nervously and fought the urge to break eye contact. “I liked that.”

“I know you did. That’s why I did it.” Ethan snickered and bumped his nose against Isaac’s. “...Well
that, and I needed to get off, and it felt amazing.”

Isaac ran his hand up Ethan’s spine and scratched blunt fingertips against the short hair at the base of his skull. “I seriously liked it. You can use me whenever you want.”

“I will, but only sometimes and only when we both need it.”

Ethan rolled his hips back, gently dragging his slick, rigid erection out through Isaac’s snug ring. Isaac had healed around him, creating a perfect fit without any stretch or burn, only a deep, satisfying tingle as the nerves were stimulated with every sliding inch. Ethan rolled back in just as methodically, grinding with perfect precision over Isaac’s prostate.

“I’m going to fuck you slow and easy till you’re begging to get off.”

“And then you’ll pound me?” Isaac asked hopefully. Ethan’s gentle thrusts were already making him quiver and itch for something hard and fast.

“Maybe.” He cupped Isaac’s face. “Just trust me to get you off really good.”

Isaac nodded, losing himself in Ethan’s bright chocolate eyes. He would trust Ethan with anything but especially that. His chest swelled with warm affection, and when it became too much to take, he broke the prolonged gaze and glanced at Ethan’s mouth. He had a sexy smile. His lips were full and sensuous, and his grin was so adorable and sweet it almost hurt. How had Isaac ever thought Ethan’s smile was smug or cruel? Only an idiot could look at Ethan and see a bad guy – and yeah, Isaac had been an idiot once, but now he had wised up.

They lapsed into a long make out session, and even as the passion intensified, Ethan never broke his slow, steady rhythm.

The dense, tingling-rich tang of Ethan’s sex pheromones coated the back of Isaac’s throat and warmed his lungs as he took deep breathes through his nose until Ethan’s cum was all he could smell. It flooded his brain as thoroughly as it had flooded his ass during Ethan’s moon’gasm. The steady stream of moonlight on Isaac’s face and side supercharged his buzz, heightening his senses and filling him with a giddy euphoria.

His mind flitted to nights spent locked in his father’s freezer, alone and broken. How had that been real? This was real, the pleasure, the power, the thrum of connection. All that pain and isolation must have been a nightmare. Two such vastly different experiences couldn’t coexist in the same world. Isaac’s life was good. He was happy and–

“Ethan.” Isaac panted as their mouths separated. “I can’t take anymore.”

Ethan’s steady thrusts faltered for only a second as he climbed back to his knees. He ran a warm, heavy hand down the center of Isaac’s chest and over his side, trailing it down to grip his hip reassuringly. “Then let go.”

“I-I can’t.” Isaac moaned and flexed his thighs around Ethan’s hips. He reached for his cock to stroke it and finish, but Ethan pinned his hand against the soft bedspread and shook his head.

“I’m close too,” Ethan whispered, a slight tremble in his voice. “And we’re gonna keep going. Until we get there. Together.”

“Then faster,” Isaac pleaded, his whole body full and warm. He needed to explode and empty himself.
“No.” Ethan traced his thumb along Isaac’s hip and shifted his other hand to lace their fingers together on the bed. “This is the good part. Enjoy it.”

“Ethan.”

“Isaac.”

Isaac gasped as some of the warm fullness in his chest shifted and fused into a flickering tendril. A mirroring heat sparked and buzzed a couple feet away in Ethan’s chest, answering the call.

“I’ll stop it.” Ethan closed his eyes and basked in the moonlight, his glistening, muscular chest heaving. “I’ll stop it from forming.”

Isaac closed his eyes too, but the outline of Ethan’s face remained emblazoned in the darkness. There was no longer a flickering tendril in Isaac’s chest but a burning lifeline, and Ethan needed it. He was alone and hurting, and Isaac could make it better. He could give him a pack. “Let it.”

“We can’t.” Ethan groaned, and his heat dimmed but didn’t go out.

“Let it.” Isaac opened his eyes as sharp pleasure lanced through his ass and stomach, and Ethan’s cock seemed to thrust all the way into his chest and graze their half-connection. “Oh god, let it!”

Ethan shrieked and plunged all the way inside Isaac. He collapsed on Isaac’s chest as everything touched, and they both exploded and reformed around each other.

Chapter End Notes

So that (finally?) happened!

Feedback is greatly appreciated!
Isaac thrummed with happiness as he showered with Ethan. Warmth glowed around the newly forged packbond in his chest as steaming water cascaded down his tired, relaxed muscles. He and Ethan smiled at each other and laughed, incapable of going more than ten seconds without touching. Isaac felt so complete and full he could hardly stand it. Indeed, he could hardly stand period. It was fortunate that Ethan’s strong arms and sturdy frame were there to support him as they took turns scrubbing each other’s bodies. Life couldn’t have been any better. Isaac had a new packbond, a new boyfriend, and a lingering high from all the amazing sex and blissful moonlight. What he didn’t have was a single care in the world.

Then his phone rang.

His heart lurched into his throat and his sudsy hands froze in place against Ethan’s upper back. It was the middle of the night and his phone was ringing, muffled by the hum of the shower, the closed bathroom door, and the layer of pants bunched around it on Ethan’s bedroom floor, but still plainly audible to werewolf ears. Not a care in the world? What had Isaac been thinking? Iron Claw, the darach–

More ringing.

Stiles...Stiles...STILES!

“I’m sure everything’s fine.” Ethan was lying. Isaac felt the anxiety pulse through their new bond. That was going to take some getting used to.

“Y-yeah.” Isaac swallowed around the word, well aware that he was pumping sheer terror through their connection.

“It’s okay,” Ethan assured him, channeling comforting back at Isaac and giving him an affectionate smile before pressing a kiss to Isaac’s mouth.

Isaac narrowly avoided flinching away from the contact. Guilt twisted his gut as Ethan reached over him to adjust the showerhead and their dicks touched.

Ethan ran his hands down Isaac’s arms and over his chest before tipping Isaac’s head under the spray for a few seconds. “Okay, I think you’re rinsed. Go answer it.”

Isaac couldn’t find the words to protest nor the nerve to move, but it became unnecessary as the ringing stopped.

Ethan frowned and squeezed Isaac’s shoulder. “Gimme a minute, and I’ll be done too.”

Isaac nodded. If he spoke, he would undoubtedly blurt out that he was a dirty, rotten cheater who shouldn’t be rubbing his dick against Ethan's.

“It’s gonna be okay,” Ethan repeated, turning and leaning back against Isaac’s chest as he washed the front of his body.

Isaac pressed his forehead to the back of Ethan’s head. He wanted to cry – something Stiles had
taught him how to do again. How could he have been so stupid? So selfish and insensitive? This couldn’t be real. Isaac wasn’t the kind of person who cheated.

“Don’t feel guilty. Everyone misses calls occasionally,” Ethan said with a light laugh as he turned off the water and opened the shower curtain. He hopped out and passed Isaac a towel. It was fluffy and luxurious. Did Ethan have one more befitting Isaac? Maybe just a sheet of sandpaper or a newspaper with runny ink?

Isaac remained silent as he wrapped the towel around his waist and followed Ethan back into the bedroom. Ethan gave him a glance of confirmation, then stooped and dug Isaac’s phone out of his pants.

“It was Melissa,” he said, tone carefully neutral as he held the device out to Isaac.

Isaac breathed a small sigh of relief. He thought it had been Stiles, that somehow he had sensed Isaac’s transgression. Isaac called Melissa back right away before his brain could go off on a new tangent about all the possible horrible reasons she might have for calling him at this hour.

“Are you okay?” Her voice held an edge of panic.

“Yeah,” he croaked out, reeling to figure out what he had done to make her sound like that.

“So you were just going to stay out all night without telling me?”

Oh. That explained it.

“I forgot.”

“You forgot?!”

Isaac and Ethan both flinched.

“Where are you? I’m coming to get you.”

“E-Ethan’ll take me home,” Isaac answered as Ethan nodded and rubbed Isaac’s damp back.

“Ethan.” It sounded like her teeth were gritted around the name. “Come straight home.”

“Yes, ma’am.”

The line went dead and Isaac slumped against Ethan’s side.

“She’s only angry because she cares,” he said, wrapping his arm around Isaac and patting his side.

“I know,” Isaac answered, struggling to breathe against the thick blanket of guilt constricting his chest. In the span of a couple of hours he had cheated on Stiles, entered a relationship with Ethan under false pretenses, and managed to worry Melissa.

They left Ethan’s room after getting dressed, Ethan in fresh clothes and Isaac in the ones he had worn at the beginning of the night. He frowned and turned to Ethan as theme music and the artificial titter of a laugh track reached his ears. Aiden was in his room watching television.

Ethan chuckled and shrugged, guiding Isaac toward the front door with a hand on the center of his back. “He got home a little while after we started.”

“Do you think he heard us?”
Ethan didn’t answer, just tilted his head and gave Isaac a sarcastic smirk. Of course Aiden had heard them. That was just perfect. Why not add mortification to the cocktail of negative emotions Isaac was sipping?

“It’s fine,” Ethan said as he turned the lock on the inside knob and pulled the door shut behind them. “I doubt it surprised him, and he kinda had it coming after everything I’ve had to listen to over the past few days.”

Isaac sighed and walked with Ethan down the hallway, dread pooling in his stomach. How was he going to tell Ethan the truth? How was he going to tell Stiles? They would both be devastated – furious. How had this happened?

Ethan pulled Isaac against his side and invited him to lay his head on his shoulder as they waited for the elevator. Isaac couldn’t resist accepting the comfort even though he didn’t deserve it.

“You know she won’t hit you or anything.”

“What?”

“I can feel how scared you are.” Ethan ran his fingers through Isaac’s damp hair, massaging his scalp. “I’ll talk to her and tell her it was my fault, but you really don’t need to worry like this.”

“No!” Isaac snapped his head up and shook it at Ethan. “You can’t talk to her. She, um...”

“Doesn’t like me.” Ethan frowned and shrugged one shoulder. “Yeah, I got that.”

Isaac was spared from answering as the elevator chimed, giving him an excuse to turn away as he got on.

Ethan studied Isaac silently as the doors slid shut. His scowl deepened and anguish flared through their packbond as the sour burn of his sadness filled the air. “I didn’t think you’d feel like this.”

“What?” Isaac shifted his weight from one foot to the other. “I’m just worried. Melissa sounded pretty mad.”

“You’re not just worried, Isaac.” Ethan’s chocolate eyes filled with pain. “You’re ashamed.”

“I’m, uh...” Isaac moistened his lips. He needed to tell Ethan the truth.

“I thought we had moved past this. I thought...” Ethan laughed without humor. “I thought you’d feel good about us being together.”

“I do!” Isaac felt horrible about them being together and they both knew it, but it wasn’t for the reason Ethan thought and--

“You were happy until Melissa called...until you thought about people finding out.”

Isaac opened his mouth but no words came out.

Understanding flashed across Ethan’s face. “And you dodged it when I almost kissed you in front of Malia and Lydia this afternoon at school.”

“It wasn’t that. It wasn’t them.” Isaac scrubbed a hand through his hair and didn’t move as the elevator chimed and the doors opened onto the lobby.

Ethan closed his eyes and their packbond went cold for the first time since it had formed as Ethan
actively hid his emotions. “It’s everyone. You don’t want anyone to know.”

He strode out of the elevator and straight toward the building’s front entrance, leaving Isaac to hurry after him. Juan the doorman started to greet Ethan but stopped as he caught sight of his expression.

“Will you wait?!” Isaac shouted, grabbing Ethan’s arm as they stepped outside. “You’re not giving me a chance to explain.”

Ethan turned back to him and flashed his eyes electric blue. The glow obscured most of the hurt, and his scent and heartbeat were missing, but Isaac didn’t need supernatural senses to understand how he had made Ethan feel. “Go ahead. Explain.”

“This is crazy. Can’t we just calm down?”

Ethan’s eyes flared brighter, and he folded his arms across his chest.

Isaac winced and inwardly cursed. Yeah, maybe crazy and calm down hadn’t been the ideal words to use.

“What I mean is everything was so great a few minutes ago. Can’t we just go back to that? Please?” He let the vulnerability and fear show on his face and in his scent. It wasn’t manipulative to honestly express his feelings right?

Ethan let out a long sigh and his eyes cooled. He unfolded his arms and surprised Isaac by wrapping them around his torso and pulling him into a tight hug.

Isaac inhaled Ethan’s scent, somehow comforted by it despite the distressed combination of emotions that permeated it.

“Is this what you want?” Ethan whispered, rubbing Isaac’s back. “Do you want to be my boyfriend, or is this still too hard?”

“I want to be your boyfriend.” But I’m already Stiles’ boyfriend. I want you both, and I can’t bear to choose.

Isaac meant to say the whole thing out loud but somehow only the first part came out.

“Okay.” Ethan nuzzled the side of Isaac’s head and kissed his jaw. “I get it. You’ve forgiven me, but you don’t know how your pack will react.”

“Um.” Isaac pulled back. Except for the whole already-dating-Stiles thing, he didn’t think anyone in the pack would have a problem with him and Ethan being together.

“We can keep it a secret,” Ethan said with a nod and only a hint of disappointment in his voice.

“We can?” Isaac hated how much he liked that idea, how his next thought was that he and Stiles were also keeping their relationship quiet because Stiles thought he needed time to come out. He couldn’t date them both at once. It was unthinkable.

“Yeah.” Ethan kissed him and took his hand, leading him through the parking lot to his motorcycle.

Shit, Isaac was dating them both at once.
I hope you guys enjoyed this chapter. It’s the shortest one so far, but I felt it worked better as a standalone than as part of the next chapter, which I’m tentatively hoping to release next Sunday. I’m super excited for you guys to read next chapter! It’s called “Into the Woods” and while I don’t want to spoil it, it starts the transition toward mystery and action as things heat up for the second major act of the story.

On that note, I know Isaac’s behavior is frustrating to read right now, but this arc is important for the overall story, he will face consequences for what he’s doing, and like I said, the focus also shifts toward other story elements. The characters are going to have quite a lot to deal with over the next story week!

Anyway, feedback is greatly appreciated, and thanks a ton for reading! Happy Easter if you celebrate it!
The front door opened as Isaac reached for the knob, his key extended. Melissa stood in the doorway with her arms folded.

“T’ll sorry.” He hung his head and slipped his keys into his pocket.

She stepped back to make room for him to enter. The stale scent of her worry hung heavy in the air, offset slightly by the dry burn of anger.

“Go to the couch.” Her voice was tired but streaked with emotion. A pulse of apprehension seeped from her pores as Isaac stepped past her.

“I’m sorry,” Isaac repeated as he took a seat on the end of the couch and dropped his eyes to the carpet. He had messed everything up like he always did.

“Do you know how worried I was?” She asked as she sat beside him.

Isaac nodded, too ashamed to look up. He finally had an adult in his life who wasn’t passed out drunk every night, and this was how he had repaid her.

“I didn’t know whether to call the sheriff, try to snap Scott out of his fugue state so he could go look for you, or just wait and hope you turned up.”

He nodded again to show he understood but continued staring at the carpet between his feet.

Melissa sighed, and some of the anger in her scent abated. “Isaac, I care about you.” She shifted closer on the couch and rubbed his back.

He leaned into her touch and raised his head. “I care about you too.” His voice trembled and his chest tightened. Why did he always let down the people he cared about?

“I know you do.” She squeezed and patted his shoulder. “This is a new situation for both of us, but you can’t stay out all night, especially not on a school night. And I need to know where you are. I need to know you’re safe.”

Heat bloomed across Isaac’s face, and he dropped his head lower. “I’m sorry I forgot. I didn’t mean to.”

“I texted you when I got home, and then a couple more times before I called.”

“I didn’t see.”

“So what were you doing?”

“Huh?!”

“If you forgot to call, and you were too busy to look at your texts, what were you doing?” Her hand stilled on his back, and she narrowed her eyes. “At one-thirty in the morning? With Ethan?”

“Uhm...” Isaac’s stomach twisted.
A smirk tugged at Melissa’s lips. “If you had been with Stiles I’d have a theory, but what were you doing with Ethan?”

“Well, uhh...We were, uhm...” He clasped his hands together and swallowed.

“Was it something illegal?”

“What? No!” *California struck down those laws years ago.*

Melissa grumbled and shook her head. “I like that you and Scott and the others want to give people a second chance, but just because Ethan’s not with the alpha pack anymore doesn’t mean he–”

“I bonded with him.” Isaac licked his lips and gave her a pleading look. He couldn’t handle her saying anything bad about Ethan, not right now.

She furrowed her brow. “Bonded with him how?”

“Like *pack* bonded with him.”

Melissa wasn’t a werewolf, but if she were, her eyes would have been glowing. “Isn’t that supposed to be a group decision with Scott making the final call?”

Isaac nodded and a new wave of guilt washed over him. It swirled and mixed with the torrents of shame that had buffeted his chest since his shower with Ethan. He deserved it. He deserved to drown for what he had done.

“Why would you go behind Scott’s back like that?”

“I...” Isaac scrubbed a hand across his face to keep the guilt inside. “I got carried away.”

“What’ll happen if Scott and the others don’t accept him?” The look on Melissa’s face clearly indicated that she didn’t accept him.

“Nothing.” Isaac shrugged. “He’s not, like, part of the pack now because I did that. I have a packbond with him but no one else does. It’s still Scott’s call if he can ever join or not.”

She tilted her head. “You can have a packbond with someone who isn’t in the pack?”

“Yeah, it’s weird.” Isaac frowned. “Liam has one with Aiden. Malia probably does too.”

“Aiden.” Melissa’s lip curled up on one side. “I like Ethan better.”

Isaac managed a grin. “Everyone does.”

She arched her brow. “What about Liam and Malia?”

“Well everyone with good judgment,” he answered with a smirk.

Melissa cracked a smile and relaxed back against the couch, prompting Isaac to mirror the action. “The sheriff came by the hospital during my shift.”

Isaac’s eyes widened. “Is he okay?”

“He’s fine.” She shifted to face Isaac, her expression once again serious. “He took Dr. Geyer and me aside and gave us stun rods. Apparently there’s a hostile pack coming to town?”
“Oh.” Anxiety temporarily displaced the guilt and shame roiling in Isaac’s chest. “Yeah, that’s part of the reason I went to Ethan’s in the first place, and it’s why Liam came by this morning...”

Isaac spent the next several minutes filling Melissa in on the situation with Megan and what was left of her pack coming for revenge on the twins. He left out the part about Ethan killing Rick and focused on the part about Deucalion and the others killing Leslie and the rest of her pack. He was just finishing the story when his phone rang.

“It’s Lydia,” he said, eying the display as he pulled the device from his pocket. It was after two in the morning, and the same sense of dread that had poured over him when Melissa had called while he was at Ethan’s surged back with a vengeance. “Hello?”

The all too familiar cadence of Lydia’s racing heart and the erratic pant of her breaths filled the air, setting Isaac’s teeth on edge.

“Lydia, what’s happening? Where are you?” He stood, ready to race out the door as soon as she told him where to go.

Her breathing intensified, making the hair on his arms stand on end.

“Lydia, where–”

A deafening scream blasted from the phone. Isaac dropped the device on the couch and covered his ears.

Melissa grimaced and retrieved the phone but held it at arm’s length. A moment later the agonizing wail stopped.

“The line went dead,” Melissa said as she passed the phone to Isaac.

Isaac frantically called Lydia back, but it went straight to voicemail. He tapped out a text, his packbond with her blazing in his chest and burning away all other feelings except fear for her safety and a blinding drive to find and protect her.

“I don’t know where she is! I don’t know where she is!” He waved his hands, his claws tapping against the phone screen as he willed her to call him back. His eyes glowed with golden heat, and his lips bulged around his fangs. He would fight. He just needed to– “I don’t know where she is!”

Melissa stood and gripped his arms. “Honey, calm down.”

