Courage Born in the Heart

by AwaitingFreedom

Summary

Omega Stiles Stilinski, after years of abuse at the hands of his father, Brandon, is saved by Alpha Derek Hale, his longtime friend (and most recently, a crush).

With the blessing of Alpha Noah Stilinski, and his wife, Claudia Stilinski, Stiles is permitted to join the Hale Pack, for a fresh start at life, and to be near Derek, who wishes to court the Omega as his mate.

After joining the Hale Pack, Stiles learns the joy of life, love, and what it truly means to be part of a pack, and part of a loving family.
Chapter 1

The roar of lunchtime rang throughout the halls of Beacon Hills High School, an outdated relic standing in northernmost California. In the heart of a rural werewolf community, about half an hour away from anything resembling a real city, the booming noise inside the cafeteria could have deafened a normal human. Young werewolves gossiped, feasted on food, and a few even got into short sparring matches in the outer courtyard, wrestling for dominance, or just for the fun of it.

Which is exactly why sixteen year old Stiles Stilinski had opted to spend most of his lunches in the soundproofed sanctity of their school's library. A musty old room filled to the brim with books dating back to the school's founding on one end, and sets of outdated computers on the other end, with a handful of newer books sprinkled throughout. Though, the large tables, and general privacy the room offered more than made up for its lack of accommodations.

Stiles' lanky arm and bony fingers ran a pen over graph paper, slowly working an algebraic equation, darting his eyes between the paper, and the Freshman sitting next to him. "...so just subtract the 2, and you're done! Viola, x equals 5!" He ran a hand through his thick, molasses colored hair, gazing his honey brown eyes over to the Freshman. "Does that make sense, Liam? Want me to go over it again?"

Liam, a short kid (shorter than Stiles by more than a foot) with brimming muscles, and a resting bitch face 90% of the time, threw his arms into the air, laughing in a mix of broken syllables. "I get it! I actually get it!" Taking the pen from Stiles, Liam quickly worked the next problem with ease, following Stiles' previous example, and arriving at the correct answer. The young man's smile could be seen from space.

"There you go!" Stiles patted Liam on the back of his crimson lacrosse jersey. "See, I said that you'd get it. You're smarter than you give yourself credit for."

Liam groaned, slamming his head on the table. "Why can't Mrs. Stephenson explain math like this?! You make about a thousand percent more sense than those stupid powerpoints. Thank you, Stiles."

Overhead, the bell inside the library began to ring, signaling the end of lunch. Both Stiles and Liam gathered up their belongings, and trashed what was left of their lunches.

"Welp, we better get going. I've got to run over to Chemistry, and you've got a math test that you're about to ace." Stiles threw an arm around Liam's neck, pulling him into a tight hug.

"You think I can?" Liam flushed, but leaned into Stiles' hug, snug in the young man’s soft hoodie, not all that keen on letting go. "I keep goofing up on the elimination method."

"Hey!" Stiles released their hug, booping Liam on the nose, and gripping the teen by both shoulders. "Don't be so down on yourself. You're a smart kid, Liam. You just get stressed out over all the small stuff. Take a deep breath before you sit down for your test, clear your mind, and take it all one step at a time. Don't look at the clock, and remember that Mrs. Stephenson WILL let you finish your math test after school if you don't finish by the end of the period."

"Okay." Liam let out a held breath, melting under Stiles' touch.

Stiles flashed a beaming white smile. "...and yes, I believe in you. You're going to to the best you can, and that's all anyone can hope for. Me, your Alpha Talia, your dad Peter... We all know that you're pushing yourself harder than you ever have before!" He threw in a coy smile, prodding Liam
in the chest. "...and if I recall correctly, you stressed out like this on your last test, and STILL made a 92."

"Yeah." Liam grinned, radiating a smidge more confidence than before. He reached around Stiles' stomach, hugging him, and burying his nose in Stiles' neck. "Thanks, Stiles. You're the best Omega, EVER. Like, EVER. Not even my cousin Isaac cares this much!"

A spark ran down Stiles' spine. His arms felt like jelly, at the simplest words of praise. He bit his lips, unable to say anything.

Stiles and Liam left the library, slinging their backpacks over their shoulders.

Liam dashed off to the freshman hallway, and into the mass of people flooding out of the cafeteria. "Bye, Stiles! Thanks again! See you tomorrow at lunch!"

Waving, Stiles turned his back to Liam, striding of to the Junior Hallway, just as thick and busy with people. "Thank you, Li." He whispered under his breath. Reaching to his wrist, Stiles gripped his hand around a section of bruised flesh. "I needed that."

"No, thank YOU."

Stiles jumped, spinning around and meeting the eyes of Scott McCall and Derek Hale.

The former, a tanned, well muscled teen wearing an identical jersey as Liam had worn, and sporting a punked up head of black hair, just shy of a full pompadour. The target of many girls (and several guys), Scott's puppy dog eyes could win the heart of anyone, in a single conversation. A walking cauldron of bubbling joy.

"Hey Derek! Hey Scott!" Stiles jogged to meet them, walking alongside them as they darted in and out of the crowd. "You guys ready for Chem? I hear Dr. Harris is on the warpath today. Greenberg actually asked what the periodic table was in first period, after 3 months of class."

Scott and Derek both cringed.

"Kill me now." Scott grumbled.

"At least it's only an hour of being screamed at." Derek shrugged, sighing. "Could be worse, right?"

"Yeah!" Stiles nodded, gripping his bag tightly in one arm. "It could be a hell of a lot worse. Much. Much worse."

Stiles, Scott, and Derek reached the Chemistry classroom, taking their respective seats in the back row, and sharing a station. They rifled through their bags, pulling out notes, and the textbook for the class.

"Oh, Stiles, I about forgot!" Derek said, producing a paper sack in one hand, and a glass jar of amber colored preserves in another. "Our farm's apple harvest is about done for the year. I know it's not much, but my mom and Uncle Peter wanted to thank you for tutoring Liam in math so much. If it weren't for you, he'd be on the bench in lacrosse, and might not have a chance at scholarships.
Seriously, you turned a D student into a B+ student, you're a God, and the Hales offer this as tribute."

Stiles took to the gifts, feeling his chest swell as he watched Derek's eyes, if only for a second, glow their candy red. Instinct, perhaps, of an Omega being presented a gift from an Alpha. Something primal, but sweet all the same. "Thank you so much!" He popped open the mason jar of preserves, for just a moment, and swooned. "These are your Aunt Lorraine's preserves aren't they? They're beautiful!"

"Not as beautiful as you are." Derek countered, with a playful wink.

Scott groaned, banging his head repeatedly on the other side of the table. "Oh God... Here we go with the flirting. Get me something to vomit in, you dorks are too much."

Little blooms of heat sprouted up and down Stiles' body. Stiles knew Derek about as well as he knew Scott and the rest of the Hale family. They'd all grown up together since Kindergarten, and Stiles shared plenty of birthdays and sleepovers with both Scott and Derek.

Sure, Stiles always had a snarky friendship with Derek, but... The flirting?

Something new they'd both gone back and forth on since the start of the school year. Innocent, and playful. Not like Derek had made a declaration of courtship, or that either of their families were arranging anything (Stiles was pretty sure his father didn’t know or care anything about the Hales), but...

They had fun with it.

Stiles laughed, waving Derek off. "Me? Pfft. Please, I'm MAYBE a 5. On a good day. With my brains, and my wit? Maybe that can get bumped up to a 6." He gestured to Derek. "You though, farm boy? 10 out of 10. Clearly, you drank all your milk and ate all your veggies growing up."

Derek beamed, the teen's face just as red as Stiles'. "Bullshit. You're a flaming hot 10. Me, and every other Alpha in the school would agree on that." He glanced at Stiles' eyes, which flashed a milky silver, alongside an overwhelming blush. "I've never met a kinder, sweeter Omega, either. Not many people would give up their lunches to tutor someone like Liam. You're kind, smart, and mean a lot to everyone around you." Reaching over, he took Stiles' hand in his own. "You mean a lot to me, and to our pack."

Time stopped. Stiles' heart, he was certain, stopped too. He willed back a flood of tears. Forced back the painful sob that threatened to erupt out of him. Suppressed the urge to pull Derek into his arms and bury himself in the Alpha's neck.

Biting his lip, Stiles shut his eyes, attempting a lighthearted chuckle. "Also, dat ass."

"La la la!" Scott covered his ears, earning a few good natured chuckles from some of their surrounding classmates.

Derek barked out a laugh, nodding in agreement. "Yep, dat ass!"

Stiles, too, forced out laughter, slugging Derek on the shoulder playfully. He licked his lips, trying to think of something else to say. Something as profound as Derek had told him.

"You're an amazing Alpha. You care. You love. About more than just yourself. Anyone would be lucky to have you as a mate. Or be a part of your family."
Unfortunately, words failed Stiles, broken by Derek's laughter ending. "Actually... Stiles?" He cleared his throat, taking in a deep breath. The man's heart stammered like a jackrabbit. "Would you be interested in popping by our family farm this weekend? It'll be crazy with like a million people, but my entire family is celebrating the end our major harvests, and we're having a barbeque." He rubbed the back of his neck, flushing. "I mean... Uncle Peter and Aunt Lorraine wanted to invite you as thanks for Liam, but... I'd be happy if you were there, too."

Scott flashed a tiny smile, throwing Derek a thumbs up from behind Stiles' back.

Stiles felt the warmth radiating off Derek's cheeks, and the scent of embarrassment rolling off Derek in droves.

Yet... Stiles felt his chest fall. Again, he suppressed the urge to cry. "I have to check with my dad, first. He usually has chores for me around the house on the weekends. I mean... He's a Deputy for my Uncle Noah, our Alpha, so he's really busy. A lot of stuff gets pushed onto me. It's just us two, you know... So, I'll have to ask, first."

"Oh yeah, that's fine! No rush, the weekend's like a million years away!" Derek nodded. "I forget the Stilinski Pack is basically the town's entire police force. I bet that does make some wild schedules." Clearly holding back from disappointment, Derek flashed Stiles a smile. "Well, I hope you can come, anyway. It'll be a lot of fun."

"Me too."

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Chapter Music

_A/N: Comments, kudos, and thoughts are always welcome and encouraged as the story develops! I plan on updating frequently (at least every other day), but I'll probably have another chapter out very shortly!_
Chapter 2

The Stilinski pack, like most of the county's "upper crust" (as if a rural County like Beacon Hills could even HAVE an upper crust), lived in a gated community for just their pack, and their pack alone. Twenty or so two story cookie cutter homes (and one large six story mansion, at the very end of the drive, the Alpha's home) lined a looping street, with flawlessly kept lawns, flower gardens, and each surrounded by a white picket fence.

On the outside, the Stilinski pack could be thought of as an ideal pack, with the money, numbers, and societal status to live comfortably in peace.

Stiles stared outside the window of his kitchen, in one of the many cookie cutter homes, to the other members of his pack, walking up and down the paved sidewalks, some walking their animals, while others merely went on a family stroll. Wide smiles, and happy touches of affection.

For a single moment, Stiles allowed himself picture him as one of those people out on the sidewalk. Walking with Derek. Hanging out with Scott. Hell, even Liam, talking about math would be fine. Talking, and laughing, and... Living.

"STILES!"

A front door slammed shut, with six sets of locks clanking shut with overwhelming force. Each one a painful echo in Stiles' mind.

Jerking out of his daydream, Stiles spun back around, returning his attention to the food before him on the stove. He switched off the burners, quickly grabbing at the plates he'd had prepped and waiting for the better part of an hour.

"Sir, I'm in the kitchen." Stiles stammered out.

Stomping in from the living room, a behemoth of a man, decked out in a deputy's uniform that strained at his muscle mass, kicked off a pair of thick boots, chucking them in a corner with little grace. He peeled off a hat, revealing a set of thick black hair. "Brandon Stilinski" read the man's badge that glimmered on his belt.

"Dinner better be ready, and it better not be cold." Brandon didn't bother looking at his son, slamming down at the dining room table, and flaring a pair of blue eyes to life. "I've had a shit day hearing that asswipe DA Whittemore ballbusting me for "procedural" errors. Then, I get my ass chewed out by my fucktard of a brother. I swear... I don't know how that bleeding heart managed to be born an Alpha. Pussy."

Stiles' hand tensed, piling his father's plate full. "Pot roast. Potatoes. Carrots. I've been watching them simmer, they're warm." He took extra care to keep the carrots and potatoes from touching. Made doubly sure that the gravy in from the pot roast spilled over into the potatoes. Double checked the plate for any "stray" foods, or pieces of fat.

Only after a short eternity of checking, and a brief moment of prayer, did Stiles finally set the plate on the table. He held his breath, watching his father sniff the plate.

Brandon sighed, shoving Stiles away from the table. "Well, doesn't smell like you fucked it up. For once. Get me a glass of milk, and stop standing around like you don't have shit to do."

"Yes, Sir." Stiles grabbed a glass (the green ones, from the family china, not the plastic ones, never
the plastic ones), filled it (not to the brim, and not just halfway), and set it down on the table (to the left of his father's plate, never on the right).

Brandon ate in relative silence, while Stiles picked up the man's boots, washing the mud and muck off in the sink. He'd polish them later.

"What the fuck are these?" Brandon spat, pointing to the bowl of apples in the middle of the kitchen counter. "I didn't write apples down on this week's shopping. Tell me you're not that stupid."

Stiles seized up, gulping audibly. "Oh! No, I didn't buy them. They're a gift from the Hale Pack. I've been tutoring Peter Hale's son, Liam Hale, in math over lunch. That's my friend Scott's little cousin." He watched his hands shake uncontrollably, digging out the mud from the treads in his father's shoes. "You remember, Scott, right? You let him come over last month..."

"Apples..." Brandon reached over, snagging one of the apples and promptly sniffing it. He took a bite, shrugged, promptly followed by a fit of laughter. "Better than nothing, I guess. Not surprising that was all they could give." He threw the half eaten apple at Stiles, hitting him in the backside and promptly rolling across the ground. "Too poor to pay money, like a decent person should. So they send... Apples." More laughter left Brandon, as he went back to the food on his plate. "I swear, that Pack is nothing but garbage to this city. Can't believe they still have a spot on the City Council. Their "noble" name and bank ran dry decades ago."

"Their pack's funds ran dry because they rebuilt our entire town after the fire fifty years ago." Stiles thought, gripping the boot a little harder than was necessary, and using a popped out claw to dig out the dirt on a tough spot.

Brandon sighed. "Can you believe your Uncle Noah and Aunt Claudia actually supports those dogs? Those idiots who actually still live like we're still hiding in the woods, away from the hunters? All that old cultural bullshit about living off the land? Pfft."

"Yet, they seem to be doing a lot better than our pack's massive debt to the bank." Stiles thought, scrubbing the boot harder. He plastered on a fake smile. "Want anything to drink? I've got your favorites chilled."

"Beer." Brandon answered, dully.

Taking care to have the bottle already opened before it reached his father, Stiles set it down on the table (to the right, never the left). In response, Brandon shucked off his uniform's top, and his khaki pants, shoving it in Stiles' hands, alongside the silent understanding to have it dry cleaned, ironed, and scented before the man's next shift. (The "or else" also silently implied.)

Stiles neatly folded his father's dirty clothes, setting them aside to handle later. He took in a deep breath, trying his best to calm his nerves. "...Sir... The Hales invited me over to their place for a barbecue this weekend. Do you care if I go, once I finish the chores you assign me?"

"Care? Of course I fucking care." Brandon slammed his beer on the table, shaking its wooden frame. "Did you not hear anything I just said, or are you that stupid? No, scratch that, I already know how fucking dumb you are."

Stiles willed away the tears. He'd been bracing himself for the disappointment all night, knowing that even the thinnest sliver of hope had been stupid to wish for. Getting permission to have friends visit for longer than an hour usually took months of ass kissing. He hadn't been able to sleepover with a friend since his mother passed, years earlier.
Brandon scoffed, finishing off the last of his food, scratching his stomach through the thin fabric of his undershirt. "Do you actually think I'd want my Omega Son hanging around those low class losers, and let everyone start talking about MY Omega being sullied with the Hales?" He laughed, chugging all of his milk in one go. "Not that it would matter. You're pretty damn useless as an Omega, anyway."

A punch echoed in Stiles gut as he cleared the table.

"...that's another thing I don't understand." Brandon kicked his feet rudely up on the table, scratching himself through his boxer shorts. "Why do you even bother existing, Stiles? You can't give anyone children, so you're useless as an Omega. A fucking genetic abomination that shouldn't have happened. A defect. Male Omegas... Pfft. I blame your mother's side. They were full of those weird fucks."

Stiles bit his lip until a small trickle of blood rolled down his chin, splattering in the soapy water beneath him.

Brandon chuckled, eyes flashing blue. "Hell, you're so broken, you've never even gone into a heat. The only thing that might have made you even the slightest bit attractive, being someone's fuck toy, and you can't even do that, either." He yawned, stretching out. "You're lucky I kept you, you know? Who'd want you, otherwise?"


Dully, Brandon finished off the last of his beer, belching loudly. "No idea what I'm going to do with you. It'd almost be worth keeping you around for labor, instead of shipping you off for a dowry. I'm sure I could talk your Uncle Noah into keeping you here. After all, you need to support your dear ol' single dad, right? That's all you're good for."

"What's that I'm smelling?" A wry grin crossed Brandon's face. He hopped away from the table, empty bottle in hand, gripped by the neck. "Haven't smelt that since you were twelve. Thought I'd broken you out of that defiant, snotty stage."

"Aw..." Brandon taunted Stiles with the bottle in his hand, swinging it back and forth in the air before him. "Did I piss you off, Stiles? Did I hurt your feelings? Or maybe... You're upset about the Hales? Maybe a "special" Hale?" He turned around, grabbing the bowl of apples on the kitchen table, before promptly slamming them into the ground. Brandon stomped them, creating a mess on the floor. "These apples don't smell like Scott. I know what that dumbass punk smells like, Stiles. Did your really think I didn't sniff that out? I'm a Beta, Stiles. A Beta cop. My nose and eyes are better than an Alpha's. Nothing, and I mean NOTHING gets past me." His eyes focused in on Stiles, taking slow, methodical steps forward.

"Derek... Derek... Ah. Talia's boy. The Giant." Brandon mocked, chuckling. "The Hale's dumb..."
farmhand. That lunking idiot gave them to you?"

Stiles shook his head. "They were a gift from Peter and Lorraine! That's all! They invited me to the barbecue, too!"

"Then why are you so flustered?" Realization struck in Brandon’s face, accompanied by a fit of dark laughter. "Haha! Don't tell me you actually started falling for that boy!"

Stiles flinched as his father reached him, pressing the end of the bottle into the teen’s neck.

"Well, isn't this just sad." Brandon cackled, slapping Stiles' face with the end of the bottle, back and forth, gently. "Listen, Stiles, I'm going to make myself very clear. Stay away from the Hales. Don't even bother helping that Liam kid out anymore, or hanging around Scott. I don't even want you in the same building as they are."

Stiles felt something... Click. Something deep in his chest. Like a floodgate releasing, and filling his entire body with... A rage he hadn't felt since he was a child.

Brandon ignored the overwhelming scent, turning away from Stiles. "Especially keep away from Derek, and the rest of his trashy family. Because like hell is my name going to go through the mud."

He turned his head back, laughing in Stiles' face. "It's one thing to have a worthless, broken Omega for a son. It's another for that worthless, broken Omega to mingle with the Hales."

The rage boiled over, forcing fangs to protrude out of Stiles' mouth, and his entire body to shift in the process. His soft, pale features, replaced by harsh, wrinkled lines, and jutted bones, giving him a wolfish appearance. Claws ripped from his fingernails, long, slender, and deadly.

"No." Stiles spat.

"No?" Brandon blinked, laughing incredulously. "Did you just tell me... No?"

Taking a step forward, Stiles growled. "I'm not hurting anyone or anything! I've been friends with Scott since before mom died! Liam needs my help, because nobody else gives a damn!" He took another step. "And Derek's not trash! He's the nicest Alpha in the entire school, and doesn't treat me like a shit for being a male Omega. He cares about me!" Yet, another step forward. "Uncle Noah is right about the Hales, too! If you'd even TALK to them, you'd know what kind, honorable people they are. They feed our entire town, take in the homeless, and expand their pack constantly without the bite! They saved our town years ago, and made sure we all had a home to come back to!" A final step forward, and Stiles was within inches of his father's face. "Say what you want about me. Trust me, I know I'm worthless., but don't you DARE call my friends trash! They're a hell of a lot more competent than you are, you hopeless drunken bastard!"

Brandon's face shifted, into a grotesque, wolfish figure. His hand wrapped around the neck of the bottle, letting a howl rip from deep within him, and into Stiles' face.

Unmoved, Stiles shook his head, howling right back in his father's face. "If you weren't Uncle Noah's brother, there's no way in hell anyone would put up with you!"

Brandon shook. Humiliation wafted off him in droves, filling the room.

"You suck at your job, you suck as a father, and nobody wants to be within ten feet of you!" Stiles spat, pressing up against his father's chest, and fronting on him. "Because anyone with a brain knows that Brandon Stilinski is the fucking failure of the Stilinski Pack, and should have been outcast YEARS ago. You're not worth anything! All you are is Uncle Noah's charity case! Everyone knows it, Dad! I know it, you know, the whole town knows it! So why don't you just..."
Brandon smashed the bottle into the side of Stiles' face, shattering it into a mess of glass that slammed into the teen's skin. In a flash, Brandon lifted Stiles up with ease, throwing him across the house, and into their television set. A spark of electricity shot through Stiles, leaving the Omega writhing on the floor, struggling to get up on his hands and knees, convulsing.

"Why do you make me do this to you, Stiles?" Brandon's eyes glazed over into a murky blue, bordering on black. "Why don't you just keep that mouth of yours shut?"

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Chapter Music

Thanks for reading! Comments, kudos, and thoughts are always welcome! :)
Derek tried to keep the butterflies in his stomach at bay as he, Scott, and Liam finally reached the Stilinski lands. While the Stilinski community wasn’t as overtly posh as the Whittemore lands, they were probably the third most prosperous pack in Beacon County.

By the look of the immaculate landscaping, the gap in wealth between the Stilkisis and Hales became more obvious than ever. He tucked the box of cucumbers, okra, and peaches under his arm, a little… Embarrassed.

"We're here for Liam, horn dog. Don't ruin this with your gross flirting." Scott said, elbowing Derek in the side.

Glaring at his cousin, Derek elbowed Scott right back, chuckling. "Shut up. I had to deal with you flirting over Kira for TWO years, asswipe. Deal with me obsessing over Stiles." Reaching over, Derek pulled Scott into a headlock under his spare arm. "MAYBE, if you're lucky, I won't go into the gorey details I REALLY like about Stiles. You know, like you did with Kira."

"Ew, no! Stiles and I are friends! Nope, nope, nope, so much nope!" Scott countered.

From behind the two cousins, Liam trotted behind, clutching a paper in his hands. He flushed, shaking his head. "Derek, Scott... Come on! Don't make me do this. Stiles is busy! He takes way harder classes than I do, he's probably doing homework or studying! I can tell him tomorrow morning!"

"No way!" Derek walked backwards, all smiles as he gestured to Liam's paper. "Stiles is going to be really proud of you, Liam. You made a hundred on a really hard test! This is a big deal! You've got an A in math now! That's going to up your GPA, and get you closer to a scholarship."

"Derek's right!" Scott beamed, ruffling Liam's punked up blond hair. "Stiles is the kind of guy who's going to want to know right away! Besides, Aunt Tally and Uncle Peter were so excited, we're shoving MORE produce down Stiles' trap."

Liam folded his arms, pouting. "We should PAY him, Scott. Not give him food."

Derek sighed, shaking his head. "We offered. I mean, you were a pretty desperate case, and after you ran off Lydia Martin, Stiles was our only hope." He grinned, remembering the night Talia all but begged Stiles to help Liam learn basic study skills, and not flunk out of high school. Without a moment's hesitation, the Omega came to Liam's rescue, and spent every lunch hour before Liam’s math class, getting him up to speed. In only three months, Liam had turned his entire school life around. "Stiles wouldn’t take any money, no matter how much mom tried. So, they made the deal for fresh veggies and preserves."

The trio stopped at the security gate of the Stilinski Community, where three armed guards glared at them, fully armed, and likely trained in the art of wolf combat. From the smell of the iron gates, they were plated with wolfsbane. Which likely cost more than their entire house, combined.

"I guess rich people don’t need money.” Liam shrugged, chuckling nervously.

One of the armed guards approached them, standing “intimidatingly” below Derek, by more than a foot. “State your business. No solicitors.”

Derek bowed politely, well aware that the guard was staring at Derek’s ratty hand me down leather
jacket he’d inherited from Grandpa Hale. “Derek Hale, Scott McCall, and Liam Hale, of the Hale Pack. I’m the son of Talia Hale. We’re here to visit Stiles Stilinski. We come bearing food.”

The Guard’s constipated glare melted immediately into a soft smile. “Ah! A Hale? Well, sure enough, you do look the spitting image of Old Richard Hale! How’s your grandpa doing?!”

“Enjoying retirement.” Derek offered the guard a smile. “Though mom’s not as keen about it. Grandpa likes to start “projects”, which usually makes us all miserable. Last week, it was a skylight in the roof. Then it started to rain. In my big sister’s bedroom.”

The guards (and his cousins) laughed in unison.

“Stiles?” Another guard said, scratching his head. Soon after, realization struck.. “Oh! You must mean, Aleksander! Noah’s Nephew! I forget he uses that nickname now. The kid never comes out of his house anymore. Doesn’t even come to Pack Activities.”

“Stiles is such a sweet Omega. Considering what a trainwreck Brandon is, I’m sure taking care of that worthless Beta he calls a father is a full time job.” Another guard commented. He pressed a switch on the security panel, swinging open the iron gate. “Go on in! I’m sure Stiles will love some company!”

Derek, Liam, and Scott bowed politely once more, walking down the sidewalk.

“Man, it’s been awhile since I’ve been here. Didn’t even recognize the new guards they have at the front gate.” Scott said, sticking hands into the pockets of his hoodie. “Poor Stiles has been really busy lately. Then again, must be hard, not having a mom, and then having a dad that works all the time. I guess if he didn’t do the cooking, cleaning, or whatever, it’d never get done.”

“Is that why you love him?” Scott asked, with a playful grin.

Liam snorted. “Nah, Derek just likes “dat ass”.”

Derek smacked both of his cousins in the back of the head.

Scott snorted, reached into his pocket, pulling out a cell phone and fiddling with its controls. "Okay guys, I've already got my phone recording! Ten bucks says Stiles hugs your neck and spins you around like a top! We'll remember this day as the day that forever changed young Liam Hale's life! He finally got an A in Math!"

“Shaddup!” Liam flushed, pulling out his test paper, looking excited all the same.

