Love Knots Are The Best Knots

by Spuri

Summary

Stiles desperately needs a snack break from supernatural research. Derek makes an unfortunate leap of logic. Hilarity and fluff ensues.

Notes

So yeah, I was having a 3am snack of tasty, tasty onigiri (rice balls), and suddenly noticed that the packaging basically said "love knot"* in Japanese. Since I clearly has a mature, my brain went there, and this happened.

*knot, or musubi/omusubi is another word for onigiri, and the 'love' bit is supposed to mean that it's made with love, but due to the ambiguous nature of Japanese, it really only says "love knot"; the rest is context.

Eternal thanks to the lovely Nira, who puts up with all my crazy, and coos and laughs at my writing real time so it actually gets done.

See the end of the work for more notes

"Okay, I’m gonna go out and get myself some love knots," says Stiles, and gets out of his chair, stretching so hard his spine cracks and he feels dizzy. Research is killer sometimes.
Derek’s head snaps around so fast it's almost audible, and stares at him. "What?"

"Some love knots. I love me some love knots. Tasty as fuck," Stiles replies, because calling the hand-rolled onigiris from the Japanese restaurant downtown ‘love knots’, like the old Japanese lady running the place does, cracks him up so bad. Especially since his world is now full of werewolves. ‘Cause really. Wolves. Dogs. Knots. Heh.

Derek growls at him, abandons his Tome Of Weird Shit and gets up from the couch, his only goal seemingly to glare at Stiles from a closer range for full stink-eye effect.

"Aw, c’mon, don't you growl at me, I deserve my fucking knots, okay? I put up with enough bullshit that you can let me enjoy this one thing," Stiles protest, because really. Sometimes, it feels like he does everything and anything Derek asks of him. And sure, maybe his motives for that aren't entirely pure, but still. Some appreciation would be nice.

Derek shoots him this look that, if Stiles didn't know better, looks hurt. Then he nods, and shifts, kind of uncomfortably. Stiles wants to stare. He’s pretty sure he’s never seen Derek do the awkward shuffle of discomfort before. "Just... be careful, okay? You're safe, right?"

Stiles wishes he knew what the fuck was going on. Sure, Derek is always kind of strange, but this is a new level of weird, even for him. He scratches the back of his head."Uh, yeah? I mean, it' not like I'm gonna choke on them or anything, I'm not that clumsy."

Speaking of choking, Derek seems to choke on thin air. "Choke...? Them? Are you... in your mouth? More than one? Not at a time, right? That can't be healthy." He clenches and unclenches his fists, and for a split-second, Stiles thinks he sees claws. Derek clearly must have lost his mind or something, nothing else makes sense.

"Where else would I put them?" Stiles asks, and is honestly kind of curious as to the answer. “I mean, really? And of course I only eat one at a time. I may have a big mouth, but there are limits."

Derek swallows, then firmly grabs both of Stiles' shoulders, and stares him in the eye. "Stiles, I hope you know that I accept and support your life choices, but I... care about you, so just make sure to be careful. And if you ever need to talk, or need help, or anything, you can always come to me."

He gives Stiles’ shoulders one last pat, and nods a single time, as if to pat himself on the back for a job well done on a conversation about feelings and things. And yeah, Derek has pretty much never
said this much at once about something that wasn’t dangerous and/or life-threatening. And if Stiles wasn't so confused, he's pretty sure he'd be bright red, with his heart jackhammering at Derek saying he *cared*. As it is, he can sort of feel his eyes hurt at how wide open they are as he stares at Derek. His mouth opens and closes like a fish at his several false starts on a reply.

"Oh my god, what is with you, they're just balls of rice with stuffing! Why are you making such a big deal out of this?!!"

Derek blinks at him in obvious confusion, and silence stretches through the loft. "Rice?" he says at last, and *what?* Stiles wonders how this conversation got so out of hand.

"Yes," Stiles confirms emphatically. "What the hell did you think I was talking about?!!"

Derek's ears turn bright pink, and Stiles is pretty sure he's never seen anything that fascinating and adorable and awesome ever before. He's kind of feeling this overwhelming mix of emotions that he can't quite make out, but it's all awesome and giddy, so he doesn't really care. Analyzing his own emotions has never really been a thing he does, either. He’d much rather analyze - and probably over-analyze - every single word coming out of Derek’s mouth. So he does, and a sudden thought strikes him. His brain promptly sort of dies.