Isaac closed his eyes and retracted his claws. He couldn’t risk accidentally scratching Melissa. He cooled his eyes but worried his bottom lip between the points of his fangs. “I don’t know where she is.”

“Let’s go to her house. Maybe she’s there.”

Isaac took a deep breath and nodded, tamping down his fear. Her house – that made sense. It was certainly where she should have been at this hour.

“I need the pack. Scott and...” Isaac winced and closed his eyes. Scott and Stiles couldn’t help him, not this late at night. If Iron Claw or the darach took over in an already dangerous situation things might turn deadly.

Melissa frowned at the stairs and sighed. “Do you want to call Liam and Malia?”
Isaac desperately wanted to call Liam and Malia. They were pack and he needed them, but—

“No, I can’t. They’re not ready.”

Liam had lost control and lashed out at Isaac that same afternoon when things had gotten too stressful, and even when she was relatively calm Malia was still half-feral. What if something happened and Liam flipped out or Malia turned back into a coyote and ran off for another eight years? Isaac couldn’t risk his new packmates. If Allison were here she...Allison wasn’t here. Isaac had to do this on his own.

“Do you want to call Ethan?” Melissa kept her tone neutral, but her scent soured.

It felt like Isaac should call Ethan because Ethan felt like pack now, but—

“I’ll go by myself.”

Ethan wasn’t pack. Isaac needed to stop using him, stop putting him in danger, stop...lying to him. He couldn’t face Ethan again tonight or he would surely tell him the truth, and even though that was exactly what he needed to do, he had to put everything else aside until Lydia was safe.

“Like hell you’ll go by yourself. I’m coming with you.”

“It’s too dangerous.” Isaac shook his head and scowled. If he couldn’t risk his packmates, actual supernatural creatures with enhanced strength and accelerated healing, there was no way he could risk Melissa.

“I have my new stun rod.” She crossed the room and picked up her purse from the table by the front door. She reached into the open center compartment and pulled out a black-handled baton with a telescoping end, which she extended and brandished in the air. “Are you coming?”

Isaac wanted to argue, but the lump of fear in the pit of his stomach stopped him. There was no time. Lydia could be running for her life right this moment. They had to find her, and they had to find her now.

As they pulled out of the driveway, Isaac left Lydia a voicemail telling her that he was on his way and that everything would be okay. It was probably a lie, but what was one more when he was already deceiving everyone else he cared about?

“Tell me more about packbonds,” Melissa said as she came to a rolling stop at an intersection before accelerating through it.

“What?” Isaac had his thumb poised over Lydia’s name in his contacts, ready to try her again.

Melissa didn’t take her eyes off the road as they barreled down the winding residential street that would take them out of their neighborhood and onto the highway to Lydia’s part of town. “I’m curious.”

Isaac frowned. She was trying to take his mind off the situation, but since there wasn’t much he could do for Lydia in the meantime, he went along with it. “What do you wanna know?”

“What’s it like?”

“Depends on who it’s with.”

Melissa glanced at him and shook her head. “That’s very informative, thank you.”
Isaac let out a nervous laugh. “No, like, I mean each one is different, but more than that it depends on if the person’s a werewolf or not.” He leaned back in his seat as he considered how to explain it. “Packbonds make werewolves stronger. We can channel energy and strength through them, as well as calm each other down or get each other amped up for battle. They help us stay on the same page during a fight too, and it’s instinctual to protect and comfort each other.”

“It’s not like that with humans in the pack?” Her fingers tightened on the steering wheel as they waited for what must have been the only other car out on the road in Beacon Hills at this hour to turn.

“It is in a lot of ways. The instincts and feelings are the same. I’m way more attuned to what Stiles” – Isaac choked over the name as icicles exploded in his chest, but he quickly continued so Melissa wouldn’t question it– “is feeling, and being around him is soothing...unless something’s wrong, then it’s really nerve-racking, but I can’t feel what he’s feeling firsthand. With Scott or Liam” – or Ethan. More icicles shredded Isaac’s veins– “or Malia, when we’re in the same room or talking on the phone or something, I can get a sense of their feelings through the packbond unless they block them, and they can get a sense of mine too. Stiles and I can’t sense each other’s feelings like that.” Isaac frowned and corrected himself. “Well I mean we can, but not supernaturally.”

“What about Lydia?”

Isaac traced his finger over his darkened phone screen and let out a ragged sigh. “Lydia’s different. I don’t think she can feel me at all, but I can feel her. She puts out this...supernatural energy. Sometimes I can pick up basic emotions from it too, especially if I’m reading her in other ways, like paying attention to her scent and heart rate.”

“But only when you’re in the same room?” Melissa asked quietly.

“Yeah.” Isaac knew what she was getting at. “I can’t use it to find her. I couldn’t even find Scott that way. It only works at close range.”

They fell silent as Melissa pulled off the highway. They were still a couple of minutes from Lydia’s house.

“It’s different for Ethan and Aiden though,” Isaac said to keep from slipping back into his head. He needed to be sharp and ready to go as soon as they got there.

“How so?”

“I don’t really know how their twin bond thing works. I guess it’s probably more related to how they used to be able to merge than to packbonds, but they can feel each other’s emotions and even physical pain from a much further distance. Ethan does seem to be able to use it to know where Aiden is too.”

“If only you and Lydia were werewolf twins,” Melissa remarked as they turned into Lydia’s neighborhood.

Isaac huffed out a laugh at the notion. A little while later they were parked next to the curb in front of the Martin house – mansion? Isaac wasn’t sure. It wasn’t quite as fancy as the home Jackson and his family had lived in, but it wasn’t that far off either.

Melissa unbuckled her seat belt. “What are we going to tell her mother?”

“I don’t know. She doesn’t know about the supernatural.” Isaac frowned and eyed the darkened house. “I’ll break in.”
“What?!”

Isaac shrugged and forced a cavalier smile. “Haven’t you heard? Werewolves always sneak in through people’s bedroom windows. It’s kind of a thing.”

“You and Scott aren’t allowed to.”

“Starting tomorrow, right?” Isaac unhooked his seat belt and reached for the door handle.

“Isaac—”

“I’ll be fine. Stay here.”

Isaac slipped out and shut the car door before she could protest further.

He stayed off the driveway and crept along the edge of the property until he reached the wrought iron fence, which he scaled without difficulty. He had been in Lydia’s room a couple of times over the past few weeks and recognized it from outside. It was in darkness like the other windows. It seemed unlikely that Lydia had called Isaac, screamed into the phone, and then casually gone to sleep.

Isaac held his breath and focused his hearing. There was a heartbeat in the room, but it wasn’t Lydia’s. It wasn’t even human. It was beating too fast, and with too light a thump. Was it a monster? Had something broken into her room and–

Isaac exhaled as he remembered Lydia’s fluffy little white and black dog, Prada. A second auditory sweep of the house picked out another heartbeat on the same floor as Lydia’s room, but on the other side of the house. This one was human and featured the slow, steady rhythm of sleep. Isaac had only met Lydia’s mother a couple of times and didn’t know her well enough to have learned her heartbeat, but this must have been her. Lydia wasn’t in the house. There was no point in going inside.

He inwardly cursed and turned to leave, but stopped as a second possibility gripped his imagination. What if Lydia was inside but no longer had a heartbeat? What if whatever had caused her to scream had–

No.

She was okay. She had to be.

He just needed to think. What would they do if the whole pack were here? Stiles would come up with something. He would investigate.

Isaac furrowed his brow. Investigate what? There weren’t any clues. He rumbled under his breath and crept closer to the house. He had to find a clue. Maybe there was something in her room that would point him in the right direction.

The Martin home featured numerous porticoes and ornate windows that extended outward. Climbing up and inching along the slanted roof to Lydia’s window was easy. Much more challenging was getting the window open. There wasn’t much to grip onto from outside, and the window seemed to be locked.

Isaac clung to the edge of the roof for balance and kicked, shattering the glass. Prada yipped and barked as Isaac continued knocking out the broken glass with the heel of his shoe until he had a hole big enough to slide through. He stuck his head in first and growled at the agitated dog, flaring his eyes for good measure. Prada whimpered and scurried under Lydia’s bed.
A loveseat occupied the space in front of the window, so Isaac eased onto it as he climbed inside the room. He breathed a sigh of relief and shifted his hand on the cushion to stand.

“Aaah!”

A shard of glass sliced into Isaac’s hand, and in his haste to get up, he tripped over the small wooden table in front of the loveseat.

He hit the floor beside Lydia’s bed with a thump. Prada ran out and sniffed the top of his head.

“Go away!” Isaac waved the dog off as he sat up and yanked the piece of glass out of his palm.

“Lydia, are you okay? I heard–” The light flicked on and Ms. Martin gasped.

Isaac winced and rose to his feet.

“Hi.” He raised his non-bloody hand in greeting.

The woman shrieked.

“No, it’s okay.” He moved toward her. “I’m–”

Ms. Martin grabbed the floor lamp beside the door and hit him with it.

Isaac stumbled back and tripped again, this time over Prada. He had to twist his body at an odd angle to keep from crushing her as he fell.

The little dog wagged her tail as she licked his face. Isaac groaned and picked her up as he got back to his feet.

“I told you to go away,” he muttered as he checked the dog for signs of injuries and attempted to activate his pain leaching ability. She wasn’t hurt, so he set her on Lydia’s bed and hurried out of the room.

The Martin home had a loft-style second floor that overlooked the living room. Downstairs, Ms. Martin was shouting for Lydia and fumbling with the front door.

“Wait!” Isaac debated leaping over the railing but decided that might frighten the woman even more. He raced toward the stairs instead.

Ms. Martin screamed and keyed something into the security panel by the door before bolting outside.

*Crap, crap, crap, crap.*

A creaking metallic groan indicated the front gate was opening. Isaac had accidentally chased Lydia’s mom out of her own home.

A horn blared as Isaac reached the bottom of the stairs.

“Over here!” Melissa’s voice shouted.

Isaac dashed outside just in time to see Ms. Martin sprint down her driveway and scramble into the passenger seat of Melissa’s car.

Chapter End Notes
Sorry about the delay in updates, you guys. April was absolutely insane. I didn’t have a single weekend free. I had three birthdays, a wedding, two visits from out-of-town friends, and a whole bunch of personal and work stuff I had to take care of. Anyway, I’m looking forward to getting back into the swing of things in May and expect to be able to manage much more frequent updates.

Also, I researched Lydia’s house/room/dog a good bit on the Teen Wolf Pack Wikia, so if it helps people visualize things better, here are some links to relevant pictures:

Front of the Martin home:

Back/side of the Martin home:

Lydia’s room and the loveseat and table Isaac tussled with:

Prada (and the ever adorable Young Peter Hale):
A horn blared as Isaac reached the bottom of the stairs.

“Over here!” Melissa’s voice shouted.

Isaac dashed outside just in time to see Ms. Martin sprint down her driveway and scramble into the passenger seat of Melissa’s car. She waved her arms and yelled as she looked back at him through the open car window, still rolled down from when Melissa had called to her.

“Go, go, go! He’s coming.”

“Yeah, about that...” Melissa killed the ignition and gave Lydia’s mom an apologetic look.

Ms. Martin gaped at her and grabbed the door handle, but as she opened it Isaac reached the side of the car and terror seized her face. She let go and darted a glance at the back seat.

Melissa gripped Ms. Martin’s elbow as she started to climb into the back, perhaps hoping to escape out the opposite side of the car, not that Isaac would have had any trouble chasing her down even if he hadn’t been a werewolf.

“He’s not going to hurt you,” Melissa said, her brow creased with sincerity.

Ms. Martin drew in a sharp breath, and a steely mask replaced the fear on her face – but not in her scent – as she shook Melissa’s hand off her arm and drew the sheer crimson robe she wore over her nightgown more tightly around her shoulders.

“I’m not sure if you remember me but...” Isaac trailed off as she leveled him with a withering glare. Recognition flickered around the edges of her eyes, but her face didn’t soften.

“I remember you now, Isaiah. You’re one of Lydia’s classmates.” She straightened her nightgown over her knees and tightened the robe’s cord around her waist. “Would you care to explain to me why you broke into my daughter’s room in the middle of the night?

“Uhh...”

“And where is Lydia?” She glanced past Isaac as if expecting to see Lydia coming up the driveway behind him.

Isaac and Melissa exchanged a look.
“Well?” She folded her arms and turned to Melissa. “Where’s my daughter? Is Scott prowling around my house too? And do you make a habit of supervising their delinquency?”

Melissa’s eyes narrowed and her mouth twisted in irritation. “You better—”

“She drove me here to see Lydia,” Isaac cut in. “She has a...a book I need for a report tomorrow. She called me awhile ago, but we got disconnected.”

“A book report? Really? At 2:00am?” She pursed her lips and drummed her fingers on her crossed arms.

“We take education very seriously in our household.” Melissa gave Ms. Martin a look that dared her to challenge that statement.

She did. She cocked her head to one side and arched her eyebrows. “Then why did he wait until the last minute to do it?”

“I had the date wrong in my planner,” Isaac answered, affecting his best innocent expression, the one he had perfected through years of making up excuses to explain away the injuries from his father’s abuse. “Thank goodness I noticed when I was reviewing my schedule before bed.”

“And just what is this book report about?”

“Ancient Celtic druids,” Isaac said with a nod. “Lydia has some very comprehensive research material.”

Ms. Martin didn’t look convinced, but then her face clouded with worry and her heart rate accelerated. “Wait, but she’s not here? So you broke in? That doesn’t make sense. Is something wrong, Isaiah? Is Lydia okay?”

“Isaac,” he answered, stalling to figure out what to say next.

“Who?”

“Me. My name is Isaac.”

“Not Isaiah.” Melissa reached into her purse and pulled out her phone. “I’m sorry he overreacted and broke in. I’ll pay for the damage. What’s your number?”

Isaac’s heart sank. He was costing Melissa more money.

“Hold on, I need to find Lydia.” She pushed the door open until it brushed Isaac’s knees and chest. “Move please.”

“You know, I bet she’s spending the night with Malia,” he said as he stepped back. “Malia’s pretty nervous about her first day of school.”

“I’ll track her GPS,” Ms. Martin said as she walked up the driveway without waiting for them.

Melissa got out of the car too, and they hurried after her.

“How are you going to do that?” he asked, a flicker of hope warming around his packbond with Lydia. This would provide a very solid lead.

“I installed a tracking app after she went missing in the woods for two days last year.” Ms Martin walked through the still open front door of her home, flicked on the light, and hurried toward the
stairs.

Isaac started to follow her, but Melissa grabbed his arm and shook her head. They remained in the entryway of the Martin home while Lydia’s mom bustled around upstairs. After a few minutes, she rejoined them in the foyer, a cell phone clutched in one hand and an orange sticky note in the other.

“It looks like you were right, Isaac.” Ms. Martin smiled, her scent swirling with sweet, floral notes of relief not unlike Lydia’s version of the emotion. “I missed it when I got up, but she left a note on my door saying she was going to the library to tutor Malia, and her GPS is off now, but her last active location was the high school.”

“Ah, that explains it. Her phone must have died while I was talking to her.” Isaac smiled to hide the flood of anxiety crashing over him. It couldn’t be that simple. She had screamed – *banshee screamed* – something was wrong. He turned to Melissa and let a flash of his true feelings show before speaking in the same pleasant tone. “Well, let’s go. Gotta get that report written.”

Beacon Hills High School tended to be a dangerous place in the middle of the night. Whatever threat Lydia was facing, Isaac needed to get there and back her up, now.

Melissa nodded and rubbed Isaac’s back. It would have seemed like a casual display of affection to Ms. Martin, but Isaac recognized it as a gesture of support and reassurance. “I’m sorry again about the intrusion and the break in. Call me when you have an estimate of the damages.”

They turned to leave, but Ms. Martin stopped them. “Wait, I didn’t get your number.”

Isaac tensed and clenched his jaw.

“Hang on, kiddo,” Melissa whispered under her breath as she turned back to Ms. Martin and fished her phone out of her pocket. “I’ll call you so you can save it. What’s the number?”

Isaac shoved his hands in his pockets and played with his claws to calm himself while they exchanged information. His attempts at finding inner peace were shattered when the distinctive blare of police sirens tore through the night. It could be for another house but...

“Do you have an alarm?” Isaac asked, eying the security panel on the wall by the front door.

Ms. Martin cringed and pressed a hand to the side of her head. “I forgot I triggered it before I ran out. The police are probably on their way.”

“Yeah, I hear sirens.”

Ms. Martin tilted her head. “I don’t hear anything.”

“Isaac has excellent hearing,” Melissa said, giving Isaac a half frown.

“Right, excellent hearing.” Isaac nodded.

A few seconds later the sirens got close enough for the humans to hear.

“Hmm.” A thoughtful expression formed on Ms. Martin’s face. “Teenagers and children do hear high pitched sounds better than older adults. It wanes with age.”

“That must be it,” Isaac answered, trying not to wince as the sirens reached their block and assaulted his sensitive ears.

“I used to be a biology teacher before Lydia was born.”
“Cool.” Isaac tapped his foot and gave Melissa a pleading look. “Can we go?”

“Wait, I’m sure the police will want to take your statement about the break in,” Ms. Martin said as the squad car pulled into the driveway and the sirens mercifully stopped. Red and blue flashing lights shone through the windows and reflected off the walls. “Maybe I ought to ask the officer to go by the school and make sure Lydia’s alright. I don’t like not being able to reach her at this hour.”

“Oh uh, we’ll check on her,” Isaac said. “We have to swing by anyway so I can get that book from her. No reason to take up valuable time from law enforcement.”

Outside a car door slammed.

“But maybe the police can check too just to be safe,” Melissa said with a meaningful look at Isaac.

“I don’t think this is their kinda thing,” Isaac answered. The approaching heartbeat wasn’t the sheriff’s. Whoever this officer was they would just be in the way.

There was a heavy knock on the door.

“Police!” shouted a masculine voice.

Ms. Martin opened the door, and a flush of nervous excitement washed over Isaac as he recognized the handsome deputy he had met the week before at the police station when he and Lydia had gone to help the sheriff after Ethan and Aiden had been arrested. What was his name again?

“Evenin’ ma’am, I’m Deputy Parrish.”

That was it.

“Natalie Martin. Please come in, officer.” She stepped aside to make room.

Deputy Parrish nodded to Isaac and Melissa as he entered the home, his muscles visibly tensed and his hands hovering in the air by his waist, poised to react to any sudden threat. His gaze lingered on Isaac, but rather than sizing him up, he seemed to be trying to place him.

Isaac extended his hand and gave the deputy the same cheeky grin he had given him when they met – to help him remember. “I’m Isaac. We met last week when my friend was arrested.”

Recognition snapped into place in the deputy’s eyes.

“Right, I remember.” He shook Isaac’s hand, then looked between the three of them. “I’m responding to a call from your alarm company about a possible break in.”

“Yes, that’s correct. Isaac here broke in.” Ms. Martin frowned at him.

“Oh.” Parrish’s lips parted in surprise, and his muscles re-tensed. He gave Isaac a hard look. “I thought he belonged here,” he said to Ms. Martin. “I thought he was your son.”

“He’s my son,” Melissa said, stepping forward and squeezing Isaac’s shoulder.

Isaac’s cheeks flushed, and a small glow warmed his chest as he leaned into her.

“And you came to pick him up after the break in?” Parrish asked Melissa as he dug a pen and pad out of the pocket of his uniform slacks.

“No, she helped him break in.” Ms. Martin gave Melissa a dirty look.
“I was looking for Lydia,” Isaac explained.

Parrish’s eyes narrowed with suspicion. “Did she break in too?”

“She’s my daughter.” Ms. Martin folded her arms and gave the deputy a polite smile. “I wanted to see if you could go to the high school and check on her. She’s studying with a friend, and I think her phone died.”

Parrish frowned. “Awful late to be studying, ma’am.”

“Lydia’s very studious,” Isaac answered, swallowing back a new wave of anxiety. This was taking too long. “We’ll go and check on her.”