The trio stopped at the front door of Stiles' house, Derek reaching back to knock on the door. As he did, a soft shatter could be faintly heard through the thick door. Followed by a nearly inaudible whimper.

“What was that?” Derek asked, leaning his ear on the door’s frame.

"Derek.” Scott focused his camera through an open window, face paling at the sight before him, while Liam gasped.
Turning his head, Derek felt his own stomach drop, immediately filled with bile. He dropped the box of produce, where it scattered all down the steps up to Stiles’ home.

Blood coated half of the window in splatters. On the other side, Derek watched as Stiles struggled to fight back, swiping his fists in his father’s direction, while Brandon held Stiles up by the neck, choking the kid. Brandon slammed Stiles into the ground, repeatedly stomping Stiles in the ribs. By a fully shifted Beta werewolf, roughly twice Stiles' size and weight. A flying bit of debris flew, leaving a crack in the window, where a screeching man's voice could finally be heard.

"...worthless! You fucking worthless Omega trash!"

Derek’s heart thumped deep in his throat, eyes swiftly bleeding red. His body boiled.

"My wife croaks, and you get dropped in my fucking lap! Of course, she HAD to keep you, the genetic freak, instead of giving you off and having a REAL heir! Loved you more than she loved me! You, the Omega freak!"

The fabric of Derek's clothes began to rip and stretch, as he shifted into his Alpha state, pulling off his leather jacket without really knowing why. He grew taller and more muscular than he already was, with long, black hairs popping over his body. A deep, reverberating growl echoed deep within him.

"Then you had to go and be Alpha Noah's FAVORITE nephew, so I couldn't even get rid of you or throw you to someone else! My brother would NEVER let me live it down if I did that, so I got stuck with you! Stuck with you forever! You worthless, useless, TRASH!"

Derek's claws erupted. Thick, meaty claws, as long as his fingers.

"Never went into heat, so I can't even marry you off to some dumb Alpha! Now you want to spread your legs for that Hale boy, and drag me further down!? What did I do to deserve this?!

Somewhere, in the back of Derek’s head, something clicked, an overwhelming urge to protect. He was sure he felt Scott and Liam trying to hold him back. They failed, as Derek's claws broke through the six locks on the Stilinski's door, tearing into the wolfsbane coated locks like butter, and flinging the door halfway across the street behind him. His claws burned in a searing pain, which he ignored.

"You ruined my life! Ruined it!"
Time froze for Derek, as he sprinted inside, taking one look at Stiles' face before everything turned into a shade of deep, bloody red.

Bruises up and down Stiles' body. The smell of blood. Sounds of bones crunching as Stiles' father brought his foot down, time and again, using his power and training to maximize the damage done to Stiles.

Stiles' mouth opened, wheezing out a soft, pitiable...  "Help."

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"...touch...him...again...and...I'll...rip...your...fucking...throat....out!"

"Mercy!  Mercy!  He's yours!  You can have him!  I don't care!  I give!  I give!"

Stiles felt his eyes slowly open, the world little more than a sad blur above him, and the sounds around him a low buzz.

The pain in his chest stopped from the broken bones. Clawed marks up and down his body stopped bleeding, steaming shut. Slowly, but surely, the wounds over his body started to heal. Nothing... Nothing hurt anymore.

"Stiles, come on...  Wake up...  Wake up...  Please...."

Blurs in Stiles' vision started to focus. Above him, he spotted Liam hovering over him, sobbing hysterically. Black veins protruded up and down Liam's entire body, going up as far as to his face, sucking away the pain from Stiles' body., while his eyes glowed a brilliant gold.

Liam had been taking the pain. ALL of the pain, which left the Freshman Beta pale, shaking, and trembling mess.

"Li?"  Stiles choked out, still tasting blood running down his throat.

"Stiles!"  Liam choked back another sob, lifting Stiles up and setting the Omega on his lap to rest.  "You're...  You're okay...  You're okay..."

"I'm..."  Stiles's mind flashed back. He'd fought back against his father, gotten in a few good punches, and...  Lost.  Badly.  There for a bit, Stiles felt like he was going to die from the pain.  His father hadn't pulled any punches.

"Move, and you're dead."
Stiles flinched, recognizing Derek's voice. The tone was deeper, harder, and filled to the brim with unyielding rage, but… Undoubtedly Derek’s. He tilted his head, cringing at the pain, before he caught sight of Derek and his father.

Or rather, a fully wolfed out Derek, in an Alpha State (somewhere blurring the line between man and beast), standing over the beaten pulp of Brandon Stilinski. Brandon's leg pointed in the wrong direction, and his once handsome face was little more than a swollen mass of purple flesh. Yet, despite the obvious damages, not a single cut or claw mark dotted Brandon's skin. Derek had won, against a cop, without resorting to deadly violence.

Derek wasn't as lucky. Huge gashes ran up and down his body, bleeding profusely. Among them, one came precariously close to Derek's neck, just on the edge of the man's shoulder blade. Staggering, Derek struggled to stay upright, paler than he usually was. Based on the blood (all Derek’s) covering the floor, the fight had been a rough one for the teen Alpha.

"No, this isn't a joke! Yes, it happened in the Stilinski Pack! I've got it on camera! Deputy Brandon nearly killed Stiles, he fucking beat the living shit out of his son! Derek had to save him, or Stiles was going to die! I swear, you have to believe me! Please, get here, fast!"

Stiles turned his attention to Scott, who paced up and down Stiles' living room. Tears rolled down his best friend's face, shaking as he spoke with someone on the phone.

"You're awake..." Derek muttered. He wobbled over beside Stiles and Liam, sliding, and then promptly falling down to the ground with an audible hiss.

Gasping, Stiles struggled to lean up, a little stronger thanks to Liam's help. "Derek... Jesus Christ... He used claws on you... That's... That's illegal. If you weren't an Alpha, he could have..."

"I beat up your dad." Derek coughed out a smile, taking Stiles off guard. "Don't think I made a good first impression. S... Sorry."

Stiles felt tears burning in his eyes, unable to hold them back. He reached out, touching the area next to one of Derek's wounds. "You're hurt. You're really hurt. You... You could have died, Derek! My father was a cop! He knows how to kill! He's had special training, he... He... He knows how to hurt people..."

"I'm guessing we'll have to reschedule that barbeque." Derek muttered, reaching around and putting his arm around Stiles. He leaned over, resting his head on Stiles' shoulder. "That... Sucks. I wanted to... Ask if I could court you. Get my family's blessing. Not that you needed it. Everyone... Loves you."

Stiles struggled to speak, to say anything... His heart raced, struggling to keep up with everything around him.

In the end, Stiles leaned over, rubbing his cheek against Derek's, not caring about the tears or bloodstains he was smushing together. He scented Derek, from his cheek, and down his neck, an unspoken "yes" to Derek's offer of courtship.

Derek smiled, despite the waves of pain that rippled through him.
"Derek?" Scott said, breaking Stiles and Derek out of their trance. He plopped down on the other side, sighing. "Uh... I called the cops, and then Aunt Talia. She's on her way."

Flashes of blue and red reflected through the windows, as a crowd gathered outside the Stilinski lawn. Most were voices Stiles recognized as his Pack, commenting on the state of Brandon's front door. Stiles heard the sound of guns being loaded, and police cars swerving into the front lawn.

"Looks like the cops are already here." Liam gulped, dropping his head.

Stiles leaned back into Derek's embrace. "I'm sorry..."

Derek shook his head, shutting his eyes as exhaustion set in over his body. "Don't be. Don't ever be sorry for... That."

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Chapter Music

Thanks for reading! I can swear, that's the WORST of the sad stuff in this story. Everything from here on out is going to be happy fun times, with MAYBE on other sad scene, bu it doesn't compare to this one! ;)

As always, comments, thoughts, and kudos are appreciated!
Chapter 4

Chaos erupted across the Stilinski Community in the aftermath of Derek and Brandon's altercation. A wave of cops (mostly Stiles' aunts, uncles, and cousins) flooded the blood stained home, snarling, growling, and pointing cocked guns at the Hale Pack members, until Stiles managed to calm everyone down.

Thankfully, calmer heads quickly prevailed as Derek passed out, and the cops caught sight of Stiles' multiple injuries and broken limbs. Stiles barely had half of the story out of his mouth before he found himself shoved into one ambulance, and Derek carried into another one. (Brandon found himself hauled in the back of a squad car, and nearly the victim of police brutality as Scott showed the video footage to anyone who'd listen to him.)

Stiles blurred in and out of consciousness as a whirl of bandages, several splints, x rays, a slew of doctors, and a particularly overbearing nurse gave Stiles a medical rundown. All ending with a final evaluation with Dr. Robert Martin (the father of one of his classmates, Lydia) in a private room. An herbal mix of pain medication was shot into his arm, setting his healing factor into overdrive, as his bones mended back into place, bruises slowly dissolved, and his lungs stitched themselves back together.

Well over three hours after Stiles first entered the hospital, he finally had a moment to rest his swiftly clearing head against the uncomfortable hospital bed's pillow, fiddling anxiously with the hospital gown that barely covered anything. He grunted, with the simple act of leaning forward a great discomfort, but slowly getting better with each minute that passed.

"Where's Doctor Martin!?  Get him here NOW!"

Stiles hitched his breath, glaring at light shining through a crack in his hospital room door. He'd recognize the forceful bark anywhere. After all, his Uncle Noah wasn't the County Sheriff and the Stilinski's Lead Alpha for his soft spokenness and timid demeanor.

"I'm here, Alpha Stilinski. No need to scream, there are plenty of patients on this floor who are trying to rest!"  Dr. Martin spat, the man's boots clunking just outside of Stiles' hospital room.

"Give me an update on my nephew. I've only heard bits and pieces from my men. I want the full story, now!"  Noah grumbled in a blunt, weary tone.

Craning his head, Stiles could barely make out the scene on the other side of the door.

Dr. Martin shifted back and forth nervously, a frail husk of a man with deep wrinkles for his age, and soft brown hair slicked back in a mixture of sweat and hair product. The man's eyes shone in a milky silver, concern striking his face. "The injuries aren't life threatening, but are quite severe. Thankfully, the Beta who drained his pain kickstarted Stiles' healing in the process, and kept him conscious. Based on observation, and Stiles's status as an Omega, I'd say the boy should be fully mended in a day or so. The worst should be over by the end of tonight."
"Dammit..." Noah balled his hand into a fist.

Stiles caught sight of the tears rolling down his Uncle's wizened, rustic face.

A man in his later fifties, Noah Stilinski has risen to the status of Lead Alpha of the Stilinski family about 20 years earlier from the previous Alpha, at the same time he took over as the County's Sheriff. Noah lacked the muscle tone he'd once had as the town’s strongest Alphas, but tough enough to command respect all around him a solid build. (Strong enough that nobody dared comment about his thinning honey colored hair. The last person who did became a prime example of the "Old" Sheriff’s powerful right hook.)

"Oh, Stiles..." A woman muttered, standing next to Noah, and wrapping her arm around his waist.

Stiles cringed, watching his Aunt Claudia tear up.

The pale, frailly built Beta buried her head on Noah's shoulder, letting her long, honey wheat hair fall around her. She bit her lip, shaking her head repeatedly.

"I’m going to gut that bastard, Noah. I better not see that monster’s face anywhere NEAR our Pack, ever again, do you hear me?!!"

A shiver ran down Stiles’ spine, knowing that his Aunt’s words were not an idle threat. As one of the town’s longtime deputies, she had just as much, if not more training than anyone else on the force.

"What about Derek Hale?" Noah broke up the conversation, shaking his head, while wrapping his arms around his wife. “I understand he's the one who took the brunt of Brandon's claws."

Dr. Martin sighed, shaking his head. "Because Deputy Brandon used his claws while in a partial shift, the wounds are much more severe, and will take more time to recover. I'd say two or three days at the least for the wounds to shut, though I'm recommending we keep the boy for at least a week. There’s a real threat of internal bleeding until his healing factor kicks in all the way."

Dropping his head, Dr. Martin gazed behind their group, on the opposite end of the hallway. "Though... I'm afraid the gash near his neck will scar. Too deep for the healing factor to fix all the way"

Stiles covered his mouth with one hand, as a pillar of ice grew out of his heart, and spreading throughout the rest of his body. He slammed his eyes shut. “Derek... No...”

"What?" Derek Hale is an Alpha. Shouldn't that count for anything?" Noah countered.

"This wasn't a defensive swipe of the claws, Alpha Stilinski." Dr. Martin spat, with a short, angry growl. "Deputy Brandon's intent was to kill, that much was certain. The wounds were the deepest cuts I've ever seen in my career as a surgeon, like the man was hoping to scoop out the boy’s throat. A lesser wolf would have keeled over after the first one, and passed out from blood loss not long after. In fact, a few inches further to the right on the neck, and Derek Hale would be dead. Using that kind of force on a teenage boy? I've never seen a more blatant display of irresponsible control. Especially from the wolves in blue."

Stiles shook. A crawling, horrible feeling wrapped around his chest, crushing it in a tight grip. Flashes of blood, all over Derek, ran through Stiles mind, wrapping his chest tighter and tighter in the process..

Noah sighed, rubbing the back of his head. "How is my brother faring? I hear the Hale boy gave him a thrashing."
Dr. Martin huffed, folding his arms. "Minor injuries that will heal overnight. Several broken bones, and a set of fractured ribs. Attacks consistent with defensive strikes meant to incapacitate a wolf. There was no deadly intent, Alpha Stilinski. I'd happily rule that Derek attacked in the defense of another."

"I'm aware of that, Dr. Martin, but I thank you for your honesty." Noah bowed to the Doctor, gesturing to Stiles' room. "May we see our nephew?"

A brief smile crossed Dr. Martin's face. "Of course. Please go right in. Do keep the conversation light, the poor boy needs to rest. Stress only makes the healing factor weaken."

Stiles hissed as he craned his neck away from the door, forcing a blanket over his body, and pretended that he hadn't been eavesdropping. Soon after, a gentle knock came to the door.

"Stiles? Can we come in?" Noah whispered, with a croaky tone.

Gulping, Stiles took in a deep breath. "Yes, Alpha..."

Noah and Claudia stepped inside the hospital room, shutting the door behind him as they rushed to Stiles' side. Both wrapped their arms around Stiles, pressing gentle kisses onto his head.

"Stiles, sweetheart, how are you feeling? Is there anything I can get for you? We can send the pack out for anything you want! Something sweet? A drink? Dinner?" Claudia took a seat next to Stiles, grabbing the teen's hands, and wrapping them warmly in her own.

Stiles shook his head. "No thanks, Aunt Claudia. I'm not really hungry right now. Just sort of... Sore."

"You're sure? Nothing at all?" Claudia sniffed, glancing down at the bones poking out through the hospital gown, and Stiles' thin build. "You look... Half starved. I never really noticed how... How thin you were." She wiped away a stray tear. "I... I say a jumbo double cheeseburger with extra bacon is in order? Don't you?" She chucked, in a weak attempt at a joke, barely holding together the urge to sob.

Noah fidgeted awkwardly over Stiles, eyes slammed shut. "We never really noticed a lot of things, Stiles." Opening the balled fists he'd kept tight, droplets of blood dribbled onto the floor, where his claws left deep tears into the man's flesh.

Stiles looked away, unable to face his Alpha's teary gaze, and the overwhelming scent of guilt and failure hanging in the air around his Uncle.

"I saw the video that Beta McCall filmed." Noah stumbled out, reaching into his front pocket, and producing Scott's phone. He waved it in the air, above Stiles. "How long has this been going on?"

"Noah, honey, now's not the time." Claudia murmured, gripping Stiles' hand tightly.

Alpha Stilinski shook his head. "No... I need to hear it, now. So I can file charges on Stiles' behalf, and have a good excuse to kick my brothers sorry ass."

Silence coated the room, dotted with the rhythmic beat of the heart monitor in the corner.

Stiles took a deep breath, shaking his head. "Since mom died," He flinched, as Claudia gripped Stiles' hand tighter. "Dad never... Dad never liked me, at all. Pretty much ignored me as a kid, but... He didn't start that, until after mom died."
"Over 10 years, then." Noah swore under his breath, pacing the length of the room. His red eyes illuminated the room in a bloody, violent red.

"Oh, sweetheart. I'm so sorry." Tears fell from Claudia's face, pebbling the sheets of Stiles' bed. "I'm so... So sorry..."

Noah slammed his fist against the wall, leaving a crater in his wake. "Stiles, you can be sure I'm not going to tolerate this. We have video evidence, and three very reliable eyewitnesses. I'm pressing charges with District Attorney Whittemore first thing in the morning, and we're going to throw the fucking book at Brandon." He stomped over to Stiles' side, bending down on one knee, and gripping Stiles' free hand. "I fucking swear, that bastard Brandon is DONE. I don't care if he's my brother, that son of a bitch is going to rot in prison, and if he ever gets out, you can damn well be sure I'll make sure no pack in the Country takes him in."

"Noah. Language." Claudia chastised her husband, managing a meager smile.

Alpha Stilinski rolled his eyes. "Don't worry, Stiles, I promise... Brandon is never going to touch you, ever again." He managed a small chuckled, shaking his head. "Not that I imagine Brandon would ever dare show his face in public again, after getting trounced by that Hale boy."

Fear seeped back into Stiles, as he flung straight up out of bed. "Derek!" Stiles eyes glimmered silver around the edges, finally able to stare back at his Uncle in the face. "What about Derek? He's not in trouble is he?! Derek did all of that to save me!"

Noah sighed, rubbing the bridge of his nose. "Technically speaking, he picked a fight in a foreign pack's territory he was visiting. That's a crime, and a violation of the treaty we have with the Hales."

He shrugged, reaching forward and gripping Stiles' shoulder. "Naturally, I don't give a flying fuck about that. To save face around town, we might have Derek fix the front door to your house as compensation, but as far as I'm concerned, this only strengthens my respect for the Hale family. I'll be formally thanking Alpha Talia later."

"Does everyone in your office swear like a sailor? In front of young adults?" Claudia sighed, prodding Stiles' cheek. "Stiles, don't end up like your Uncle. Swearing just makes you look ignorant."

"Really, Claudia? Now is when you bring this up?" Noah's nostrils flare, shooting his wife an incredulous glare.

Claudia folded her arms, glaring right back. "Well excuse me for trying to make you and the rest of you pigs on the force be a little more civil!"

"Oh, please, like it's just the police force that swears? I seem to recall a heated PTA meeting between you and Helen Grigsby!" Noah's teeth flashed white as he beamed a wide smile.

Flushing, Claudia huffed. "Well, that woman was just... Too much!"

The scent in the air changed, to a sickly sweet smell, which flooded Stiles' senses, and set his heart to ease. He felt the heavy cloud over him start to break, as an easy laugh left his throat, and a stray tear or two ran down his face. "You guys... Fight way too much."

Leaning over, Claudia pecked a kiss on Stiles' forehead. "Oh, I'm just teasing your Uncle."

"That's what you call it, huh? Are you just "teasing" when you scream at me and my driving, too?" Noah said, raising a playful eyebrow in Stiles' direction.
Caught up in their laughter, the three jolted back to reality as a heavy knock came to the door.

"Pardon me? May I enter? The Doctor told me that Stiles and the Sheriff were here." Asked a woman, with a curt tone.

The Sheriff stood up, taking his place in front of Stiles, putting himself between the Omega and the door. "Enter."

Stepping out of the hallway was a tall, tanned woman with a powerful figure, and sleek black hair, peppered with gray down her long, gentle curls. A tad younger than the Sheriff, but wearing a conservative, sharp ensemble that granted her a serious aura, like something Stiles would expect a college professor might wear. In a pair of rough hands, she held a glass vase, filled with a bloom of Red and Silver roses, intricately woven together.

"Good evening, Stiles. Good evening Alpha Noah, Lady Claudia. Lovely to see you all again, though... I'd rather they be under happier circumstances." Talia bowed her head, offering her respects. "I pray for your quick recovery." Raising up, she sat the roses on the table next to Stiles' bed.

"Alpha Talia." Noah bowed, offering his respects to the Alpha. He rose up soon after, rushing to Talia's head, and shaking her hand firmly. "I believe I owe your pack a great deal of debt. Not only did your family save my nephew's life, but they exposed a corrupt man living under my nose. God knows what my ass of a brother has done on the force." He huffed, groaning to the side.

Talia shook her head, chuckling. "My Pack and I did nothing. My son and my nephews were the ones who acted." She turned her attention to Stiles, smiling sweetly. "Your friends give their love and thoughts, and hope all is well."

Stiles nodded appreciatively. "Thank you... Is he... Okay? Were the cuts really bad?"

Snorting, Talia let a hearty chuckle rip from the depths of her chest, taking the Stilinskis aback. "Oh sweetheart, Derek's already awake, fighting with his sisters over the chocolate pudding in the fridge back home, and poking fun at Isaac's goofy scarf. Trust me, it takes a lot more to keep that boy down," She eased down into a seat, waving the very thought off. "Though, he is worried about you, I must say. Nearly ripped his stitches, and it took two nurses to keep him in bed after he heard you were just down the hall. Thankfully, the realization that he was buck naked under his gown, and showing his hairy ass to half the hospital calmed him down."

Stiles flushed immediately, trying desperately not to picture that... Rather attractive image.

Noah cleared his throat, taking the seat across from Talia. "In any case, I would like to express my gratitude to the Hale Pack. Or even just to Derek and your nephews."

A coy smile crossed Talia's face. "You're sure?"

"Absolutely." Noah reiterated.

"Very well, then. I'll call in my favor immediately." Talia crossed her legs, turning her attention back to Stiles. "Why waste any time?"

Noah, clearly taken aback, nodded. "Of course. Anything that's within my power, I'd gladly give you."
"Excellent." Talia raised her hand, pointing directly at Stiles. "As the Alpha of the Hale Pack collecting a debt from the Stilinski pack, I formally request that Stiles join our Pack, and join our Family."

Noah and Claudia's faces paled on the spot.

Stiles felt his heart bloom, on the verge of bursting with joy. Because... He couldn't have actually heard that right. Could he?

"You want... Stiles?" Noah stumbled out.

"We ALL want Stiles, Alpha Stilinski." Talia corrected, immediately, with a fierce flash of her red eyes.

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Chapter Music

Your thoughts, comments, and kudos are greatly appreciated! Let me know what you think of the story! :)

Next chapter, Stiles and Derek will get to reunite, while their parents
By late morning of the next day, the worst of Stiles' injuries healed, granting the young Omega the freedom to walk with relative ease (and only a minor limp). Bruises still lined a majority of his body, alongside a sensitive set of ribs, but overall looked far worse than they felt.

After an early morning checkup from the hospital staff, Stiles changed into comfortable clothes (furnished by his Aunt Claudia, who'd snuck him an overnight bag from the crime scene), and wandered down the halls of the hospital's top floor.

Or rather, he paced back and forth in front of Room 809, staring at the whiteboard clearly marked "Hale, Derek". Waiting for the better part of an hour, he waited for Derek's final evaluations, and if he was cleared for visitors that weren't blood relations.

The door clicked, and Stiles froze in place, watching Dr. Martin and a pair of nurses exit the room, fiddling with a chart in their hands.

"Be sure and change the bandage at noon and make sure the bleeding has stopped. Please also make sure and..." Dr. Martin caught Stiles' gaze, offering the teen a warm smile. "Good to see you up and around, Stiles." He wasted no time in nodding to the room behind him. "You can go on in. I'm clearing him for visitors. He's been asking for you, and I'd be remiss to deny our local hero something so simple."

"Thank you!" Stiles rushed past the doctor and nurses, and into Derek's room. He shut the door behind him, rushing through the entryway. "Derek? Are you here?" As he reached the middle of the room, the Omega stifled a fit of laughter, covering his mouth.

Stiles' eyes came to rest on Derek's long body, laying on a hospital bed, with his feet a good gap off the edge and supported by a pair of pillows duct taped to prevent them from dangling. Clearly, the hospital staff draped over the Alpha's body with a hospital gown long enough to double as surgical dress for a Horse, to accommodate the man's height. Though, perhaps the most humorous of all was the extension cords poking out of the heart monitor, in order for the cord to reach all the way down to Derek's hand, and the crazy tubing that ran down the IV bag, stretching out to Derek's wrists.

Derek caught Stiles' stifled laughter, rolling his eyes. "Yeah, yeah, laugh it up! Big guy in a tiny bed. Ha ha ha! Let's all make fun of Derek the Giant!" He smiled, flashing a radiant, warm smile.

From a chair next to Derek, and the only other body in the room, Scott snorted. "Pretty sure the EMTs couldn't fit you in the standard sized gurney, so one of the guys had to hold your legs the whole way."

Stiles shook his head, joining Derek's side, and patting the Alpha's hand gently. "I'm sorry.... I'm so sorry.... It's just.... It's cute!" Laughter staved off the tears Stiles wanted to spill, eyes gazing up and down Derek's body.

The Alpha looked far better than the night prior, with most of the smaller cuts on his body sealed up, but larger gashes remained bandaged, dotted with trace amounts of blood pooling underneath. Stiles gulped, releasing a gentle chuckle. "It's like when you couldn't fit your head in the driver's ed car, and they had to use Coach Finstock's truck whenever it was your day to drive!"

Sighing, Derek rubbed his forehead. "What school buys a VW Bug for the Driver's Ed car?! Seriously!" He immediately gestured to the bed below him. "What hospital buys beds theses
small?! What is this? A bed for ants?!”

“Nah, a bed for normal sized people who aren't trying to outgrow a tree.” Scott joked, standing from his seat, wrapping his arms around Stiles, and pulling him in for a tight hug. “You're looking good! How ya feeling? Anything broken? Should you be up and walking already?”

Hugging Scott back, Stiles felt the Beta's grief coursing through his veins. All the worry, all the grief, and all the sadness, bubbling just under the surface.

One of an Omega's many perks, Stiles could always sense how his friends felt, by contact of skin, for better or worse.

“I'm fine, Scott.” Stiles hugged Scott back with just as much fervor, hoping to ease his friend's overwhelming worry. “The doctor cleared me to walk around, and get some blood pumping. I'm just a little achy, that's all.” He turned to Derek, nodding appreciatively. “You're looking…. Less bloody?”

“Thanks, I try.” Derek grinned, leaning back and resting on a thick pillow, while Scott and Stiles took seats next to him. “Scott was just telling me that pretty much everyone at school and all over town are talking about some romanticized version of what actually happened.”

Stiles cringed. He could only imagine what kind of story the little old ladies in dispatch had started spreading around. They tended to dramatize to the extreme.

Scott shook his head, hiding a sneaky grin. “Ever seen one of those harlequin romance novels, with the buff Alpha on the front cover, carrying out a Beta or Omega from a burning building, their rippling muscles scarred and sweaty, covered in ash and dirt, but they're still managing to ram their tongue down the love interest’s throat? All while keeping their perfect hair somehow flawless?” Rolling his eyes, the Beta huffed. “The story is something like that.”