"Oh my god, is the knotting stuff real?!" Stiles blurts out, and he’s actually literally *wringing his hands*. He’s turned into an anxious 18th century maiden or something. "I thought for sure that was bad romance novel and fanfiction bullshit. *Seriously?*"

Derek blushes even harder, his cheeks bright red now, as he looks down at his own clenched fists.

"And you thought that I was..." Stiles trails off, and he can *feel* himself paling every bit as much as Derek is turning red. "Oh my god, you thought that I was... y'know." He waves a hand vaguely towards his mouth, and his brain almost short-circuits at Derek's eyes flicking towards it before quickly looking away.

"And you thought I was, with knots and all? With several guys?! What is wrong with you?" Stiles inwardly curses. His voice has gone positively squeaky. And his eyes are bugging painfully again. But there is so much wrong with this conversation, he doesn’t even know where to start.

"How was I supposed to know that 'love knots' is *rice*?" Derek protests, and Stiles doesn't think he's ever heard him this defensive before. "How does that even make *sense*?!!"
"They're omusubi!" Stiles shouts, gesturing wildly with his hands. He’s not even entirely sure what his gestures are supposed to mean at this point, but he’s kind of hoping Derek will infer some kind of meaning to it beyond just flailing. Even if flailing and babbling seems to be his natural state, especially around his crushes. Which at the moment is a category only populated by one Derek Hale. "It means knot in Japanese, okay? And the Japanese lady at the restaurant, she's not really that great at English, but she says she makes them, fresh and handmade, with love. So she calls them love knots. I thought it was cute! And kind of funny, with the werewolf thing. I didn't think the giant lumps on dicks thing was actually real, though! How does that even work?!"

"It works just fine," Derek says gruffly, looking away, and oh god, the images. Stiles will be making so many spank bank deposits in the near future.

He forcefully shoves away the gorgeous pictures in his brain for another day. "But seriously, though, what possessed you to think I could get several werewolves to have sex with me? And in a way that I could just casually call them up for an orgy or something? Seriously? I can't even get one to want me."

...which really didn't come out right. Crap. Stiles kind of panics. "Err, I meant guys in general, not werewolf specific. Bad grammar! It was just bad grammar!"

Derek does an obvious double take, blinking at him, which, crap. "You're lying. You do want a werewolf to want you." He pauses, clearly considering this. "Is it Scott?"

Stiles has to stop himself from making gagging noises. He can’t stop the grimace and the shudder of disgust, though. "Oh god, no, ew! Scott is like my brother, that's so gross!"

"Isaac, then," Derek says with a decisive nod, and really? What the fuck is wrong with him?!

"No! Why would you even say that? Besides, pretty sure he's into Scott, and that would be kind of like lusting after your brother-in-law. Ugh." Stiles shudders again. He doesn’t want to be anyone’s second best, especially not if they’re into his best friend. Beside, he’s pretty sure that’s some kind of party foul. Or maybe he just doesn’t want to be a soap opera cliché. Either way, Isaac is just... No.

Derek stares at him. "That doesn't make any sense. It's not like Scott and Isaac are even dating."
"Shut up, it makes sense in my head. Isaac is my honorary inlaw," Stiles snaps back sulkily. And really, how dense can you get?

Derek suddenly fixes him with a wide-eyed look of horror, and goes completely deer in headlights still. Which should be hilarious, because werewolf, but nothing about this conversation is or ever will be funny. "It's not Peter, is it?"

"Oh god, my brain! Why would you do that to me?!" Stiles wails. The thought of doing anything, let alone stuff involving mouths and knots with Peter - or any other creepy uncle character - is ball-shrivelingly terrible, and Derek is the devil for even thinking it. "That's just awful! He's a zombie! And old! and most importantly, he's creepy!"

Derek frowns, clearly confused. "Then who...?"