“No.” Parrish’s tone was stern and clipped as he gestured at Isaac and Melissa with his ink pen. “I’m taking you two in for questioning in connection with the home break in.”

“That won’t be necessary, officer. I’ve decided not to press charges.” Ms. Martin gave Isaac a sharp look. “For now.”

Parrish ran a scrutinizing eye over Isaac and made a click of disapproval in the back of his mouth. He motioned with his head to speak to Ms. Martin alone. They stepped out of the foyer and into the living room but Parrish kept Isaac within his line of sight. He turned his head and lowered his voice, but he’d might as well have been speaking directly into Isaac’s ear.

“I agree, there’s no reason to stain his record with an arrest at such a young age, but I can take him down to the station and hold him for questioning for a couple hours. Might be enough to scare him straight.”

Isaac snorted.

“Nip this juvenile delinquency phase in the bud before he graduates to more serious crimes.”

*Good luck with that, Deputy Tight-Ass. Last year I was held on suspicion of murdering my dad, and a couple months ago I was interrogated by an FBI agent, but sure we can play Twenty Questions about a broken window.*

Isaac’s packbond with Lydia tightened and throbbed in his chest. No, they couldn’t. He didn’t have time for this shit. Lydia could be dying while they stood around waiting for her mother and an over-eager new cop to decide if Isaac should get a tour of the jailhouse. He eyed the front door.

“Don’t,” Melissa whispered as she stepped into his path and gripped his arm. “It’ll tank our chances with the adoption people.”

Isaac let out a muted growl and took a breath. He had to think. He had to—

“‘The sheriff!’”

Parrish and Ms. Martin snapped their heads in Isaac’s direction.

“The sheriff will vouch for me if there’s a problem, deputy.” Isaac smiled and pulled his phone out of his pocket. “As I recall he’s not working tonight, right?”

Parrish’s lips parted and his brow furrowed with confusion.

“So I’ll just call my boyfriend, his son, to wake him up and put him on the phone so you can talk to him yourself.”
Parrish kept his face stony, but the conflict played out in the rhythm of his heart and the snarl of emotions in his scent. Isaac could tell he was about to call what he thought was a bluff but wasn’t sure. The sheriff probably would vouch for Isaac, but the harder part might be getting Stiles to wake up and answer his phone at this hour if the darach had taken over.

“I mean, if you think that’s necessary?” Isaac forced the cockiness out of his tone and tried for innocent. “I thought Ms. Martin wasn’t going to press charges.”

Parrish sighed through his nose, his mouth a hard line. “The two of you can leave after I finish taking your information.”

Isaac growled below the man’s range of hearing but kept the guileless smile on his face. 

_Hurry the fuck up._

A few minutes later they were finally exiting the Martin home.

“You did great, honey,” Melissa whispered as they walked down the driveway. Parrish trailed behind them but stopped when he reached his police cruiser. “I’m proud of you for staying so calm.”

“I’m about to wolf out,” Isaac answered, letting the points of his fangs drop.

“Do it in the car.”

Isaac grumbled and climbed into the passenger seat. He was sick with worry and felt like tearing something apart. “We need to hurry. I have to find her.”

“We will.” Melissa turned the car around in the foot of the driveway and sped onto the street so fast, Isaac half-expected Parrish to whoop his siren at them.

“I wouldn’t have liked living there,” Isaac muttered, lightly scraping his claws against the thick denim covering his thighs without tearing the material. It was soothing.

“What?” She glanced at his hands but otherwise didn’t react.

He shrugged one shoulder and tapped his foreclaw against the seam that ran along the side of his leg. “Scott wanted me to move in with the Martins awhile back when the Iron Claw thing first started. He thought I’d be safer there.”

Melissa made a sour face and shook her head. “He didn’t tell me that.”

“I’m not going anywhere,” he answered, sheathing his claws and managing a grin despite the situation. “I guess I better call Malia to see if Lydia’s note was true or just an excuse she made for her mom.”

Isaac swallowed around a new lump of worry in his throat as he pulled Malia’s name up in his contact list. Malia was a wild card in a situation like this – whatever this situation was – but at least Lydia wouldn’t be alone.

A snarl cut through the air as the call connected. Isaac’s blood ran cold as he pictured Malia fighting for her life.

“I was dreaming about chasing a deer.” Her voice was rough with a combination of sleep and anger. “And you woke me up!”

“Uh, sorry.” Isaac cleared his throat. “So, um, is Lydia with you?”
Malia sighed and the springs in her bed creaked as she rolled over. “She was with me in the dream.”

“No, I mean in real–”

“She and Aiden were both coyotes, and we were hunting together as a pack. You and Ethan had stayed back at the den to take care of Liam. He was your pup.”

Isaac blinked. “Me and Ethan?”

“No, you and Aiden.” Malia laughed. “It was a weird dream. Ethan was just helping babysit.”

Isaac tried not to contemplate the horror of co-parenting with Aiden. “Oh, okay so–”

“Scott was hunting with us too, but Aiden was our alpha.” She hummed. “You know now that I think about it, I think Stiles was the deer. I don't know what that means.”

“Listen–”

“It's possible I want him in my mouth.”

“Malia!”

“Oh c’mon, I know you can relate.”

“Is Lydia with you now?”

“No, I’m at home. I–”

“Do you know where she is?”

“No, I haven’t seen her since she dropped me off at Aiden and Ethan’s for dinner.”

Isaac sighed and shook his head at Melissa. “Okay, go back to sleep. I’ll see you tomorrow.”

“Okay.” She rumbled. “Don’t wake me up again unless it’s important.”

“You got it.” He hung up and confirmed to Melissa that Malia and Lydia weren’t together.

When they arrived at the school they parked in the side parking lot next to the lacrosse field. The stadium light pole that had been knocked down last week during the battle with Iron Claw on the first night of the full moon still hadn’t been replaced. It left a large gap among the other uniformly distributed light poles that lined the perimeter of the field. Would Isaac and his pack be lucky a second time, or were they going to lose someone tonight? Someone...Lydia...

“Let’s check inside.” Melissa guided Isaac toward the side entrance.

He stopped and gave her a serious look. She had left her purse in the car. “Do you have your stun rod?”

“Right here.” She patted a bulge in the pocket of her pants.

Isaac nodded and resumed walking. He had no intention of letting anything get close enough for her to use it, but it made him feel better.

He kept his senses on high alert as they crept down the darkened hallway toward the library.

“Do you smell her?” Melissa whispered.
"Yeah." He frowned.

"Well isn’t that a good thing? You can track her, right?"

He took a deep breath and tried to make sense of what he was smelling. It was no use. “No, I can’t. I don’t know which her is the new her.”

“Huh?”

Isaac pointed to the end of the row of lockers they were approaching. “That’s her locker. She’s here all the time. She’s part of the background smell. And there’s a fresher scent but” –he threw his hands up and looked around– “we were here a few hours ago searching for the darach’s journal. I don’t know if it’s from that or from a little while ago.” He turned in a slow circle and sniffed. “And she goes off in every direction.”

Melissa patted his back and caught his eye. “We’ll find her.”

Isaac hung his head. “Scott would be able to find her.”

“And so will we.”

Isaac hurried ahead of her as they reached the end of the hallway. He held up his hand and rounded the corner first, ready for danger.

There was only darkness and silence. He motioned that it was all clear.

“I wish he was here.” Isaac frowned at her. “Scott.”

“Me too.”

“I’m gonna let down the pack. If she dies...”

“Hey, none of that.” Melissa swatted his shoulder and shook her head.

Isaac nodded and flared his eyes to feel the accompanying rush of power. How had Ethan made it so long without a pack? Isaac felt like an omega as he skulked down the final branch of the hallway toward the library.

“Wait.” His hand froze on the door handle, and he turned his head.

“What?”

He sniffed. Metal. But not regular metal like the lockers and door handles – circuits. There was a crisp burn and a flickering tickle that smelled like electrical potential. Lydia’s scent was tangled around it.

He crept past the library doors and followed the scent toward the end of another bank of lockers. His heart hammered in his chest. He could practically see Lydia’s chemosignals wafting in the air from around the edge of the lockers.

Isaac’s packbond with her stretched taut in his chest, ready to snap. Would that happen when he took the final few steps? Would he find–

Her phone.

He gasped in relief and picked it up. The glass screen was shattered into a thousand tiny pieces, held
together only by her screen protector.

“Well, that explains why her GPS is off,” Melissa said.

Isaac nodded. The back casing was cracked too – whether from the fall or Lydia’s scream, Isaac wasn’t sure.

“I hope she has a warranty,” he said as he slipped the broken device into his pocket.

Melissa huffed out a small laugh.

They turned back toward the library, but a quiet scuffling of footsteps from inside made Isaac flinch. He jumped between Melissa and the library door, his claws flicking out.

“Is it a monster?” Melissa yanked out her stun rod and extended it to its full length.

Isaac growled as a heartbeat materialized and it and the footsteps grew closer.

“Yes, it’s a horrible, evil, smug monster.”

The door swung open and Aiden stepped out.

“See if I make you a steak dinner again,” he said with a smirk as he approached them.

“The monster’s a good cook,” Isaac conceded to Melissa.

“I’m guessing that’s not Ethan?”

Isaac shook his head.

“Nice to see you again, Ms. McCall.” Aiden gave her a toothy grin. Isaac snarled.

“Aiden.” She turned on her stun rod, igniting a crackling blue aura around the shiny metal.

“What are you doing here?” Isaac demanded, pivoting to stay in front of Melissa as Aiden kept walking and edged past them. “Don’t come any closer.”

Aiden rolled his eyes and extended his arm down the hallway. “Lydia went that way.”

“How do you know?”

“How do you not?”

“You didn’t answer my question.” Isaac flashed his eyes at Aiden. “Why are you here?”

“Natalie called me.” Aiden turned and walked in the direction he had indicated.

Isaac and Melissa exchanged glances. She shrugged and flicked off her stun rod as she moved to follow Aiden.

Isaac rushed forward, staying between the other two. “Why would she do that?”

“Parents like me,” Aiden answered with a cocky smile over his shoulder.

“Oh really?” Melissa revved her stun rod.

“I’m going to win you over yet, Ms. McCall.” Aiden’s grin widened in a way that was infuriatingly
charming. “You just wait and see.”

“I won’t hold my breath,” she answered.

Aiden laughed as he turned a corner, leading them into a part of the school they hadn’t explored yet.

“Are you sure she went this way?” Isaac couldn’t make sense of the scent trail. Lydia had been here at some point, but it didn’t smell any different from the afternoon trail he’d picked up near her locker.

“Yes, Isaac, I know how to track someone.” Aiden’s scent dripped with contempt. “You should get my brother to teach you. Ask him about stealth while you’re at it.”

“I’m good at stealth!” Isaac stamped his foot.

“I heard you coming from the other side of the hall.” Aiden snickered and dropped his voice to werewolf levels. “Second time tonight.”

Isaac growled.

“Actually, I guess it was more like the fourth time, huh?”


Melissa arched an eyebrow at Isaac. He blushed and looked away.

“Anyway, I heard you in the library,” Isaac countered.

“Yeah, after I decided to reveal myself.”

Isaac tried not to think about Aiden revealing himself. He didn’t need that kind of distraction right now.

They reached the side entrance on the opposite end of the building and Aiden stopped. His scent flickered with concern as he eyed the door’s long metal push bar. “She was terrified when she touched this.”

Isaac’s stomach roiled. Aiden was right.

“Was something chasing her? Can you tell?” Melissa asked.

“I don’t smell anything out of the ordinary besides Lydia.” Isaac swallowed his pride along with a new lump of fear as he turned to Aiden. “D-do you?”

Aiden shook his head and pushed the door open. “It might have been masking its scent.”

Outside Lydia’s trail swerved off the sidewalk and around the back of the school toward the woods. They followed it through a ditch and up to the tree line. Melissa took a breath and stepped forward, but Isaac caught her arm.

“Will you go home, please?” He lowered his voice and turned them so that they were angled away from Aiden, even though he knew it would be no more effective than when Parrish had taken Ms. Martin aside earlier that night. “I’m scared you’ll get hurt.”

“I’m not leaving you alone with him.” She glared around Isaac’s shoulder at Aiden.

Aiden waved from the edge of Isaac’s peripheral vision. He was enjoying this, the bastard.
“How am I supposed to concentrate on Lydia when I’m worried about you too?”

“Multitask.” She brushed past him and stepped between two pine trees.

Aiden smirked and leaned against one of the trees. “If it’s too dangerous for you, we can go on without you.”

Isaac growled and flared his eyes at Aiden.

There was no path, the underbrush was thick, and the trees grew dense and close together. Lydia’s scent was all over the foliage, and as with the emotional signature she had left on the exit door at school, it dripped with terror.

Isaac cupped his hands around his mouth to project his voice. “Lydia! Lydia! Yell if you can hear me!”

“What the hell, Lahey?!” Aiden snarled and shoved Isaac against a tree. “I know you don’t understand stealth but come the fuck on.”

Isaac sprang off the tree trunk and returned Aiden’s shove. “I want her to know we’re coming.”

“Do you want the whole damn forest to know too?” Aiden lunged forward and got in Isaac’s space, his eyes glowing blue.

“Maybe.” Isaac gave Aiden a challenging look and tipped his head back. He opened his mouth and–

Aiden punched him in the throat before he could howl.

Isaac sputtered for air as he stumbled over a bush and scraped his arm against a tree.

Melissa jabbed at Aiden with her stun rod, but he bounced away on light feet and spun behind a tree.

Isaac gently grabbed Melissa’s hand to stop her before she could press her attack. He couldn’t let her engage Aiden or next time he might counterstrike instead of dodge.

“Can we focus–” Isaac coughed and rubbed his throbbing windpipe. “On finding Lydia?”

Aiden didn’t answer.

Isaac whipped his head back and forth trying to locate him, but his scent and heartbeat had disappeared.

“Where is he?” Melissa whispered, her knuckles white around the handle of the stun rod.

“I don’t know where he is, but I’LL TELL HIM WHERE HE CAN GO!” Isaac yelled into the trees.

His phone vibrated in his pocket as he relocated Lydia’s trail.

Aiden: *Make all the noise you want now. You’re my decoy.*

Isaac howled.

He strained his hearing for any kind of response from Lydia, but all he heard were regular forest sounds: the hooting of owls, the hum of cicadas, the skittering of small paws in the dirt, the rustle of bushes and tree branches.
“Anything?” Melissa asked.

Isaac shook his head and they resumed their trek deeper into the woods. It was slow going. They still hadn’t come across a path, and a few times they had to double back or wind around when they reached a steep incline, overgrowth of shrubbery, or other obstacle that Melissa struggled to traverse but that Lydia had apparently managed. It was a cool late-October night that bordered on cold, but a thin sheen of sweat clung to their skin.

Isaac stayed in front of Melissa, doing his best to protect her from errant tree branches and calling her attention to roots, rocks, and holes. He was almost grateful for the task. Lydia’s trail was easy to follow, and without Melissa’s well being occupying the rest of his focus, his mind would have been free to spiral into an anxiety loop. As it was, his chest felt ragged and tender around his packbond with Lydia, and a sharp, angry ball of tension rolled and rocked in his stomach, but at least he hadn’t given conscious voice to his fears. Not until–

He gasped and raised an arm to stop Melissa.

“What?” She gripped his shoulder for balance as she stopped too fast on the uneven terrain.

“Blood,” Isaac whispered as his own ran cold. He crouched beside a tree and stared at the underbrush until he visually located the dried blood on a dead leaf.

“Is it Lydia’s?” Melissa stooped next to him.

He nodded and sniffed the air. “There’s more.”

He stood and eyed a nearby branch.

“Here.” Isaac grabbed it and pulled it forward for Melissa to see. A rough knot on the branch was smeared with Lydia’s blood and covered in her scent. “The branch cut her” –he angled his chin to the blood spot on the ground– “and then she dripped on the leaf.”

“So she’s fine?” Melissa asked, her face relaxing.

A weight settled in Isaac’s gut and he shrugged. “Well, this didn’t kill her.”

Melissa frowned, and they continued their journey.

After about another fifty yards, they finally broke through the trees and onto a dirt path.

“I smell someone.”

“Human?”

“Not an animal, and not someone I recognize.” Isaac wasn’t sure if there was any way to differentiate humans from supernatural creatures by scent.

“Are they after her?”

Isaac sniffed the path in front of them where Lydia had gone, the non-path behind them where she had come from, and the path in the direction she hadn’t gone. “I don’t think so. They followed the path here, and she intersected with it.”

“Maybe she’s after them,” Melissa said with a wan smile. “Do you smell Aiden?”

“I’ve smelled flashes of him along the way, but his scent’s been masked for the most part.”
After another few minutes of walking, the path lit up with not-animal scents. Isaac pointed at the ground. “There were at least five other people here recently, besides Lydia and the first new scent.”

Melissa pulled out her phone and checked their location on the map. “We’re near a neighborhood. Maybe the residents use this trail for hiking.”

“Maybe.” Isaac didn’t think so. Fear and anger were the driving emotional signatures of these scents. These weren’t happy hikers.

Isaac was still looking for clues in the chemosignals when he caught a sound that made his ears tingle and the packbond in his chest twitch.

“I hear them!” He grabbed Melissa’s hand and ran down the dirt path.

“Hear who?” Melissa shouted as she sprinted down the trail beside him. “The hikers or–”

“Lydia!” Isaac’s chest filled with joy as they burst into a clearing and he spotted her standing beside Aiden, clutching his arms and trembling. Something was wrong.

“Isaac?” She turned her head. She had been crying. “Isaac!”

“Lydia!”

Aiden stepped back as Isaac scooped her up in his arms and spun her around.

“I was–” Isaac’s voice caught in his throat as he set her down. Tears pricked the backs of his eyes, and a flood of emotion crashed over him as he pulled her into a tight hug.

“Easy, she’s not a werewolf.” Aiden grabbed Isaac’s arms and pried them open.

Isaac growled at him, but was more mindful of his strength as he resumed embracing his packmate – his scared packmate. She reeked of fear and distress.

“What happened?” he whispered as he rubbed her back.

She squeezed him harder and pressed her face against his chest. “Death, so much death. It’s everywhere. It’s–”

“It’s specifically over there,” Aiden cut in, pointing across the clearing.

Isaac gasped and let go of Lydia as his gaze landed on a grisly sight.

The end of a large limb had been snapped off an oak tree and the body of a middle-aged man was impaled through the stomach on it. He had been pushed about four feet from the end of the jagged, broken limb to the base of the thick trunk, coating the hefty limb with blood and viscera. His intestines had been pulled out as they snagged on unyielding branches. They dangled to the ground like macabre streamers. Flies swarmed the blood and guts, and crawled all over the body’s face and arms. It was obviously a fresh kill, but the stench of death was all consuming now that Isaac wasn’t caught up in his reunion with Lydia. He recognized the underlying scent as belonging to the original second person from the dirt trail.

“This is just the beginning,” Lydia whispered as they edged closer to the victim. “I’ve been having vision after vision all night. They’re hard to decipher, and when I saw glimpses of people, I couldn’t recognize most of them but...”

“Who did you recognize, Lydia?” Melissa asked.
She clutched Isaac’s hand and slowly raised her eyes to meet his. She nodded and looked away to Aiden. She caught his gaze and nodded again.

“Us?” Aiden’s face paled in the moonlight and his heartbeat stuttered as he gestured between himself and Isaac with his thumb. “Me and Lahey? You saw us die?”

“I saw you...dying.” She rubbed Isaac’s knuckles with her thumb. “It might not come to pass.”

Isaac forced a sarcastic smile and laughed. “Were we killing each other at the time?”

Lydia huffed and pulled her hand away. “This is serious. I don’t want either of you to end up like him.” She tipped her head toward the impaled corpse.

“Well, that’s a shame.” Aiden stared at the blood dripping off the victim’s fingers. “Because the person who killed him also has it out for me.”