"Good grief." Derek slammed his eyes shut, shaking his head back and forth and groaning. "This sucks. Nobody wanted last night broadcast all over town..."

Stiles felt the anxiety roll off Derek. He attempted a sly smile, patting Derek's hand. “You're right, this does suck.” He pinched Derek's hand, playfully. "I mean, come on, Derek’s much better looking than those douchebags on romance covers! Have you seen him shirtless? The man's a walking cowboy model. How dare they lower him to the standards of that hack Fabio!”

A short grin crossed Derek's face. He opened his eyes, gazing back at Stiles, and catching onto the Omega's warm intentions. “Pfft. Come on, Scott’s the one with the six pack and the gym addiction.” Derek linked his hand with Stiles', allowing his eyes to glow. “You're the one with the gorgeous eyes. Like the moon in the sky on a starry night.”

Laughing, Stiles felt a hot blush cross his face. “Screw a six pack. I’d have a natural guy with natural muscles any day. Makes you cuddlier.” Stiles' eyes melted into their warm, milky silver. “...and your eyes are way prettier than mine. Like a couple of rubies, in the middle of priceless treasure.”

“Aww.” Derek chuckled, unable to hold back a genuine smile.

“Bleck.” Scott feigned a gagging noise, waving both Stiles and Derek off. “Okay, while you guys do your “thing”, I'm going to run and grab some drinks for us, and let everyone know you're up, Stiles.” He threw a hug around Stiles' neck, and quickly clasped a hand on Derek's shoulder. “I'd prepare yourselves for the army of visitors.”
Scott left the Alpha and Omega alone, clicking the door shut behind him as he left.

Derek's grip on Stiles' hand grew tighter. He brought the Omega's hand up, kissing it chastely. "Don't worry about school. Scott wasn't kidding about the romance novel bullshit, but Liam set the story straight with some tasteful editing of the events. Mom did, too." He dropped his head, biting his bottom lip. "Though pretty much everyone knows about... Deputy Brandon."

"It's fine," Stiles grumbled, shaking his head. He was glad that his father's "true" self was out there for the world to see, but... Stiles knew it would be awkward from then on out, with most of the people he interacted with. They'd all know him as the kid that got beat. A victim. "I expected it. I mean.... Gossip around town spreads like wildfire, so there's no way it would have been a secret for long."

Derek gulped, offering Stiles a sympathetic smile. "You okay? If you need someone to talk to about it, my Uncle Peter is a shrink." Wincing, Derek swore under his breath. "Not that I think you're crazy or anything! I just... I mean... That shit sucks, man."

"I know what you're saying Derek, and thanks. I'll probably need that at some point." Stiles glanced away, eyes glazing over in a quiet horror. He didn't want to fathom how messed up he was in the head, or what kind of shit this would do to him down the line. Denial sounded good, for the time being. "I just... I don't want to talk about it right now. Not to anyone, if that's okay?" He huffed, bending over to bury his head in his lap. "I'm having a hard time accepting.... All of this. That it's over... That this isn't some... Really great dream that I'm going to wake up from, back into that God awful nightmare." He raised his head up, chuckling. "You saved my life... You... You adorable, gigantic, wonderful dork. You just.. You don't even know what that means to me. I can't even... I can't even think straight, about what it's going to be like... To have a normal life."

"I..." Derek crumbled. He let out a broken, fragile whimper, as the floodgates broke under the Alpha's cocky demeanor. "I should have done it a long time ago, Stiles... I... I didn't know... I should... I should have... I should have done something."

"Don't... Don't you fucking cry." Stiles laughed, his entire body shaking. "Because then I'll cry, then you'll cry some more, and then it'll be like us watching that stupid movie when the dog dies, and everyone will make fun of us, and nobody wants that."

The two sat in mutual silence. Tears ran down both their faces, across bright, smiling faces, accompanied by short breaks of chuckles, interlaced with a sob here and there.

After a while, the tears dried up, but the laughter remained.

Derek cleared his throat, patting the inch or two of free space next to his bed. "Come here."

"Huh?" Stiles wiped away a tear.

"Lay down with me." Derek asked, clearing his throat, while his face broke out in a bright red hue. "If... If you want, that is."

Stiles caught his breath, nodding sheepishly.

Awkwardly, Stiles managed to lodge himself up next to Derek, sharing the hospital bed with the Alpha. Derek wrapped his arm around Stiles, pulling him close, while Stiles tucked his head onto Derek's bicep.

Derek ran his hands through Stiles' hair, leaning forward and pressing a kiss on Stiles' forehead. An easy smile crossed Derek's face, while he shut his tired eyes, "So, let's not talk about that, then..."
His arm gripped Stiles' hip, tucking the Omega closer. “So, uh…. Did my mom ask you and Alpha Stilinski about joining our pack? Because… I don't think any of us are going to be able to handle letting you out of our sight. I mean... I'm not speaking for the rest of my pack, but, dat ass, Stiles.”

Stiles snorted, nudging Derek in the stomach with his knee, earning a pained grunt from the Alpha. “Yeah. We all talked about it last night. Your mom and my Uncle must have been going at it for hours.”

“What did they say?!” Derek's entire body perked up, the Alpha jerking forward, and beaming like an overexcited puppy.

Stiles just smiled, feeling the overbounding joy flaring through Derek's body. Which only served to make Stiles more excited about the coming days.

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Noah Stilinski felt the rage bubble to the surface, as he realized that all of Stiles' worldly belongings could fit into two average sized duffel bags. The poor boy's room was little more than a cracker thin mattress, old sheets, and a pile of ill fitting clothes. Whereas, Brandon's room had been filled with every amenity and electronic gadget that existed.

"I'm going to shove my boot so far up your ass, Brandon, that you'll taste leather for the rest of your life. That is, if Claudia doesn't kill you first, and I cover up the murder."

Huffing, Noah tossed both bags over his shoulders, weaving in and out of the crime scene investigators that took up the rest of the house. Mostly a waste of their time, considering that Brandon had already been tossed into jail, without bond, and little hope of freedom anytime soon. Still, it didn't hurt to stack the case as much as they could. With any luck, the bastard could see 20 or more years in prison at the least.

Exiting his brother's home, Noah walked down the cobblestone pathway, and to Talia Hale, sitting on the edge of her family's farm truck.

“I really hate this.” Noah said, planting both of Stiles' bags into the passenger seat of Talia's truck. He shook his head, feeling a wave of guilt reverberate throughout his entire body. “Really, really hate this.”

Talia threw both arms around the Sheriff's neck. “We’ll take good care of him, Noah, I promise.” She patted the Alpha's back, a short shiver running down her own spine. “Just like he's taken care of us.”

Breaking the hug, Noah rose an eyebrow. "Stiles helped your pack?"

"Oh, I'd say so..." Talia wiped a tear from her eye. "Not many kids would want to be around my boys. I'm sure you know that being friends with a Hale doesn't do much for one's social class, what with us being the only pack that lives off the land... Stiles though... I still remember that first day of school, with Scott and Derek coming back home and bragging about their new best friend, and how much fun they had, day in and day out."

Noah chuckled, nodding. "That's... My Stiles. Reminds me so much of his grandfather."
Talia shut the passenger door, walking with the Sheriff on the opposite side of her truck. "My
nenephew Liam, as I'm sure you know, got into all of that trouble at Devenford. After he got expelled
and chucked to Beacon High, Liam spiraled out of control, and... Stiles brought him out of it. Got
his life back on track. Got his grades up. Got him into sports again. Accepted Liam into their little
group of friends, without a second thought."

Sheriff Stilinski cringed. Liam Hale... He wasn't exactly thrilled with the idea of Stiles being around
the punk delinquent, but... Apparently that punk delinquent had been one of the reasons Stiles
recovered so quickly. He'd try not to remember the brat's... Past crimes.

"So, of course, we owe him a great deal. Giving him a loving home, and a place with his friends is
the least we can do." Talia's hand hovered over the driver's side door, dropping her head. "Maybe...
Maybe I'm selfish, too. Maybe I'm hoping for more of Stiles' light to shine on our pack. Because he
seems so good at chasing away the darkness."

"He'd have to be." Noah shook his head. "Considering how he's lived the last ten years."

The two Alpha stood in silence, overhearing the sounds of the police rummaging in and out of
Brandon Stilinski's home.

"You remember our agreement. My wife and I will be there to pick up Stiles on Sunday, and take
him to dinner and a movie. We'll have him back by his curfew." Noah muttered.

"Every Sunday, I promise." Talia nodded.

"My financial advisor will have Stiles' trust fund sent over to you in a couple of days, and all the
bonds. Nothing spectacular, but it'll pay for college, and give him a little something for down the
line." Noah's hands shook. He refused to tear up, so close to his deputes, but he didn't hide the
cracks in his voice. "If your pack needs ANYTHING, Talia, and I mean ANYTHING, you don't
fucking hesitate to call me. I don't care if it's just some rustling in the bushes, you call me, and I'll
have my men out there in a split second, or I..."

"Noah." Talia placed her arm on Alpha Stilinski's shoulder, calming him. "Stiles will be fine. He's
going to have an entire pack, who loves him to pieces, always with him. Our Pack is going to make
sure his every need is met, and that he never goes hungry. If anything goes wrong, or if we need the
police, I will call you."

A steady heartbeat from Talia calmed Noah's nerves. The woman spoke the truth, and that settled
the old man's slowly crushing heart.

Opening the door for Talia, Noah gestured for the Alpha to enter. "...and feed that boy some steaks.
He's too damn skinny."

Talia cackled. "Oh, don't you worry. Once Lorraine gets a hold of him, Stiles is going to never go
hungry again."

Noah smiled, as Talia's steady heartbeat spoke the truth to him once more.

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*Chapter Music*

Thanks for reading! The real fun of the fic starts tomorrow! ;)
Comments, thoughts, kudos and
anything is greatly appreciated!
Chapter 6

Expansive green pastures, tilled earth, acres of cultivated farmland, groves of fruit bearing trees, and a slew of animals passed by Stiles in a blur as he rode through the massive property that the Hale Pack owned, in the passenger seat of Talia's truck. Hundreds of times bigger than the Stilinski community (or any community in Beacon Hills), the old dirt roads that lined the Hale land seemed to go on forever, winding through the Californian countryside.

Stiles and Talia drove by dozens of charming cabins along the way, while Talia waved to every soul she met along the way.

"This is all your land?" Stiles asked, glancing over to... Well, he supposed Talia was his Alpha now. A bite mark on his wrist, already halfway done healing, was evidence enough, coupled with the subtle change in his blood's scent.

Talia beamed. "Sure is! Not as fancy as other Pack Communities, or as close together in those gated areas, but we’re happy enough," She pointed to one of the many homes, next to a field of fledgling strawberry patches. "Each branch of the Hale family has been responsible for a certain crop or livestock, going back generations as far as anyone can remember. So, naturally, they live next to the farmland they're in charge of. A gated community might be nice for some, but it doesn't really work for us."

"That makes sense. Though, doesn't that make it hard to see each other?" Stiles asked.

Talia snorted. "Hell no. We meetup once a week for dinner at the our home, which, once you get to know our family, is plenty enough time being around them," she slowed the car down, pointing out a sparkling blue lake in the dead center of their land.

Stiles barely paid attention to the lake, paling from Talia's words. "All of you? Are you kidding?!" He remembered once or twice in his entire lifetime that the Stilinski pack gathered all of their pack in one place. Results were less than favorable, and resulted in heated debates, and a couple of fist fights on how the pack's finances should be m.

“All of us.” Talia nodded, chuckling to herself. "Crazy, I know, but it's a tradition my great grandfather started when he settled this land. Part of our pack bylaws, and why our pack works so well together," She waved at another passerby, who hustled several sheep out of the dirt road’ pathway. "Though it's fun, and you can't believe the food that a pack of farmers can pull from fresh crops,” Reaching up, she patted her stomach. "If I weren't careful, I'd be big as a house!"

Stiles felt his stomach rumble, followed by a quick blush. "Doesn't sound like a problem."

"Oh believe me, it's not!" Talia drove down several other winding roads, before reaching a thicket of trees that they drove through.

Before long, they reached a clearing in the trees, where a grander version of the earlier cabin homes stood, about three stories high, with a massive building attached to the side of the home. Colored a deep rosewood, the home gave off a warm and inviting feel about it, like something out of a Laura Ingalls book.

Dirt covered trucks were parked outside the garage, with a couple nicer (but later model) cars inside the garage. A rusted blue Jeep, clearly out of commission, sat parked up against a tree.

A fire pit sat on the edge of the property, with dozens of logs seated around the pit, carved in varying
Talia parked with the rest of the work trucks, as a slew of dogs (and an aggressive pygmy goat) hopped and barked happily at her return. She switched off the truck, turning to meet Stiles' gaze. “Before we head in, I'll get the boring stuff out of the way. Just a little bit about how the family works, and what our Pack expects.”

Stiles nodded, balling his hands against his knees. He glanced away, staring intently at the floorboard. "Of course they'd have rules... Well, can't be any worse than dad's orders were.”

Reaching over, Talia cupped her hand against Stiles' face, raising his head up. She smiled, rubbing her finger against Stiles' cheek, scenting him and marking the teen as her own. “I don't have many rules for you. You're almost an adult, and have a good head on your shoulders, so I'm sure you have common sense not to do something too stupid. I'm sure you won't pull a Liam on us.”

Stiles chuckled, feeling a comfortable warmth spread through him.

“Everyone in the pack provides for the pack. There's no slackers in my family, Stiles.” Talia removed her hand from Stiles, taking a deep breath. "I don't expect you to break your back, or work more than anyone else, but there's always something to do. Take a few weeks to get acclimated to us, and maybe we can find you something.”

“Yeah! Of course!” Stiles waved his hands up in protest, feeling a deep embarrassment running through him. “I don't want to wait, it's fine! I don't want any special treatment, I'm not some fragile glass person that's going to break! You guys are doing so much for me, PLEASE, let me know how I can repay you.”

Talia chuckled, slowly nodding. “Alright, then. I'll find you something,” She reached down into the console of the truck, rummaging through its contents. “Be home by 9:00 on weekdays, so I know you're safe, and won't be too exhausted for school the next morning. Curfew on weekends is 11:00, call me if you're going to be late, so I don't worry about you being dead in a ditch. Hopefully that's not too strict. I know how thing have changed a lot since I was a girl your age.” From the bottom of the console, Talia recovered a flip phone, with several dings around the edge. She placed it into Stiles' hand. “This isn't much, just one of our farm phones, but you can make calls and text with it. I programmed everyone’s numbers in it for you. I didn't see you had a phone of your own, so I figured it's something you might appreciate.”

Stiles felt his mouth gape open, gripping the phone in his hands. He shook, letting out a slow, tender laugh. "Too strict? Are you kidding me?!"

“Something funny?” Talia rose an eyebrow, unsure of how to take the teen's expression.

Stiles cleared his throat, flipping open the phone and smirking. The wallpaper of the phone was a picture of him, Scott, Derek, and Liam in the high school cafeteria. “I uh…. I had to be home by 4:30 every day. To do my dad's daily laundry, cook him dinner, scrub the toilets, polish his boots... You name it, I had to have it done,” He stammered out, distracted by the picture. Stiles stuffed the phone in the front pocket of his shirt. “I've never had a cell phone before, for some pretty obvious reasons, so... Thank you, so much.”

"You're welcome." Talia reached over, yanking Stiles into a tight hug.

Taking Stiles' luggage, Talia led Stiles up to the front porch (growling at the dogs and goat to shoo away from Stiles), slamming her fist repeatedly on the oak door with little ceremony.
Not a few seconds later, the door swung open, with an overexcited Liam on the other side.

“Stiles!” Liam pushed past Talia, leaping up and wrapping his arms around Stiles’ neck, bringing them both to the ground in a spectacular crash. "You're here! You're okay!"

While most of the waterworks, for Liam, had come crashing down the day prior at the hospital, a short sniffle and whimper from the Beta caught Stiles’ attention.

Reaching up, Stiles hugged Liam right back. He ran his hand on the back of Liam's neck, scenting his... Well, he supposed Liam was a pack mate now. He was family, now. “Hey, Li... Yes, I'm fine.”

Liam leaned up, helping Stiles up and ignoring Talia's awestruck gaze at Liam's display of affection. "Welcome... Welcome home. About time you got here.” He folded his arms, nudging Stiles' shoulder with his own. "Come on in."

Stiles followed Liam inside the Hale's Alpha Home. He was met with the warmth of a roaring fireplace, thick rugs covering a hold hardwood flooring, and a simple, rustic decor.

From the expansive living area, Stiles spotted several unfamiliar faces, looking up from the massive couches (clearly made for large groups and a close knit werewolf family).

Liam nodded to the group. "This is my family. We live here with Aunt Tally and Grandpa Richard. Family, this is Stiles."

The first to stand, a sharply dressed man in his later forties, extended his hand to Stiles, shaking it firmly. “Lovely to finally meet you in person, Stiles. I'm Dr. Peter Hale, Liam’s father. Truly, it's a pleasure,” His eyes flashed a warm yellow, patting Stiles on the shoulder.

"Really?” Stiles took in the man's sharp features, dark, quaffed hair, and proper (almost uptight) manner of speaking and didn't immediately link the man together with Liam. ”Nice to meet you, sir,” Stiles bowed his head.

"It's just Peter, young man." He corrected, turning and gesturing to the other two sitting on the couch.

The first, a lean guy in a sharp white school uniform, with dark brown curls, appeared to be just as overwhelmingly tall as Derek, with guy's legs taking up over half of his body. If the Chemistry textbook in his lap were any indication, he had to have been about the same age, too. His eyes flashed gold in Stiles' presence.

Beside the beanpole, an older girl, paler than the boy, sat with straight blonde hair that went down to her bottom, wrapped in a thick collegiate hoodie, clacking away on an outdated laptop. Looking up from her work, her eyes flared a sharp, honey yellow, and she waved, politely.

Peter guided Stiles to the duo. “This is Isaac Hale, my oldest son, and Malia Hale, my oldest child. Isaac attends Devenford Preparatory as a Sophomore, and Malia’s a freshman at Beacon University in Agricultural Studies. Both are Betas.”

Stiles shook both sets of hands, and felt both Isaac and Malia clasp around his shoulders, next to Peter's hand. Already, he smelt the concentration of the Hale pack starting to linger on his skin. Not that it would take much, given what little contact he ever had with Brandon. Still, it was nice, having an actual scent of family lingering on his skin.

“Hey.” Isaac said, breaking the ice as wrapped his arms around Stiles and patting the teen on his
back. “Thanks for taking care of my little brother like you have. Seriously, you have no idea how much you’ve saved his future, you are tutor of the year!” He broke the hug, grinning in Liam's direction. "Li's a real pain in the ass, too. You must be a real saint to put up with his shit.”

Malia snorted. "Pain in the ass? That's putting it mildly. He's a five foot tyrant with a Napoleon complex."

“Hey!” Liam snapped, growling at his older siblings with a flash of pearly white fangs. “I'm not like that anymore! So shut the fuck up!”

"Language." Peter sighed, rubbing his forehead.

Stiles chuckled, reaching back and patting Liam on the shoulder. "Hey, Li's a smart guy and fun to hang around with."

“I know he is!” Isaac reached over, pulling Liam into a headlock, ruffling the teen's hair. “Just teasing you, little bro. It's so easy to get you all riled up! Like Malia said, you're a tiny little terror!”

"Off me, Isaac!" Liam screamed, as the brothers quickly devolved into a mess of struggling, flailing limbs.

Talia leaned closer to Peter, sighing. "...and here's when Stiles runs screaming in horror. Great job, baby brother."

Peter glared right back at his sister. "Just wait until he meets Papa and your overbearing lunk of a husband when they get back from fixing the McCall's plumbing. Then we'll see who's got the REAL dysfunctional family, Sissy.” Sparks flew between brother and sister.

Warmth ran through Stiles' veins, accompanied by the sweet smell of affection. He took in a deep breath, basking in the noise, and the feeling of a real home. Laughter soon followed, as the Omega watched Liam knock Isaac back into the couch, and attempt to smother his older brother with a pillow.

“Well, now that you've met everyone, and haven't fled in terror…” Talia set Stiles' bags on the floor, reaching over and pecking a gentle kiss on Stiles' head. “I'm gonna head back to check up on Derek. They're hoping to release him soon, and I don't like him being there all alone.” Striding over to the couch, Talia snagged the pillow out of Liam's hands, smacking the teen in the back of the head with it. “Isaac, Liam, if you're done horsing around, why don't you show Stiles to his room? Get him settled, and don't embarrass the family on the first day.”

The Hale brothers hopped to their feet, dusting themselves off, and each grabbing one of Stiles' bags.

"We're on the second floor, Stiles! Come on!" Liam guided Stiles to the staircase at the end of the living area.

Stiles followed behind Isaac and Liam, taking in the sights of the Hale home along the way. He didn't see much in the way of knick knacks, or unnecessary decorations. Everything he saw seemed to have a function or a purpose in the house, like the large blankets and quilts he saw plastered all around, or the ample seating options, clearly for the large family unit. The bedrooms, based on a quick peek around, seemed to follow that theme, with just enough space to sleep, work, and store clothes, and not much in the way of excess "stuff”.

“Downstairs is where the old people live. Our rooms are up here.” Isaac said, knocking on the first door on the second floor, with a rose colored door. “That's Cora, Malia, and Laura's room. Cora’s at one of her combat classes, and Laura’s at college. They'll be home by dinner, probably.” Right
across from the girls' room, Isaac pointed to a darker colored door. “That’s Derek’s room, and Scott pretty much lives there, too. Derek's big brother, Ennis, used to live in there before he moved out,” Isaac stopped at the end of the hallway, reaching forward and twisting the knob to a neutral colored door. "This is mine and Liam's room, which is also now your room.”

Stepping inside, Stiles was blasted with the mingled scent of Isaac and Liam, emanating from a single King sized bed, unkempt with two sets of blanket and pillows strewn about. The room presented itself in disarray, where they’d clearly shifted the furniture around to allow for a third dresser and third desk, just for Stiles.

Liam's lacrosse gear laid strung over a messy desk, lined with study books, a mess of comics, and surrounded by posters of varying sports stars, and snapshots of their Beacon High group taped to the wall.

In its own corner, Isaac's part of the room was far tider. Neatly arranged textbooks were stacked in order, marked with colored notes, in front of an old desktop computer, where a word processing program blinked out a half written paper. A old 90's CD player and headphones sat next to the keyboard, beside a stack of CDs of various artists across several genres.

Stiles' heart skipped a beat, unable to take in the sight of a real bedroom. With... Stuff.

“Hope you don't care sharing a bed and such close quarters. After you and Derek finish courting, I'm sure you'll share with him, but Aunt Talia is pretty old fashioned, so....You got stuck with us until that happens,” Isaac sat Stiles' bag on the Omega's empty desk, smiling. "Do whatever you want with your part of the room, and let me know if you need anything.”

Unable to hold back a bright smile, Stiles shook his head. "No, this is.. This is awesome. It's way more than I've ever...” Stiles caught himself, trying to block out the memories of his old room. The cracker mattress, blankets that had holes in them, and the lock on his door that only worked from the outside. He shook his head. "Seriously, thank you.”

Isaac looked away, stuffing hands into his pockets. "Don't have to thank us, Stiles. If what Scott and Derek brag about you constantly is true, then we're lucky to have you,” He cleared his throat, plastering on a smile and prodding Liam in the side with his foot. "Word of advice, Liam kicks in his sleep, so I'd wear a cup to bed. Learned that the hard way more than once.”


Isaac snorted. “Liam farts in his sleep after taco night. Little man's sensitive tummy can't handle beef, so don't forget the nose plug.”

Deep growls echoed between the brothers, and Stiles watched in awe, as Liam stood up on his tippy toes, barely coming up to Isaac's neck. “Stuck up bitch. You really want to start with me?!”

Isaac smirked. "Just telling Stiles the facts... Juvie reject.”

Liam growled. “Devenford whore.”

"Beacon Slut.”

"Hipster snob!”

"Momma's boy.”
"Daddy's brownnoser."

Isaac's face curved into a long, wry smile. "Shortie."

Liam slammed Isaac into the ground, as the brothers soon dissolved into another wrestling match, in a fit of growls, snarls, and fight for dominance. They knocked over several chairs, and rammed into the wall with an audible thud.

"Oh dear. They're really going at it today..."

Stiles spun around, watching as an older woman stepped inside the room, carrying a tray of cookies, and dressed in a pink, floral apron that wrapped around her plump figure.

Poofy blonde hair swirled around her gentle face. "Though I hear Peter and Talia fought just as much when they were that age. I know I used to do the same with my big sister... Just a part of life," the woman laughed, bright and high pitched, full of zest.

"I guess so..." Stiles said, sensing Liam and Isaac's love for each other, deep down within. They weren't fighting out of anger, that much he knew for sure.

A tray of cookies were forced under Stiles' nose, with the woman's glimmering silver eyes. "Lorraine Hale, I'm Peter's wife, and the mother to those little monkeys over there. Cookie? They're fresh out of the oven and baked with Aunt Lorraine's super secret recipe, passed down from the back of Betty Crocker package for generations!" She laughed again, from the depths of her stomach, that made Stiles smile right alongside her.

"Thanks!" Reaching out, Stiles took a cookie, biting into the thick, chocolaty, molten goodness. The flavor hit his tongue, and he beamed brightly. He finished the dessert in a hurry, only to hear his stomach rumble soon after, clearly demanding another.

Lorraine turned to meet Stiles, gasping as she poked at the bone sticking out from the V of his shirt. "Look at you! Skinny as a rail, and just listen to that stomach rumbling! Unacceptable! Absolutely unacceptable! Not in my home!" Setting the cookies down on Stiles' desk, she all but dragged Stiles out of his room, down the stairs, and through the maze of halls that finally led into a cozy, old fashioned country kitchen. "Come on, sweetie, let's get you a little nosh. Nothing too big, we're having dinner in just a few hours, but... How about a thick burger, with ooey gooey farm cheese, and sweet bacon, with some fresh cut fries with all the fixins?! Oh, we have the best, freshest potatoes, Stiles. They're so yummy, Peter's cousin Elizabeth Anne plucked them up just this week!"

"Uh... That's okay, really! Don't go to any trouble." Stiles felt as though his words fell on deaf ears, as Lorraine already attacked the numerous cupboards with gusto, setting ingredient up on the kitchen counter.