"I'm just gonna stop you there, before you come up with anything else that's horrifically mentally scarring," Stiles interrupts. And he can feel the heat rising to his cheeks. Oh god, he's actually going to say it. Even though he’s been trying to not be his regular stupidly obvious self for months now, he’s gonna say it, just because of some stupid misunderstanding. His life sucks, and this is not how he wanted to go. But Derek is obviously going to kill him. Well, maybe just maim him a little, they’re sort of almost friends, now, and friends don’t kill each other, right? Regardless of how many times his various friends have tried so far.

He takes a deep breath, and let it out in an explosive sigh. "It's you, you complete idiot. Now please don't make it weird? Please? I mean, it's not like anything has to change, right?"

"You... me?!" Derek stammers, and Stiles doesn't think he's ever seen him this flustered before. Good. It's nice not to be the only one. And no anger or maiming or killing so far. This is going surprisingly well. If he's lucky, he'll come out of this with the only mortal wounds being to his pride and his heart.

"Yes, very Tarzan and Jane of you, but yes! Now, can we please get this humiliation over with, and return to our regular scheduled program?" Stiles is not above begging. Really, if they could just both forget this ever happened, that’d be the best.

Derek straightens, and almost seems to grow slightly taller. Maybe it’s some kind of weird werewolf ability. But oh man, this is going to suck. "You want me," Derek states, voice gruff and with an unreadable expression on his face. “To want you. To touch you. To hold you. To-... to knot you."
Stiles can't help but shudder at Derek's slightly hoarse voice, even though this entire situation hurts. He clenches his eyes shut, trying not to let the shudder evolve into full-blown shaking. He can’t lose it, not yet. "Yes! Yes, okay, I do. But that's no reason to be a jerk about it." He opens his eyes again to fix Derek with an accusing glare. Hopefully, it won’t be obvious how much this is hurting, but judging by how his voice cracks, Stiles probably isn’t going to be that lucky.

"I'm not trying to!" Derek protests, and his ears turn pink again. What? Stiles is pretty sure he’s lost his handle on the situation again. "I mean, I want that too. To do those things. With you." He shifts uncomfortably from foot to foot, but holds Stiles' gaze, firm and unwavering.

"Could, uh... could you repeat that?" Stiles licks his lips nervously, and shuffles subtly closer. Just a little bit. There’s this disgustingly gooey and warm feeling of hope spreading in his chest, and he doesn’t want it, at least not yet, before he can clarify things. Getting his hopes up never ends well for Stiles. "I think I just hallucinated."

Derek growls, and oh god, that should not turn him on as much as it does, Stiles thinks. It's probably unhealthy.

"You didn't hallucinate. I want you. I want you to want me. Is that so hard to understand?" Derek seems almost offended at this, and really? Has he even looked in a mirror lately? Or done any of the million things that would tell him how insane it is for someone like Derek to want someone like Stiles?

"Kinda, yeah," Stiles says with a nervous laugh. "No-one ever really wants me. And you're like ridiculously out of my league. Like, I thought Lydia was stupidly out of my league, back when I had a crush on her. But you're, like, I dunno, a completely different sport. On a planet on the other side of the universe."

Derek snorts. "I'm a werewolf with no job and no prospects, and more issues than a comic book store, living in a crappy, run-down apartment, and someone new seems to want to kill me every other week. What about me, exactly, is out of anyone's league, much less yours? It's more the other way around."

Stiles blinks at him, and wonders what the world looks like from Derek's brain. Because his view must be radically different than Stiles'. "So clearly we both have raging self-esteem issues. We should probably work on that," he says nervously, because jokes are always what he'll fall back on when he's not sure how to react.
But Derek simply nods. "We probably should. We could do it together?" And he just looks so hopeful, and it kind of breaks Stiles’ heart, because he's pretty sure Derek was shooting for nonchalant, but he fell so ridiculously short of his mark.

"That'd be... nice," Stiles settles on at last, and hesitantly reaches out to tangle Derek's fingers with his own. Derek's lips twitch into a slight smile, and his fingers squeeze back.

"I think so too," Derek agrees. And part of Stiles wants to do more than just hold hands, he's been having all kinds of dreams about all the things he wants to do with and to Derek, but the majority of him is okay with starting here. He grins so widely it almost feels like his cheeks will split.

"Wanna go get love knots with me?"

Derek laughs, and it's the best sound in the world.

End Notes

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