“How do you know that?” Melissa asked.

“That’s Vernon Warnke,” Aiden answered, nodding toward the body. “He was the Cosgrove pack’s former emissary.” His eyes met Isaac’s. “As in Megan, Rick, and Leslie Cosgrove.”

“Oh.”

“Who?” Lydia looked between Isaac and Aiden, then at Melissa as she hummed in realization too.

“Okay, I’m clearly missing an important piece of information.”

“The short version is Aiden’s psycho werewolf ex-girlfriend wants to kill him.” Isaac smirked at Aiden. “The long version is all the things he did to deserve it.”

Aiden flipped him off.

Melissa let out a weary breath and turned away from the body. Her shoulders sagged, and her scent was a muddled blend of exhaustion, disgust, apprehension, and above all fear. She never took her eyes off Isaac as she raised her phone. “I’ll call the sheriff directly and report this. The last thing we need is Deputy Parrish answering a 911 call and finding us at the scene of a homicide.”

“You have his number?” Isaac asked.

“Of course I have his number.”

Isaac needed to get that.

“How do you know this...” Lydia waved her hand. “Cosgrove pack killed him?”

Melissa stepped away from the others as the sheriff’s sleepy voice came on the line

“Why would they kill their own emissary?” Lydia asked.

“Former emissary,” Aiden answered, taking a few steps in the other direction away from the body. Lydia and Isaac followed. “He retired and moved away the week before we got to Fort Lauderdale. Deucalion didn’t know that, so he had us memorizing his file along with everyone else’s. Megan’s scent is all over him.”

“So you never actually met him?” Isaac asked.

Aiden shook his head. “But I saw photos.”
“How do you know that’s not just someone who looks like him?”

Aiden growled and folded his arms. “You think it’s a coincidence Megan shows up in town and just happens to brutally murder someone who looks just like her former em–”

Isaac shrugged. “Well when you put it like that.”

Aiden held up his hand. “We’re not alone.”

Isaac darted his eyes around the clearing and stepped closer to Lydia. Dammit, Melissa was about twenty feet away with her back turned, talking into the phone and oblivious to any danger.

Aiden pointed to the tree line behind the body.

Isaac still didn’t see or hear anything, but he stepped between Lydia and the trees that Aiden had indicated and edged them toward Melissa. Aiden stood his ground.

“Isaac, my premonition,” Lydia whispered. She dug her heels in and refused to move as Isaac tried to guide her away. “This could be what happens to Aiden.” She swallowed and clutched the back of Isaac’s shirt. “Or you.”

“I have to get to Melissa.” Isaac spun and snatched Lydia off her feet, then sprinted the short distance to Melissa.

“Hold on,” Melissa said into the phone, her eyes widening. “What is it?”

A twig snapped, and two heartbeats thumped into existence. The bushes rattled and a pair of animalistic roars split the air.

Aiden squared his stance and roared back, his claws glinting in the moonlight.

“Stay behind me.” Isaac wolfed out and spread his arms back defensively around Lydia and Melissa.

Two male werewolves charged out of the trees and into the clearing. One of them looked to be a couple years older than Isaac; the other one looked younger than Liam.

The younger wolf reached Aiden first and took a clumsy swipe at his face. Aiden blocked the blow and twisted the boy’s arm back in the opposite direction. It snapped and he howled as Aiden pivoted around him and slammed his elbow into the older wolf’s face.

The older wolf growled and slashed at Aiden’s stomach. Aiden sprang back, but not in time to fully dodge the blow. His blood pelted against the wet leaves that lined the ground of the clearing.

The younger wolf snarled and raked the claws of his intact arm across Aiden’s back. Aiden twisted and dropped into a crouch. The older wolf used the opportunity to press his attack, but Aiden ignored the blows and sprang back to his feet, slamming his palms up against the younger wolf’s chest and sending him hurtling backward through the air. He yelped as he hit the ground with a crunch.

The older wolf roared and sank his claws into Aiden’s sides. He tried to heave Aiden off the ground, but Aiden hooked his foot around the other wolf’s leg, and they both went down.

Aiden sank his fangs into his opponent’s shoulder and tore out a large chunk of flesh. He slammed the older wolf’s head against the ground and bounced back to his feet in time to deflect a hobbled
assault from the younger wolf. He grabbed the boy’s wrists and flung him to the ground atop his packmate.

The two injured werewolves untangled themselves quickly, but not before Aiden delivered a hard kick to the older wolf’s face. The blow bloodied his nose and knocked out one of his fangs.

Aiden circled them as they got back to their feet.

The boy snarled and lunged forward, but before he could get within range of Aiden, the older wolf grabbed his arm and yanked him back. “Run!”

Aiden stood between them and the way they had entered, so they bounded across the clearing in the other direction.

Aiden roared and took off after them.

“Aiden!”

Lydia’s scream halted him as he reached the tree line. He turned and looked at her, the older werewolf’s blood still dripping from his chin and trickling down his throat.

“Are you seriously about to chase them into the woods where the rest of their pack might be lying in waiting?”

Aiden wiped his mouth and spit into the woods after them. His phone rang an instant later, and he whipped it out of his pocket. “I’m fine.”

“Where the fuck are you?!” Ethan’s voice shouted. “Why aren’t you in your room?”

“I said I was fine. I’ll explain when I get home.” Aiden’s eyes landed on Isaac and his bloody lips curled into a gruesome grin. “Isaac says hi by the way.”

“Isaac?!” Confusion and alarm rang in Ethan’s voice. “That’s impossible. I dropped him off—”

Aiden hung up on his brother.

“You’re gonna be in the doghouse,” Aiden said as he strolled back to the group.

Isaac growled under his breath and texted Ethan to let him know he was okay too.

Chapter End Notes

I hope you enjoyed this chapter! Also, fun little near typo. I wrote part of that scene with Parrish at the Martin home on my phone, and autocorrect changed ‘brow’ to ‘brownie.’ I almost didn’t notice when ‘Parrish’s brownie furrowed in confusion.’

Please forgive, and feel free to point out, any typos that did slip by. I stayed up all night to finally finish the chapter, so I’m worried the second half might be a bit sloppy. I’ll give it a thorough edit over the coming days.

Anyway, I hope you enjoyed this chapter! As always feedback and general impressions
are greatly appreciated!
Race Ya

Chapter Notes

This was meant to be a long, plot-heavy chapter...but then Isaac and Stiles saw each other and were like, “Oh it’s on!” And suddenly things had taken a smutty swerve.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Isaac groped around under the covers for his phone as the alarm went off. He had just closed his eyes. There had to be some mistake. He must have set it wrong.

He whined in the back of his throat as he cracked open one bleary eye and read the display. No mistake. It had already been forty-five minutes.

Forty-five frickin minutes.

That’s how much sleep Isaac had gotten after spending all night in the woods. He and Melissa had waited with Lydia and Aiden while the sheriff came to meet them. Then, after they had gotten their stories straight and confirmed there was nothing explicitly supernatural about the homicide, the sheriff had called in his team to process the crime scene and remove the body. Since Aiden would have looked suspicious with his clothes torn and bloodied from his fight with the two Cosgrove pack werewolves – the older of whom he had recognized as Megan’s cousin Byron – he had been allowed to leave after the sheriff had taken his statement and before the other officers and coroner had arrived. Isaac, Melissa, and Lydia had remained at the scene to answer questions.

Isaac stretched, curling his toes under the covers and savoring the silky-soft warmth on his bare skin. He had a text from Melissa timestamped twenty-minutes ago.

Melissa: I just opened Scott’s mountain ash circle. Stay home today if you change your mind.

He closed his eyes and slumped back against the pillow. Well okay then.

Tension settled in his stomach as he pondered the situation instead of falling back to sleep. Whether he stayed home or not, Ethan and Stiles would be at school – together.

Guilt roiled through Isaac’s body. What had he done? How the fuck had he let this happen?

He shoved his guilt and anxiety into a corner of his mind. He couldn’t afford to let himself get lost in the fiasco that was his romantic life, not when there were life or death dangers at play today. Megan and her pack had already killed once, and they wouldn’t stop until the twins were dead too. Meanwhile, Lydia’s vision of the darach stabbing someone dressed in a blue sweater on the front steps of the school might come to pass today or anytime in the near future if they couldn’t find a way to avert it. Ugh, and it was Liam’s first day of school as a werewolf, and Malia’s first day of school period. Isaac had set his alarm early for a reason. People were counting on him. He couldn’t just skip school and go back to sleep when lives might hang in the balance and his pack needed him.

He threw back the covers and crawled out of bed. He needed to get ready, then wake Scott up. They had a lot to talk about. He slid on his slippers and shuffled to his bedroom door in just his boxers. No one would be up yet – or so he thought.
His hand froze on the knob as he caught the sound of movement coming from Scott’s room. That wasn’t right. He should have had to wake Scott up. It was at least an hour before they normally got up for school. His blood ran cold. What if Melissa had broken the mountain ash ring too early. What if Iron Claw had taken over?

Isaac raced down the hallway and pounded on Scott’s door. “Scott?!”

There was a strangled yelp.

Oh god, that proved it. Iron Claw was about to go on a murderous rampage.

Isaac flung open the door and leaped into the room, his claws and fangs out, ready for danger.

Scott was sitting at his desk. He gasped and slammed the lid of his laptop shut. “Isaac!”

“Scott are you okay? Why are you–”

Isaac’s eyes widened as his frantic gaze alighted on the floor beneath Scott’s desk...where his pajama pants were pooled around his ankles.

Scott dropped his hands to his lap and hunched closer to the desk, which obscured Isaac’s view of his waist and crotch. A bottle of Astroglide with the cap popped open sat beside the laptop.

“You’re up early,” Isaac said lamely, his cheeks burning.

Scott gave him a flustered look, his heart thumping too fast in his chest. “Uh yeah. I didn’t get any alone time like I wanted yesterday. Stiles came over right after Mom left for work.”

“Oh.”

“Then Ethan came over too...”

“Right.”

“Then you came back, and Stiles took you upstairs to–”

“Scott–”

“I thought about doing it while you guys were...but I mean, that would have been super weird.”

Isaac covered his face with his hand and backed toward the door.

“Then it was time to go in the mountain ash ring, and I hoped I would have time after you guys left and before Iron Claw took over. But nope. So I got up early to...” Scott let out a nervous laugh and ran a hand through his hair, his bronzed bicep flexing under the sleeve of his white v-neck. “It’s been so damn long.”

Isaac could have guessed that based on the tight, needy frustration permeating Scott’s scent. “I’ll be in my room. Just come get me after you– Uh, I mean once you’re fin– Uh, I’ll be in my room. Take your time.”

“I can’t do it now,” Scott answered indignantly. “You’ll know it's happening.”

“I won’t listen,” Isaac answered, palms raised.

Scott shook his head as he frowned at his crotch. “No offense, but you completely killed the mood.”
Isaac chuckled and gave Scott an apologetic shrug, mortification and guilt warring for control of his emotions. “That’s me. Isaac The-Boner-Killer Lahey.”

Scott laughed. “That’s not the impression I get from Stiles.”

“Uh, anyway...”

“Right.” Scott nodded and tapped his foot under the desk. “Lemme just pull up my pants and I’ll be right there.”

Isaac cringed and walked out of the room. Why the fuck hadn’t he hit snooze a couple times?

He put a pair of pajama pants on over his boxers and got his school clothes ready while he waited for Scott, all the while trying unsuccessfully not to think about all the sex he’d had yesterday. He’d gotten off twice with Stiles and three times with Ethan. He was such a scumbag. How could he treat them like that? Meanwhile someone good and loyal like Scott couldn’t even rub one out in peace without Isaac storming into his room at all hours of the morning.

“So what’s going on?” Scott asked as he knocked on Isaac’s open door.

Isaac frowned at him. “Sorry.”

“I don’t really wanna talk about it.” Scott shrugged one shoulder. “Did you need something though?”

Isaac nodded and collapsed on the edge of his bed next to the clothes he’d picked out. He hardly knew where to start, but he focused on the thing that felt the most important to tell Scott first.

“I did something that I...” Isaac trailed off. He didn’t regret it exactly, at least not the end result so much as the circumstances surrounding it. “Well, I’ll understand if you’re mad at me. You have every right to be.”

Scott squeezed Isaac’s bare shoulder and shoved the pillows back so he could sit beside him on the bed. “It’s okay. I’ll get another chance.”

“Huh? Another chance for what?”

Scott made a fist over his lap and jerked it up and down.

“Oh.” Isaac’s eyes widened and fire burned across his face. “I wasn’t talking about that.”

“You weren’t?”

Isaac shook his head. Crap, the blush had spread all the way down his chest. He should have put on a shirt for this conversation.

“Well what else did you do to me?” Scott chuckled and patted Isaac’s back. “That came out wrong.”

“I packbonded with Ethan.”

“Oh.” Scott’s lips curled into a smile, and he bumped Isaac’s shoulder. “Good.”

“Good?”

Scott nodded. “I’ve been hoping you would. I just didn’t say anything because I wanted it to be your decision.”
“But” –Isaac tilted his head– “he’s not pack.”

Scott frowned. “That’s why I can’t bond with him, but I’ve been worried about him. He needs that connection, now more than ever.”

Isaac picked at the leg of his pajama pants as he tried to figure out how he felt. It was a relief that Scott wasn’t mad or disappointed...but then again he didn’t know the really bad thing Isaac had done with Ethan behind everyone’s backs. A self destructive part of Isaac wanted to confess that to Scott too, but he owed it to Ethan and Stiles to come clean to them first.

Scott nudged Isaac’s knee with his own. “Did you get up early just to tell me that?”

Isaac groaned and shook his head. “I still have a lot I need to tell you about last night.”

Scott sighed and stroked the fingers of his left hand along the black medical sleeve that covered the space where his right index finger should have been. “I thought there might be something else...”

Isaac opened his mouth to launch into it but changed his mind.

“Let’s get ready for school first. We need to be early today.” Isaac also needed a few more minutes to marshal his thoughts and figure out a way to admit to Scott that he had taken his mom into the woods – into danger. “How ’bout I fill you in at breakfast?”

Scott nodded and stood. “Yeah, okay.”

Isaac spiraled into another guilt cycle about Ethan and Stiles as he dressed for the day. Ethan wasn’t answering his texts. The rational part of his mind knew that was because he wasn’t awake yet, but the irrational part kept going to the worst case scenario. What if he was so angry at Isaac for not calling him last night when he went to look for Lydia that he was going to break up with him?

Isaac frowned at himself in the mirror as he tried to smooth down his unruly hair. He had taken a shower before his short nap, and he’d been in bed just long enough for his hair to dry in a weird way. He brushed it out with one hand as he sent yet another totally chill and completely casual text to Ethan.

He couldn’t breathe at the prospect of Ethan breaking up with him. Under all his anxiety and guilt, he hummed with a full-bodied joy that they were finally, finally together – and it was so good he could hardly stand it.

…How the fuck was he supposed to fix this? He wanted them both so much it hurt.

“Hey,” Isaac said softly as the call connected.

Stiles groaned. “Dude, why are you calling me?”

Isaac barked out a nervous laugh. “Can’t a guy call his boyfriend to say good morning?”

“No.” There was a smile in Stiles’ voice that took the sting out of the word. “Not at this ungodly hour.”

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Isaac rolled his eyes at himself in the bathroom mirror as he caught sight of his stupidly big grin. It
faded as he got down to business. “Can you come meet me and Scott as soon as possible? We need to be at school early today. I’ll explain when you get here.”

“Gughh!” The springs creaked as Stiles slapped the mattress. “You know you technically haven’t even said your good morning yet.”

“Good morning.”

“Morning, boyfriend.” The smile was back in Stiles’ voice. “Fine. I’ll be there in twenty.”

Isaac couldn’t resist pressing his luck. “See you in fifteen.”

Stiles grumbled and hung up.

Isaac’s stomach tightened and his cock twitched as he remembered something. He opened the photo album on his phone and brought up the pictures he had taken the previous morning of Stiles’ cum-splattered asscrack. His eyes flared with heat as he scrolled through them, taking in every detail: his milky seed coating Stiles’ puffy, pink hole; Stiles’ smooth balls and spent dick tugged back between his legs so they would be visible in the shot; Isaac’s swollen, glistening tip tracing the lines of Stiles’ taint and kissing Stiles’ wet cockslit; Stiles’ supple ascheeks and lean thighs framing everything perfectly.

Isaac unbuckled his belt and popped open the top button of his pants. He had promised to jerk off to these pictures when he had taken them, when Stiles had put himself so pornographically on display for Isaac’s lustful delight. He tugged his fly down and spread the flaps of his pants wide, freeing the tent in the black boxer briefs he’d changed into for the day. He could change again. He’d cream the front of them, make sure his cock and pubes were good and coated, then snap an inside-the-underwear picture to send to Stiles with a text letting him know what the inspiration had been.

Just as Isaac’s fingers dipped beneath his waistband Scott growled and a dish clattered against the kitchen counter downstairs.

“Dammit!”

Isaac flinched. What was he doing? He didn’t have time for this. He gave one last longing look at Stiles’ jizzed asshole then closed the picture and zipped himself back up. He checked himself in the mirror. His bulge was too big, but Scott was straight; he wouldn’t notice.

Isaac hurried downstairs and into the kitchen.

Scott was standing at the sink. He had taken the medical sleeve off his missing finger and was holding it under the water. A hard rubber insert lay nearby on the counter.

“What happened?” Isaac asked, stepping up behind Scott and patting his back. Tension and frustration radiated from his tight muscles.

“I was about to make scrambled eggs,” –Scott nodded over his shoulder at the bowl of raw eggs by the stove– “and my phone buzzed with an email. So I was checking it with one hand and...” He pursed his lips and frowned as he wrung out the black elastic sleeve. “I was holding it in the bowl and I didn’t notice. I couldn’t feel it till my nub got wet and slimy.”

Isaac let out a sympathetic rumble and squeezed the back of Scott’s neck. “Why don’t I make breakfast?”

Scott nodded and patted Isaac’s side as he stepped around him. His eyes widened as he looked
down. “Uh, I think those pants might be too tight for you.”

Isaac groaned and blushed for what must have been the hundredth time that morning as he folded his hands over his crotch. “I was thinking about Stiles. He’s on his way over.”

Scott laughed and sank into one of the kitchen chairs. “You should tell him that when he gets here. He’ll get a kick out of it.”

“I kinda need to tell you guys some other stuff,” Isaac answered as he passed Scott the insert for his finger sleeve.

He couldn’t leave Scott hanging after a statement like that, so while he made breakfast he filled him in on the murder in the woods. To his relief Scott seemed concerned but not angry when Isaac mentioned that Melissa had gone with him.

“So you just got home?” Scott asked when Isaac had finished the story.

Isaac shrugged. “’bout an hour and a half ago.”

Scott got up and took the orange juice out of the refrigerator. “I’m sure Mom’ll understand if you don’t go to school today,” he said as he got two glasses out of the cupboard. “She’ll probably be asleep all day herself.”

“Yeah, she said I could.” Isaac scooped some of the eggs onto two of the three plates he’d taken out. Stiles’ portion would stay warmer in the skillet. “But I can’t. It’s Liam’s first day back. He needs me.”

Scott sighed as he poured the juice. “I can take care of Liam.”

A pit formed in Isaac’s gut at the notion of not being there for Liam today. “Uhh...”

“I’m his alpha,” Scott said, setting the drinks on the table.

“Yeah,” Isaac answered right away as he added sausage patties from the other pan to their plates.

“So you can stay home, and I’ll make sure he’s okay.”

Isaac fell silent as he buttered slices of toast and cut them into triangles.

“What is it?” Scott asked, a hint of irritation in his tone.

“It’s just...” Isaac reluctantly looked up and said what was on his mind. “I’m his First Bond. He needs me.”

A scowl flashed across Scott’s face, but before it had time to settle it had already softened into a faint smile. “Yeah, I guess he does.”