"Nonsense! You're hungry! You should eat!" Lorraine grabbed a hesitant Stiles, pulling him to the counter of the kitchen. She handed him a potato peeler, and dumped several spuds in front of him. "I hear from your Aunt Claudia that you're quite the cook, and from Alpha Talia that you're interested in helping out around here! Oh, it'd be just a real treat if you could help me out around the kitchen, and with the dishes. Better than doing those dirty farm chores, believe you me, but just as much work! You should see how much we have to feed those giants, Isaac, Ricahrd, and Derek! They never stop eating!" Lorraine took a preportioned patty of meat from the fridge, throwing a multitude of spices, and rolling into a patty with her swift hands. "Nobody ever wants to help in the kitchen. Not after Malia's failed attempt at making a pizza. I swear, nobody in this house could boil water if their life depended on it! The shame of it all! Why, in my day, I learned all my cooking from Granny Alpha Sophie! She was the sweetest little old lady... Cooked for all 20 of us, every
day until the day she died!"

Peeler in hand, Stiles did as instructed and helped prepare his own lunch, while Miss Lorraine's energetic mouth and plethora of stories kept Stiles entertained for his impromptu lunch, and for most of the afternoon as they waited for the rest of the family to rejoin them. Not long after, he found himself being taught how to make Aunt Lorraine's 5 Alarm Chili, baked potatoes, and super fruit salad, as they prepared dinner for the family.

Liam hung out in the kitchen, working on math, and asking for help from Stiles when the need arose.

Peter saw himself out in the late afternoon, meeting with a client, but not before stopping to peck a kiss from Lorraine, and hug all of his children, Stiles included.

Isaac and Malia were coffee addicts, who spent most of their time studying, but took the time to make a cup or two for Stiles and Lorraine, and bitched about their respective hated teachers and subjects.

Stiles smiled through it all.

Not even a day with the Hales, and he already felt like he was exactly where he belonged.

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Chapter Music

Comment thoughts and kudos are greatly appreciated! I hope you're all enjoying the story so far! More to come soon! :)
Chapter 7

Stiles collapsed onto the Hale’s majestically sized living room couch, clutching his bloated stomach. Between Aunt Lorraine’s burger from lunch, a massive helping of chili and potatoes, and a key lime pie with soft homemade whipped cream for dessert, Stiles felt like he’d gained twenty pounds alone.

“Aunt Lorraine claims another victim!”

Stiles glanced up, watching as Laura Hale immediately took the seat to his right. The spitting image of Talia, Laura’s serious demeanor often found itself colored with bright smiles, and bouts of warm laughter. She rocked the typical college studyholic gear, with her long brown hair tied up in a ponytail, and a soft, warm hue to her skin, much like Derek and the rest of his family.

Laura’s eyes flashed red, as she reached over, pulling Stiles closer to herself in a side hug. “Told you the key lime pie was worth the pain, am I right?”

Groaning softly, Stiles couldn’t help but nod. The pie had been to die for.

A teenage girl, around Liam’s age, crashed down on the opposite side of Stiles. She smiled, leaning on the left side of Stiles’ shoulder, and her soft eyes glowed a gentle silver. “Just wait until you try Mrs. McCall’s tamales on Pack Night. She will blow your tastebuds away!”

Turning to his side, Stiles nodded to Cora Hale, Derek’s younger sister. Unlike Laura, it was clear that Cora (much like Derek), took after their father’s side of the family, sporting a head of sleek black hair, a deeper tan, and with the oversized limbs and height to put Stiles (and Laura) to shame. She smelled of stale sweat that dotted her muscular figure, and by the state of her gym shirt (highlighting a local kickboxing team), could probably thrown down with the best of them.

"I don't even want to think about food anytime soon." Stiles groaned, curling up in between the Hale sisters, and waiting for his food to digest.

Cora and Laura laughed, subtly keeping contact and scenting Stiles in the process.

"Where's Dad and Grandpa?” Cora finally asked, as Peter and the rest of the crew descended into the living room.

Carrying trays of coffee and cocoa, Peter passed out the warm beverages to the pack. "Still working on the McCall's plumbing. From what Scott texted me, Grandpa decided to get "creative”, and install a brand new sink, so your father also decided to take it upon himself to install a high pressure shower kit.” He sighed, taking a seat next to Laura, batting the young woman's ponytail, in a teasing manner. "I expect they'll be at it all night, and have the whole damn bathroom remodeled by dawn. You know how Grandpa is with is "projects”, and how your Dad enables the old coot."

Laura groaned, tossing Peter's hair right back. "You and Mom were SO gung ho about Grandpa not getting lazy in retirement! You just HAD to buy him the tool kit, and leave him in charge of property maintenance! This is your fault!” She prodded Peter in the chest.

"I'll hand in my resignation as Pack Second post haste. We'll let Tally deal with the plumbing bill in the morning." The Pack laughed, and Peter nodded reluctantly, kissing Lorraine as she curled up beside him.

The laughter stopped soon after, as the sounds of car doors slamming shut caught everyone’s ears.
Stiles felt his heart leap, already on two feet when the front door swung open, and Derek's face was the first thing to appear on the other side, and Talia just behind him.

Like horses out of the gate, the Pack immediately swarmed Derek, practically entangling him with a slew of hugs, scenting, and laughter.

However, Stiles focused on a thin scar that poked out from under Derek's shirt, just beside the man's neck. A low pain thudded in the bottom of Stiles' gut, realizing that the mark would probably never heal completely.

"Stiles!" Derek exclaimed, breaking through his pack and rushing towards Stiles.

"Derek!" Stiles melted as he and Derek wrapped their arms around each other. As he hugged Derek tighter, a sharp point jabbed into Stiles' stomach, forcing him to yelp.

"Oh, sorry!" Derek chuckled, breaking their hug. "I forgot about this... You're crushing your present."

"Huh?" Stepping back, Stiles stared at a bouquet of fresh flowers in Derek's arms. A mixture of dark scarlet roses and blue irises wrapped in a silver ribbon.

"These are for you." Derek pressed the flowers into Stiles' arms, grinning from ear to ear. "Fresh from the Hale Gardens, our florist picked them fresh just a couple of minutes ago. I know purple's your favorite color, and I'm partial to red myself."

Stiles brought the flowers to his nose, inhaling the sweet floral scent. "They're gorgeous... Thank you, Derek, but why'd you..."

"Oh, and this, too!" Derek exclaimed, cutting Stiles off. Talia stepped from behind Derek, presenting Stiles a neatly wrapped box, wrapped in a silken bow, adorned with a tidy handwriting. "To Stiles, From Derek, With Love" emblazoned on a card, alongside the Hale Pack insignia, the triskelion.

"...oh!" Stiles' face flushed, immediately realizing the significance.

A gift given of love, marked with a pack's insignia, presented from the Pack's lead Alpha. Flowers from the Pack's lands. Both were the clear signs of an intended courtship, should Stiles accept them.

An excited buzz rang throughout the Hale Pack, as all eyes focused on Stiles, and the group began to disperse back into the living room, giving the couple more room.

"Yes, Stiles." Talia said, nodding to confirm his suspicions. "Derek informed me well over a month ago that he wanted to court you into our pack. Our pack discussed and agreed to allow Derek to follow through with it. Things got a little out of schedule, but we would love to keep things on track."

“I mean…. Only if you want to move ahead!” Derek quickly added, taking the gift out of Talia's hands, and clenching it tightly in his own. "I know we talked about it at the hospital some, and... We've been sort of dancing around it since school started, but... Don't think you have to do anything! Trust me, I get it! This week was nuts, but... I mean, if you wanted..." Derek gulped, rubbing the back of his neck, stumbling over his words. “If you want to wait a bit, I'd understand.”
An excited flutter vibrated in Stiles' chest. He reached out, palms down, in front of Derek. "Are you kidding? Who'd want to wait for a guy like you, and those adorable bunny teeth? This... I've..." Stiles paused, biting the bottom of his lip. He'd been dreaming of this moment for months, since school started, and they'd first complimented each other on their hair, and descended down a flirtatious route. Long nights of hopes and prayers, after difficult evenings with his father, had been spent for this exact moment. "I accept your offer of courtship, Derek."

Relief flooded Derek's face. He laid the gift into Stiles' arms, letting out a held breath of deep worry. "Thank you, Stiles... I... I didn't want to wait on you and those perky lips of yours, either."

Derek and Stiles laughed, settling on the living room couch, the entire pack hovered over them.

"Awww!" Lorraine slammed her elbow into Peter's side, on the verge of bawling. "Peter, do you see this?! I'm dying! I'm absolutely dying! They are so sweet together! My little baby Der is all grown up and... Awww!"

Isaac plopped down beside Derek, shaking his head. "Scott was right. You two are the worst kind of disgusting. Adorkable, but disgusting."

"Hush, you!" Laura shoved Isaac out of the way, plopping next to her brother, while Cora came to rest beside Stiles. "So, Derek, come on! Do the whole Alpha courtship thing, and do it right! Don't embarrass the family by copying out or forgetting a line! I mean, this is Stiles we're talking about! The guy you've been crushing on since first grade!" A sweet giggle left Laura's lips.

"First grade?" Stiles turned to Derek, unable to contain his smile. "Really?!"

"Laura!" Derek's face reddened, clearly embarrassed by the fact. "I was getting to that, and shut up!" He then turned to Stiles, with a sheepish smile. "I mean... Yeah, first grade... When you gave me your extra pudding cup, because I sad about my dog running away."

"Awww!" Lorraine practically melted in Peter's arms, already tearing up at the exchange between the two.

Talia smiled, taking her place beside Derek and Stiles. She cleared her throat, and flashed her red eyes, assuming her partial shift, while the rest of the pack bowed their heads in respect. "Stiles Stilinski, having accepted my son, Derek Lawrence Hale, as a courting partner, you will now be presented with the first of six gifts, for the six months of your courtship. This gift comes from the love that Derek holds in his heart for you, and the respect that our pack holds in regard to his future mate," She paused, turning to Derek. "Derek, during these six months, it is your duty, as the one who instigated this courtship, to show Stiles that you are a capable partner, and able to provide for him the kind of life that he deserves," She glanced to Stiles. "Stiles, it is during these six months that you have a responsibility to Derek, and to this pack, to show that you too are a capable, equal partner in our eyes. A successful mating is only possible when both partners contribute, and while you may not be the instigator of this courtship, you share in the success or failure of the relationship."

Stiles nodded in agreement. Courting was a two way street, after all. Sure, Derek would take the leading role, and have six months to present the Six Traditional Gifts, but Stiles couldn't just sit on his ass and be "wooed". This wasn't some Victorian Era romance novel, where money and influence were the only factors. Stiles needed to prove he was just as worthy to Derek to the pack, as Derek was as worthy to Stiles for the pack.

Talia nudged Derek's knee.

Derek cleared his throat, patting the wrapped box sitting in Stiles' lap. He, too, flashed his red eyes,
Stiles beamed. "I accept your gift, thank you."

Derek's shift faded. He let out a gentle chuckle as the pack applauded all around him for a successful recital of the his courting speech. “And I also give the gift of complete corniness from the Hale Family traditions.”

Stiles gasped, feigning surprise. “I love corniness! Just what I always wanted! How'd you know?”

The group laughed, while Stiles used his claws to cut into the wrapping paper. He popped open the box underneath, pulling out a stack of warm, cotton clothes. Stiles yanked out several sweaters, in varying shades of red, blue, and silver. He pulled a few pairs of thick blue jeans, soft to the touch, and a common Omega brand for sensitive skin. Under those, Stiles found a pair of leather gloves, a scarf, fancy socks, Omega brand boxer briefs, slippers, and even a pair of pajamas. More clothes than he'd ever been given in his life.

"Oh my God... Derek... This is so much! I love them! They feel great!" Stiles rubbed his new sweaters against his cheek, amazed at the softness. He swooned, immediately, knowing he didn't have to freeze his ass off in school anymore.

Derek dropped his head. “Sorry it's not much, I wanted to do more, but...” He shook his head, catching the scent of Stiles' genuine excitement from the gift, and allowing himself a subtle smile. "I thought those would look good on you. You're always cold in winter, so, you know..."

“No, seriously, I love it! Thank you, Derek.” Stiles slipped on the thick slippers, humming happily at the soft fabric, and grinning. “I accept your gift of warmth and comfort. Now get over here and kiss me, we're courting.”

Eventually breaking their kiss, Derek leaned back, having shifted in the middle of the kiss without realizing. He chuckled, finding it difficult to change back right away. “Heh... Sorry, I swear this never happens to me!”

"That's what they all say!" Stiles joked, nudging Derek in the stomach.

Peter chuckled, shaking his head. “Derek? Forgetting something?”

Still slightly kiss drunk, Derek stared back up at Peter, with a cocked eyebrow. “Uh, am I?”

“The ring.” Peter reached into his pocket, tossing Derek a tiny black box.

Derek caught the box, finally shaking out of his partial shift. “Oh! Crap, I almost forgot!” He fidgeted with the box, planting it in Stiles' hand, and clasping the other on Stiles' knee. “Again, it's not flashy or anything.... Nothing like Whittemore and Martin’s rings, but.... This is the ring my great grandfather used to court my great grandmother. It's a family heirloom.”
Talia added, nodding in Peter's direction. "As did Peter for Lorraine, who had it last."

"Thank you!" Stiles cracked open the black box, revealing a simple band. At first glance, Stiles thought it was a soft, grey charcoal, only to see that it changed color depending on the light, shifting into a sharper black, a bright grey, and even into a dark, deep auburn red. Speckles of white ran all around the band, shining far brighter than any diamond. "It's... Wow, I've never seen anything like this before! Is this some kind of stone?" He set the ring over his left middle finger, where it fit like a charm.

"The story in the family is that Derek's great grandfather saw a star shooting in the night sky, right above his head, on the day he met his mate to be. A star that captivated his future mate's eyes, and brought tears to her eyes in its beauty."

Laura leaned over, leaning her head on Derek's shoulder. "So Great Grandpa ran for seven days and seven nights, until he found the star that had crashed into the earth, the very same star that Great Grandma had thought was so beautiful."

"This is a meteorite?!" Stiles glanced down, awestruck by the ring. Silver was nice, gold was pretty common, and sure, anyone could wear a diamond, but who had an actual meteorite for a courting ring? Tiffany's diamonds could eat their fucking heart out.

"We assume so. My grandmother always bragged about grandpa catching a star for her, and turning it into a ring, up until the day she passed on. I never had the heart to explain the science behind it. Though, the story is far more charming without that knowledge."

Stiles grinned, leaning on Derek's shoulder. "I think so too. Derek just gave me a ring made of stars. Sounds a lot cooler."

"How about I lasso the moon, next?" Derek wrapped his arm around Stiles' waist, tugging them together. "I'm glad you like it."

With the main event wrapped up, most of the family scattered about the house, making themselves busy, and leaving Stiles and Derek to have some alone time.
"Seriously?" Isaac hopped up on the kitchen counter, rolling his eyes. "He didn't complain about the generic brand clothes I'm pretty sure Derek got from a factory outlet, or that old hand me down ring. Hell, he didn't even lie about it! Trust me, I was listening for the heart's off beat! I didn't even smell disappointment on him!"

Lorraine sighed, busy herself to wash up the kitchen counters. “Money isn't everything, Isaac, and I think Stiles realizes that." She tossed Isaac a rag, pointing to the kitchen table where they'd all eaten that night. "Sure, we might not have much profit from the farm to buy the latest gadgets, trendy clothes, or junk we don't need, but we have land that is ours completely, a modest house paid off over a decade ago, and more food than anyone could eat in a lifetime. We don't have debt to worry about, and we have each other.”

Isaac started to wipe down the kitchen table, shrugging. “Yeah, and I get that, and I'm not saying we're bad off.” He let out a deep sigh, eyes shining a bright yellow. "All I know is that if an Omega at Devenford got handed anything less than a Tiffany’s diamond ring, or a new Porsche for their first month’s courting gift, they wouldn't even give the Alpha the time of day."

"Beacon's the same way." Liam piped up, glancing up from his homework at the far end of the kitchen table. "You should have seen the bidding war that Lydia Martin went through to court Jackson Whittemore. Didn't matter that she and Jackson have been best friends since diapers, Jackson's parents wouldn't let him court a pack that didn't make over a certain figure. They almost made him court into the Mahalani pack."

“That's sad.” Lorraine pouted, shaking her head in disappointment. "Packs these days don't even care about the old ways of mating. The Six Gifts are supposed to show competence and love between two mates! They're not a commercial gifting war to outdo each other!” A soft smile crossed her face. "Your father gave me a warm dinner, home brewed tea, and a handmade blanket for my First Gift. Such a romantic gesture..."

"Still…. Stiles is a Stilinski." Isaac finished wiping up the kitchen table, tossing the rag into the sink. "They're one of the biggest gun dealers in the West, and have members in the police force all over the State. They're fucking loaded, so I guess I expected Stiles to be more.... Stuck up. You know? Like, surely he's gotten nicer stuff than that off brand sweater! He sure didn't act like it though! You'd actually think it was the nicest gift he'd ever gotten from the look on his face!” He laughed.

"I'm sure Stiles didn't get to appreciate the novelty of wealth, given his circumstances. From what I understand, he didn't even have a proper bed." Lorraine muttered, quietly.

Isaac froze, biting the bottom of his lip.

Liam growled, snapping his pencil in half.

"I'm sure, to Stiles... We're the wealthy ones," Lorraine said, crossing the kitchen, and pressing a gentle kiss on Liam and Isaac's heads. "The grass is always greener, boys!"

Lorraine left the kitchen, leaving the boys to their own devices. Isaac folded his arms, glancing down at Devenford's emblem emblazoned across his uniform. "Grass is always greener, huh?”

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Chapter Music
Thanks for reading! Comments are GREATLY appreciated, as are kudos, or anything in between!

Now we get into the fun stuff! ;)
Chapter 8

Talia gave Stiles and Derek both the option of skipping out on school for the rest of the week, to recover from their stressful encounters. Both refused, as Stiles needed to catch up in his advanced placement classes, and Derek’s absence from the basketball team earned him multiple texts from the coach, pleading for his prompt return before Friday night’s game.

Unfortunately, Stiles’ return to school was met with the pitiable response he’d expected. All day, he felt hundreds of eyes focused on the back of his head with the sour waft of pity always at the tip of his nose. Everyone stared at him, from the teachers, from his classmates, and even the administration workers.

“Poor guy.”

“Never realized how bone thin he is.”

“Who does that to an Omega??”

Walking through the school’s hallway, Stiles stopped by his locker, fumbling with the combination. He grabbed the sack lunch Lorraine had prepared for him, and the books he’d need for the afternoon. A low headache dulled in the back of his head, watching as anyone near his locker vacated the area, bowing and shooting sympathetic looks his way.

A pair of warm hands wrapped around Stiles’ waist, and he felt a gentle kiss on the back of his neck. Stiles’ headache ebbed away, slowly being drained out of him. “Guess who?”

“Mmmm… Eduardo, dear, is that you? I told you, I’m taken now. We can’t be having these trysts!” Stiles joked, tilting his head back and staring up into Derek’s soft gaze.

Derek snorted, pecking another kiss on Stiles’ forehead. “Very funny.” He grinned, releasing Stiles, and allowing the Omega to finish rummaging through his locker.

Slamming his locker shut, Stiles presented Derek with a brown bag of his own, pressing it into his hands. “For you. Decided I’d get started on my end of the courting. Have some dessert with your lunch, on me. Figured you needing some comfort of your own, and I always thought that… You know, home cooked stuff was comforting. At least, I remember I always loved my mom’s home cooked stuff.” He grinned.

Peeking inside the bag, Derek’s face melted, catching sight of homemade sugar cookies, complete with cherry red frosting. Little doodles adorned the cookies, made of of hearts, wolves, Hale Triskelions, and Stilinski family crests.

“Okay, full disclosure though, I’m not a terrific artist, and the cookies were basically just a premade box, but Aunt Lorraine showed me a few flavoring tricks, and said you loved the butter drop mix the best out of anything, but you know… I tried.” Stiles admitted, hoping Derek was okay with his cooking.
Derek beamed, as a sweet scent of joy wafted from his body. He leaned forward, pecking a quick kiss on Stiles' lips. “Thank you, they’re my favorite. After this shitty day I've had, I could use some good comfort food.”

“Oh my God, could you two stop being so cute with each other all the time! You're going to make me look bad in front of Kira!” Scott stopped beside his packmates, gently poking them in the head. “Lunch started like five minutes ago.” He then turned to Stiles, grinning. “Oh, and Liam said not to wait on him, he’s doing some kind of extra credit project for Biology. No tutoring today.”

“Cool! I’ll actually get to eat lunch with you guys!” Stiles stuffed his belongings into his backpack, walking beside Scott and Derek as they made their way to the cafeteria.

Along the way, the trio passed by a group of freshman, who took one look at Stiles and Derek, before bolting.

"Having fun, today?" Derek asked Stiles, rubbing his forehead.

"Copious amounts of fun.” Stiles groaned, leaning on Derek’s shoulder as they turned a corner. “A guy accidentally bumped into me going into history class, and apologized for half an hour straight. How about you?"

Before Derek could open his mouth, Scott jogged ahead, shooting a wry grin Derek’s way. "Some guy bumped into Derek, dropped his Starbucks coffee, tried to mouth off, realized it was Derek, and then ran away screaming in terror."

"He wasn't screaming, Scott." Derek insisted, glancing away from the rest of the group.

"He was totally screaming, Der. I was there.” Scott turned to Stiles, snorting. “We’re talking a linebacker on the football team, too. A real tough, muscled up beta, running away like a baby.”

Derek groaned, leaning his head on the top of Stiles’ soft hair. "He might have been screaming... A little."

"Aww." Stiles reached up, patting Derek’s cheeks. "My big guy, scaring all the tiny ants around him. Don’t worry, I know you’re just a big ol’ soft marshmallow under all that muscle and terrifying height."

"Shaddup.” Derek nudged Stiles in the side, unable to hold back a tiny smirk.

The three entered the roaring cafeteria of Beacon High, striding past the numerous circular tables lining up and down the room. Each table housed their own specific social “clique”, usually dictated by pack alliances, societal status, and obvious wealth.

The bigger packs, like the Martins, Whittemores, Mahealanis, and some of Stiles’ distant cousins made up the long tables, at the front and center of the cafeteria. Most wore high end fashions, befitting their status as heirs and heiresses to their family names, and as members of the town council that ruled over the areas surrounding Beacon Hills.

Medium packs, like the Reyes, Boyds, Steiners and Hewitt’s took up the average tables, not all that far off from the bigger packs. They were the families that didn’t own their own businesses, or came from old money, but successful enough to bring in fairly high income on their own. While not as glitzed out as the upper crust packs, they wore name brand attire, and never seemed to be without the latest in technology or gaming.

Which left the table that Stiles, Scott, and Derek sat around, in the far corner of the cafeteria. The
lowest ranking packs in the area, made up of 70% Hale Pack (Derek’s insane amount of cousins, and packmates that weren’t blood relations), with the rest comprising of the smallest packs in the area, some barely 10 members in size.

Scott dug into his lunch, pulling out a half a dozen meal filled wraps, and a massive bowl of rice. “Well, I mean... It's not just anyone that could actually outfight a cop in the Stilinski Pack. Have you seen the training those guys have to go through?” He grinned, elbowing Derek on the shoulders. "There’s no competition. The entire school recognizes Derek as resident badass Alpha that nobody wants to fuck with. The Steiner Alpha Twins got knocked down a peg."

"Great.” Derek ignored the sub sandwiches in his bag, and dug straight into Stiles’ cookies. “Because when I'm selling produce at the farmer’s market, what I want is for everyone to be afraid of approaching me. We want the Hale name to be synonymous with “Resident Badass Alpha”.”

Stiles pouted, nuzzing his cheek on Derek’s shoulder. “Sorry…”

The trio ate in relative silence, unable to block out the hottest topic of high school conversation. Them.

“Dude, have you seen Hale’s claws before? He’d fucking rip your throat out in a second.”

“I heard his Alpha State is like 16 feet tall, and ripped like a fucking movie monster.”

“Wouldn’t want to meet him in a dark alley, that’s all I’m saying!”

“Seriously! I heard that Brandon Stilinski was crying like a bitch when the other cops got there!”

“Explains how Hale got the Stilinski's only Omega. Derek probably won him by almost killing the guy’s father. Not surprising. The Hales are one of those creepy old school packs.”

Stiles’ stomach rolled over. Derek stuffed three more cookies in his mouth, suppressing the glowing red rage in his eyes. Scott scooted closer to Stiles, hovering over him protectively.

"Pardon me? Please let me through. I wanted to speak with Omega Stilinski. Don’t worry, I’m not going to bite the poor boy, I’ve known him for a long time."

Glancing up, Stiles caught sight of a dozen or so of Derek’s cousins standing between them and a petite, strawberry blonde. The teenage girl radiated an aura of authority, behind her floral patterned dress, and shimmering jewelry. Arms folded, the girl’s beaming red eyes cut through the crowd of Derek’s relatives, forcing them to relent and allow her passage through to Stiles’ table.

Stiles recognized the Alpha as Lydia Martin, the Alpha Successor of the Martin Pack, who’d come to lead the Beacon Hills branch of the Martin Pack somewhere down the line. While not
exceptionally familiar with her, Stiles had known Lydia through the Stilinski/Martin allied dinners, balls, and holiday gatherings. As kids, they’d played together during the boring “adult talks”, and even danced a couple of times at the gala events. Of course, that was before Lydia had initiated her courtship with Jackson, so Stiles hadn’t been around her all that much since then.

Lydia strode to Stiles’ table, standing over the trio with a gentle smile. As she did, the usual roar of the cafeteria tuned down to little more than hushed whispers, too quiet for a werewolf’s hearing to catch. All eyes were on Lydia, the Queen of the school.

"Uh, yes...?" Derek rose an eyebrow, standing to meet Lydia, and bowing respectfully.

Lydia bowed in turn, offering Derek a brief smile. "Sorry, but... Are the rumors true? That you fought off Brandon Stilinski, sparing him at the last second before you ripped his throat out with your claws? That you left him a bleeding, writhing mess, that barely survived his wounds? At least, that’s the latest story going around."

"What?! No!" Derek sputtered out waving his hands in front of Lydia. “I... I’d never use my claws. I’m an Alpha, and I take that responsibility seriously!”

Stiles shot up, nodding in agreement. "He’s telling the truth! Derek never used his claws, because he's not a fucking psychopath! My father was the one who used claws, and nearly ripped Derek's throat out, do you see the scar on his neck?! Derek just used his fists, and knocked my dad out to save me!"

A gentle smile curved on Lydia’s lips. She turned away from Derek and Stiles, glaring at the rest of the cafeteria. Lydia’s eyes, alone, forced every wolf in the cafeteria (teachers and staff included) to look down and away from the Alpha’s dark gaze. "There! You all heard that, and you all know damn well he wasn't lying. So quit spreading lies about Derek Hale, and quit treating Stiles like a glass vase. Show a little more respect to a Pack going through a rough period right now.” The “or else” clearly, and violently, implied.