Isaac set Scott’s plate in front of him and took his place at the table. “He’d be way better off if you were his First Bond.”

“I don’t think so,” Scott mumbled, picking up his fork. “You haven’t traumatized him.”

Isaac’s head snapped up. “You haven’t traumatized him.”

The words registered as a lie somehow even though Isaac had meant them. Scott didn’t say anything, just stared at his finger sleeve for a moment before biting into his eggs.
“Scott, I—”

“I’m proud of you.” Scott nudged Isaac’s foot under the table. “For taking care of the pack so much these last couple weeks. Ethan mentioned something about there being a ritual to make you” –he waved his hand in the air– “like my official Vice Alpha or something. I wanna do it.”

Isaac’s lips parted in surprise and a tingle of warmth rolled down his back. “I-I, um, don’t think I deserve that.”

Scott reached across the table and squeezed Isaac’s forearm. “Well I do.”

Isaac grinned at Scott as the tingly sensation crept up his arm and into his chest.

“I need to see if Deaton knows how to do it.” Scott sipped his orange juice. “Ethan doesn’t remember all the details.”

“Shouldn’t we put it to a pack vote?” Isaac asked.

Scott nodded. “Yeah, we probably should. But I don’t think anyone’s gonna object.”

“There’s something else.” Isaac was about to tell Scott about Lydia’s vision of the darach stabbing a guy wearing a blue sweater when Stiles’ Jeep rumbled into the driveway. “I’ll get it.”

“I bet you will.” Scott smirked at Isaac, but his scent filled with delight. He liked Isaac and Stiles together.

Isaac swallowed around a lump in his throat as he hustled out of the room. Under different circumstances Scott would have probably liked Isaac and Ethan together too, but somehow Isaac doubted his alpha would like him with both of them.

Stiles gasped and jumped back, his hand outstretched as Isaac opened the front door. He clutched his chest and glowered. “You and Scott seriously need to stop doing that. Or, like, knock on your side of the door before you open it.”

“Right.”

Stiles licked his lips and looked Isaac up and down. “You look unfairly hot for this hour of the morning.”

Isaac looped an arm around Stiles’ waist and tugged him forward. He drew his scent deep into his lungs and whispered in his ear, “What’s your excuse?”

Stiles moaned and palmed Isaac’s ass before dragging heavy hands over his hips and then his crotch. “Let’s go to your room.”

Isaac took a long drag on Stiles’ pheromones as they thickened with desire and as he thickened in Stiles’ hand. “We can’t.”

Stiles rubbed Isaac’s erection harder through his pants and hooked his other arm around his neck. He dragged Isaac down and sealed their mouths together.

Isaac whimpered as Stiles shoved his tongue through Isaac’s lips and climbed the front of his body. He tucked one arm under Stiles’ ass and held his back steady with the other as Stiles writhed and bucked against him, grinding their hard-ons together in a way that hurt as much as it felt amazing.

“Take me upstairs and fuck me,” Stiles said as he broke the kiss and bounced in Isaac’s arms. “My
ass isn’t sore anymore.”

“So you want it to be again?” Isaac asked with a ragged laugh.

Stiles nodded – fucking nodded. “You wouldn’t believe how many times I jerked off yesterday because I could feel what you had done to me, how many times I played with my hole because it was still wet with your cum.”

Isaac’s eyes blazed and he squeezed Stiles’ ass. There was no way this could happen. Isaac was in the middle of eating his breakfast. Scott could hear everything. They had to be at school early.

“We don’t have much time,” Isaac said as he turned and bolted up the stairs with Stiles in his arms.

“I’ll fucking race you to see who can get off first once you’re inside me.”

“Ughn!” Isaac growled and took the last three steps in a single leap. The floor shook as he landed with a thud.

“Dude, you’re gonna wake up Mom,” Scott werewolf whispered. “I’m gonna go listen to music in the garage.”

Isaac should have been embarrassed, but he couldn’t think straight as he ran into his room and threw Stiles on the bed. To his utter shock Stiles gripped his wrists and stopped him when he reached to undo his pants.

“You left the door open.”

“Scott’s going outside,” Isaac answered as he fumbled with the button of Stiles’ fly.

“Melissa—”

“Is asleep.” Isaac took just a moment to zero in on her heartbeat and breathing to confirm that fact.

That was all Stiles needed to hear as he covered Isaac’s hands with his own and they both fought with his fly. Their fingers kept getting in each other’s way. This really shouldn’t have been so difficult, but–

“Ugh, just rip it open!”

Isaac shoved Stiles’ hands away and tore the front of his pants apart, sending the metal button popping into the air and the zipper whining and squeaking as the fabric ripped around it.

“Oh my god, I didn’t think you were actually gonna do it!” Stiles slapped Isaac’s bicep and stared in open-mouthed shock at his ruined pants.

“You said—”

“Whatever.” Stiles arched his hips and worked the torn denim down his thighs along with his underwear.

Isaac took over, pulling the clothes the rest of the way down Stiles’ legs but unable to look away from his uncut cock as it bobbed in the air. He growled and Stiles groaned as the fabric bunched and caught on Stiles’ shoes.

“I’ll get it.” Stiles jerked and kicked his legs. “Get your pants off.”
Isaac’s heart sank. He had pants too?! *FUCK!*

He got them open and down to his ankles in record time, but they too got tangled around his shoes. Fuck it. Stiles needed to have his legs wide open, but Isaac? Not so much. He half-sat, half-flopped on the bed and pulled Stiles onto his lap. Stiles had only gotten one foot free but – no seriously that was fine. So what if he had inside out pants hanging from one shoe? He could spread his legs now and that was all that mattered.

Isaac stopped just as his cock slipped between Stiles’ hot, supple asscheeks and his glans brushed Stiles’ wrinkled mound. “We need lube.”

Stiles’ face fell and he cursed. “Awww fuck! We do, don’t we?!”

They both crawled up the bed toward Isaac’s nightstand at the same time, tripping over each other, but after a moment Stiles settled beneath Isaac and jerked his cock while Isaac leaned over and rifled through the drawer for what he needed.

Seconds later Isaac’s tongue was in Stiles’ mouth and his slick fingers were in his ass, roughly scissoring him open and leaching away all the pain caused by his clumsy, reckless preparations. Saturday night he had *worshipped* Stiles’ hole, and it certainly deserved that same level of care now but–

*Ughnnf!* Isaac needed to get the fuck inside Stiles before they both melted into puddles on the bed.

He found Stiles’ prostate and worked it vigorously while stroking his cock and sucking on his tongue until Stiles broke the kiss and pushed Isaac back up onto his knees.

“I’m fucking ready.”

“You’re fucking not.”

“Just fucking do it.”

Isaac shimmied off the bed, almost falling as his feet hit the floor at an uneven angle thanks to those damn pants still tangled around his ankles. He squared his stance as much as he could, grabbed Stiles hips, and yanked him lower until his ass hung off the edge of the mattress.

“Race ya,” Isaac said with a wink as he plunged into Stiles’ tight, hot ring of muscle.

*Ahh fuck!*

He savored every perfect, blissful inch of the penetration – the slow, wet stretch as Stiles’ rim massaged his thick, bloated glans; the way Stiles’ glove-like heat gradually enveloped more and more of his throbbing, nerve-packed head until it hooked snug and tight around Isaac’s flared coronal ridge; the pulsing flutter on Isaac’s shaft that beckoned him deeper and deeper.

“Ohh *fffff*uck!” Stiles gurgled and choked as he gripped the bedspread. “That thing is enormous.”

Isaac sucked away all the pain he could as he rubbed Stiles’ stomach under his shirt with his thumbs and clutched his hips as he impaled him.

“Aaah!” Stiles’ eyes rolled back in his head and he fist ed his cock. “I’m gonna win.”

Isaac slammed forward the last several inches and ground his bushy pelvis against his boyfriend’s smooth taint. He rocked his hips a few times, then withdrew until his glans were once again wedged
right in Stiles’ hot, muscular ring. Stiles flexed and Isaac couldn’t breathe. They were both going to win, and victory was almost upon them.

Stiles yelped as Isaac drove forward and hammered his prostate. Isaac covered his mouth and pulled out to slam him again.

One.

Isaac shuddered as his cock throbbed and his balls tightened.

Two.

Oh fuck. How was his cock getting even harder and feeling this good?

Threeee!

The world fell away and Isaac’s heart stopped as his dick shattered into a thousand glowing, tingling nerves and he gushed torrents of thick, hot cum into his boyfriend, making his hole squelch with every erratic thrust Isaac continued taking.

Stiles’ eyes went wild and his ass clamped around Isaac’s spasming cock as he erupted in creamy white ropes all over the front of his shirt.

They bounced against the bed and slammed against each other’s crotches as they kept going for a few more heavenly seconds. Stiles’ cock sputtered and dribbled against the soaked t-shirt that was plastered to his stomach as Isaac’s semen trickled down his shaft and dripped off his balls, quietly pelting the pants still stretched between Isaac’s legs.

Isaac pulled his hand away from Stiles’ mouth and kissed him as he rode out the trembling aftershocks of his pleasure.

“I win,” Isaac whispered as he nuzzled Stiles’ face and took a couple more noisy, sloppy thrusts to punctuate his point.

“Dude, I came so hard I almost blacked out, and my spine feels like jelly.” Stiles let out a giddy laugh and bucked his slick cock against Isaac’s abdomen. “I win.”

“I guess we can call it a tie.”

“Na uh.” Stiles grinned and rolled out from under Isaac. “Race ya to the bathroom!”

He ran out of the room, dick flopping and pants dragging behind him.

Isaac chuckled and stood. A niggling concern tugged at the back of his mind as he put the lube away and cleaned up. Wasn’t it odd that Stiles could run like that right after getting fucked hard and fast with minimal prep?

Isaac sniffed the air and frowned. Beneath the layer of pheromones and cum that filled his room were distinctive notes of sage, sap, and rain.

Chapter End Notes
If you have a few minutes to comment, feedback and general impressions are always very greatly appreciated!
“I’m sorry,” Isaac mumbled as he snapped his seatbelt into place.

Stiles turned the key in the ignition and smirked at Isaac as the Jeep rumbled to life. “About my pants or about the turkey baster?”

Isaac groaned. “Can we please not talk about the turkey baster?”

Stiles snickered and shifted into reverse as Scott pulled out of the driveway behind them. “Aww, don’t be jealous. You were way more satisfying than the turkey baster.”

Isaac growled and draped his hand over his face. He was too tired for this.

After their morning quickie, Isaac had taken a lightning fast shower while Stiles had scarfed down the breakfast Isaac had saved for him, and Scott had gathered some clothes for Stiles to change into. When it was Stiles’ turn to shower, he had entered the bathroom carrying supplies, most notably Melissa’s turkey baster.

“I’ll never be able to look Scott in the eyes again.”

“Why?” Stiles asked, his voice twilling with amusement. “What are friends for?”

Isaac glared at Stiles from between spread fingers. “Not for that.”

After showering and dressing in the borrowed clothes, Stiles had entered the kitchen and insisted that Scott sniff him for any trace of Isaac’s semen – or as Stiles had put it, Do I smell like a can of Cream of Isaac soup? And when Scott had only furrowed his brow and blinked at him, A Sprayhe of Lahey? And eventually just, Oh my god, Scott, does it smell like Isaac jizzed up my butt or not?

It hadn’t, and whatever Stiles had done...Isaac definitely owed Melissa a new turkey baster.

Isaac sat up straighter in his seat as they rolled to a stop at the end of the block. “Look, I’m sorry you had to do all that.”

The teasing smirk on Stiles’ lips softened into a gentle smile. “I would have done it even if we weren’t keeping our relationship a secret for now.”

“You would’ve?”

“Sure.” Stiles laughed and accelerated through the intersection after waiting his turn. “I don’t need the Wonder Twins knowing every time I have sex.”

“What?!”

“Ethan and Aiden.” Stiles shrugged one shoulder. “Don’t they have, like, super smell even for
werewolves?"

“They’re just” –Isaac swallowed– “really observant.”

“Yeah, so we don’t need them up in our sex life.”

“Right, of course not.” Isaac folded his arms and bobbed his head, stopping just short of whistling casually.

“Not that it would be any better with Liam or Malia asking questions.” Stiles cringed dramatically. “Malia would probably embarrass the fuck out of us.”

“Probably.”

They fell silent as Stiles gave Isaac an appraising look. “I know you’re not telling me everything.”

Isaac’s heart leaped into his throat.

“Huh?”

Stiles reached across the cab and rubbed Isaac’s shoulder. “Scott and I were talking while you were in the shower. We know you can’t tell us where you were yesterday when Liam dropped you off, or give us all the details about Lydia’s visions.”

“Oh.” Isaac patted Stiles’ hand and stroked his fingers.

“It sucks that the darach and Iron Claw are listening in on everything, but we get it. So don’t worry about being secretive, and I’ll try not to ask you questions you can’t answer.”

Isaac gave a stiff nod.

Fuck. Stiles had basically just given him permission to lie and be evasive.

Stiles returned both hands to the steering wheel as he turned out of the McCall neighborhood and onto the main road. “So do you have anything you need to ask me?”

“About what?”

Stiles rolled his eyes and shook his head fondly. “The investigation.”

“Oh.” Isaac shrugged and readjusted his school bag where it sat in the footwell between his legs. “Nah, we’re pretty sure the Cosgrove pack killed that guy. Aiden smelled them all over him.”

Stiles hummed and frowned. “Maybe, but you shouldn’t rule out Iron Claw or the darach. Or Aiden for that matter.”

Isaac thought it over. “Well, Iron Claw was in the mountain ash ring when we left, and he was still there when we got back. So I don’t think it coulda been him.”

Stiles nodded his agreement.

“And I didn’t smell Aiden on the body. His clothes were also clean until he was attacked, whereas the victim was very...messy. I don’t think he woulda had time to clean up and change before Melissa and I found him at school.”

“And the darach?”
A chill crept down Isaac’s spine. He could practically sense the darach in the Jeep with them. “I
didn’t smell him, uh, you anywhere around there either. Do you know if he went out last night?”

Stiles smiled and shook his head. “He didn’t. I had to call my dad this morning after you woke me up
to let me out of my room. I was locked in all night.”

Isaac breathed a sigh of relief and grinned at his boyfriend.

Stiles cleared his throat. “I’m just showing you how you need to ask questions and not assume
anything until you rule out all the other possibilities.”

Isaac scoffed and tried not to be offended at the implication that Stiles thought he might have missed
something. Geez, it wasn’t like this was his first murder investigation. Besides, he had Lydia helping
him.

“My dad said the crime scene was absolutely horrific.”

Isaac shuddered and flashed back to images of fly-infested intestines dangling from the blood-slicked
tree limb.

“It was pretty bad,” he answered quietly.

Stiles sighed. “Dad was reviewing applications for a new officer last night...I guess he better hurry
up and make his final decision. Looks like he’s gonna need all the extra help he can get.”

Isaac yawned and nodded.

Stiles laughed and yawned too. “Same here, buddy. I have an idea.”

He slammed on the brakes and swerved into a shopping center.

“Whoa, what are you doing?” Isaac clutched his seatbelt and looked around. They were still about a
half mile from school.

“Coffee!” Stiles pointed at the Starbucks drive-through as he edged around a speed bump instead of
going over it.

“We don’t have time.” Isaac glared at the line of cars wrapped around the side of the building.

Stiles waved away his concerns with the back of his hand. “School doesn’t start for another forty
minutes.”

“Yeah, but Lydia wanted us there early so we could, like, setup a perimeter and watch for guys in
blue sweaters.”

Stiles groaned and rubbed his eyes. “Yeah, I’m gonna need some coffee for that.”

“She’s gonna be pissed.”

“I’ll text her.”

“Her phone is broken.”

Stiles winked and pulled to a stop behind an SUV. “Then I’ll say I texted her.”

Isaac huffed and folded his arms.
“Now don’t be a grumpy wolf.”

Isaac growled, extending his fangs to hide his smirk.

“If you’re a good boy, I’ll buy you a latte,” Stiles said sweetly as he leaned sideways toward the Jeep’s window and fished his wallet out of the back pocket of the baggy jeans he’d borrowed from Scott. “How ’bout a smile?”

Isaac mock snarled and chomped the empty air between them. “How was that?”

Stiles snickered and opened his wallet. “Close enough.”

“Don’t worry about the latte though. I’m not in the mood.”

“You sure? It’ll perk you up.”

“If only.” Isaac yawned again and shook himself in an attempt to dispel the fatigue. “Ethan says caffeine doesn’t work on werewolves.”

“Seriously?” Stiles’ eyes lit with mischief as he rolled forward another car length. They were the next in line to order. “Does Scott know?”

“I don’t think so.”

“Hehehe, don’t tell him. I can have some fun with this.”

Isaac rolled his eyes. He could almost hear the wheels turning in Stiles’ head as he planned his prank.

“You wanna study some human anatomy while we wait?”

Isaac arched his brow and smirked. “Again? Seriously?”

Stiles was insatiable! But there was no way they could mess around a second time before school or Isaac might as well just buy a t-shirt that said two-timing douchebag across the front for how obvious it would be to Ethan.

“Well...” Stiles’ face was earnest for a moment before he cracked up. “Nah, I mean actual Human Anatomy, like the class. Stevenson’s giving everyone a pop quiz today.”

Isaac cocked his head. “How do you know?”

Stiles smirked. “The darach’s a psychic.”

Isaac’s mouth dropped open.

“Kidding!” Stiles chuckled and reached blindly into the backseat. “I stayed after class Friday to ask him something, and I saw a note in his planner.”

“Oh.” Isaac sagged under the weight of yet another responsibility, one that he would have to face sooner rather than later. Isaac had Stevenson’s class first period. Stiles had him second period.

“Ugh, my bag fell behind your seat.” Stiles groaned and reached further over the center console, but as he did his foot came off the brake and the Jeep lurched forward.

“Stiles!”
Stiles stomped the brake and flailed as he lost his balance.

Isaac grabbed him and helped him resituate. By a small miracle the SUV in front of them had just finished ordering and pulled forward.

Stiles panted and grinned. “That was a close one!”

Isaac closed his eyes and rubbed his face. He was seriously too tired for this. “I’ll get the bag. Place your order.”

“Right. Ohh–” Stiles grabbed Isaac’s arm as he turned around in his seat. “Watch out for the mountain ash.”

“What?!”

A horn blared behind them.

“There’s a baggie of mountain ash in the front pocket of my bag.” He kicked the storage space built into the Jeep door with his heel as he pulled forward. “I have another one here in the door, and one more in the glove compartment.”

“Shit!”

“Can’t be too careful with Iron Claw running around.” He shrugged as he rolled down his window. “Besides, with as often as I have to lock Scott up at night, it’s just practical.”

Isaac grimaced, half-expecting to be burned as he snagged Stiles’ bag from behind his seat and cautiously retrieved it. Now that he knew it was there the sharp, energetic tang of mountain ash radiated through the porous fabric.

Static crackled outside Stiles’ window as the speaker came to life.

“Hi, welcome to Starbucks.”

Stiles chuckled as Isaac held the backpack out at arm’s length. “Don’t worry I double bagged it!”

“Um...Can I take your order?”

Stiles whipped his head toward the speaker. “Ignore that. I was talking to my boyfriend. I double bagged something for his protection. Betcha can’t guess what it is!”

The voice on the other end paused. “Would you like to try our new Triple Mocha Frappuccino?”

“You know what? I would! A venti please.”

Isaac was so covering his face when they got to the front window.

“Make it like a triple shot of caffeine too.”

Isaac unzipped Stiles’ bag and–

“Oh my god!”

Stiles scowled. “Fine, just the regular amount of caffeine.”

Isaac stared into Stiles’ bag, speechless until he completed his order and pulled forward.
“What?” Stiles asked, returning his attention to Isaac. “What is it?”

Isaac swallowed and pulled the butcher knife out of Stiles’ backpack. “You tell me.”