After a brief period of awkward silence, and several wolves sweating buckets under Lydia’s gaze, the low roar of the cafeteria returned. Talk about the Hale Pack, or Derek, didn’t stop, but the topics soon turned around on their head.

“He survived getting clawed by a cop? That's fucking hardcore, man.”

“Fuck that, he knocked him out?! With just his fists?! Dude, I knew Hale was strong, but.. Good God, that's insane!”

“All the Hales are pretty strong, you know... Must be all the work on that farm of theirs.”

"No claws? Seriously, he fought a cop without any claws? That's... Impressive."

Derek sat back down at their table, with Lydia joining him. "Th... Than... Thank you."

"Think nothing of it. I hate malicious gossip, especially when it involves an old family friend.” Lydia reached out, patting Stiles’ hand. “How are you doing, Stiles? Haven’t seen you in ages!”

“A lot better now, thanks. Good to see you again!” Stiles went back to his lunch, offering Lydia one of his sandwiches. “How have you been? Things with Jackson working out?”
Lydia took the sandwich, taking a bite out of one of Lorraine’s masterpieces, and melting into the fresh meat, cheese, and veggies filling its insides. “Thing are going well. I’m on my fifth month of courtship with Jackson, and we’re hoping to mate around Christmas. Jackson’s parents are planning for a wedding after we graduate. All for the sake of Pack “Unification”,” she offered air quotes around the last few words, rolling her eyes in disgust. Yet, as she caught sight of Stiles’ ring, the disgust quickly drained away. “Oh, and I want to offer my congratulations. I’d heard through the grapevine that you and Derek are courting.”

"Yeah, Derek gave me this last night! Isn’t it nice? It’s an heirloom ring made of meteorite from his family!” Lydia stole Stiles’ hand, admiring the black band in awe. Stiles reached out, tugging at the end of his sleeve. "This sweater, too. Isn’t it soft? He basically bought me a whole wardrobe of Omega threaded clothes, and they’re the most comfortable stuff I’ve ever worn!"

Derek and Scott exchanged a nervous glance, with Derek dropping his head in shame. He gripped his can of soda tightly, unable to look Lydia in the eyes. Embarrassment ran through his veins.

Lydia hummed, tapping Stiles’ ring. "It’s absolutely lovely, Stiles." She then turned to Derek, offering him a playful wink. "You have excellent taste, Alpha Hale. This matches Stiles’ lovely eyes, and I love the fabric. Very chic, and very comfortable."

Taken aback, both Scott and Derek exchanged incredulous glances. Derek gulped, rubbing the back of his neck. "Tha... Thanks, Alpha Martin."

“Call me Lydia, if I can call you Derek,” Lydia chuckled, turning back to Stiles. "Actually, Stiles, why don’t we go out for a double date sometime? You and Derek, with me and Jackson? It’d be fun!” Without missing a beat, Lydia finished the rest of the sandwich she’d been given, standing up and offering Stiles a quick hug around his neck. "I’d love to hear the real story about what happened, and get to know the Hales a bit more. I hate to say it, but I know next to nothing about the biggest pack in Beacon Hills."

"Sure! Sound good, Der?” Stiles glanced to the side.

Derek’s face seemed pale, not that much better than Scott’s. "Uh huh… Yeah! Sure!"

Lydia reached into her pocket, producing a bright pink smartphone, clacking through her contacts. "Great! Well, I’ll make plans for Sunday! What’s your new number?"

After giving Lydia his new cell phone number, Stiles waved goodbye to his old friend (who waltzed back to her table, and her partner), and went back to his own lunch. He looked up, staring at Derek and Scott, who seemed shellshocked, gazing off into space. "What’s up? You guys look like you’re about to pass out…”

Scott dropped his jaw, grabbing Stiles by the shoulders and shaking his friend back and forth. "Dude! That was Lydia Martin! Do you have any idea who she is?!”

Stiles nodded, freeing himself from Scott’s grip. “An Alpha in the Martin Pack? The girl who’s kicking my ass to class Valedictorian? What’s the big deal? I sort of knew her from stuff my family did with the Martins.”

“Idiot!” Scott groaned, banging his head on the cafeteria table. “She’s the heiress to the Martin Pack fortune, and the next head of the Beacon Hills Branch Pack! Hell, there’s talk about her being the head of the Martin’s entire National Pack! She’s a genius, just like her mother, so you don’t just... TALK to Lydia Martin! Not if you’re a Hale, you don’t!”
“Pfft. Come on…” Stiles chuckled, waving Scott off. “Laura’s the heiress to the Hale Pack, and I talked to her just fine last night. I’m sure Lydia’s the same.”

“He’s not wrong,” Derek mumbled, taking a deep sigh. “I’m a little shocked she came to talk to us, or did what she did. Honestly, most of the packs in and around Beacon Hills don’t want much to do with us.”

Stiles scoffed. “I have no idea why. That’s so stupid!” He prodded Derek in the chest, eyes flaring into a bright silver. “Your family rebuilt the entire town after it burned to the ground. You guys basically feed the entire county, and stock all of the grocery stores, and are the reason we don’t have any homeless around here, because you give them jobs! You are literally everything that a pack is supposed to represent! Honor, unity, and compromise! Uncle Noah told me time and again growing up, that our Pack should strive to be the kind of pack like the Hales are! Because you embody what our culture is supposed to be like!”

“That was the last generation of Hales that did all of that, Stiles. We did that before the Whittemores and Martins moved out here and brought their allied packs along for the ride. The people we helped either joined our pack already, or are like your family, who still support us,” Derek glanced all around him, to the upper and middle class Packs, laughing and carrying on, without a care in the world. “We don’t have what the newer packs want, Stiles. We’re not old money anymore, we don’t have some multi million dollar company we run, and anything we could trade of value is stuff they buy from the grocery store. Who would you rather make an alliance with, or support? The Martins, head of countless medical corporations and filled with doctors, or the Hales, a Pack that’s got a big farm?”

“The Hales.” Stiles answered, after taking a deep breath, and flashing a white smile at Derek. “Of course, I might be a tad biased, because this really cute guy in the Hale Pack that I’ve had my eye on for a while.”

Scott groaned, loudly.

Derek snorted. “Oh? Anyone I know?”

Stiles leaned on Derek’s shoulder, wrapping his arm around the Alpha’s waist. “You know that guy that’s about as tall as a fucking giraffe, with the warm muscles, sexy as hell stubble, and that gorgeous booty that I could stare at for hours on end?”

“I’m going to vomit, guys, seriously. You’re my best friends, and you’re basically eye fucking.” Scott feigned a gagging reflex, clearly in good natured fun.

Derek rolled his eyes, wrapping his own arm around Stiles, and presenting his last sugar cookie to be brought up to Stiles’ lips. “Well, it can’t be Scott, he can’t grow a beard to save his life.”

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Chapter Song

Happy new year to all! Hope you had a safe and fun start to 2017! :)”

Comments, thoughts and kudos are greatly appreciated!
The bleachers lining the Beacon High gymnasium roared with life late Friday night, as the basketball game between the Beacon Hills Crimson Cyclones, and the Devenford Academy Emerald Timberwolves came to its frenzied end.

Stiles sat in the Beacon High section with Lydia, among the flood of crimson red colors from the rest of the school’s active alumni and current students. On the opposite side of the gymnasium, an equally vocal mesh of green and white filled the away team’s stands.

With the score sitting at 71-71, with only half a minute of playtime left on the clock, the roar of both schools shook the gymnasium to its raptors, with a mess of howls, screams, and various noisemakers adding to the hysteric stomping of feet.

Stiles raised his bright red sign, marked with the Hale Pack symbol, and neat calligraphy that read “Derek Hale #13 is #1”, with the typical glitter and scrapbooking stamps he could find in Lorraine’s craft room. “Go Derek! You can do it, kick their butts!” He screamed.

On the gym floor, huddled with the rest of the starting team around their coach, Derek waved, with a bright smile. Sweat dripped down his body, as he panted in an out, starting to fatigue, despite his supernatural stamina. As the tallest member of the team, and standing a good two feet over the other team’s guard, Derek had played almost every minute of every quarter. While Stiles wasn’t all that familiar with basketball (football and lacrosse were more his thing), he figured that 60 assists of the 71 points in the game was a pretty solid measure of his mate’s talent.

Lydia screeched wildly, as her red eyes flared to life with her stellar cheer. Like Stiles, Lydia had her own sign, in bright pink, professionally printed with the Whittemore’s star-like pack symbol, reading “Jackson Whittemore #1, Star of the Game and Star of my Heart”. She whistled through her fingers. “Go Jackson! Come on babe, you can do it!”

Down below, Stiles watched a lean teenager, not all that taller than Stiles himself, lean up from the huddle and flash a bright smile on his face. Tanned, toned, and with a mess of punked up blonde hair, Jackson Whittemore was the stereotypical image of a California teenager. His eyes flashed a dazzling silver, offering a seductive wink in Lydia’s direction.

The overhead buzzer rang out, ending Beacon’s time out. Teams took their position on the court, with Devonford’s players getting the ball. With a whistle from the referee, Devenford chucked the ball half-court, high into the air, and aimed at their shooting guard.

“You tailing the giant, you idiots! Down the court! Down the court!” Devenford’s coach screeched, throwing his hat and clipboard onto the ground.

All eyes focused at the other end of the court, where Jackson bolted past the only guard left, outspeeding his opponent by a good three lengths.

“Whittemore, catch!” Derek screeched, leaping up hands high above the Devenford defense, and passing the ball, like a bullet from the chamber of a gun.
Flying across the court, it slammed easily into Jackson’s hands just as the Omega jumped into the air. With one arm, Jackson dunked the ball with ease into the net. Not a second later, and the final buzzer for the game rang out, as Beacon erupted into an insane mosh pit of cheering fans, hugs, and smug glares in the direction of Devenford.

Taking well over ten minutes for the celebration to die down, and for the teams to shake on a game well made, Stiles and Lydia waded through the mess of Beacon fans, before finally reaching the sweaty mess of players.

Derek and Jackson caught Stiles and Lydia’s eyes, and made their way through the crowd to them.

Leaping up, Stiles hugged Derek, easily held up by the Alpha’s physique. “You guys did great! Congratulations on the win, Derek! You’re seriously the best support their team has, and that was the coolest thing I’ve ever seen! I’ve got to start learning more about this game!”

Derek flushed, flashing a cocky grin. “Thanks, Stiles.”

“Congrats, babe. You were phenomenal!” Lydia said, crushing Jackson with a tight hug.

“Thanks, Lyd. I was alright,” Jackson hugged her right back, nuzzling his nose into the crook of her chin.

As the two couples broke apart, Jackson folded his arms, smirking in Derek’s direction. “Nice game tonight, Hale. You were a little more aggressive, and even got a couple of fouls. I like it.”

Derek roped his arm around Stiles’ shoulder. “I had someone cheering for me. Maybe I had something to prove tonight.” He flashed his red eyes, grinning in Stiles’ direction.

Jackson chuckled, turning his attention to Stiles. “You better start coming to all our games then, Stilinski. We need Derek to show off more. The prick hates getting physical, and lets guys walk all over him sometimes.” He reached out his hand to Stiles, flashing his silver eyes, and meeting Stiles’ gaze, as an equal. “Jackson Whittemore. Don’t think we’ve ever met, formally. Heard plenty about you, though. Lydia’s caught me up on you two as kids. Oh, and sorry your dad was a asshole. Heard he got 20 years. Hopefully, he’ll get to have some fun in prison, involving a few shanks.”

Stiles wasn’t sure if he appreciated Jackson’s bluntless, or thankful that the man’s rumored douche tongue wasn’t aimed right at him. Either way, the man was honest, so Stiles figured he’d roll with it. He shook Jackson’s hand, firmly, flashing his own silver eyes back at the Whittemore Omega.

“Thanks. You were on fire tonight, too! I’d kill to be able to move that fast, or have that kind of aim!”

Jackson smiled at that. For a brief moment, Stiles swore he felt something like relief ebbing out of Jackson. Like a long, held breath had finally been let out.

Lydia reached around Jackson’s shoulder, bringing him closer for a quick peck on the cheek. “Best player on the team, in the county, and probably the state. My Jax is amazing!”

A low blush settled on Jackson’s face. “She’s not wrong.”

Stiles, Derek, and Lydia chuckled.

“My, my, such confidence for such a sad performance.”
The group froze, under a deep, regal sounding tone.

Stiles spun around, watching as an aged, portly man with soft, greying hair, and a bushy moustache walked towards them. Clearly not dressed for the event, the man’s white and grey suit (stretching at the seams from his weight) looked more like CEO headed to a board meeting, than a high school basketball fan.

“Hello, father.” Jackson muttered, clearing his throat, and standing a bit straighter than he’d been before.

“Jacques Whittemore. The Whittemore’s head Alpha.” Stiles thought, recalling the “stories” he’d heard about the man: ruthless in business, ruthless in life, and unforgiving to all. He’d made his fortune and legacy bringing businesses from out under the brink, or buying them outright and pushing them to profit through an iron fist. Jacques had been investigated a few times from federal groups, over the man’s labor practices, and questionable dealings overseas. Yet, he’d never been charged with a crime, or faced a single penalty. "He plays the law like a fiddle, and knows every note, without missing a beat..” Stiles remembered hearing his Uncle Noah saying about the man in question.

Joining the group, Jacques brushed past Derek, paying the man not a single mind, and glaring directly at Jackson. “Well, glad to see you managed to squeak out a win there at the very end with that unnecessary bravado. Those sloppy free throws of yours might have made all the difference in the world.” He folded his arms, eyes shining a bright red. “Your brother Jason had at least a 90% accuracy at your age. What are you, at about 70%? Maybe less, after tonight. 4 missed points, Jackson. FOUR.”

Flinching as though he’d been slapped, Jackson glanced away. “Somewhere around there, yeah,” He mumbled.

Stiles balled his hand into a fist. He’d recognize that “tone” Jacques used anywhere.

Alpha Whittemore chuckled, waving the thought away. “Well, there is always room for improvement, Jackson. Not that I expect you to live up to Jason, I mean… After all, he’s an Alpha. He’s got the drive to be a winner,” he said, laughing harder as Lydia and Derek both flashed their fangs at the man, just out of sight. “In any case, I have to be going. I missed a meeting for this sad spectacle, and need to catch up on work.” Jacques turned to Lydia, who pulled back her fangs at just the last second. He glared at Alpha Martin, looking down upon her as though she were something like a bug. “See to it that my son arrives home safely, Alpha Martin. Do try not to keep him out too late, there’s still a full month until your mating, and I’m still unsure of your competence..”

“Well, of course, Alpha Whittemore.” Lydia spat, bowing her head respectfully. All the while, Stiles felt her rage, humiliation, and urge to clock the guy bubbling under the skin.

Jacques made his exit, brushing past Derek again, and not bothering to say goodbye to any of them.

The group stood in an uncomfortable silence, waiting for Jacques to exit the stadium completely.

Jackson wiped the sweat from his brow, clearing his throat in the process. “I’m going to hop in a shower and change out of this wet mess.” He plastered on a hollow smile towards Lydia. “How about dinner at Monty’s, movie at your place? I can call my mom, and she’ll give me permission to stay the night. Father won’t even care to ask.”

“Sounds lovely.” Lydia kissed Jackson on the forehead, waving goodbye to him as he left towards the locker rooms.
Derek pecked a kiss on Stiles’ cheek. “I’ll hit the shower too, Stiles. See you in a bit, this won’t take me long.” He followed after Jackson, jogging up to the Omega and heading into the locker room with the rest of the team.

Stiles and Lydia took seats on the quickly emptying bleachers, as Stiles huffed, tapping his foot angrily against the gym floor. “What a dick. What a fucked up douchebag dick. He talked to Jackson about like how my dad talked to me.”

Lydia shook her head. “That’s Alpha Jacques Whittemore for you. Practically worships Jackson’s older brother, who’s the Whittemore’s heir. Doesn’t give a shit about Jackson now that he’s being courted off, and can’t be sold to the highest bidder.” She folded her arms, leaning back to rest on the bleacher just behind her.

“What?” Stiles stammered, raising an eyebrow.

“You’re surprised?” Lydia shrugged, tapping her heel in time with Stiles. “Arranged marriages are getting popular these days, with pricy dowries. Mostly Omegas, but some Betas even, spend their entire lives being prettied up by their parents, and married off to other packs’ Alphas. That’s what Jackson was to his father. A trophy child. A pit of money. An investment.”

Stiles’ stomach rolled. Suddenly Brandon’s threats of “selling” Stiles off began to make a lot more sense. “That’s sick.”

“It’s the world we live in.” Lydia stretched out, leaning forward and turning to meet Stiles with a sad gaze. “My mother gathered up an obscene amount of money for me to be allowed to court Jackson, so we could save him from that kind of life. Didn’t matter we knew each other for our entire lives, or that our packs were allies, or that everyone and their dog knew that we were in love… All that mattered was that Jacques didn’t get cheated out of his dowry.”

Glancing down at his ring, and tugging his new scarf closer around his neck, for once Stiles felt… Somewhat lucky.

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Rushing out of the gym after Derek finished changing, Stiles barely made it to the edge of the lacrosse field with Derek, as the last play of the game started, with less than a minute on the clock. With Derek having games about the same time as Scott and Liam had theirs, the Hale Pack agreed to rotate each week on cheering schedules, which left Stiles to cheer for Derek that week, while the rest of the Pack cheered for Liam and Scott.

“We made it! At least we’ll get to see them play for a bit!” Stiles said, leaning on the chainlink fence.

Derek leaned behind Stiles, protecting his mate’s body from the cool November weather. “They’re ahead!”

Stiles glanced up at the clock. 9-8, Beacon ahead, with less than a minute to play. Using his fingers, Stiles whistled loudly. “Go Liam! Go Scotty! You can do it!”

Derek howled in tune with the rest of the Beacon High stands, half shifting at the excitement flowing through the area. “Come on you Li, come on Scotty! Dig deeper! You got ‘em!”

On the field, Stiles recognized Liam’s #9 jersey, with him holding the ball. He ducked in between two of Devenford’s players, jumped over a third, and ran at full sprint to the goal. A true, talented Athlete, that could outperform any Alpha on the lacrosse field. Stiles always heard that Liam was
their team's ace player (part of the urgency in getting Liam's grades up), but he felt shocked to see the
skill the young man showed on the field.

However, as Liam reared back to shoot the goal, a Devenford player darted in front of him,
slamming his fist into Liam's chest pads, and knocking him back. Rearing back a second time, the
player hit Liam's helmet hard enough to shatter the outside plating. Through the gasps and the shock
from Beacon's side of the field, the Devenford player went as far as to pin Liam to the ground, like in
a wrestling match.

“HEY!” Stiles growled, face shifting, and fangs shooting out of his mouth.

Derek roared, the Alpha’s massive claws cutting through the chain link.

All around, Beacon High’s fans howled, growled, and screamed at the top of their lungs.

The referee grabbed the offending player by the shoulderpads, blaring a whistle, and dragging the
player off to the sideline. “Foul! Devenford, number 20! You’re out of here! Get the HELL off
my field!”

However, as Beacon cheered at #20’s ejection, Stiles focused on their own coach, grabbing Liam by
the shoulders, and dragging him off to the side lines. A short argument seemed to explode between
the two, resulting in Liam being planted on the bench. Which, Liam seemed to take offense to, as he
slammed his stick onto the wrack with the rest of the sticks, tossed his broken helmet into a trash can,
and stormed off the field, heading to the parking lot.

“Wait… Why’d Liam getting benched? He didn’t do anything! There’s no foul on him...” Stiles
looked up to Derek, scanning his Alpha’s face for a clue.

“Oh no…” Derek muttered.

Derek and Stiles ran towards Liam, stopping him just on the outskirts of the parking lot. The Beta’s
eyes were dazzling gold, accompanied by a partial shift that left the palms of Liam’s hands bleeding
through his gloves, as he balled everything into a tight fist.

“Li?! Li, are you okay?!” Stiles bent down, placing his hands on Liam’s face. He didn’t see a
bruise, or feel any sign of injury, but… The heat from Liam’s inner rage made sweat trickle down
Stiles’ spine.

“I’m fine, Stiles.” Liam batted Stiles’ hand out of the way.

“Liam!” Peter scrambled off the bleachers, decked out in full Beacon fan attire, and rushed to his
son’s side. He placed his hands on Liam’s shoulders, flashing his own golden eyes. “Deep breaths,
Liam. Count with me, just like in therapy, one, two…”

A growl from Liam ripped through the air. “I don’t fucking need a countdown, dad! I’m fine!” He
screamed, slapping Peter’s hands away, and snarling in the process.

Taken aback, Peter nodded hesitantly. “I know you are, son. I just thought…”

“Thought I’m about to flip out!? Lose control again!? Go crazy!? Is that all you fucking care
about?!” Liam spat, glaring daggers towards his father.

“No… No, I…” Peter flinched, as though he’d been slapped in the face. A tired desperation
overtook the pack’s Second, as he fumbled for the right words to say.
Stiles stepped in between the two, offering a polite smile. “So, uh… How about Derek and I take Liam home, and you guys get some pizza to go when Scott finishes the game? I mean, we were going to have a sleepover tonight, right?” He turned to Liam, wrapping his arm around the teen’s neck. “You, me, Scotty, Derek, Isaac… Guys’ night in the living room? Scotty was bringing his old Nintendo? Sound familiar?”

The tension, if only by a small margin, weakened between the group.

Peter nodded, reaching over and ruffling Stiles’ hair. “That sounds like a fine plan, thank you.” He glanced down to Liam, fumbling over his words for only a moment. “Meat lovers? Extra bacon?”

Liam said nothing, as a wide frown crossed over his face, and he trudged off into the parking lot.

The group split up not long after. Stiles, Liam, and Derek piled into Derek’s 3-seater truck, buckled up, and made their way out of Beacon High.

From the passenger side window, Stiles sighed, offering his hand to Liam. “Give me your hand.”

“I don’t… I don’t need…” Liam stammered, still buzzing in a half shift.

“Li.” Stiles tried to make his tone firm, like when Liam drifted in their tutoring sessions.

With an angry huff, Liam peeled off his lacrosse gloves, and planted his bare hands into Stiles’ open palm.

White veins protruded up and down Stiles’ arm. A fiery hot heat ran through Stiles’ blood, as Stiles drained the overwhelming emotions prickling through Liam’s mind. Like any Omega who’d gone through puberty, Stiles could siphon emotions from other living beings, just like Betas could siphon pain. A particularly handy skill for a species that relied almost entirely on instinct and emotion.

Yet, the rage Stiles felt coming out of Liam was hotter than anything the Omega ever felt before. “Okay, yeah… That’s some… That’s some bottled up rage there, Li.” He hissed as the worst of the rage passed on, and Liam’s heart began to beat in a normal, easy rhythm.

Liam dropped his head, practically burying it in Stiles’ shoulder. “After the bastard pounded me to the ground… He asked if I took it up the ass in Juvie. Asked me how I liked being Beacon’s trash.”

Derek’s grip on the steering wheel tightened.

Stiles hitched his breath, putting his arm around Liam, and tucking the Beta closer to him. He’d heard several rumors from varying sources about Liam’s time in Juvenile Hall, but never had the heart to flat out ask about what happened to the Beta, or how Liam ended up at Beacon High.

“I was there for a month, Stiles. One month, and… That’s all it took.” Liam laughed, while tears ran down his face. “I went to Devenford. I had good grades. First string on the junior high team, and the high school coach was already scouting me to be first string on the high school team as a freshman. Hell… I was good enough that there were college scouts already looking at me, asking me when my first high school games were… I was the first Hale ever to get scouted for college sports… My mom and dad were so proud…”

Stiles allowed his body to start draining the overwhelming anxiety and depression that Liam gave off, siphoning them through the white veins on his skin.

Liam eased into Stiles, wiping away the tears on his face. “That just made me full of myself. Too cocky… That’s what everyone, even my mom and dad, called me, and they were right,” He
shivered, as the last of his partial shift faded, and he began to retain his human self. “Lost control of
my shift…. One time. One fucking time, I lose control when I fucked up a play, and accidentally
break some guy’s arm during practice on a tackle. A rich prick, who had his daddy’s fancy lawyers
get revenge on me with trumped up charges. Claimed I assaulted him. Judge didn’t go for it, all the
way, but I still… I still landed a month in Juvie,” He shrugged, laughing hysterically. “…now my
life’s ruined. Expelled from Devenford, missed a month of school, fell behind, started flunking all
my classes, my parents are embarrassed of me, my brother thinks I’m a failure, and everyone is
AFRAID of me.”

“Li…” Derek muttered, glancing to the side for a moment.

Liam shot up, eyes blazing gold. “Did you see them, Derek!? Did you fucking see them!? They
dragged me off the field! Didn’t even give me a chance to get back up, they were SCARED I’d hurt
someone! Coach told me to sit out the rest of the game and COOL OFF, so nobody would get
hurt!” More tears ran down his face, crumbled into a broken heap. “Nobody… Nobody trusts me.”

Reaching over, Stiles grabbed Liam, hugging him tightly from the side. “I’m not scared of you.”

Liam’s heart raced, glancing up at Stiles, eyes wide.

“Trust me, Liam. I know what a bad guy is like. You’re not one of them.” Stiles brushed his hands
through Liam’s hair, scenting his pack mate, in an attempt to get the Devenford player’s scent out of
Liam’s body. “I trust you with my life. I mean, you sucked away my pain when I hurt the most after
my dad beat the shit out of me, and thanks to you, my healing kickstarted.” He laid his head on
Liam’s. “Betas are the only ones who can take physical pain, and you took it ALL. More than I’ve
ever seen a Beta be willing to take on before! Seriously, you looked… Like you put your whole
body into it.’

Liam shrugged. “You… You’re my friend, Stiles. You’re the only friend I’ve got who’s… Who’s
not my own blood.”

“Doesn’t matter.” Stiles shook his head, hugging the crap out of Liam as he drained away all of the
negative emotions. “I’m proud of you. You’re one hell of a Beta I’m proud to call a pack brother,
who’s done one hell of a job climbing out of a hole he’s dug. Your grades are fantastic now, Li.
You’re doing so well! Don’t let some jealous Devenford prick get to you! Dude was just pissed off
that the fancy private school got their asses kicked by public school kids!”

“I’m proud of you, too.” Derek clasped his hand on Liam’s shoulder, offering the Beta a curt smile.
“Just take it day by day, Li. Reputation takes time to heal, but you’ll get there, cuz. Rumors aren’t
true unless you make them be true.”

A low buzz from Stiles’ phone caught all of their attention. Reaching into his pocket, Stiles read the
new message on his phone, beaming from ear to ear as he glanced back to Liam. “On the bright side
of tonight, that guy getting fouled out got Beacon a free penalty shot. Scott scored, and Devenford
couldn’t score in time, so…” Stiles patted Liam on his shoulder pads. “You helped seal tonight’s
win. Scotty says your teammates are cheering you on in the locker room.”

None of the three spoke for the rest of the ride home. Though, the tiny smile on Liam’s face spoke
volumes.

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Chapter Music

This was a worldbuilding chapter, so a little longer than I usually aim for. Hopefully that's not a problem! ;)

Comments are GREATLY appreciated, I love to hear feedback and thoughts on the story as it goes along!
With the weekend upon Stiles, he found himself in the midst of the Hale’s weekly Pack Dinner. Amassing around a hundred of their pack members, the Hales hosted their family in the attached segment of their home, lined with long tables, filled to the brim with fresh, homemade foods. Music played on the old speakers in the corner, echoing over the barn-styled roofing, and rustic decor.

Most of the adults made idle chatter over the after-dinner drinks, talking about their work weeks, crops, livestock, or anything in between. The children ran wildly around the building, in half shift, playing tag with their cousins, brothers, and sisters.

Which left the teens to their own devices. Though while Isaac and Liam were off spatting in a corner, and Scott found himself playing catch outside with the preteens, Stiles sat against the wall by himself, recovering from the night of endless introductions he’d had.

“Aunt Lynn, this is Stiles, my courting partner. Stiles, this is Lynn, and she runs one of the grocery stores in town.”

“Uncle Jerry, this is Stiles! Stiles, this is Uncle Jerry, who runs the cattle barn.”

“Hey Misha, you piece of shit! Have you met my boyfriend? He's WAY cooler than yours!”

Stiles grinned, with a slightly inflated ego. Derek had dragged him around all evening, showing Stiles off to his many relatives and pack family. While Stiles had no hope of remembering a couple hundred names, he’d been met with happy faces, and a supportive pack who welcomed him with open arms.

Though, the far more enjoyable moment of the night was watching Derek be dragged off by his little cousins (mostly girls), and begging to play with him. There was a great deal of joy to be had in watching Derek (the undisputed “badass” of Beacon Hills High, thanks to Lydia), giving girls piggyback rides, and tossing them into the air, being used as a personal trampoline. Soon the younger boys wanted in, and Derek was flooded with dozens of children, begging and whining for their turn to fly. "You’re such a goober.” Stiles muttered under his breath, taking a sip of his drink

“Having fun?” Asked a deep, hearty voice.

Glancing to the side, Stiles watched an elderly man approached. As tall and broad shouldered as Derek, but not as toned, he ran fingers through his trimmed white beard, beaming brightly in Stiles’ direction. The spitting image of his grandson, there weren’t many who couldn’t recognize Richard Hale, the previous Head Alpha of the Hale Pack, and the son of Montgomery Hale, who’d been the man to save Beacon Hills all those years earlier.

Richard extended his hand to Stiles, with a loud laugh that came straight from his rounded belly. “Well if it ain’t ol’ Jakub Stilinski's grandson! You are the spitting image of my old friend, down to that scrawny ass neck of yours! If I didn’t know better, I’d think I was 70 years in the past!”

Stiles practically shook from the man’s forceful handshake, and vibrated from his boisterous laugh. “Nice to meet you, sir!”
“Oh hell, none of that sir business, son! Call me Richard, or call my Grandpa Rick!” Richard proclaimed, slapping Stiles on the back with his broad hand. “Haha! I mean, we’re practically already family, young man! Now tell me, has Derek been treatin’ you right? I know we’re living in a new age, but there’s no reason an Omega should be treated with anything but the highest respects!”

Stiles nodded immediately, overwhelmed by the man’s kind, joyous aura. “Of course, S… I mean, of course, Richard. Derek’s been a perfect Alpha!”

Glancing down, Richard spotted the ring on Stiles’ finger. A warm, gentle smile crossed the man’s wrinkled features. “I see you’re wearing my daddy’s ring. Good! He’d have loved to see it still being used to this day. That ring meant a lot to my daddy and mama. Brought them together, just like I hope they’ll bring you and Derek together.”

Reaching out, Stiles fidgeted with the band. “It’s an awesome ring, Richard. I’m proud to wear it.”

Richard and Stiles moved out of the way, as a group of kids took up the space next to them, walking to a far corner of the room.

Grabbing a bottle of beer from one of the refreshment tables, Richard pried off the bottle cap with his claw. “So, having fun tonight, Stiles? Get to meet the Pack?”

Stiles snorted, watching as Derek toppled to the floor, after five of his little cousins leap onto his shoulders, toppling him over. “Seeing Derek like that makes this night just about perfect.”

Richard chuckled, downing half of the beer in his hand in one swig. “Derek’s always been good with the pups in our family. The big cousin everyone loves. Him and Scotty both, I swear, are going to be the best fathers someday. Raise up some good, honest kids.”

Stiles gulped, shooting back the rest of his soda as his features darkened. He tried not to think too hard on the idea of him and Derek… Having kids. Or rather, Stiles’ inability to provide one. “I’ve never been in heat, so… That pretty much axes any hopes… I don’t need a doctor to tell me I’m probably just broken.”

“Oh! Sonny, I didn’t mean to imply anything!” Richard caught the words as they left his mouth, chuckling as he patted Stiles on the shoulder. “I know you’re young, and probably 10 years away from it, but have you had any thoughts to a family?”

A low hum of anxiety filled Stiles’ gut. “Derek and I agreed that we want some kids for sure. That was topic one when we sat down for courting talk, after the first month’s gift.” He dropped his head, recalling the awkward conversation topic. “I thought about adoption. There’s a lot of kids out there in shit situations, you know? We uh, we didn’t discuss the finer details.”

Richard nodded. “I think that’s a lovely idea.” He shook his head, laughing as he and Stiles stopped at an outer table, taking seats next to each other. “So tell me, have you thought about college? Heard plenty of talk from Matalia that you’re a smart kid! I’m sure Derek will want to go to-”

From behind Richard, one of the Hales bumps into the old Alpha, knocking the bottle of beer out of his hand. The bottle flew to the floor, shattering into pieces.

As the sound of shattering barely caught the ears of the crowd around them, Stiles felt his perception of time to slow, as the crashing noise was all he could hear..

“Worthless.” “Pathetic.” “Can’t do anything right!” “Did you burn dinner, again?! What is wrong with you?!” “Still not in heat!? What kind of a freak Omega are you!” “What are you
good for?!” “You burnt my shirt with the iron?! Motherfucker, do you know how much that cost me?!”

The world all around Stiles blacked out.

“Why do you make me do this to you?”

Richard sighed, looking at the mess that one of his nephews had made. Shards of glass scattered everywhere, with the stale smell of beer rising on the air. “Excuse you, too, Samuel!” He laughed, turning back to Stiles. “I’ll clean it up later. So anyway, about college, how have…”

Eyes widened, Richard couldn’t see Stiles at first. As he glanced down, however, he spotted the Omega curled up in a defensive position. The poor boy on his knees, hands covering his head, and shaking like a leaf swept up in a hurricane. Richard took one look at the Omega’s eyes, the blank, lifeless husks that had just been brimming with life, and wasn’t even really sure if Stiles was with him anymore.

“I'm sorry…. I'm sorry…. I'm sorry… I'm sorry…” Stiles repeated, over and over again, like a mantra, through a torrent of tears rolling down his face.

“Stiles?” Richard reached out, planting his hand on the teen’s shoulder.

Stiles flinched instantly, with a tiny yelp “I'm sorry!” “I'm sorry! I'm sorry!” His breathing turned harsh, choking now and then, struggling to find air.

A deep red glow struck Richard’s eyes, as he yanked one of his nieces by the shoulder. “Tell Peter to grab Cora and get back to the main house. Then find Derek, and tell him to get his ass there, too. Right now, you hear?”

As Richard’s niece ran through the crowd of people, Richard gathered Stiles up as gently as he could in his arms, cradling the Omega, and discreetly making an exit. His eyes blazed red, washing Stiles’ body over in a gentle light, that steadied the erratic breathing.

“*This is bad, Uncle Peter…. Really, really bad… I.. I can hardly breathe!*” Cora said, her voice muddled through a dense layer of static.

“*Back off on the drain, then. Slow and steady, Cora. You don't have to take it all at once.*” Peter said, in a muffled tone as well.

The haze of darkness slowly began to blur into light. Stiles felt his eyes start to open, but his vision felt unfocused, like a deep fog surrounded him.
“Stiles?” “Can you hear me?” Peter asked, the man’s voice more audible this time.

Blinking, Stiles’ vision started to focus. Above him, he spotted Peter planting a palm on Stiles’ lungs, draining away pain out of Stiles, and into his own body. Just beside him, Cora did the same, lacing her fingers with Stiles’, where white veins protruded from under her skin.

“There he is.” Peter offered a short smile, reaching to his side and producing a cool washcloth. He planted it over Stiles’ forehead.

Breathing in and out steadily, Stiles relaxed under the cool compress. “I… What happened?” Within seconds, everything flooded back to him: the glass shattering, him ducking into a defensive posture, and… Nothing. “Oh shit… I didn’t… Did I?” He stammered, not really wanting to know the truth.

Peter nodded. “You blacked out for about five minutes, after what I can only assume was an nasty panic attack.”

“Oh crap…” Stiles slowly raised himself up, taking in his surroundings. Based on the general messiness, the slew of sports posters, and haphazardly organized closets, Stiles recognized Derek and Scott’s room instantly. Glancing down, he spotted Derek’s quilt wrapped around his body. He tucked the latter closer to him, biting his bottom lip. “Please tell me I didn’t ruin your pack night…”

Peter shook his head adamantly, moving the cold compress to Stiles’ neck. “Of course not, Stiles. Richard carried you discreetly back into the house, and Cora helped bring you back. Not that it would have mattered, anyway. You’re our pack, Stiles, and we take care of our own. Anyone in the family would have done the same.”

A soft glimmer of warmth spread in Stiles’ chest. There was comfort in knowing that Richard, Peter, and Cora came to his aid so quickly. That they rescued him, just like Derek in their own. “Thanks,” Stiles sputtered out, unable to adequately vocalize how much that really mattered to him.

Peter turned around, facing Cora. He patted his trembling niece on the shoulder, offering a quick kiss to her forehead. “Cora, can you give us a moment? Then go fetch your mother and let her know what happened”

Hesitantly, Cora nodded. She ran her arms around Stiles’ neck, hugging him quickly before taking her leave of the room, and shutting the door behind her.

Hovering over Stiles, Peter took a seat at Derek’s desk, kicking away a pile of dirty laundry to the floor. “Richard said you blacked out after a glass bottle shattered. I don’t think I need but a couple of guesses as to what that means for you.”

Stiles balled under Derek’s quilt, grimacing in the process.

Peter sighed, shaking his head. “Stiles, I wasn't sure how to bring this up, but… I think it would be wise if you sought out therapy,” He paused, glancing away. “More than wise. You’re a strong young man, so I won’t lie when I say that your mental health in the long run would benefit from it now, rather than later.”

“I don’t really…. Want to talk about it.” Stiles grimaced. Maybe it was years of hearing his father’s threats of violence if he ever spoke out, or the shame he felt at letting himself feel so weak to give in to his father, but… Even thinking about “talking” about it all made him sick to his stomach.

Peter nodded. “I understand the sentiment, Stiles, but ten years of abuse doesn’t go away in a week.” He rocked back and forth on the chair, glancing up to make eye contact with Stiles with a
stern gaze. “Removing yourself from the source certainly helps, and I'm sure that being with friends has made it all seem far away, but… Deep down, I know that you’ve got demons. Demons you want to get rid of, and make go away forever.”

Chuckling, Stiles attempted to smile and laugh away the entire situation. “Can't I just forget about it? I mean, over time? I'll get better, won’t I?”

“There is a good friend of mine in town, Dr. Alan Deaton, who specializes in situations like yours. I'm sure that he would take things slow, and let you go at your own pace. Me? I’m too close to you to be an effective therapist, and I’m more focused on aggressive therapies.” Peter said, ignoring Stiles’ veiled attempts at dodging the question.

Huffing, Stiles shook his head. “I don't have a choice, do I?”

“You always have a choice.” Peter stood up, offering his hand to the Omega’s shoulder. “But…. I think someone as strong and kind as you deserves to live a life where they don't have to be afraid,” He sported a cocky smile. “I believe you would say the same to Liam, wouldn’t you?”

With a low, disgusting groan, Stiles banged his head repeatedly against his knees. “Okay… Fine, whatever… I know… I know I need it, but…”

“No need to say anything, Stiles. I know how hard it can be. I needed it myself, once upon a time.” Peter nodded, with a gentle smile.

"Stiles!"

The door to Derek's room swung open, with the Alpha in question panting from the dash all the way from the party.

Peter chuckled, raising up and glaring at Derek. He strode to his nephew, flicking Derek on the forehead, playfully. "Go be a proper mate for Stiles tonight. Keep the door open, and no funny business. I'll banish Scott to Liam and Isaac's room,” He left the room, with little to no further explanation.

Shaking off his Uncle's words, Derek ran to Stiles' side, climbing on the bed, and wrapping himself around Sties' body. "What happened? Cora said you blacked out, and you had an anxiety attack, and... My grandpa said it was because of a glass bottle? Are you okay?!”

Stiles eased back into Derek's chest. He felt his boyfriend's genuine worry firsthand, alongside the love and affection with each of Derek's touches.

"I'll be fine. I just... I had a bad episode." Stiles muttered. He peeled off his shirt, and kicked off his shoes to get more comfortable. "Can we just... Lay down? For a while?"

Nodding, Derek peeled off his own shirt, switched off the light to his bedroom, and curled protectively around Stiles, tucking them both under the covers. He kept his hands north of the border, but gently stroked Stiles' shoulders, and scenting the Omega's neck with the curve of his chin.

Stiles counted his breaths, in and out, relaxing as his heart and Derek's soon beat in the same harmony. Minutes turned into hours. Hours passed by, one after the other.

Wide awake, and still being gently scented by Derek. Stiles finally turned around, meeting Derek face to face. His silver eyes and Derek's red eyes shone, giving them just enough light to see each other in the pitch black darkness of the bedroom.
"Dad... Always started the beatings with a beer bottle. He'd throw it at a wall, or hit it against my head, or sometimes jab it in my gut after it broke. Every... Every fucking time, it was glass. That same, god awful noise," Stiles buried himself in Derek's chest, slamming his eyes shut. "So every time I heard it... I'd duck. I'd apologize. I'd... Beg. Soon, I just... I just learned to tap out when I heard it."

Derek balled Stiles closer to his chest, and wrapping his mate in a quilt, leaving Derek bare to the cold evening. He nuzzled Stiles' head, the only exposed skin on the Omega, and pressed a kiss on his forehead. "When your dad gets out of prison in twenty years, I'm taking my cousins, and we're making sure he knows to stay the fuck away from Beacon Hills, or our entire family is going to shove a glass bottle so far up his ass, that he can use his mouth as a beer tap. I'm sure Liam will have some choice words. My grandpa Rick, too. Fuck, Grandpa Rick will stay alive out of spite, just to make sure he gets his hands on that asshole's neck."

A tiny grin grew on Stiles' face. Oddly enough, he didn't think for a second that it was just a joking, idle threat. In just a week, he knew that he could rely on the Hales. They could (and had) protect him.

"Everyone loved you tonight, by the way. They all know how you've helped Liam, and some were asking if you'd help tutor some of the other kids in the pack. I mean, if you can deal with Liam, dealing with these kids would be a dream come true," Derek said, shutting his eyes as a loud yawn broke out of his throat. "Mama McCall and Aunt Lorraine, too. Scotty and Isaac aren't failing any classes, but their SAT scores are a joke. They need a prep tutor."

A yawn escaped Stiles' mouth as well, as he allowed himself to shut his eyes, and slowly drift off into sleep. "I'd love to. Wanna show everyone I'm a good mate for you."

"You already are." Derek countered, with a blinding grin. "With that big heart of yours, who got Liam to open up last night... Who wouldn't fall in love with someone like you?"

Stiles chuckled. "...Well, I'm nothing compared to big cousin Derek, the human trampoline. Big badass Alpha on campus, with a heart of gold."

Derek snorted. Stiles laughed.

They both fell asleep soon after, each with wide smiles crossing their faces.

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**Chapter Music**

Stiles learns he isn't alone, and still has some demons to conquer that he can do with his new Pack :)

Comments, thoughts, kudos, and idea are always appreciated and welcome! Thanks, all!
Happy to find an excuse to vacate the Hale House (after the previous night’s debacle), Stiles dragged Derek to just outside downtown Beacon Hills, where the Martin’s community stood, to take Lydia up on her offer of a double date. Hell, he’d have done just about anything to take his mind off the sounds of broken glass echoing in his memory, and the dread of his appointment with Dr. Deaton the following week. (Which Peter sat up that very same morning, giving Stiles little chance to go back on his word.)

Around half the size of the Stilinski’s land, but twice as charming, the golden plated gates, marked with the heart-shaped pack symbol of the Martin family gave an immediate sign of the family’s affluence. The seven modestly sized Craftsman styled homes, each with a flashy car parked in their driveways, alongside a silver-plated fountain in the center of their land, certainly helped.

After meeting the Security Team (Martin Betas), Stiles glanced to his side, watching as his paling boyfriend bubbled in sweat through his nicest vest and sweater. They walked side by side, up to the Alpha’s home at the end of the cul de sac. “You’re really this worried?” He chuckled.

Derek gulped, straightening his vest for the hundredth time, while balancing a pie plate (wafting the honey warm scent of apples) on his arm. “Stiles, I’m going to make an ass of myself in front of the most popular pack in Beacon Hills.”

“Pfft. Derek, come on… You do that in front of everybody!” Stiles joked, nudging Derek playfully in the ribs.

“This isn’t funny!” Derek squawked, as his ears turned a bright, tinted pink. “Please, please, PLEASE, for all that is holy, don’t let me say or do anything stupid! Kick me under the table if I use the wrong fork, or if I start to slurp, or…”

Reaching over, Stiles wrapped his arm around Derek’s waist. “Relax, Derek! This is the Martins, there’s pretty sensible people, and way more laid back than most packs are, trust me!” He gestured to the pie in Derek’s hands. “Everything will be fine! Look, you even brought an Apple Pie. A Lorraine pie! You can’t possible go wrong!”

Stiles continued to comfort his partner all the way up to the front door of the Alpha’s home, an identical model of all the other homes on the street, down to the last shingle. He rang the doorbell, patted Derek on the shoulder for a last shot of confidence, and stole a small kiss on the Alpha’s cheek.

Swinging the door open, Lydia met her guests with a bright smile. “You made it!” Reaching over, she hugged Stiles tightly, before turning her attention to Derek, offering the Alpha a courteous bow. “Thanks for coming, both of you! Seriously, you saved me from another boring Sunday brunch with my future in-laws.”


Stepping up (still a tad pale, and awkwardly observing the conversation), Derek bowed to Lydia, clearing his throat and holding the pie plate before him. “I… Come bearing a present, to the Martin Pack, for their hospitality? Or, uh, well… For… Your mother? I mean, I’m an Alpha, in her house. I’m supposed to, you know… Offer something? That’s a thing. I mean… That’s a thing our Pack would do! I mean, if your pack doesn’t then…” Derek fumbled over his words, before
letting out a deep, frustrated sigh. He held up the pie, presenting it to Lydia. “Pie?”

Lydia laughed, taking the pie out of Derek’s hands and yanking both him and Stiles inside her home. “You are 50 shades of adorable, Derek. I think you’re the first Alpha to show proper manners in our house since we moved here. Mom is going to adore you following the old customs!”

The trio walked into the main living area of the Martin home. Not all that different than the Hales, Stiles was surprised to see a focus on comfort, from the plush couches, to the soft carpeting, and warm, earthy tones that colored the home. Though, unlike the Hales, the Martins overkilled on knick-knacks, designer electronics, and a grand assortment of stylistic art that adorned their walls.

Lydia stopped just at the bottom of her home’s staircase. “Come on, Derek, I’ll introduce you to my mom, she’s out in the gardens,” she pointed to the back area of her home, that oversaw a good acre of land, sprawling with a well tended land, and a shimmering glass greenhouse. “We’ll do our bullshit Alpha posturing, yadah yadah, and then we’ll cut into that pie for our tea!” As she and Derek walked to the back of the home, Lydia pointed up the staircase. “Oh, Stiles, Jackson’s already upstairs in the tea room, if you wanted to talk with him! First door on the right! Trust me, avoid the Alpha bullshit if you can!”

Nodding, Stiles kept back as he watched Derek be dragged off by Lydia into the backyard. He ascended the staircase, and nosed his way into the Martin’s tea room.

Going back to the days of old, Packs always had a room dedicated to bonding with foreign packs, or guests in their home. A room of peace, where conflict was forbidden, on either side of the parties. Some fancier packs referred to it as the “sitting room”, or a “tea room”. The Hales would have called it their “gathering room”, and the Stilinskis didn’t believe in such nonsense, and stuck everyone in a living room.

Still, Stiles appreciated the room the moment he stepped foot inside. Incense, that smelled of a dense forest, burned in the corner. A cherrywood table, set with piping hot tea and coffee, and plates of gold, gave the room a refined, posh atmosphere.

Sitting in one of the softly padded lounge chairs, Jackson Whittemore glanced up from his cell phone, where he’d been watching a rather heated sports show. “Hey.”

“Hey.” Stiles strode to the seat opposite Jackson, kicking his shoes off underneath the chair. Dead, awkward silence filled the room.

Jackson fumbled with his phone for several minutes.

Stiles poured himself a cup of coffee, and sipped through half of it.

Eventually, Jackson shut off his phone, slipping into his front pocket. “You know, I’ve never had a chance to talk to another guy Omega. Except for Lydia’s dad, but he’s ancient, and I don’t think we’d have much in common.”

Stiles shrugged. “Me either… I mean, we’re not that highly populated.”

Jackson leaned back in his chair, yawning. “Yep… We’re both just fetuses with Omega genes that fucked up and grew a dick instead of splitting open a vagina. Not even that great of a dick, either.” He cracked a wide, cocky smile.

Choking on his coffee, Stiles couldn’t help but laugh. “I don’t think that’s how it works.”
“Close enough. I’m more of a sports guy, not a biology guy.” Jackson grabbed his own mug of coffee, sipping at the contents. “So, you and Hale, huh? How’s that going for you?”

“Good!” Stiles grinned. “Derek’s a great Alpha, a great partner, and I love his family! How about you and Lydia?”

Jackson’s cocky smile softened. “I love Lydia, and I love her family. I’m counting down the days until I become a Martin.” He scoffed, rolling his eyes. “So is her family. As you can imagine, my father is huge dildo that fucks everyone over. We’re ready for him to leave me alone and start working on getting my older brother married off.”

“Oh!” Stiles grimaced, recalling Jacques Whittemore’s rather harsh treatment of his son. He could sympathize with Jackson. “Well, just one more month, right?”

“One more month,” Jackson said, like a short mantra. He grabbed one of the cookies lining the tea set, popping it in his mouth. “You and Derek fucked yet? With a guy like that, I’d be surprised if you didn’t climb him like a tree.”

Sputtering out his coffee, Stiles shook his head vehemently. “No! No, never! I mean, I slept in his bed last night, but that was more of a cuddling thing! We kiss, and stuff, but uh… Yeah, no! No, we haven’t!” He felt himself flush at the thought of it, and tried to chase away the image of Derek in just a pair of boxer shorts, scratching the soft layer of hair that covered almost all of his body. The latter image he’d stored away in his memory for all eternity, being one of the many fine perks of living with the Hales.

Jackson chuckled. “I’m kidding, dude, I’d be more surprised if you were banging,” He admitted, smirking at Stiles’ red face. “Lyds and I are holding off, too, for what it’s worth. Mostly because her mom’s sort of traditional, but also because we really don’t want an accidental kid until she’s out of college and working. I mean, it’s going to be hell getting my shitty ass Omega sperm to make any kind of kid, but… Someday, we’ll have that battle, but not anytime soon.” The Omega’s face dropped, mouth gaping in realization of what he’d said. “Wow. That got depressing, fast.” He feigned laughter.

Stiles felt his stomach pang for Jackson. While getting a male omega to bear a child was relatively easy, a male Omega fathering a child was a steep, painful curve. Sperm counts in Omega men were minimal, and only produced during heats. So, naturally, Male Omegas with Female Alphas, Betas, or other Omegas, could spend upwards of a decade trying to have a child. Artificial insemination was an option, but most traditional wolves found it a personal insult against themselves, and their ability to procreate.

Of course, Stiles wasn’t even sure if he had a future in either department. He frowned, clutching as his stomach, but planted on a feigned, fake smile. “Well, there’s plenty of time! We’re all still in high school. I mean, I get that we’re supposed to be married off and courted by 18, but why rush on kids? Why not enjoy just being with a mate? Derek and I have plenty of fun lounging on the couch, or hanging out with Scott. I mean, we’ve been friends our entire life, so we’ve got a lot to build on. Sex is way overrated.” Stiles waved off the thought.

Jackson nodded. “I know what you mean. Lyd stays over at my place when I go into heat. Door open, fully clothed kind of thing, but… I mean, it’s stupid.” He rolled his eyes, gazing into his mug of coffee. “I get a fever, want to be held like some snotty baby, and smell like sugar for a few days before bleeding my ass out, big fucking whoop, but… Having her there, watching sports games I know she hates watching, or putting on a stupid comedy movie with the dumbass actors she can’t stand… Just to make me feel better?” He cleared his throat, popping another cookie in his mouth. “You know, it’s the dumb shit like that that Lydia does for me that makes me love her so much.
That’s why she’s a great Alpha. She makes the shittiest two days out of the month seem like Christmas and my Birthday.”

Stiles cocked an eyebrow. For a moment, the legendary douchebag of Beacon Hills, and star athlete of the basketball team seemed almost… Normal. “That’s really sweet.”

“I mean… You get what I’m saying, right? That feeling of having your Alpha, or anyone really, just... Bother to give a damn?” Jackson’s face crumbled as the words left his lips. He scrambled to take them back, only to watch Stiles nodded immediately.

“Yeah,” Stiles grabbed his coffee, planting himself on the seat immediately next to Jackson. He met his fellow Omega’s eyes, flashing silver. Jackson returned the gesture. “I guess it’s instinct, you know? Omegas are practically empaths, so we know when the love is real... Makes it seem more special, ya know?”

Jackson leaned back in his chair, crossing his legs. “Yeah, it does,” He adjusted his position, so his and Stiles’ shoulders touched. “Of course, makes it even worse when you know someone says they “care”, but all you feel is... Nothing. Like you’re just a slab of meat to them...” His eyes faded distantly, and Stiles could easily figure out who Jackson probably meant.