Stiles gasped, his eyes widening. “Where did you get that?!”

Isaac huffed and rattled the bag.

“Oh right.”

Isaac looked around, at a loss for what to do with the knife. He felt like just throwing it out in the parking lot, but that seemed dangerous and irresponsible. Someone could drive over it, or step on it, or–

“I didn’t put that in my bag.” Stiles closed his eyes and sighed. “At least...I don’t remember putting it in my bag. It’s one of ours but...”

“Lydia’s vision...”

“Yeah, I know!” Stiles waved a trembling hand. “Someone in a blue sweater is about to have an epic case of the Mondays.”

Isaac took a deep breath and shook his head. “No, they’re not.”

“But–”

Isaac slid the butcher knife under his seat. “We’re locking it in the Jeep, and you’re gonna give me the keys when we get to school. I won’t give ‘em back till the end of the day.”

“Isaac, I don’t know...”

“It’ll be fine.” He gave Stiles a reassuring smile and squeezed his arm. “I won’t let anything happen.”

“Let’s take it somewhere instead. Back to my house or–”

“Ethan’s in danger.” Isaac pleaded with his eyes for Stiles to understand as cold anxiety tangled around the newly formed packbond in his chest. “That murderous bitch and her psycho pack are coming for him.”

“Yeah but–”

“And Liam.” Isaac’s chest burned as Liam’s claws sliced into him all over again, and his feral face appeared like an afterimage floating in front of him. “He doesn’t have an anchor yet, and he’ll be getting to school at any minute. I’m the only one who can calm him down if he loses his temper.”

“Scott–”

“Yeah, Scott too.” Isaac could hardly breathe. “Anything could happen to Scott. Or Lydia. Or Malia. Or-or you.”

“Hey, no.” Stiles leaned across the seat and tugged Isaac into a one-armed hug around their seatbelts. “It’s okay.”

“We have to get to school.” Isaac whispered against Stiles’ cheek. “I have to protect them. You. Everyone.”
“We’ll be there soon.” Stiles broke the embrace and gripped the wheel as he scanned the line in front of them. The drive-through lane was too narrow for them to pull out. Isaac had already looked. “I’m sorry I stopped for coffee.”

Isaac sighed and slumped in his seat. “At least we found the knife.”

“Yeah,” Stiles answered softly, “and you’re right. Everything’s gonna be fine just like you said.”

Isaac used what felt like the last of his energy to smile at Stiles and nod. Everything wasn’t going to be fine. Someone was going to die. Lydia had seen it. Someone, maybe even–

“Me.”

“What?”

“I’m in danger too.” Isaac licked his lips and lowered his eyes, unable to look directly at Stiles. “It didn’t seem as important as everything else but...Lydia saw me die.”

“WHAT?!?”

“I didn’t wanna worry you and Scott.”

“So you lied to me?”

“I...may have neglected to tell you something that was relevant so you wouldn’t be upset.”

“Well fucking tell me now.”

“Uhh...”

“What did Lydia see?”

Chapter End Notes

Please note that ‘double bagging’ – i.e wearing two condoms at once – increases the risk of STI transmission and accidental pregnancy. Condoms aren’t designed to be used in this manner and doing so raises failure rates. BUT it’s sort of a common misconception, so I wanted to play it for laughs and also take this opportunity to dispel that myth.

Anyway, I’m focusing on increasing posting frequency right now, so I apologize about the shorter length of this chapter. Chapter 64 will be much longer because what I have in mind for it only works if it covers the entire school day. I’ve got ten scenes planned for it and a quite a bit of drama and excitement. No spoilers of course, but the working title is, “The Truth Shall Set You Free.”

As always feedback is greatly appreciated!
“A Class III Hemorrhage occurs with a blood loss volume of...?”

“Thirty to forty percent,” Stiles answered as he pulled into a parking space and killed the engine. “The victim will be disoriented and tachycardic, and a blood transfusion is usually necessary for survival.”

“That’s right.” Isaac glanced at the final category listed in Stiles’ notes as he unbuckled his seatbelt. “A Class IV Hemorrhage is the most extreme at over forty percent volume loss. Organ failure begins as blood pressure drops too low and the patient slips into a comatose state. Immediate, aggressive intervention is required to prevent death.”

“Morbid stuff.”

Isaac nodded as he passed Stiles his binder and idly wondered what the hemorrhagic classes and prognoses looked like adjusted for werewolf anatomy. Deaton would probably know.

Isaac climbed out of the Jeep and went around the front to meet Stiles where he was fumbling with his Starbucks cup and zipping his jacket.

“It’s sweater weather,” Stiles said with a meaningful frown.

“Yeah.” Isaac smirked at him and bumped his shoulder. “I could have worn my scarf today.”

“I’m gonna burn that thing.” Stiles grumbled as he held out the keys. “Here.”

“You’ll get these back at the end of the day,” Isaac said in a mock stern tone.

Stiles chuckled and leaned into Isaac as they walked toward the school’s front entrance. Lydia and Malia were sitting on the same bench they had occupied the previous afternoon when Ethan had dropped Isaac off for the search for the darach’s journal, only this time Scott was sitting on Malia’s other side regarding Isaac with a disappointed expression. It cut through him like a gust of cold wind.

“There’s someone in a blue sweater!” Malia bounced in her seat and prodded Lydia with her elbow as she pointed across the lawn at a group of students with their backs turned.

“Don’t point.” Lydia arched her brow and held it until Malia lowered her arm. “And that’s a girl.”

“Wait, are you sure?” Malia tilted her head. “She has a nice ass.”

“Who has a nice ass?” Stiles asked as he and Isaac got within speaking distance.

“That girl over there.” Malia raised her hand, pointer finger extended, but jerked it back and shot Lydia an abashed smile.

Everyone but Lydia turned and eyed the girl in question.

“She does have a nice ass,” Stiles agreed with a nod.

“I like yours too,” Malia said pleasantly.
“Same!” Stiles grinned.

Isaac leaned closer to Stiles, resisting the urge to weigh in on this conversation.

“You know who else has a really nice ass?” She turned and gave Scott a lingering look.

He was flustered, but made eye contact with Isaac and cleared his throat. “How could you not tell us Lydia saw you and Aiden die in a vision?”

Isaac hung his head as Scott’s hurt and anxiety lanced through their packbond and settled like a stone in the pit of his stomach. “I didn’t want you to worry.”

“Isaac—”

“I’m mad at you too,” Malia cut in, tapping her foot against the ground.

“You are?” Isaac raised his head. What had he done to piss her off?

“You didn’t tell me Lydia was missing when we talked last night.” She folded her arms and flared her eyes.

“He can.” Malia smiled and stretched. “It all depends on how you ask him.”

“Don’t look at me.” She pursed her lips and glanced at the silver watch strapped to her wrist.

“I’m sorry we’re late.” Stiles sipped his drink with exaggerated nonchalance. “Well, late as far as being early goes.”

“Mnhmm.”

“I texted you.” He smiled innocently. “Didn’t you get it?”

“My phone’s broken.”

“It is?” Stiles tsked and shook his head. “Well darn.”

Lydia sighed, long and weary and laced with the same exhaustion Isaac felt. He would never tell her she looked tired, and she didn’t, but her scent was off and her posture belied a deep fatigue. If today weren’t Malia’s first day of school and they weren’t all trying to find and save some guy in a blue sweater, she probably wouldn’t have come.

“It seems Aiden can’t follow simple instructions either,” Lydia said.

“He can.” Malia smiled and stretched. “It all depends on how you ask him.”

“Don’t I know it?” Lydia muttered.

“So they’re not here yet?” Stiles asked, the last traces of his guilt evaporating.

Lydia shook her head.

The stone in Isaac’s gut turned into a gnawing worry. “Maybe I should call Ethan— Uh Liam! Maybe I should call Liam.”

Scott shrugged. “Either one.”
Isaac checked his phone and found a couple of texts from Ethan. The first was a curt good morning in response to the multiple messages Isaac had sent. It must have come in while Isaac was in the shower. The second text was more recent and said he was on his way with Aiden and Liam. That was it. No Emojis or flirtatious banter. Ethan was apparently okay, but Isaac wasn’t sure their relationship was.

“What’s wrong?” Stiles asked, leaning against Isaac’s shoulder.

Isaac closed his conversation thread with Ethan and slid his phone into his pocket. There was nothing ‘inappropriate’ on the screen, just a couple of goofy messages Isaac had sent that morning and Ethan shutting him down, but it still made Isaac nervous for Stiles to see.

“Ethan’s on his way, but I think he’s mad at me.”

“He’ll get over it,” Stiles answered, patting Isaac’s back.

Lydia gave Isaac a questioning look, and he shook his head. She frowned and disappointment flared in her scent.

“Yeah, don’t worry.” Malia nudged Isaac’s foot, her voice uncharacteristically gentle. “Ethan can’t stay mad at you. You’re his—”

Isaac’s blood ran cold, but Lydia was already speaking over her.

“Morrell arranged for me to shadow Malia today and tomorrow to help her adjust. I told her the truth about Malia’s situation.”

Everyone fell silent, the revelation sufficiently significant to fully disrupt the previous conversation. Isaac thanked Lydia with his eyes.

“I showed her my fangs.” Malia bobbed her head. “She believed Lydia, but I just wanted to.”

Isaac yawned and slumped against Stiles as he turned back to Lydia. “Did you have a chance to read the darach’s—”

“Ahhem.” Lydia glared at Isaac then looked between Stiles and Scott.

Isaac blanched. He was so tired and so relieved that she had changed the subject that he had forgotten the other secret he was meant to be keeping.

Stiles’ eyes darkened, and he regarded Isaac with a cold intensity that sent chills down his spine.

“Um...” Isaac stepped back as Scott jumped to his feet and darted a defensive arm in front of Isaac.

Stiles snapped out of it an instant later with a shake of his head. His brow furrowed as he looked at Isaac and Scott. “What?”

“Are you with us, Stiles?” Scott squeezed Stiles’ shoulder.

“Yeah, of course. I—”

“They’re here.” Isaac took another step away from Stiles as the twins’ motorcycles rumbled into the parking lot with Liam riding on the back of Aiden’s. Once again Liam was wearing a helmet while Aiden wasn’t, but this time as Isaac inwardly derided Aiden for setting a bad example, it occurred to him that Aiden might not have a spare helmet. It was no excuse but...
Isaac’s attention shifted to Ethan as he parked a couple dozen feet away in the designated area beside Scott’s bike. Fuck, he looked good – stupid good in his leather jacket and snug pants as he straddled his motorcycle and knocked the kickstand into place with his heel. Warm rays of morning sunlight shone in his hair, giving it golden-red highlights as he hung his helmet on the handlebars. Their eyes met, and Isaac couldn’t breathe as Ethan’s lips curled into a smile brimming with playful amusement.

“Isaac!”

Liam shoved the helmet into Aiden’s hands and barreled toward Isaac. Their packbond flooded with agitation and for a split second Isaac thought Liam was mad at him too, but then he was being bowled over as Liam jumped the last few feet and threw himself against Isaac’s chest.

“Aghh!” Isaac toppled backward, struggling to regain his balance as he wrapped his arms around his packmate. He would have fallen if Scott hadn’t been behind him, holding him steady and helping support their weight.

“Aiden told me about Lydia’s vision.” Liam’s legs slid down Isaac’s body until he was standing on his own, giving him the leverage to wrap Isaac up in a crushing hug. At least it would have been crushing if Isaac had been human. Instead it felt like pure warmth and affection to Isaac’s supernatural musculature.

“I’m okay,” Isaac whispered, dipping his chin against Liam’s head and trailing his hand down Liam’s spine through his shirt. His back was cold, so Isaac gave him a brisk massage, rubbing him all over from waist to shoulders.

“You might die.” Liam’s voice caught in his throat and his grip tightened.

“I won’t,” Isaac promised, channeling reassurance through their bond and tilting his head as Liam nuzzled his face into the crook of his neck.

Liam snuffled along Isaac’s jawline and clung to him before abruptly tensing and pulling away. His cheeks were red as he turned from side to side. “People are looking.”

Isaac laughed and ruffled Liam’s hair as they separated.

“Never be ashamed of who you love,” Stiles said with a chuckle as he patted Liam’s shoulder.

Liam’s growl was more human than wolf as he dropped his arms to his sides and stared at the ground.

Ethan stood beside Stiles, his chocolate eyes dancing with amusement and his lips twisted into a smirk. Malia and Aiden were on the periphery of the group kissing.

“Hey,” Isaac said quietly as he tried not to think about the greeting he wanted to give Ethan.

“Hey.” Ethan kept his tone carefully neutral as the good humor faded from his face.

Isaac frowned.

“Hey man.” Scott stepped past Isaac and pulled Ethan into a hug that looked almost as snug as the one Liam had given Isaac.

Contentment and excitement flared through Isaac’s packbond with Ethan – in both directions. The jealousy Isaac had felt the last time Scott had hugged Ethan in front of him was nowhere to be found. Scott wasn’t giving his attention to an omega; he was making Isaac’s packmate and boyfriend feel
welcome. Isaac tingled. He wanted Ethan to feel welcome.

Scott ran his hands down Ethan’s arms as the embrace ended, and Isaac realized that at least part of Scott’s goal was to get his scent on Ethan, probably to warn off Megan and her pack.

Ethan gave Scott a grateful smile, and Scott smiled back.

“Isaac told me you guys bonded. I’m happy about that.”

Ethan’s grin widened, but he shook his head at Isaac. “Didn’t stop him from going out in the woods without calling me.”

Isaac swallowed and shrugged apologetically.

“Of course it didn’t stop my knucklehead brother either.” Ethan turned a reproachful scowl on Aiden, but it went unnoticed.

“Here,” Aiden was saying as he slipped off his leather jacket and draped it around Malia’s shoulders. “If you start to lose control, you’ll have something with my scent on it. It should help since I’m your anchor.”

Malia sniffed the collar and drew the jacket more tightly around her body. “Can’t we go somewhere so you can anchor me the usual way?”

“No.” Lydia’s voice rang with authority. Ethan and Stiles snickered.

A small pout had formed on Liam’s face as he watched the couple.

Aiden noticed and laughed. “What? Did you think I might offer you my jacket instead?”

“Tuh, no!” Liam’s face was a mask of derision, but his heartbeat faltered.

Aiden smirked and punched Liam’s arm.

Isaac fidgeted, struggling not to lash out at Aiden or whip off his own jacket and give it to Liam. Doing either would have embarrassed him. It probably should have embarrassed Isaac too, but it didn’t feel like it would. Looking after Liam took priority. Isaac glowered at Aiden and channeled reassurance to Liam through their bond.

“Okay, we need to go.” Lydia stood and linked arms with Malia. “Stiles and Aiden, you too. You’re in Malia’s first hour. I want to get there early so we can pick seats, and she can get used to the classroom.”

“See ya,” Stiles whispered, brushing against Isaac as he stepped around him.

“Bye,” Isaac whispered, trying to lace the word with affection...just not too much. He risked a glance at Ethan and got a half-smile back in return.

“Later man.” Aiden held his hand out, and Liam’s face broke into a grin. They growled at each other under their breath and slapped hands before leaning in and bumping chests.

This more human version of their goodbye looked a lot less ridiculous than the full-werewolf, claws out, snarling version they had performed the day before, and Isaac almost didn’t mind it, especially given the way it buoyed Liam’s mood. It was still a problem that Liam was bonded with Aiden, but they could deal with that later, when Liam wasn’t facing his first day of school as a werewolf.
Aiden caught Liam’s eye as they broke apart. “Remember what I told you.”

“Got it.” Liam gave a sharp nod and punched Aiden’s bicep.

Isaac’s stomach twisted, and he narrowed his eyes on Aiden.

“What did he tell you?” he asked, not bothering to wait until Aiden was out of earshot. Scott drew closer too with obvious concern written across his face, while Ethan hovered nearby with his trademark neutral expression.

Liam answered with an easy shrug. “He said my anger is power, but I have to wield it and not let it wield me.”

Scott sucked air through his teeth. “I don’t like that.”

“Oh really?” Liam folded his arms and puffed his chest.

“I don’t either,” Isaac said.

Liam’s eyebrows drew together and his tone softened. “Really?”

Isaac nodded. “We need to keep you from getting angry to begin with. Anger is dangerous for you.”

Liam huffed. “Aiden says it makes me stronger. I just have to channel it.”

“I don’t think Aiden’s the best person to give you advice on this,” Scott said carefully.

Liam’s jaw clenched. “Aiden’s got great control.”

Isaac opened his mouth, but Ethan stepped forward and caught his arm, guiding him back a few steps.

“Don’t make him feel ganged up on.” Ethan trailed his hand down Isaac’s arm and curled his fingers around Isaac’s wrist. “It’s Scott’s call how he’s trained. Let him handle this.”

Isaac was sure he meant to protest, but his arm lit with tingly warmth and his brain short circuited. He gripped Ethan’s shoulder with his other hand and pulled him forward.

“Are we okay?” Isaac asked as he collapsed against Ethan’s chest and drew his scent deep into his lungs.

“Oh course,” Ethan whispered, pressing his lips against the top of Isaac’s head and giving him a tight squeeze before letting go and moving back. He tipped his head sideways, indicating Scott and Liam behind them. They were arguing in increasingly heated voices.

Isaac frowned, debating whether or not to get involved. He didn’t want to, not when he could finally spend time with...Ethan.

“Are you mad at me?”

Ethan sighed and crowded closer, nudging Isaac back to give them a measure of privacy. “Last night was...” He licked his lips and locked eyes with Isaac.

Isaac’s chest filled with joy even as his ass throbbed with lust. “Yeah, it was.”

Ethan groaned and flicked his tongue out. “I felt you when I woke up this morning, our new
packbond.”

“I felt you too,” Isaac whispered.

Ethan rubbed his neck and his eyes softened until they held a vulnerable quality that made Isaac desperate to hug him – which he couldn’t do because they had already hugged once and a second hug would look suspicious.

“I don’t understand why you didn’t call me if Lydia was in danger. If you were going to be putting yourself in danger looking for her.”

“I didn’t wanna risk you getting hurt for my packmate.” Isaac crossed his arms so he wouldn’t do something stupid with them like wrap them around Ethan and plead for him to understand. “You’re in danger too.”

“And so is Aiden. He was fucking attacked.” All trace of vulnerability vanished from Ethan’s eyes as his face hardened with rage.

“I didn’t know he would be there.”

“I went to sleep thinking you were both fine, that everything was...really good.” Ethan growled and rubbed his chest. “And then I wake up to the sensation of claws tearing through my skin and find out that you and my dipshit brother are hanging out at a murder scene with the murderers still there.”

“Well when you put it like that...” Isaac stared at the ground by Ethan’s feet.

Ethan let out a ragged breath and nudged Isaac’s shoulder with the heel of his hand. “Just call me next time something happens, okay?”

Isaac nodded and their eyes met. He opened his mouth but--

“Just leave me the fuck alone!” Liam gripped the straps of his backpack, his lips bulging around his fangs.

Scott raised his hands, irritation billowing off him even as he tried to make his tone and body language non-threatening. “Okay, but I’m here for you if you need me.”

“I don’t need you!” A vein in Liam’s jaw throbbed, and the nylon straps crinkled as his fingers dug into them. If he opened his hands, Isaac was certain his claws would be out.

Scott caught Isaac’s gaze and glanced back at Liam in silent request. Isaac nodded. Scott’s mouth pulled into a strained smile, and he edged away from Liam and patted Ethan’s back. “C’mon man, let’s go look for guys in blue sweaters.”

Ethan did a double take and furrowed his brow. “Uh, that’s a weird game but...ohh-kay.”

Scott laughed as they walked away. “Didn’t anyone tell you about Lydia’s vision?”

Liam faced the other direction, staring at Aiden’s motorcycle like he wanted to hop back on it and leave. His bottom lip protruded in a pout, and his shoulders were coiled tight with tension. There was a good chance he would snap if Isaac touched him, but Isaac was willing to gamble that their bond would keep that from happening.