Stiles nodded in agreement. “Or feeling when someone genuinely hates you.” He glanced away, remembering the red hot hatred his father always gave off. In the depths of his heart, Stiles always wondered if his father ever loved him, even a little. Perhaps, as a baby, or at some point before Stiles’ mother passed on. The truth, unfortunately, was that Stiles never felt a tinge of anything but hate and disgust from his father.

“Anyway…” Jackson cleared his throat, running a hand down his face. “When you and Hale do fuck, you better slick up more than usual. I’ve seen Hale in the locker room, and his dick is proportionate to his height. Dude is going to fucking rock your world.”

The abrupt shift in tone set Stiles’ face on fire. “Jack… Jackson!”

Jackson’s sneer returned, as he slapped his arm on Stiles’ shoulder. “What? Don’t even act like you haven’t thought of his cock. Dude, we’re Omegas, there’s no secrets.” He wriggled his eyebrows, like he’d just told a fairly dirty joke. “Trust me, I love Lydia, and I wouldn’t trade her for the world, but we all get that “itch” at some point. An itch only a big, throbbing-”

“Yeah, no, I get it!” Stiles playfully shoved Jackson’s shoulder.

They snorted and laughed in unison, as their “discussion” turned completely to sex for a good half hour. As they drank coffee and tea, devouring the tray of snacks on the table, Stiles felt his guard completely fall down around Jackson. He joked and had lengthy discussions about Omega things he’d never dream of talking to Scott and Derek about: periods, dicks, the worst emotional drains they’d had, dicks, the best emotional drains they’d gone through, dicks, the best and worst liars in the school they could pick out, sports, eating after their monthly visitor, dicks, and a few minutes on self pleasure techniques.

Through all the laughter, Jackson and Stiles retired to a couch at the edge of the tea room, leaning on each other, their legs intertwined.

“...so that’s when I had to tell Scott, that NO, I hadn’t cut myself, the blood he was smelling was coming from a different source.” Stiles popped a red twizzler in his mouth, chomping it down in his mouth. He grinned. “That’s how Scott learned to keep his mouth shut when he smelt blood around girls and male omegas.”
“Jesus Christ.” Jackson let out a deep laugh, stealing a twizzler out of the bag on Stiles’ lap, and rolling his eyes. “This is why we need Sex Ed. I had to practically show my Beta buddy Danny a step by step guide on why, YES, my dick does in fact function the same as his, and NO, I don’t care what all the fucking Omega Porn shows about us only being bottoms.”

Stiles snorted. “Send me the guide you used, because I’m pretty sure I haven’t completely scarred Scotty for life yet.”

The laughed, lounging on each other, and staring outside the wide, open window. Both of the young men sighed in contentment.

“So, like, is this the Omega Bonding bullshit they talk about in biology? Like, the whole “brothers and sisters in arms” hippie nonsense?” Jackson asked, cocking an eyebrow at Stiles.

Stiles shrugged. “Maybe. Omegas reading the emotion of other omegas? I’m sure there’s some science behind it, and it probably does bond us together, but really…” He paused, chuckling. “I think, deep down, I’m just glad to have someone else that gets me. It’d be hard to talk to Scott or Derek about some of this stuff.”

Jackson tensed, balling his hand into a fist. “I… I feel the same way.” He glanced to Stiles, face crumpling up in a tight mess. “I have a real question I’ve been wanting to ask you. Ever since Lyd started taking you up, and told me about you.” He folded his arms, scoffing. “Did you really leave your birth pack for the Hales? You’re not just… Visiting? This isn’t some weird Hale tradition?”

Immediately, Stiles shook his head. “I joined their Pack and left my old one. I mean, I’m still Stilinski blood, and my Uncle Noah says I’m always an unofficial member, but I’m officially a member of the Hale Pack. Talia’s my head Alpha.”

“Are you some kind of stupid?” Jackson stood up from the couch, laughing as he glanced outside the long window of the room. “Didn’t you even think about where you could have been? Your dad got disinherited. Doesn’t that put you at head of the line to be an heir?”

Stiles ran through his head the family tree. Since Stiles was an Omega, he’d never inherit the pack, so that would leave one of his Uncle Noah’s cousins or a branch member to inherit the title of Head Alpha. Though, as far as blood and the family business and fortune goes, Uncle Noah and his father, Brandon, were Jakub Stilinski’s only children. Noah and Claudia never had children. Which just left…

“Oh.” Stiles blinked wildly. “I guess I didn’t even think about it. I would have technically been the heir to my family’s business, but…” He shook his head, shrugging. “Truth be told, I was so relieved to get out from under my father’s thumb, I really didn’t care. I mean… Yeah, it might have been nice to run the Stilinski Arms, but… I’d rather be with the Hales, if I’m being honest!” He smiled, breathing easily.

Though, truth be told, Silinski Arms was a business in massive debt. Founded by his grandfather, Jakub Stilinski, the company took out a gargantuan loan to start up the necessary manufacturing capacity. While a fine engineer, and a brilliant designer, Jakub was far from a good businessman.

Some 50 years later, and from what Stiles could gather from his family, they were still paying on that same loan, despite the nice profits the business raked in. He didn’t pretend to know the whole truth about the situation, but apparently, the business was the hottest point of contention with his Uncle Noah.

Jackson spun around, mouth agape. He started at Stiles for several minutes, words failing him.
Eventually, he huffed. “How is it?”

“How is it?”

Folding his arms, Jackson turned his back to Stiles. “What’s it like, living with people that love you? People you can actually feel… That care about you?”

“Jackson?” Stiles stood up from the couch, walking to Jackson’s side.

“Forget I asked,” Jackson scoffed, shaking his head. “That was stupid to bring up. I’m an idiot, ignore me.”

Reaching up, Stiles rested his hand on Jackson’s shoulder. “My dad talked to me like your dad talked to you at that basketball game.”

Jackson rolled his eyes. “My father doesn’t hit me, Stiles. He buys me anything I want, and I mean everything. Don’t put you and I on the same level, because we’re not,” He walked away from Stiles, huffing. “My father is an asshole. He wanted me to be a Beta, to serve my glorious big brother, and be the second in the family. I wasn’t, and he still hasn’t forgiven me for popping out as an Omega. That’s our history.” He waved his hand, scoffing. “I’ve only got one more month, anyway. Besides…. If I’m going to mean anything to Lydia, I’ve got to kiss the man’s fat ass until I’m 18, and have my trust fund. I’m not going to let her and the Martins take me in out of pity. I can’t…. I can’t be a burden. I’m not going to drag this pack down. Not after everything they did for me.”

“A burden?” Stiles opened his mouth to speak, only to be met with Jackson’s shimmering silver eyes.

“Drop it.” Jackson ordered.

Sensing the overwhelming aura of “nope” radiating out of Jackson, Stiles held up his hands in defeat.

Yet, Jackson folded his arms, glancing around the room curiously. “Question.”

“Yeah?”

Jackson rubbed his forehead. “Where the fuck are our Alphas? It’s been nearly an hour since we started talking…”

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A short walk later, and Stiles was able to answer Jackson’s question. Outside in the Martin’s greenhouse, a sweet smelling utopia of flowers and plants, Stiles and Jackson spotted Derek, Lydia, and Alpha Martin.

Hands deep in a pot of soil with several tools (face and vest only slightly smudged with dirt), he plopped a sapling into the soil, patting all around the roots. “See, if you do it like this, and get it in a pot sized just right, the plant takes to the soil better. Helps even out the distribution of water, and let the flower grow out.”

Alpha Natalie Martin, a woman in her early forties, with a bob of dark brown hair, and a tall, slender
frame, watched Derek’s handiwork in awe. Much like Derek, she too had several spots of dirt on her sleek dress, following Derek’s lead as she potted her own plant. “Like this?”

Derek nodded. “Perfect!”

“Oh, Derek, you’re such a sweetheart!” Natalie set her potted plant and gloves to the side, brushing off the dirt from her dress. “Take up gardening Natalie, it’s so easy Natlie! Last time I ever listen to my sister,” She said, mockingly, with a wide smile. “I’ve probably killed twenty plants in this overpriced greenhouse. Thank you, Derek, for showing me what to do!”

“My pleasure.” Derek took off his own gloves, setting them to the side of a workbench. “Oh, you know, Alpha Martin, my Uncle Rafe McCall is a professional landscaper, and knows more about flowers than anyone in our pack. He doesn’t charge much, and he could probably help you get the greenhouse setup for year-round care.”

“Oh, please, it’s Natalie! No need for such formalities, Derek! You consider yourself a friend to the Martins, alright?!” Natalie shot her hand out, shaking Derek’s firmly. “I do believe I’ll give him a ring, then! I’ll get this greenhouse running, and make my sister eat her heart out!” She laughed, almost in a giddy cackle. “I should call Talia, too, and thank her for having such an helpful, wonderful son! Oh, and we should get together for dinner, sometime! I’ve never had the pleasure of your mother’s company outside of the City Council meetings.”

“I think that would be lovely.” Lydia nodded in agreement, already pulling out her cell phone and rummaging through her calendar app. “I say we cancel next weekend with the Whittemores, tell Jacques to go jump off a cliff, and have a nice dinner with the Hales. Sound good?”

Natalie turned to Derek, winking. “Think your mother would be up to help me get out of dealing with Jacques Whittemore for a night? I’d be very grateful.”

Derek’s face froze in place for several minutes, but eventually nodded, yanking his own flip phone out. “I uh… I can ask her right now! I’m sure she’d be happy to! We’re free most Sundays!”

As the Alphas soon descended into a chaos of planning, calls, and conversations, Stiles and Jackson turned to face each other.

“Knowing my Lyd, this is going to be a while, and involve an actual discussion about what color napkins to use at the table. Wanna go back to the tearoom and watch a game? You like football?” Jackson asked, signaling back into the main home.

“Yeah!” Stiles grinned, stealing the apple pie, left unforgotten on the workbench of the greenhouse. Jackson smirked. “Well tough shit, there’s a basketball game on we’re watching.” He sniffed the pie in Stiles’ arms, drooling over the sweet contents.

Stiles rolled his eyes. “You’re kind of a dick, aren’t you? Overcompensating for something?”

“Ha!” Jackson faked a cocky laugh, smacking his hand against the backside of his jeans. “At least I’ve got an ass.”

“Hey! My ass is magnificent! Derek told me so!” Stiles countered, tucking the pie closer to himself, as he and Jackson bounded back up the stairs.

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Chapter Music

Another long chapter with some world building about Omegas, and Stiles makes a new friend in the process. :)  

As always, comments and kudos are GREATLY appreciated. Let me know what you think about the story!
Weeks passed for Stiles under the protection and love of the Hale Pack. November faded into December, as the warm colors of autumn gave way to the frozen, hardened hues of Winter. A colder winter than most years for the northern parts of California, all the forecasts planned for a bitter, icy cold well into the spring months.

Despite the frigid atmosphere, Stiles cherished the routine of a normal life with the Hale.

Early mornings, waking up in between Isaac and Liam, fighting for the bathroom, before he’d run downstairs to help Lorraine with breakfast, and then proceed to stuff himself full.

Following breakfast, Stiles experienced a peaceful day at school, where Stiles worked efficiently in class, with a full night’s sleep, and a pack waiting for him to return home. Of course, his friendly rivalry with Lydia Martin over their GPA spurned many heated discussions, and a newfound desire to fight and claw his way to the top. (Of which, Lydia gladly welcomed.)

He still tutored Liam when the Beta needed it, but otherwise, Stiles hung out with Derek and Scott in the lunchroom. Though their vacant table had expanded significantly in the weeks since Stiles game to live with the Hales. Jackson and Lydia, the basketball team, and even the lacrosse team (consisting of middle and upper class packs) joined the Hale family’s section of the cafeteria. Their lunches were far from lonely.

After school, Stiles always found himself with someone and something to do, and his circle of friends kept Stiles from being lonely. Dates with Derek, or even just a friendly stroll through the park. Coffee shops with Lydia and oddly enough, nights watching sports with Jackson over takeout barbecue wings. Hanging out with Liam and Scott after their lacrosse practice, usually involving large quantities of food. Kickboxing and yoga with Cora. Shopping with Laura and Isaac.

Of course, though… Not all his afternoons were fun and free.

Every Wednesday, at 4:00 on the dot, Stiles found himself in the offices of Dr. Alan Deaton. A cozy cottage on the outside of town, with the good Doctor’s credentials as a psychiatrist plastered on the outside sign.

This Wednesday was no different. Stiles stepped up to the Doctor’s office, where Alan Deaton waited to open the door, and help Stiles out of his coat and scarf.

“Come in, come in! Get out of that nasty weather, you’ll catch your death!”

Stiles glanced up, smiling at his psychiatrist. On the outside, Dr. Deaton appeared to be a large and foreboding man, with a powerful stature and broad shoulders. The man’s bald head, and patchy goatee might have given him the air of someone rough and gruff (much like Richard Hale), but after a few weeks worth of sessions, Stiles knew that was far from the case.

“Afternoon, Doc. Keeping warm,?” Stiles strode to one of the cozy chairs next to Deaton’s fireplace, settling in for the next hour.

“Good afternoon, to you too, Stiles. I try my best, but this start to winter is particularly nasty on my family. Luckily, our Alpha has already put in an order with Scott and Derek for some firewood, and we can finally start kindling. We’re quite lucky to have two strong young Hales willing to work with our tiny pack.” Deaton’s eyes glimmered gold, for just an instant, as he gathered two warm mugs from the tiny kitchen, not that far from the man’s desk. “Did you have a good day at school,
Sitting across from Stiles, Deaton grabbed a pen and paper, turning through several pages of notes. “Ah yes, Alpha Martin… She’s the one who got you in the yearbook class, yes?”

“Yeah.” Stiles shrugged, setting his mug to the side. “You told me to put myself out there, right? Not hide from the world, and do something help me get back into contact with people, so… I talked to Lydia about that, and next thing I knew, Lydia got the counselor to switch my schedule around, I’d dropped out of some stupid elective my dad had picked out for me. Then I met Erica Reyes, the yearbook’s co-editor, and had a camera thrown at me,” Stiles rolled his eyes. “Sports. I get immediately lumped doing the sports pages, because I know what a touchdown is.”

“Oh? How’d your first few days go with it? I believe you swapped those classes after our last session.”

Stiles snorted. “Considering my buddies are in most of the sports teams, it’s gone pretty well. Jackson posed like the complete tool he is when I snapped picture of them during practice. Liam and Scotty helped introduce me to the lacrosse team, and Derek introduced me to the football coach, who was one of his Aunts or something,” he cracked a smile, remembering the fun he’d had editing one of the basketball pages. Somehow, he’d even managed to get away with a goofy shot of Derek, Jackson, and a few of the team’s seniors on the page.

“That’s excellent. Do you like working on the yearbook?” Deaton smiled, scratching down notes on this page.

“At first, I worried it’d take away time from tutoring Liam and the other Hale kids, but…” Stiles fidgeted in his seat, trying to contort himself in a more comfortable position. He grabbed a nearby pillow, clutching it against his chest. “...I’m glad I did it. Taking pictures is fun, I like editing pages, the yearbook team is goofy as hell, and just… I dunno, I like doing something for myself. Like, Derek and Jax have basketball, Liam and Scott have lacrosse, Isaac’s one the Devenford debate team, Lydia’s Student Council president, and… You know? I never got to do anything “extra” in my life. It’s… Fun.”

Deaton nodded, finishing his scratches, and putting his pen aside. “How’s the tutoring for the pack pups going?”

“Great!” Stiles felt his face burn in embarrassment. “I, uh… I guess they’re doing better?”

“From what Talia tells me, you’re in high demand. Other packs have been calling her, asking for your assistance.” Deaton curved a knowing smile, taking another warm sip of his cocoa. “I believe Talia used the term “miracle worker”.

Stiles cleared his throat. “I wouldn’t say that was all because of me. Give the kids some credit. Most of them just needed a little extra push, or have a rough time with weird concepts. Hell, sometimes I drain their anxiety. Some of them flip the fuck out over homework, like it’s the end of the world.”

“...and raising Scott McCall’s SAT score?” Deaton cocked an eyebrow, chuckling. “I talked with
Melissa McCall last evening in the grocery store. From what I understand, Scott jumped by several hundred points.”

A hearty laugh left Stiles’ throat, as he pointed right back into Deaton’s face. “Okay, you can give ALL of that credit to the Yukimuras! They won’t let Scott and Kira start courting until he’s accepted by a college that they deem “worthy” of their daughter! He spent the last couple of months cramming test books, and I just sort of helped explain the hard stuff,” Stiles laughter faded, finishing up the last of his cocoa. He let out a deep sigh. “I feel bad for both of them. Scott can’t see her all that much, since she goes to Devenford. Can’t even see her ALONE, since the Yukimuras don’t let her date. All she gets to do is study, work on her swordplay, study more, and go to school. They’re a couple of dictators…”

Deaton’s expression froze in place, gently scratching at his goatee. “Do you think the Yukimuras are being unreasonable? That they’re too strict?”

Stiles felt his heart thud in quick succession, deep, and painful. “I mean… I get the whole courting thing. Each pack has their different ages and stuff, and to each their own, but seriously?! Kira’s not even allowed to date, or do much of anything. Her parents expect a million things out of her. Of course, she’s the next Alpha of the Yukimura pack, but… So is Laura, and you don’t see Talia being a helicopter parent!”

“Do you feel sorry for her?” Deaton took up his pen once more, pausing to write as he glanced over Stiles’ tightening features.

Balling his hand into a fist, Stiles scoff. “Well, yeah! It sucks to be cooped up in a house all of the time. Not allowed to have a life, or do anything for yourself.” The heat of the fireplace got to Stiles, as he felt sweat running down his back. “Just having to always do what… Someone else says. Follow their orders, constantly. Never allowed to step out of line, or OH LOOK, you’re in trouble, and a colossal failure in life!” Stiles’ eyes blazed silver, flickering like the flames in the fire before him. “Because he’s selfish and can’t do shit for himself! Lazy piece of fucking TRASH! Every fucking thing I did, I had to do it for him!” He screamed.

Aside from the crackling embers in the fireplace, and the ticking of Deaton’s office clock, silence enveloped between Stiles and Deaton.

In half shift, Stiles barely realized he’s stuck his claws into Deaton’s chair. Again. Like’d he done during most of their sessions. Thankfully, the pattern of the fabric made the marks nearly invisible.

Coming out of his angry state, Stiles sighed, retracting his claws. “You have the most cryptic as fuck ways of getting me to open up, you know that?”

Deaton set his notes to the side. “Like we agreed in the beginning, Stiles, you won’t want to be pushed. Which is why half of our sessions are spent talking about the weather, politics, or your family,” He linked his fingertips together, offering Stiles a polite smile. “Though, while we’re on the subject of your father’s control… Do you feel like telling me about what life under his roof was like? You don’t have to divulge everything, just… Give me an example of your everyday life.”

Slinking back into his chair, Stiles glanced away from Deaton and from the fire. He stared into blank space, at the ceiling just above them. “Dad… Never let me do anything for myself.”

Deaton began to scribble on his notes, watching Stiles speak, eyes focused on every word.

“Dad went to work every day at around 5:00. I had to have breakfast ready for him. Had to make sure his boots were polished, and… I’d lace them up, and make sure they were tight enough on his
“Had to be in the house by 4:30. There was a security alarm on the back door, and he’d always check to make sure the security code got entered. Next to it was the list of chores I had to have done. Hell, he’d bolted that list to the wall.” Stiles’ hands shook, stomach churning as he remembered the few times when the bus ride home took too long, and he’d have to bolt it back to his house.

Stiles rose his legs up, tucking his knees just below his chin. “My dad’s laundry always came first. He didn’t believe in dirty clothes, so I always had to clean whatever he’d just worn to bed, and my clothes, too, and have them put up in the drawers and closets before he got back. Then do laundry again after he got home. I’d scrub his damn uniform clean every night, polish his boots, treat the leather belt he wore, just… HOURS of my life, down the fucking drain. I flunked a math test in the 8th grade, because I spent 5 hours getting a wine stain out of his white khakis, and didn’t have time to study.”

Deaton stopped writing. His eyes blazed gold, but he remained seated, watching Stiles’ every move.

“Bathroom couldn’t have a single hair in a drain, or a spot of piss on the toilet. Always had to smell just right when he used it, with that strawberry spray crap. Toilet paper facing the outside. If it didn’t…” Stiles gulped audibly, remembering the force of tile floor smashing into his head. “Well, I never let the damn bathroom look anything but splendid. Though, he never bothered fixing the crack in the tile. Hated cleaning that spot.” Stiles felt the words pouring out of him.

Stiles lost his awareness of Deaton’s presence anymore. The anger, and the frustration, boiling out of him as he shifted again. His fangs prodded the bottom of his lip.

“Food was the worst. Dad couldn’t bother having a “simple” dinner every night. No… Right at the top of the fucking fridge was some ridiculous recipe, with a stupid demand. Pot roast with carrots and potatoes, but he didn’t want to see the carrots on the plate, just wanted the flavor, and by damn it had better have been the right brand of carrots! Pizza with grated cheese that melted EVENLY, with no lumps. Meat on top of the cheese, but it couldn’t STICK to the cheese, he wanted to pick them off and eat them on his own…” The sound of glass shattering rang through Stiles’ head. Broken plates. Broken classes. A broken bottle, upside his head. “Usually, I fucked up dinner as a kid the most. Trust me, Doc, you will NEVER see me complaining about any food I eat in my life. Ever. Lorraine… The Pack…” Tears bubbled in Stiles’ eyes, as they fell down his cheeks. “When I cook for them…. They… They appreciate it. They…. They appreciate it, and eat it, and they don’t… They don’t…” His claws extended, digging deep into the flesh of his palm.

A warm hand rested on Stiles’ head, while another cupped his hand, and pulled the claw away and out of the Omega’s palm. The sensation of the minimal pain being drained away brought Stiles’ eyes back to life.

Lifting up, Stiles met Deaton’s gaze. Dr. Deaton patted Stiles on the head, taking a deep breath. “Thank you, Stiles. If you don’t want to share anymore, I think that’s quite a lot for today, I don’t want you to feel like you have to hurt yourself to continue.” He handed Stiles a tissue.

Stiles wiped away the tears. With a second tissue, he wiped away the blood from his hands, which healed with the speed that a normal omega could expect. Not a month ago, and that tiny would would have taken two or three days to heal. Of course, having a good meal every day and a full night’s sleep had helped his health out immensely.

“How about we talk about something positive?” Deaton took his notes again, flipping back to the previous pages. “Ah! You must be excited for Derek’s second gift! How’s your courtship with
young Alpha Hale going?”

A bright, searing blush crossed Stiles’ face. “Doc, I have no idea what he’s got planned, but all I know from Scott and Laura, is that he’s spent the last month working on it,” he shook his head, feeling the rage and despair he’d just undergone go back into hiding, deep in his chest. “The Gift of Prosperity… Good lord, knowing Derek, it could literally be anything, that dorky goober…”

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Chapter Music

OKAY, so to make up for this rather angsty chapter and timeskip into the second month of Stiles’ courtship, I promise the next one will be super sweet and lovey-dovey! :)

Comments are greatly appreciated, and I’d love to know what you guys think about this story!
Stiles felt like the room he shared with Liam and Isaac was more like home than he’d ever felt with the Stilinski pack. He’d gotten used to tripping over Liam’s dirty clothes, hearing the low roar of music always blaring out of Isaac’s headphones, and their combined scent that clung to most everything in the room.

In the month he’d lived in the room, the area around his desk had amassed its own unique charm. Fresh flowers, that Derek always found the time to replace, sat at the top of his desk, in a crystalline vase that Laura gave him “just for the heck of it”. His schoolwork littered the area, surrounded by pictures he’d started to accumulate with his cell phone’s camera. A tad small and blurry, but they looked right at home, taped up on the cork board Liam donated to his half of the room.

A board that shook as Stiles slammed up against the wall, shirtless, and struggling to pull his jeans up over his hips. The Omega growled, trying in vain to get the fabric to proceed any further. “Come on! Come on! Why…. You…. No…. Fit?!” With one last yank, Stiles tumbled to the ground, yelping as he fell on Liam’s left tennis shoe.

Popping his head out out of the bathroom, with a soaking head of wet hair and toothbrush in his mouth, Liam cocked an eyebrow. “Uh, Stiles…. Having problems there?”

Stiles growled again, throwing off his jeans and chucking them to the ground in an angry fit. “How can I not fit into my pants anymore? I brought these from my house! They've always fit! I’ve worn them since the seventh grade! Hell, they were baggy on me!” He huffed, shaking his head in an angry fit. “None of them fit anymore! The only thing I can put on is the stuff Derek gave me!”

Liam spat out his toothpaste, chuckling as he tossed his toothbrush into the sink. He threw on a tank top and a pair of jeans, striding over to Stiles’ side. “Uh, Stiles? You realize that you’re not a skeleton anymore, right?” He poked his finger into Stiles’ soft stomach, which earned a quick giggle out of the Omega. “See! You've even got a belly now!”

Glancing down, Stiles took stock of his body. Long gone were the signs of bones and ribs, the nonexistent hips, and pale, sickly color of his skin. Like Liam pointed out, a soft belly covered his once hollow stomach, a layer of healthy weight covered most of his body, and his hips (by extension, his ass), looked far healthier. All made more obvious by the gentle touch of color to his skin, far more peachy than its previous white.

“Oh…” Stiles stood in front of their full length mirror, realizing that he’s probably put on about twenty pounds. Most of which was probably Lorraine’s doing. “I guess I'll just put on the pants Derek gave me. Those have been a little tighter, but they still-”

Stiles slipped into the jeans Derek gave him, and felt his face redden. They weren’t as baggy as they’d once been, and captured every one of Stiles’ new curves. From his slim legs, all the way up to his hips, and the new semblance of an ass.

“Looking good, Stilinski! Dat ass!” Isaac wolf whistled, stepping out of the bathroom, and wrapped up in a towel around his waist. With little ceremony, he dropped the towel, and hopped into a pair of boxers and a warm sweater. “I noticed that your bony ribs hadn't been sticking me in the front lately in bed. You’re not hogging all the heat up anymore, either.”

Stiles rummaged through his part of the closet, pulling on one of his t-shirts, and yanking on a borrowed hoodie from Isaac. “I'm not getting too fat, am I? I uh… I’ve never really worried about
my weight before, I sort of... Couldn’t,”

Isaac and Liam’s both growled in unison.

“Fuck no. You look healthy. You look like a wolf’s supposed to look.” Isaac pulled on his pants, gentling prodding Stiles’ temple with a finger. “Hell, you’re still skinny, Stiles. Eat a couple more bagels this morning, how about it?”

Liam nodded in agreement. “Seriously, Stiles, you look good. Better than good! You’re great!” He planted his hand on Stiles’ shoulder, gripping it tightly. “There at the start, you looked... Sort of sickly.” He beamed, unable to hide a gentle smile. “I, uh... I think you look good, anyway. You’d look good in anything.”