“You stink,” Isaac said as he squeezed Liam’s shoulders, intent on soothing some of the angry knots.

“What?” Liam stuck his lip further out and drew his eyebrows together.
Isaac laughed and tugged Liam against his chest. Liam went with it, laying his head on Isaac’s shoulder and relaxing into the embrace.

“When you lose your temper it smells like hot sauce and old coffee, but then your feelings are hurt too and it’s like sour milk. It’s a nasty combo.”

“Sorry.” Liam didn’t sound sorry; he sounded irritated.

“I like how you smell when you’re happy,” Isaac whispered, rubbing Liam’s side. “Try to calm down, and let’s go change out our books. We’ll go to your locker first.”

Liam raised his head and nodded. The aroma of hot sauce and stale coffee abated, but the stench of curdled milk intensified. “Scott hates everything I do.”

“No, he doesn’t.” Isaac guided Liam up the sidewalk to the main doors, where they had to stop and wait for a crowd of girls slowly streaming inside ahead of them.

“He ignores me and then acts like he can tell me what to do.”

“He’s your al—” Isaac dropped his voice to werewolf levels as they entered the school. “He’s your alpha. He can tell you what to do.”

“Sheer that. I can't please him anyway, so I don’t care what he thinks.” Liam’s heart fluttered and another burst of sour milk filled the air. “His opinion doesn’t matter to me at all.”

“Right. I can tell how indifferent you are.”

Liam growled under his breath and shoved through a gap in the foot traffic, hustling down the hall toward the sophomore lockers. Isaac had to hurry to keep up.

“So are you feeling okay about today?”

Liam scoffed but didn’t answer as they split to opposite sides of the hallway to make way for a crowd of students going the opposite direction.

“Hardly. I was okay until Aiden told me about the mur—” Liam coughed as a guy Isaac vaguely recognized as an underclassman from their cross country team looked at them. “The myrrh and frankincense last night.”

Isaac cracked up as they reached Liam’s locker. “Yeah, that frankincense was really brutal.”

“That’s what I heard.” Liam fumbled with the combination lock, anxiety radiating from his skin. “I’m worried Lydia’s, uhm, theory about someone giving you and Aiden frankincense will come true.”

Isaac covered his mouth and leaned against a neighboring locker. “You know you can just werewolf whisper right?”

“I forgot,” Liam murmured as the lock clicked open.

Isaac chuckled and turned his head as a familiar voice and heartbeat approached. He smiled and nodded at Danny as he walked down the hallway holding Mason’s hand. “Your friend’s here.”

Liam looked up and grinned. “Hey Mace!”

Mason frowned at Isaac and moved to keep walking, but Danny stopped.
“How was your weekend?” Liam asked, still smiling.

Mason flinched and his lips parted. “My weekend?”

“Yeah.” Liam shrugged. “Sorry I forgot to text you back, I was–”

“Oh you forgot to text me back? All, what, ten times I texted you?”

Liam swallowed and his scent flared with guilt. “I was busy.”

Mason side-eyed Isaac and scowled at Liam before turning to walk away. “Yeah, I bet.”

“Mace, wait!” Liam grabbed Mason’s arm and hung on as he tried unsuccessfully to pull it away. Danny stepped forward and placed a hand on Liam’s chest – and Liam ignited in an inferno of spicy rage.

Isaac lunged forward and wrenched Liam back. “Stop,” he rumbled in his ear.

“Careful, Isaac, he has anger problems.” Mason brushed past Danny and into Liam’s space.

Isaac wanted to pull Liam away, but there was nowhere to go. They were against the lockers with people on either side of them.

“Does he know that?” Mason’s voice was low, almost soft, but his heart pounded in his chest and distress dripped from his pores. “Do you think your cool, older friends are going to put up with your...” He trailed off, his mouth forming a tight line as he decided to keep Liam’s IED a secret. It made Isaac dislike him just a little bit less, but it didn’t change the fact that he was intentionally trying to upset Liam.

“Yeah, I know all about his anger issues.” Isaac wrapped a possessive arm around Liam’s shoulders. Fuck this guy. Liam didn't need him. He had the pack. “It’s not a problem.”

“Well good.” Mason grabbed Danny’s hand and lifted it. “We’re together by the way. Not that you care.”

“Dude, what is your problem?” Liam clenched his fists and shuffled closer to Mason.

Danny let go of Mason’s hand and moved to get between them, but Mason stopped him.

“He won’t hit me.” Mason narrowed his eyes and stepped forward until he and Liam were practically chest-to-chest. “My problem is that you’ve been ignoring me for the last week. That you said you were coming to my grandma’s birthday, then wouldn’t even answer the phone when I called. That I have my first boyfriend and you don’t give a shit. That’s my problem, Liam.”

It was all Isaac could do not to gasp in surprise as Liam licked his lips and his anger deflated, replaced by a thick mist of guilt. “I’m sorry.”

Mason scowled and shook his head. “Whatever.”

“Mace, I mean it.” Liam grabbed Mason’s arm again as he turned to leave. “I give a shit that you have a boyfriend.” He flashed an awkward smile at Danny, then returned his attention to Mason. “And I’m sorry I missed Grammy Rose’s birthday. I feel awful I forgot. Did she ask about me?”

Mason folded his arms, breaking contact with Liam’s hand. “Of course she asked about you. I had to lie and say you were sick.”
“I’m sorry.” Liam dropped his head and bumped the toe of Mason’s sneaker with his own.

“So what was the deal?” Mason asked, sounding like he was willing to listen.

“I, um...” Liam looked to Isaac for help.

“I kept him pretty busy this weekend,” Isaac said, patting Liam’s back. “We were, uh, we were...”

“Seriously?” Mason threw his hands up. “What’s the big secret that you can’t tell me?”

Danny snickered and leaned over to whisper in Mason’s ear. “Maybe they’re–”

“They’re not.” Mason rolled his eyes and shook his head.

“Yeah, we’re not.” Liam gave an awkward laugh.

Mason sighed. “Well, when you’re ready to tell me what it is we can talk, but you don’t get to shut me out and expect us to just be friends on your terms, William Dunbar.”

Liam swallowed and nodded as Mason stalked away, Danny trailing behind him.

“I have to tell him,” Liam whispered urgently as he turned back to his open locker and shoved books into his bag.

“Dude, you can’t tell him,” Isaac answered, helping Liam hold his bag as he tugged on a binder wedged between two books.

“Why not?” Liam wrested the binder loose and tossed it in his locker. “My parents know and they’re cool with it.”

“You can’t just tell all your friends.”

Liam scowled. “I don’t wanna tell all my friends. I just wanna tell Mason, my best friend.”

“What if he tells someone? What if he tells Danny?”

“He wouldn’t.” Liam crammed another book into his bag and slammed his locker. “He wouldn’t do anything that might hurt me. We’ve been best friends since second grade. We practically grew up at each other’s houses.”

Isaac sighed, fatigue settling into his muscles. He didn’t want to argue with Liam about this. “You’ll have to ask Scott for permission.”

Liam let out a half-growl, startling another student as she tried to reach around him to get to her own locker.

Isaac flashed the girl his most flirtatious smile and tilted his head. “Ignore him. He missed breakfast.”

She giggled and looked away as her cheeks darkened with a blush.

Liam sighed and pushed Isaac back until they rounded the edge of the bank of lockers and stood in the space in front of a classroom, away from the other students milling around. “I am not asking for Scott’s permission. It’s none of his business.”

“Dude, he’s your alpha.” Isaac couldn’t believe he had to explain this to Liam. “It’s his business.”
“He tried to kill me!” Liam shouted.

Isaac cringed as at least a dozen heads turned to look at them.

“Fortnite.” Isaac shrugged and tsked. “Liam was grieving. He had it coming.”

Liam swatted Isaac’s arm as the other students returned to what they were doing. “I don’t grief people.”

Isaac yawned and slumped against the classroom door. Another near catastrophe averted.

“And I don’t care what Scott says,” Liam whispered. “Do you have a good reason why I shouldn’t tell Mason? Because otherwise I’m gonna.”

Isaac groaned and raked a tired hand over his face and through his hair. “Scott–”

“Almost killed me.”

“Ugh, I get it. Iron Claw traumatized you.” Isaac waved his hands, fighting back another yawn. “But Aiden and I almost killed you too, and you got over that.”

Liam’s head snapped back. “What?”

Isaac choked on his tongue, suddenly wide awake. Shit.

“You never tried to kill me.”

“Uhh...” Isaac wanted to lie, but the sensation of Liam’s pulse fluttering against his fangs filled his mouth, and he could feel Liam’s fragile body in his arms as he lay weak and dying. The memory sliced through Isaac’s gut like a broken bottle and carved its way up and into his chest where it tangled raw and burning around his packbond with Liam. Liam. How could he have ever come so close to do something so unthinkable to Liam?

“Isaac, you’re freaking me out.” Liam’s face was vulnerable but filled with a desperate trust. “You misspoke right? You just meant that Aiden–”

Isaac shook his head. It hurt too much to lie to Liam about this, to be on the receiving end of so much implicit trust while secretly he was a monster who had almost–

“I didn’t misspeak.” He clutched Liam’s elbows and looked into his stormy blue eyes. All he wanted to do was wrap him up in a tight hug and hold him, swear he would never hurt him, swear he would never let anyone hurt him. “I almost killed you.”

“I don’t...” Liam’s lip quivered. “I don’t understand.”

“It was-it was that night. Iron Claw had just–”

“Yeah, Iron Claw. Iron Claw did it. You didn’t–”

“I was taking you to the hospital–”

“Stop.”

“And I pulled over–”

“Stop.”
Isaac trembled and let go of Liam’s elbows. “You were so weak. And it was the full moon. And I was having such a horrible night. I just wanted it to be over.”

“STOP!” Liam shoved Isaac back and clutched his chest. Their bond felt like hot, broken glass. “How– Why– Aaaahh!” Liam turned and swung his fist at the door.

Isaac caught it before it could connect. Maybe if it didn’t connect everything would be okay. Maybe–

“Get away from me!” Liam yanked himself loose and shoved Isaac against the wall.

Isaac tripped and stumbled to the ground as the crowd of students that had gathered around them oohed and broke into laughter. He looked up in time to see a gap close around Liam’s retreating back. Then he was gone.

Isaac closed his eyes and let his head sag against the classroom door as the bell rang. He still hadn’t gotten his books, but it didn’t matter. Isaac had only come to school today for one reason and... He was gone.

Chapter End Notes

Feedback is greatly appreciated!
Today is the two-year anniversary of when the first chapter of this story was posted, and I was determined to get an update out to mark the occasion. My deepest gratitude to each and every reader for sticking with the story, whether you’ve been following it all that time or only since yesterday, and special thanks to everyone who’s shown support and let me know they were reading!

I’m having a wonderful time writing this story, and if anyone is curious while it is completely planned out and I have an end firmly in mind, we’re still not even halfway there yet and virtually all the juiciest content is still yet to come! So I hope you’ll also join me for the third, fourth, and perhaps even fifth anniversaries as well!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Isaac closed his eyes and let his head sag against the classroom door as the bell rang. He still hadn’t gotten his books, but it didn’t matter. Isaac had only come to school today for one reason and...

He was gone.

“Excuse me.” The stern voice accompanied the impatient tapping of toes near Isaac’s calf where he was stretched out in front of the classroom.

He opened his eyes to find his sophomore English teacher, Ms. Wyatt, glaring down at him.

“Don’t you have a class to get to, Isaac?” She folded her arms and pursed her lips. “Instead of blocking mine?”

He sighed and climbed to his feet. “Sorry, Ms. Wyatt.”

“Make good choices,” she called after him as he wound his way through the crowd of students waiting to follow her inside.

Anxiety and guilt pummeled the pit of Isaac’s stomach. What if Liam never forgave him? What if Isaac’s betrayal sent him over the edge and he lost control and hurt someone?

Scott would never forgive Isaac if that happened. No one in the pack would ever forgive him. He would never forgive himself.

Oh fuck. And what were Scott and the others going to think when they found out what Isaac had almost done to Liam that fateful night? Stiles was the only person who knew.

Stiles. Isaac had to get through the day for Stiles. And for Ethan. He might have blown things with Liam but he still had to protect his...boyfriends.

He cringed. Were the darach and the Cosgrove pack even the ones they needed to watch out for?
Isaac was the son-of-a-bitch who was going to break their hearts when the truth inevitably came out. Fucking hell. No one would ever talk to him again...and he deserved it.

“I’m such a piece of shit,” he muttered as he looked up and found himself standing in front of his first hour Human Anatomy class. The bell rang as he stepped through the doorway.

“You’re late, Mr. Lahey.” Stevenson glared at him over the top of his eyeglasses.

“I’m here.” Isaac shrugged one shoulder.

“You’re not in your seat.”

“Would you like me to go to the office and get a tardy slip?” Say yes, asshole. I don’t have the energy to stay and put up with your pompous bullshit.

“Just take your place.” Stevenson’s voice rang with condescension.

Isaac trudged to his usual desk and dropped his bag to the ground with a thud, daring Stevenson to call him out.

“Everyone put away your things. We’re having a pop quiz.”

There was a chorus of groans as the oppressive tang of two dozens distinct varieties of anxiety filled the room. Isaac was anxious too, but not about the quiz. He felt good about the material thanks to his study session with Stiles in the Jeep, but regardless, a stupid science quiz didn’t matter much compared to everything else he was facing.

Fifteen minutes later, Isaac placed his completed quiz on Mr. Stevenson’s desk. He was the third person to finish, and he was confident he had correctly answered every question and the bonus.

“If you’re not even going to try–” Stevenson’s lips parted, and he blinked as he picked up Isaac’s exam and scanned over it.

“I know a lot about traumatic blood loss,” Isaac said with a smirk.

“Well, um.” Stevenson cleared his throat and took a half-step back. “Good job.”

“Isaac, can you hear me?”

Isaac whipped his head toward the door at the sound of Lydia’s whispered voice.

“If you can hear me, come meet me in the hall.”

“Are you quite alright, Mr. Lahey?”

“I just remembered that...the bathroom’s out there.”

“Yes, that’s right,” Stevenson answered slowly. Others students looked up from their quizzes, but he waved them back to work.

“And I need to use it.”

Stevenson huffed and rolled his eyes. “Your over-active bladder again?”

“Yeah, you see my dad used to lock me in a freezer in our basement all night, and I’d have to hold it until morning.” Isaac stared at the wall behind his teacher as he relived the memory. “I guess it did
some permanent damage. But, I mean, if you want me to try to wait...”

“Just go.” Stevenson held up his hands, discomfort billowing around him. He breathed a sigh of relief as one of Isaac’s classmates approached the desk and asked a question about the wording of the bonus.

A moment later, two more students got up and lined up behind her to turn in their quizzes. Isaac used the opportunity while Stevenson was distracted to return to his desk and grab his bag before leaving. He didn’t have his anatomy book, and he was too stressed to sit through the rest of class anyway. Besides, there was no telling what Lydia needed or how long it would take.

He found her waiting in the hallway just out of view of the door. She motioned for him to follow.

“What’s up?” he asked as he caught up with her.

She raised a finger to her lips and didn’t speak until they had reached the end of the corridor and ducked under the stairwell across from their English class. Isaac frowned. The last time they had talked here, he had found out Allison had almost killed her, and she had given him a heads up about Stiles’ darach possession.

“My phone’s broken, so I couldn’t text you. I’m glad you heard me.”

“I always listen for pack.” He gave her a small smile, but it faded as he realized something. “Why aren’t you with Malia?”

Lydia waved her hand. “She’s fine. Aiden and Stiles are in her math class, and Ms. Suarez is being nice to her since it’s her first day.”

“Great, so what’s the problem?”

“You are.”

Isaac flinched and crossed his arms.

“You told Stiles – You told the darach – that I have his journal.”

“No, I didn’t.” Isaac shook his head. “Not in so many words.”

“You asked if I had read his...” Lydia arched an eyebrow. “How else would he think that sentence ended? Read his horoscope?”

Isaac snickered. “That’s silly. We don’t even know his sign.”

“Isaac.”

“Sorry.” He rubbed the back of his neck. Stooping to fit beneath the stairwell was already giving it a crick. “I’m really tired from last night.”

Lydia sighed, her shoulders sagging. “Me too.”

Isaac’s stomach turned over with guilt. He shouldn’t have complained. As exhausted as he was, at least he and Aiden had gotten a boost from being in moonlight all night. It had to have been worse for her. He was also pretty sure that werewolves could function better than humans on minimal sleep. “So you think he suspects?”

She nodded. “That’s why I had to get out of there. Stiles kept zoning out and then he would stare at
me with hateful eyes.”

“I’ll protect you,” Isaac whispered, squeezing her shoulder.

“I know.” She patted his hand. “But to answer your question from this morning, no, I haven’t read
the journal yet. I was kind of busy last night.”

“Right...”

“I need you to keep Stiles occupied at lunch. I’m going to duck away to the library and read as much
as I can. Given the lengths the darach has gone to to hide it, I think we can assume the journal does
contain the key to unmaking him.”

“Wait, you brought it with you? Here?”

Lydia nodded and tapped her oversized purse. “I didn’t want to let it out of my sight.”

Isaac eyed her bag and fidgeted. He didn’t like the idea of leaving it laying around somewhere either
but...

“What if he can sense it? What if it’s got some kind of magical aura like that druid amulet?” Isaac
drew in a sharp breath. “You didn’t bring that too did you?”

She shook her head. “Of course not, but I think we should take it back to Ezra sooner rather than
later. Maybe after school today if I can finish reading the journal.”

“We all have cross country practice this afternoon, but I can go with you as soon as it’s over.”

“That works. I’ll read more while I wait for you. Then we can swing by my house and pick up the
amulet on the way. We might not finish early enough to risk bringing Scott along, but Malia and
Liam can come too.”

“Uh...” Isaac rubbed the back of his neck again and looked at the ground.

“What?”

“I don’t think Liam is gonna wanna be riding in a car with me anytime soon.”

“What are you talking about?” She tilted her head and gave him a piercing look. “Isaac, what did
you do?”

“I almost killed him...”

“What?!”

Isaac slumped against the dusty drywall as he recounted what happened on the way to the hospital
the night Iron Claw attacked Liam. Lydia didn’t say anything until he had finished his story, but the
frown on her face steadily deepened.

“I didn’t realize you still struggled that much on full moons.”

“I-I don’t.” He looked into her eyes and pleaded with her to understand. “It was just that night. We
had all almost died, and I was hurting so much, and-and Liam wasn’t pack yet...taking his pain just
pushed me over the edge.”

“Almost pushed you over the edge,” she said softly, patting his arm. “He’ll understand when he
calms down.”

Isaac shook his head, struggling to speak through the thick lump in his throat. “You didn’t see his face.”

“But I’m seeing yours.” She squeezed his forearm. “If he saw it, he’d know how sorry you were.”

Isaac let out a ragged breath and stared at the floor. He desperately wanted to believe she was right, that Liam would forgive him, but it didn’t seem likely. Besides, Isaac was a fraud, and soon enough everyone would know it. “I did something else bad.”

Lydia grumbled and irritation displaced the sympathy in her scent. “I know. You didn’t tell Ethan about you and Stiles.”

“Worse.”

“What’s worse than that?”

Isaac bit his lip and looked up, afraid to see her reaction.

Realization dawned on her face. “You cheated on Stiles.”

Isaac gave a stiff nod, his stomach tied in knots. “And then I cheated on Ethan this morning.”

“Wait what?”

“Yeah see...” Isaac swallowed. “We’re together now too.”

Her jaw dropped. “So instead of telling Ethan you were with Stiles, you–”

“Made it official with him too...yeah.”

She folded her arms and gave him a look that pumped ice water into his veins. “And then you had sex with both of them for good measure?”

“I got caught up in the moment.”

“Wow...” She looked so disappointed, Isaac half expected her to walk away without another word, but instead she took a deep breath and let it out slowly. “You realize how insane it is to think you can juggle them both, right?” She caught his gaze and held it. “Not to mention how wrong it is to use them that way?”

“I know.” He raked a hand through his hair. “It’s not like I planned any of this. It just happened.”

“You need to tell them before they find out, because they’re going to find out, and it’ll be worse if they catch you or if they hear it from someone else.”

Isaac’s stomach roiled, and his palms had broken out in a cold sweat. “You won’t...say anything to anyone, will you?”

“Of course not.” She sighed. “It’s not my place, and I don’t wanna be the one to hurt either of them.”

“Neither do I,” Isaac whispered, closing his eyes and thinking about how much he didn’t want to hurt Stiles or Ethan.

“Yeah, well you have to, and the longer you wait, the worse it’s gonna be.”
Isaac nodded, the backs of his eyes burning. “I know.”

“Look, I’m not getting involved or taking sides but...” Lydia hesitated before reaching out and rubbing his shoulder. “I’ll still be your friend when this is all over.”

Isaac let out a gasp that bordered on a sob and pulled her into a tight hug. “I was so scared I’d lose everyone.”

“You won’t lose me,” she whispered, trailing a slow hand down his spine.

“Thank you.” He buried his face in her hair and drew her scent deep into his lungs, savoring his connection with her and the security of knowing that he had at least one packmate who wouldn’t abandon him when everything blew up in his face.

He flinched as something moved against his thigh.

“That better be a phone in your pocket.”

Isaac snickered and let go, feeling about ten times better than he had a moment earlier. “It is.”

Unknown: Stilinski is on the move and I don’t know where Lydia is.
Unknown: FIND HIM
Unknown: I have to stay with Malia

“What is it?”

Isaac showed her the screen. “I think it’s Aiden, but I don’t know how he got my number.”

“Ethan’s group text last week,” she answered. “From when Scott lost his finger.”

“Oh right.” Isaac reluctantly saved the number as a new contact and sent a reply.

Isaac: Lydia is with me. We’ll find him.

Ethan’s Evil Twin: Don’t fuck up and don’t put her in danger.

Isaac scowled at his phone, but he could concede Aiden had a point. “Maybe you better stay here while I look for him.”

“Right, because I’ll be so much safer carrying around his journal without a werewolf to protect me.”

Dammit, she had a point too.

“I’ll text Ethan and Scott,” he answered, tapping out a short message explaining the situation. He sent it as they crept out from beneath the stairwell. The hallway was deserted.

“Can you track him?”

Isaac turned in a slow circle, sniffing and listening. He growled under his breath and shook his head. “He’s everywhere.”

“What?”

“It’s the same problem I had last night when I was looking for you. He’s been up and down this hallway so many times that his scent is coming from everywhere at once.”
“Okay. Let’s go that way.” She pointed in the opposite direction of their classes.

Isaac started to walk but then stopped and placed a hand on her arm, guiding her in the other direction. “Actually let’s go this way.”

“Fine.” She shrugged.

“And take you back to class.”

“What?” She glared at him.

“Lydia please.” He took a deep breath and clenched teeth. “You’ll be safer with Aiden.”

His phone buzzed.

Ethan: On it

“Ethan’s looking for him, and I’m sure Scott will be soon too. We’ll find him.” Isaac took a few steps and gave her a pleading look. “I just want you to stay out of harm’s way until we do.”

She sighed and stepped forward, looping her arm with his as they marched back up the hallway. “Fine, but don’t forget to keep an eye out for guys in navy blue sweaters. The stabbing could happen any day, but I feel like it’s going to be today.”

“I’ll pay attention.” He didn’t mention that he had forgotten to look during his first hour class.

A couple minutes later Lydia was back in the math class she was sitting in on with Malia and Aiden, and Isaac was outside hustling across the common grounds toward the opposite wing of the school, desperate to cover as much ground as he could as quickly as possible. He made it a point to pass the front entrance so he make sure no one in a blue sweater was bleeding out on the steps. It was all clear.

Just as his hand made contact with the side door, his phone went off with a steady buzzing in his pocket, indicating a call rather than a text. It was Ethan.

“I found him.”

Isaac let out the breath he was holding. “Is it him or the–”

“Everything’s fine. We’re in the locker room.”

“Text Scott. I’ll be right there.”

Isaac turned and raced toward the gym, a new worrying worming its way into his gut as he realized Ethan and Stiles were alone together.

“It’s okay,” Ethan was saying as Isaac entered the locker room. They were sitting on a changing bench.

“It’s not okay,” Stiles shouted, his hands balled into fists as he rested his elbows on his knees and hunched over. “I destroyed Scott’s locker.”

Ethan started to say something, but Isaac cut him off. “Actually, Malia did that yesterday. You know the combination don’t you?”

Stiles looked up, the anguish on his face abating slightly as he made eye contact with Isaac. He
nodded. “Yeah, I’ve left stuff in his locker or picked stuff up for him before. I know the combo.”

Isaac flashed Ethan a grateful smile as he sank into the space on the other side of Stiles.

“So the darach hid something in Scott’s locker?” Stiles asked as he scooted over, making room for Isaac and crowding closer to Ethan in the process. Ethan repositioned too, brushing his fingers across Isaac’s lower back as he leaned his hand on the bench behind them, angling his shoulder so it wouldn’t hit Stiles’.

Isaac cleared his throat and tried not to think about the way Stiles’ thigh was pressed against his own, or the fact that Ethan’s hand was mere inches from his ass. “Yeah, his journal.”

“So this was where he put it!” Stiles’ face lit up as he learned the answer to the mystery that had baffled them on Friday.

Isaac nodded. The darach obviously knew they had found and removed it, so there was no point denying it.

“Do you have it?”

A chill ran down Isaac’s spine as a darkness formed in Stiles’ eyes.

“Uh...”

The muscles in Ethan’s arm tightened, and it suddenly seemed less like he was casually resting it behind Stiles and more like he was preparing to grab him if he tried anything.

Stiles shook his head, as if clearing it. “Right, I don’t need to know that.”

“When I found him he was rifling through it.” Ethan nodded toward Scott’s locker. “I thought he had ripped it open too. I was sure he was going to attack me.”

Stiles let out a bitter laugh. “Yeah, one minute I’m listening to Ms. Suarez drone on about wave functions, and the next I’m surrounded by B.O. and Ethan’s growling at me with his fangs and claws out.”

Isaac flinched at the visual.

Ethan huffed and glared at Stiles. “B.O.?”

“Not you.” Stiles laughed, his nostrils flaring as he sniffed the air between them. “You smell good actually. I meant the locker room.”

“I know what you meant.” Ethan smirked and bumped Stiles’ side. “I was just giving you a hard time.”

“Oh, a hard time, huh? Well–” The grin faded from Stiles’ lips, and he turned to Isaac and blushed. “Never mind.”

Ethan chuckled and winked at Isaac from over Stiles’ shoulder. “So you think I smell good?”

Stiles’ eyes widened and he sputtered. “Uh, no, I-I mean, well yeah, compared to the rest of the room but–” He swallowed. “Uhm...”

Isaac couldn’t decide if he was jealous, amused, or turned on. Regardless he needed to shut things down. “Thanks for finding him,” he said to Ethan as he stood.
“Yeah, of course.” Ethan squeezed Stiles’ shoulder and smiled at Isaac as he got up too.

“And you’re okay?” Isaac asked Stiles.

“I’m freaked out that he can just take over like this.” Stiles rose to his feet and Ethan stepped back to give him space.

Isaac didn’t. He wrapped his arm around Stiles and leaned into him, confident that Ethan would read it as a simple pack gesture. “Maybe it’s because you’re tired today.”

“I guess.” Stiles cringed as the bell rung. “Dammit, my bag’s still in Ms. Suarez’ room, and my next class is across campus. Gotta go.” He gave Isaac a quick one-armed hug and smiled at Ethan before hurrying out of the room with Isaac and Ethan trailing behind him at a more leisurely pace.

Isaac still hadn’t been to his locker today, but he had French next, and by a stroke of good fortune, he already had his French stuff packed.

Ethan’s hand hovered on Isaac’s upper back as they walked single file through the more narrow gym hallway toward the exit. “So, do you wanna talk about what happened with Liam?”

Isaac turned his head in surprise as he pushed the door open and they stepped outside. “How did you know?”

Ethan nudged Isaac’s shoulder and guided him toward the old oak tree that sprawled beside the gym, it’s thick, heavy limbs dipping all the way to the ground in some places. “Liam texted Aiden, and Aiden texted me. He didn’t tell me what happened, just that you had ‘fucked up’ with Liam and now he was raging out.” Ethan’s fingers curled into quote marks as he relayed his brother’s words.

Isaac hung his head, his chest so tight he could hardly breathe. “I did fuck up.”

“You wanna tell me about it?” Ethan’s voice was gentle, and his chocolate eyes were soft with concern as he held Isaac’s upper arms and trailed his thumbs over the sleeves covering Isaac’s biceps.

Isaac sighed and closed the small distance between them so he could nuzzle his forehead against Ethan’s.

“You wanna tell me about it?” Ethan’s voice was gentle, and his chocolate eyes were soft with concern as he held Isaac’s upper arms and trailed his thumbs over the sleeves covering Isaac’s biceps.

Isaac sighed and closed the small distance between them so he could nuzzle his forehead against Ethan’s.

“Someone’s gonna notice,” Ethan whispered.

Isaac shrugged and breathed in Ethan’s scent. Ethan was right. What he was doing was stupid and risky. Students were streaming to and fro all around them, and there was no mistaking he and Ethan were a couple based on their body language.

“You said you weren’t ready for people to know about us.” Ethan squeezed Isaac’s arms and let go, stepping back until they were at a more casual distance. “And I don’t wanna go public just because you’re upset. It would only make things worse.”

“You’re right.” Isaac let out a humorless laugh but nodded his head in appreciation. “I’m really proud to be with you though. It’s-it’s not that.”

“We’ll tell your pack when you’re ready. There’s no rush.” Ethan smiled, innocent and warm, and so genuine it made Isaac’s chest ache.

“I-I better go.” *Before I confess and destroy our relationship too.* “I’ll tell you about Liam at lunch.”
“Okay.”

Isaac was late to French class, but it didn’t matter. Everyone was still talking and clumped together in groups around the room. Their teacher, Mr. Moreau, hadn’t arrived yet.

A familiar heartbeat stopped Isaac in his tracks as he went to his desk.

“You okay, man?” Jeff, one of Isaac’s teammates from the lacrosse and cross country teams, asked as Isaac froze beside him.

“Fine.” Isaac walked on without looking at him, his head tilted so his ear was pointed toward the back wall.

Liam.

Their bond throbbed in Isaac’s chest as he listened to the too fast thump of Liam’s heart. He hadn’t known Liam had a class next door this period.

“Hey, did you do the homework assignment? I got stuck on number–”

“Shut up.” Isaac blinked and gave Lindsay, the girl who had spoken to him, an apologetic smile. “Sorry, I didn’t do it and...I have a really bad headache.”

Lindsay gave him a dirty look and turned away as he zeroed in on Liam’s heartbeat. Something was wrong.

"Liam, you’re not gonna just stand there, are you?” The voice was muffled by the wall and belonged to a teacher Isaac didn’t recognized.

“Maybe.” Liam’s voice was tight with distress. Isaac gripped the metal bar under his desk to resist the urge to get up and go in there.

“The rest of the semester?”

“Maybe.”

“Liam, have a seat.”

For a moment, everything was quiet in the next room, and then–

“You put gum in my seat?!” Liam shouted loud enough that he was plainly audible through the wall. Conversation in Isaac’s classroom ceased and people started laughing.

Isaac swallowed and got to his feet. Liam’s heart rate was too high. He was about to wolf out. His footsteps clattered against the floor as he ran out of the room.

“Bonjour, classe.”

“Bonjour, Mr. Moreau,” several students answered in unison as Isaac hurried toward the door and his startled teacher.

“Monsieur Lahey, où allez-vous?” he asked as he stepped into Isaac’s path.

“I gotta go to the restroom.”

Mr. Moreau tsked dramatically and shook his head. “En français s’il vous plaît.”
“No, I gotta–” Isaac bit back a growl as the man shuffled sideways when Isaac tried to go around, blocking him. “It’s an emergency!”

“Urgence?”

“Oui!” Isaac waved his hands.

Mr. Moreau looked unimpressed. “Repeat after me, ‘Puis-je aller aux toilettes?’”

“Je m'appelle toilet,” Isaac answered, clenching his jaw and struggling to keep his voice human.

Everyone, including Mr. Moreau dissolved into laughter, and he finally stepped aside. “You need to practice, Monsieur Lahey, but you may go.”

By the time Isaac was out in the hall, there was no trace of Liam. Or more accurately, as with Stiles’ scent that morning and Lydia’s the night before, Liam’s scent seemed to be everywhere. Isaac growled under his breath. He really did need to get Ethan to teach him how to tell the difference.

He took a deep breathe and let it out slowly. Gum. Liam had accused someone of putting gum in his seat. Thus, he would have logically gone to the restroom to clean up.

Liam wasn’t in the restroom, and Isaac got a funny look from a senior who was washing his hands when he walked in and visibly sniffed the air.

“I was trying to figure out if a friend of mine was in here.”

The guy blinked at him. “And you would be able to recognize him by the smell of his...?” He gagged and backed away, palms up. “You know what? I don’t wanna know.”

Isaac leaned against the sink and racked his brain for where else Liam might have gone.

Locker room. Maybe Liam needed to change if the gum was bad enough.

Isaac ran back to the gym to check. At this rate, he might as well have just stayed there.

A P.E. class was playing basketball when he walked in, and music blared from the weight room, accompanied by the reverberation of weights thudding against the padded floor. Beneath all the chaos was a sound that made Isaac’s blood run cold: snarling and the slap of flesh pounding flesh.

Oh god, Liam’s attacking someone in the locker room!

Isaac hurtled down the hallway and lunged for the door.

“Aahh fuck!” Pain lanced through Isaac’s wrists as the door unexpectedly failed to yield.

“Go away!” Liam roared from inside.

“Ignore him,” a second voice rumbled. “Come at me. Swing.”

Aiden.

Liam grunted, and there was another resounding smack as his blow landed.

“Again.”

Isaac rubbed his wrists and set his shoulder against the door. Metal screeched against the floor as he
heaved the door open inch-by-inch until he could slide his upper body through the crack.

Liam’s eyes burned into Isaac’s as he let out a savage growl, his fangs bared and his brow thickened with supernatural rage. He turned back to Aiden and swung at his face, but Aiden caught his fist with another echoing slap. Liam pivoted and threw his weight behind a second strike with his other hand, but Aiden caught that one too, and they both dropped into a crouch, growling and pushing against each other.

A bank of lockers had been slid in front of the door to keep people out, but now that Isaac had more leverage he had no trouble prying it back enough to slip inside.

Liam broke contact with Aiden and roared at Isaac.

“I said go away!”

Liam feinted forward and Isaac braced for an attack, but at the last second Liam spun into a roundhouse kick that connected with Aiden’s hip.

Aiden stumbled sideways and tripped over the changing bench. He rolled into the fall and bounced back to his feet. “Nice!”

Liam’s feral face flashed with a grin and he pressed his attack, launching another kick and a rapid left, right, left combo. Aiden deflected each blow and caught Liam’s arm on the final swing. He whirled behind him and pinned his arm against his back.

Liam panted and went slack, his face shifting back to human.

“You good?” Aiden asked, rumbling the question into Liam’s ear.

Liam nodded and Aiden released him.

Liam swept his damp bangs back. A light sheen of sweat had formed on his forehead and neck. “And maybe now I won’t freeze my ass off either.”

Isaac frowned at Liam’s bare legs. He had changed into gym shorts.

“Liam, we need to talk abou–”

“No, we don’t.” A vein in Liam’s jaw twitched as he grabbed his bag off the floor by the bench. “I just calmed down. I don’t wanna flip out again.”

“Please.” Isaac caught Liam’s forearm as he stepped by him to leave. “Let me explain.”

Liam gripped Isaac’s hand with supernatural strength and his eyes blazed with golden fire. “Let go, or I’ll break your fingers.”

Isaac sighed and released Liam’s forearm.

Liam growled again and banged the door against the back of the lockers as he squeezed through the gap and out of the room.

“You’re really a hypocritical asshole, you know that?” Aiden slammed his shoulder against Isaac’s as he stepped past him and started to push the bank of lockers away from the door.

“What are you talking about?” Isaac would have had to wait for him to finish anyway, so he moved forward to help guide the heavy piece of furniture back into place against the wall.
“You tried to make him hate me by telling him about an offhand suggestion I made, when all along you had almost ripped his throat out the same night.” Aiden growled and shoved the lockers the last few inches. “If you weren’t my brother’s boyfriend, I would fuck you up for what you did.”

Isaac sighed and slumped against the lockers they had just moved. This was how far he had sunk; he was getting a lecture from Aiden and he deserved it.

Aiden picked up his own bag and headed for the door.

“Wait.” Isaac swallowed around a lump that felt like his literal pride. “I need your help fixing things with him.”

Aiden scoffed and turned back to Isaac, his hand lingering on the door handle. “Why would I help you?”

“For Liam,” Isaac said quietly. “You know he’ll be happier and better off if we make up.”

Aiden frowned and let go of the door. “There’s not really anything I can do even if I wanted to, which I don’t.”

“You can tell me how you got him to forgive you.”

Aiden exhaled through his nose and stepped closer, stopping a few feet away and propping his shoulder against the edge of the lockers. “I told him the truth.”

Isaac shrugged. “Well I did that.”

Aiden smirked. “Yeah, at the worst fucking time.”

“When did you tell him?”

“Friday morning when I was taking him home after the last night of the full moon.”

Isaac processed that information. It would have been while he and Stiles and Lydia were meeting Scott and Ethan at the Argent compound. “How did he take it?”

“He yelled. He tried to hit me. Then he ran inside his house.”

Isaac made hesitant eye contact with Aiden. “Then what did you do?”

“I left.”

Isaac huffed. Leave it to Aiden to not even give a shit enough to try to fix it.

“I went home and texted him explaining things a little more, and I told him to let me know when he was ready to talk.”

Isaac did a double take. “And he actually did?”

“Yeah, that afternoon.” Aiden shrugged. “You’re just making it worse following him around nagging him.”

Isaac crossed his arms. “I’m not nagging him.”

Aiden rolled his eyes and motioned toward the door.
“I was *checking* on him.”

“Nag, nag, nag, nag,” Aiden mumbled under his breath.

Isaac growled.

“Look, all I’m sayin’ is if you just leave him alone, he’ll get over it.”

“You really think so?” Isaac’s chest fluttered with something approximating hope.

Aiden drew in a weary breath. “Yeah, you’re important to him. He does need you.”

Isaac’s jaw dropped. Had Aiden really just acknowledged that out loud?

Aiden glowered at him and adjusted the strap of his bag as he turned to leave.

“Thank you,” Isaac said softly before he reached the door. “For telling me all that, and for taking care of him.”

Aiden flipped him off and walked out without looking back.

Chapter End Notes

As always feedback is greatly appreciated, and thanks again for two amazing years!

French Translations:
“Bonjour, classe.” = "Greetings class."
“Monsieur Lahey, où allez-vous?” = "Mr. Lahey, where are you going?"
“En français s’il vous plaît.” = "In French please."
“Urgence?” = "Emergency?"
"Puis-je aller aux toilettes?" = "Can I go to the bathroom/toilets?"
 "Je m'appelle toilet" = "My name is toilet."

Not sure if it’ll come up in other chapters, but for the record my headcanon is that Lydia and Malia are also taking French (as did Allison while she was still in school), Liam and Scott are taking Spanish, and Ethan and Aiden are taking German. I’m better at German and Spanish, so someone please let me know if I did mistranslate any of the French in this chapter.

Works inspired by this one

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