Isaac threw his arms around Liam’s neck, dragging him into a headlock. “Aw, my little bro’s all sweet on Stiles! Finally starting to feel those tingly Beta feelings deep down, huh? Should I tell Derek’s he’s got some competition?” He held on tight, as Liam began to snap and snarl up towards his brother. “Not that Stiles or anyone with a brain would pick a little shorty like you, but I mean, at least your balls finally dro-”

The brothers soon devolved into a mess of flailing limbs, as Liam threw Isaac back over his shoulder, and slammed him into the ground. They both shifted, “playfully”, wrestling to get out their frustrations.

Stiles chuckled, rolled his eyes, and gently stepped over the scrapping brothers, and excused himself from the room. He strode down the staircase, all the way to the kitchen, and the otherwise ghost house for that Saturday morning. With most of the Pack out doing chores, errands, or prepping for pack night, Stiles had the kitchen all to himself.

Helping himself to the fridge and cabinets, Stiles gathered a simple breakfast of fruit, some bagels, and peanut butter. He snuck a slice of pizza from last night’s dinner, for a side dish.

As he reached for a glass, Stiles heard the front door open and close, catching the warm, familiar scent hit his nostrils. “Morning, Derek!”

“Morning, Stiles,” Derek said, waltzing into the kitchen.

Stiles turned, spotting his partner’s work sweatshirt covered in huge grease stains, and spots of sweat. Far worse, Derek’s hands seemed to be virtually colored black. “Good grief, you’re covered in grease, what have you been doing all morning?”

After peeling off his dirty shirt, Derek moved to the kitchen sink, washing his hands. “Working on the tractor over at my Aunt Susan’s place, and a couple other machines. My Dad would usually handle that, but he’s off working on Uncle Lynn’s heater. We don’t let Grandpa Rick handle machines anymore, not after the disaster with Mrs. McCall’s mini-van.” He grinned, switching off the water, and rubbing his hands dry. “...and I even started getting your present finally ready for the big reveal.”

“Well, aren’t you sweet! You’re giving me farm equipment!” Stiles passed by Derek, leaning forward and planting a kiss on the Alpha’s lips. As he leaned in for a second one, Stiles grunted, as a sharp pain jabbed below his stomach. “Ow…”

“Stiles? You okay?” Derek’s eyes flickered red, resting his hand on Stiles’ waist.

“Nothing, nothing… My stomach just sort of cramped up there for a second… Actually, it was sort of... Lower.” Stiles shook it off, as the pain faded away.
“You okay? Want me to go get Melissa, just in case?” Derek asked, as worry colored his face.

“Derek, relax, it’s probably nothing. A muscle twitched, or some bullshit, probably. It’s already over.” Stiles waved off the entire thing, grabbing two glasses from the cabinet, and rummaging back to the fridge. “Want some juice?”

“Yeah, thanks.” Derek’s worry softened, and he went to gather his own breakfast, consisting entirely of last night’s leftover pizza, and half a dozen bagels. “I’m done with my chores for the day, so you want to go hang out somewhere today? How about the park, or a walk around the trails?”

Stiles poured them both juice, handing Derek his, as they sat down for breakfast together. “Sounds fun! Want to invite the other dorks, or just a you and me thing?”

From upstairs, a loud roar shook the house, as Liam and Isaac tumbled down the stairs, still mid-fight, and scrambling to take it outside. The sound of squawking birds and broken tree limbs told most of what was going on outside.

Derek and Stiles nodded. “Just us,” they said in unison.

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For winter, Beacon Park managed to retain its charm, despite the barren branches all around the region, and the murky overcast that kept the sun from shining. The long paved jogging trails circled around the marble fountain that splashed the chilled water high into the sky, and through the clean forests that surrounded the park. Vendors sat parked along the sidewalks, selling a wide variety of winter treats.

Stiles and Derek jogged past a vendor selling warm coffee, waving as they passed by.

Derek bundled for warmth in his hoodie, all smiles as he and Stiles passed another long bend. “...you won’t believe where Uncle Peter got us booked for our two month ceremony, I can’t wait to reveal the surprise! Hell, I can’t believe it, but you should have seen his face when he told me! I’m telling you Stiles, you’re quickly becoming the favorite nephew. Me, Laura, and Cora have all been bumped down a notch!”

Flushing, Stiles sighed, bumping Derek on the shoulder. They slowed down to a walking pace, as Stiles tried to catch his breath. “You’re not going to go overkill on this month’s gift, right? I told you guys that I don’t need some flashy gesture. This isn’t one of the MTV Courting Shows, where the bratty courtee sobs because she got a last year model porsche. I seriously would be okay with a dinner at home.”

Derek folded his arms, flashing a quick smile to his partner. “It’s the Gift of Prosperity. The one month when me and my pack are supposed to spoil you, Stiles.” He took a deep breath, exhaling his breath in a deep fox. “To show you that I can provide for you, and give you a life where you don’t have to worry about not having enough to get by.”

“Derek, you guys have already showed me that.” Stiles rolled his eyes, leaning his head on Derek’s shoulder. “You guys... Gave me so much, already. Why would I need more?”

“My Pack gave you that stuff. I haven’t.” Derek dropped his head, shutting his eyes, while he wrapped his hand around Stiles’ waist. “Not that I’m going to be that impressive. I wouldn’t expect
a Porsche or anything like what Lydia can give Jackson. This is something… Well, my gift is a little weird, but… I hope you like it.”

Stiles nudged Derek in the side. “Come on, Derek, you can get me a lollipop and I wouldn’t be disappointed.”

A wide smile crossed Derek’s face as he focused his hearing on Stiles’ chest. “Funny thing is… You’re not lying.”

“Just as long as it’s strawberry flavored, my hunky hero, or we’re through.” Stiles grinned, waggling his eyebrows at Derek.

“Pfft… Strawberry? My beautiful boyfriend, we’re going to have to have some serious words on flavors, or this relationship just isn’t going to work out.” Derek nuzzled his nose into Stiles’ hair, taking a deep whiff.

Stiles stopped, watching as Derek’s pace skid to a halt. He glanced back at his partner, and at how deep his eyes began to glow. “Uh… Der?”

Clearing his throat, Derek shook away the red glow. “Sorry, sorry… It’s just…” He leaned forward, pressing a kiss on Stiles’ head, and taking another lungful of air. “You smell… Really nice today, Stiles. I might be a little… Enamored.”

Stiles snorted, glancing down at Derek’s jeans, where his boyfriend’s “enamor” started to display. “Huh… I’m making you hot right now?”

“Very.” Derek regretfully removed himself from Stiles, and took a full step away. “Let’s keep walking, and I’ll try to get some fresh air through me.”

“Huh… That’s weird.” Stiles walked alongside Derek, keeping a short distance. “I used the same shampoo and soap this morning. Definitely showered, so, uh… Not sure what’s going on.”

“Maybe it’s just you,” Derek grinned, focused on breathing in the fresh air before him. “I noticed you smell a lot sweeter these days. More like Cora and Jackson, and less like… Well, for the longest time, you didn’t smell like much of anything. Nowadays, and especially today, it’s… Like sugar.”

Stiles chuckled, walking backwards as he faced Derek. “Probably because Aunt Lorraine keeps shoving pies down my throat. Seriously, I don’t know how any of you Hales don’t weigh 500 pounds with her cooking!”

They laughed, and continued down the trail, through the entrance to city park, and back to the main stretch of vendors. A lot of people, mostly students, hung out on and around the area, chatting and playing games.

Stiles and Derek grabbed a few cups of coffee, and headed to a park bench. They started to sit, stopping halfway as Derek peered across the park, to a group of nicely dressed kids, all surrounding a thin guy in a blue scarf.

“Hey, isn’t that Isaac?” Derek muttered. He sat his coffee to the side, eyes flaring red.

Stiles recognized Isaac’s outfit, and his scarf. He also noticed some of the guys surrounding him, wearing Devenford’s colors. “Yeah, that’s definitely Isaac! Looks like some guys from Devenford, too! Wanna go say-”
One of the shorter members of the group removed the lid to his beverage, and then proceeded to pour it over Isaac’s head, drenching him in the cold soda. The other Devenford guys laughed, while Isaac yelped at the cold contact, but did nothing as a second drink was thrown right in his face.

Stiles felt his chest burn. Like every drop of his blood ignited, forcing his eyes to shine like the moon itself. Barely aware that he’d broken out into a hard sprint, Stiles rushed to the group of kids, yanking and throwing them out of his way until he came to Isaac’s side. He smashed the drink out of kid’s hands, where he’d still been drenching Isaac with its cold contents. “HEY! What the fuck do you think you’re doing?!” The words pushed out of Stiles in the form of a snarl, which struck fear into half the group, while the other group stood behind the perpetrator, with terrified glares.

Only then did Stiles realize the kids were all freshman. Hell, some were probably still in junior high. Yet, they all stood behind one kid in particular. A tanned, toned, and smugly dressed prick with punked up brown hair, and a pair of cold, red eyes. As tall as Liam, but nowhere near as muscled, he didn’t have much in the way of an intimidation factor.

“Isaac?” Derek growled, pushing through the crowd, and taking his place in front of Isaac, and beside Stiles.

The punk kid stepped forward, chuckling. “Ah… Well, if it isn’t Alpha Hale and Omega Stilinski. Beacon Hill’s power couple.” He reached out, attempting to take Stiles’ hand, bending forward to kiss it. “A pleasure to meet you, Stiles. I’ve heard so much about you…”

Stiles shoved the kid back, taking his hand back. More anger bubbled underneath, as he turned to survey the damage to Isaac’s clothes. They dripped, soaking wet, as the Beta did nothing but stand in his cold misery. “Well, I haven’t heard jack shit about you, you fucker. You get a kick out of throwing soda in people’s faces in the dead of winter?!”

“Oh, Stiles, that was just a little accident.” The Punk chuckled, gesturing to Isaac. “Isn’t that right? Isaac?”

Isaac shook, fangs popping out of his mouth.

“What? Are you going to defend that savage brother of yours Isaac? Do you want to hit me?!” Going to prove you’re just like the rest of your trashy pack?” The Punk laughed, as his eyes swirled into a mixture of black and red. “Going to prove that’s all you’ll ever be? Low class trash? I swear, I don’t know why you bothered sticking around Devenford. Everyone knows there’s no way you’ll ever accomplish anything. You’re a Hale, that’s all you-”

Stiles felt his hand move on its own. He grabbed the punk’s soda, and proceeded to pour the entire contents over the punk’s head.

Isaac’s jaw dropped.

Derek forced back laughter.

The group of Devenford punks began to snicker and laugh, while others watched their “leader” in awe.
The Punk in question froze, blinking, and unable to process what just happened to him.

“Whoops.” Stiles tossed the cup over his shoulder.

“Do you have any idea of who I am?” The Punk wiped the soda from his forehead, practically trembling in rage. “Do you… Have any idea, who the fuck I am?!”

“About 5 feet of douche and a Napoleon complex?” Derek chimed in, folding his arms as he stepped forward.

“I am Alpha Theo Raken. Of the Raken Pack.” He screamed, shifting in the process and baring his fangs towards Derek and Stiles. “I’m sure you heard of us? We’re on the City Council, and a very CLOSE, personal friend of the Whittemores.”

“Yeah, I have.” Stiles rolled his eyes, laughing at the punk kid. For a moment, he’d almost felt somewhat intimidated. Hearing THAT pack’s name? Laughable. “Though, if I remember correctly, you used to be a close personal friend of the Stilinskis? I think my Uncle Noah put an end to that hundred thousand dollar problem pretty quickly.”

Theo’s face paled instantly. Many of his friends’ gazes turned to the Alpha's crumbling face, as his eyes lost all of their glow.

Stiles rolled his eyes. “How about you run along, don’t ever look at Isaac again, and I don’t tell your friends why they’re kissing the wrong ass in town.”

Growling, Theo spun around, flipping Stiles off. “Whatever. You low class, trashy Hales aren’t worth my time. Neither are you, Stilinski, don’t think for a minute that your pack has ANYTHING on the Whittemores, so fuck off. You might be high class blood, but you’re NOTHING compared to Jacques!” The group of Devenford punks followed behind Theo as they made their exit.

Huffing, Stiles turned back to Isaac, sighing as he helped wipe the soda out of Isaac’s face. “You okay?”

Isaac, finally managing a tiny smile, shook his head. “I’m wet and sticky, and not in the good way.” He shook his head, chuckling. “I also REALLY don’t want to talk about it, so how about we keep this all between us? Just leave Liam and my folks out of it, alright?”

“But-” Stiles stammered, silenced as he felt Derek’s hand on his shoulder. The Alpha shook his head, and Stiles knew better than to push.

“Come on, let’s get you home. We’ll talk about it later, but we’re not going to drop it.” Derek said, walking Isaac and Stiles back towards the parking lot.

While they walked, Isaac laughed, bundling up for warmth as his wet clothes shot a chill down his spine. “You know… I forget that Omegas lose their shit when Pack is in danger. Pretty sure you made a bunch of junior high kids piss their pants.”

Stiles shook his head, peeling off his hoodie, and offering it to Isaac. “Hell, what is pack for?”

While Isaac stripped out of his wet clothes and replaced it with Stiles’ hoodie, Derek glared at Stiles, now just wearing little more than a t-shirt. “Aren’t you cold?”

Stiles shrugged, noting how fog began to billow off his hot skin. “Nah, not really. I’ve kind of felt hot all day.”
Well, Stiles is feeling much better physically, Derek's got something big planned for Stiles' second gift, and Isaac's got some troubles at Devenford! Oh dear!

Comments are always appreciated! I'd love to know what you think! :)

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Chapter 14

About a mile off into the Hale Lands, an old barn stood behind a fully harvested section of land. Long since retrofitted into a makeshift garage, broken down farm equipment sat around its edges, waiting to be harvested for parts. Newer equipment sat inside the barn, waiting to be repaired, or for their annual maintenance.

All things, at least to Derek, could wait until Monday afternoon.

Far more pressing to the Alpha was the later model Jeep hidden off in the corner of the barn. Once a rusted out bucket of rust that sat in the front of his home, and after a month’s worth of elbow grease, and a few parts on Ebay, the Jeep stood as it looked back in its prime.

Rolled underneath the pale blue vehicle, Derek fiddled with the vehicle’s undercarriage, making the final adjustments before the car’s last test run. He wiped the sweat from his brow, and the smudge of grease that painted his cheek.

“Hey Derek! You out here?!” Liam shouted.

Peeking out from under the jeep, Derek spotted his younger cousin waltzing up to the barn, bundled for warm in his letterman jacket.

“Hey Li,” Derek waved Liam inside, heading back under the Jeep. “Pass me the wrench and a towel, will ya?”

Liam rummaged through the ill-kept tool cabinets that lined the barn, but found the wrench within seconds, and the rag not long after. “Here you go,” He handed both to Derek, taking a seat next to the Alpha. “Still trying to get this thing running in time?”

“I’m about done.” Derek grinned. “Once I get this bit checked out, dad’s going to go over everything, and I’m going to take it for a test drive. Pretty sure it’s going to run perfectly, Li.”

Liam chuckled. “Stiles is going to love it. I feel bad that the guy has to catch rides with all of us all the time. At least this way, he can go do stuff for himself.”

Nodding, Derek took a deep breath, focused on the task before him. Neither he or his family had the kind of money to get Stiles the typical 2nd month gift of a brand new car. Though, Derek was more than capable of buying the rust bucket from his Grandpa Rick for cheap, and putting his years of mechanic expertise (studying under his father) to use and giving his mate something acceptable at the very least. Something that would let Stiles have more freedom, and hopefully show everyone that Derek could provide for his mate.

Liam sighed beside him, running his hand up and down the newly finished doors, that practically shimmered with the polish. “Wish I could do something cool like that. Or do anything useful other than being a fuck up.” He dropped his head, eyes flickering gold at the edges.

Rolling out from under the Jeep, Derek stopped just short of Liam, meeting the Beta’s gaze. “You okay, Li? You were moping at breakfast, too.”

“Isaac told me about Theo.” Liam shoved hands into his jacket’s pockets, grimacing. “My brother’s living a shit life at Devenford, and it’s all my fault. If I hadn’t broken Theo’s arm, or been such a cocky shit, then…” He paused, shutting his eyes. “Derek, I don’t know what to do or say… Isaac deserved better. He didn’t deserve to get dragged down with his loser of a baby brother. How do I
make this up to everyone?”

Sighing, Derek forced himself up, yanking Liam up in the process. He glared at Liam, flashing his eyes. “Li, listen. You losing control, and using too much force on a tackle, and breaking someone’s arm? Yeah, that’s on you, Li. You know that was wrong, and was all your fault.”

Liam winced under his cousin’s words.

Derek shook his head, grabbing Liam’s chin and forcing it up. “That was a mistake, Liam. An accident. One that could have been prevented, but an accident all the same,” His glare softened. “You getting arrested, and those ridiculous assault charges? Not your fault. That’s Mr. Raken’s bullshit. Theo being a bitch to Isaac, and pulling his stupid shit? Not your fault. That’s Theo’s bullshit.”

“But if I hadn’t—” Liam spat, ready to argue.

“Liam!” Derek’s voice shook the barn, and silenced Liam on the spot. “Take responsibility for what you did, and only what you did. Don’t let what happened to Isaac drag you down, because that’s not your fault.” He managed a soft smile, planting a hand on Liam’s shoulder and squeezing.

“Isaac’s a tough guy. He’s Peter Hale’s son, and your big brother. You really think he’s going to let something like this drag him down? Please. Your mouth is more dangerous than that little shit Theo could ever hope to be.”

“Then why doesn’t he fight back!?” Liam spat, eyes flaring gold and an annoyed growl ripping through the barn. “Why’s he taking it like a bitch?!”

“Because Isaac probably knows that’s there a X planted on the back of his head. Being a Hale at Devenford is practically an insult to have the student body. I mean, come on… They think we’re all savages that piss in the woods.” Derek rolled his eyes, chuckling. “So if he fights back, he’ll probably get the same shit treatment that you got. Isaac’s strong AND smart, Li. He knows when to pick his fights. Theo Raken isn’t worth the time.”

Silently, Liam backed away from Derek, hopping onto a tool cabinet. “I just… I feel like I’ve disappointed everyone once already, Derek. Now I’m doing it again.”

“You know, Li… It’s easy to fall down into a hole. Easy to give up, and just let the world shit on you for the rest of your life, and not give a damn.” Derek clenched his fist, thinking back to Stiles. Thinking back to seeing his mate, lying beaten and broken on the floor, and that bastard Brandon standing over him. “It’s hard to climb out of a deep hole, and sometimes, it’s nearly impossible.” He smiled, thinking back to Stiles just the day before, sticking up for Isaac, and giving zero fucks. Reaching out, Derek flicked Liam’s ear, earning a yelp out of his cousin. “You did, Li. You dragged yourself out of the shittiest situation possible. Trust me, Li, nobody’s disappointed in you. Especially not me.”

As Liam opened his mouth to argue again, both he and Derek stopped dead in their tracks, as a sickly sweet scent hit their noses.

“LI! Li, you out here?!” Stiles yelled.

Derek scrambled, tripping over his long legs, and slamming his head into the hood of the Jeep. “Fuck, fuck, fuck!! Get the tarp, get the tarp, get the tarp!” He ordered.

In a scramble, Derek and Liam managed to cover the Jeep in a weathered tarp, and run over to a tractor in repair, vaguely pretending to work on the other machine, just in time.
Stiles poked his head inside the barn, huffing in Liam’s direction. “There you are! About time I found you!” He strode inside, bundling in a borrowed hoodie of Derek’s, that practically went down to his knees. “Your Aunt Susan called and asked for you. They’re wondering if you’d come over and show Ryan the basics of lacrosse. He’s wanting to play on the pee wee team next year, and won’t stop ranting about it since he saw your game last Friday.”

Derek peeked to the side, watching Liam’s face beam wildly, and smell of overzealous joy. Not that he blamed the kid. Even amount the Hales, there had been a few (Aunt Susan in particular), who’d not been Liam’s biggest fan after his run in Juvie. The opinions had been slow to change, but sure enough… It seemed like Liam had started to earn some of his previous respect back.

“Really? Liam stammered out.

Derek shoved Liam from behind, kicking his cousin in the ass to get him out of the barn. “Go on, dumbass, and don’t question your big cousin again, got it?”

With little more than a silent thanks, Liam ran off at a breakneck pace, leaving the barn in a dust cloud.

Left to their own devices, Derek gently guided himself and Stiles away from the big surprise gift under the obvious tarp, and outside the barn. As they walked, Derek’s nose caught Stiles’ scent.

Or rather… Stiles’ “other” scent. Like warm sugar, strawberries, vanilla creme, and an amalgamation of sweet smells that overpowered the air all around them. So much, and yet, just enough. It had been mulling around in a weaker form for the last few days, coming to full fruition at last.

Derek leaned forward, taking a deep whiff, and humming contently. “You’re out and about pretty early. Feeling okay? Get enough sleep? Did you eat enough?” A low buzz filled Derek’s stomach, a mix of worry and care for his partner.

Stiles groaned, rubbing his stomach. “My stomach’s been cramping all morning, but I’m starving somehow. For… Meat. Lots and lots of meat.” He snorted, burying himself in Derek’s hoodie. “Oh, and I borrowed your hoodie. Smelled like you, and it made me feel better.”

“Keep it.” Derek muttered, a low purr forming in his throat. He wrapped an arm around Stiles’ waist, walking him back towards the house. “Come on, if you’re hungry, I’ll fix you something. I’m pretty good on the grill, how’s a thick steak sound?”

“Mmmmm…. I’m drooling.” Stiles leaned into Derek as they walked, rubbing his head against Derek’s chest. He grinned, winking. “The steak sounds pretty good, too.”

“Playful this week, huh?” Derek laughed, letting out a playful growl of his own, allowing a quick nibble on Stiles’ ear. “Fine by me.”

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After a shower, changing into warm clothes, and bundling Stiles on the couch with a thick quilt, Derek snagged a few raw steaks from Lorraine’s freezer, and fired up the barbeque on the back porch of their home.
While Derek paid close attention to the meat that cooked on the barbeque, he caught sight of Isaac hopping their back fence, and making his way up to Derek.

“Hey, Derek? You got a second?” Isaac asked, leaning against the wall of their back porch.

Derek checked the steaks, nodding. “I’ve got about 10 minutes until I’m feeding steak to my mate, crawling into a blanket fort with him, and won’t be coming out for anything short of the apocalypse.”

“Figured. Smelled it on him this morning.” Isaac patted Derek on the shoulder, grinning. “Dude is fucking drenched in that sweet smell. I’ve never smelled someone THAT sweet before.”

Perhaps on instinct, Derek felt his eyes blazing protectively in Isaac’s direction.

Isaac held up both hands, laughing as he stepped away from Derek’s side “Uh, anyway…” He cleared his throat, leaning over the back rail of the porch, and staring off into the acres of land behind them. “I talked to dad about Devenford. About Theo, and all the shit I’ve been going through there. Not that I had a chance, with you practically threatening my life if I didn’t.”

Derek rolled his eyes, flipping over a steak as he smelled out one side perfectly cooked. “Still can’t believe you’ve put up with that shit, or didn’t tell any of us. You shouldn’t have to put up with that.”

“Well fucking excuse me for not wanting to waste mom and dad’s money on tuition they already chucked out for this semester.” Isaac hopped up on the rail, growling.

Sighing, Derek pulled down the cover to the barbeque, turning to face Isaac. “What did your dad say?”

“He was furious.” Isaac fiddled with the edge of his scarf, kicking his feet back and forth off the edge of their porch. “Threatened to call the school board, launch a formal complaint, hire a lawyer, the same stuff he did when they went after Liam,” He laughed, stretching out into the air. “I convinced him not to do anything. Didn’t help with Liam, it won’t help with me. Just a waste of time and energy, and it won’t accomplish anything in the end. Raken’s the Headmaster of Devenford, and basically owns the School Board.”

Derek folded his arms. He was already well aware of the Raken’s influence in town, and over their private academy. “So…? Final verdict?”

Isaac sighed, leaning backwards, and hanging off the rail, with his head dangling just above the ground. “Dad wants me to move to Beacon at the start of the next semester. He says it’s my decision, but he’s hinting pretty hard. Mom almost brought on the waterworks. Grandpa Rick chimed in too, saying he doesn’t want them finding a reason to fuck me over. Did his whole “fuck them spoiled little bitches and their fancy cars” spill. This one was 2 hours long, Derek. Even my dad got bored.”

“What are you going to do?” Derek leaned next to Isaac, helping his cousin up to his feet.

Isaac paused, shaking his head in disbelief. “I don’t fucking know.” He groaned, yelling up into the air as he pulled at the curls on his head. “Everything sucks, Derek! I go from being middle of the road popular at the most popular private school anywhere near here, with an actual fucking chance at finding a mate, to being a social pariah over that stupid Freshman tool Raken fucking with my little brother!” He slammed his hand against the railing, shaking the entire back porch. “I lost all my friends, Derek. Because some little fucking twit and his Richie Rich family decided to screw with our family.”

“Then they were shitty friends, Isaac.” Derek shrugged. “Why weep over people who’d abandon
“I know that, Derek, fuck those assholes, but you’re missing the point!” Isaac growled, pacing back and forth, before finally stopping in front of Derek. His eyes blazed gold, huffing as he prodded Derek in the chest. “So… What do I do?”

“Huh?” Derek rose an eyebrow. “Why are you asking me?”

“Because I need advice, and you’re basically my brother, Derek.” Isaac rubbed the back of his neck, shutting his eyes. “Liam and I are two different people, and I already know his opinion about Devenford. Dad’s a shrink and tries to psychoanalyze everything I say, so talking to him is like walking in circles. Mom’s… Too nice and agreeable. Grandpa Rick would tell me to go punch the guy in the nose.” He glanced up, offering a soft grin in Derek’s way. “I respect you. You don’t bullshit people. You’re honest, and face things head on. Really… You’re a perfect mix of Grandpa Rick and your Mom. Pretty damn smart and composed, but not afraid to smack a bitch.”

“I’ll take that as a compliment.” Derek turned back to the barbeque, checking on the status of his partner’s meal. “Well, I think you’re an idiot if you stay at Devenford, and just let people walk all over you. You’re a Hale, have a little respect for that name.” He took the steaks off the grill, moving them to a plate to rest. “Come to Beacon, and be with the rest of your family, who’ll help you find good friends. You’re a smart guy, Isaac, you’re going to be at the top of our class, easy. No more kissing Raken ass, or getting sodas dumped on your face. You can excel without all the petty drama. Seems pretty obvious to me.”

Isaac nodded, letting out a soft sigh. “Figured you’d say that.”

“Then why’d you bother asking, dork?” Derek wrapped the plate up in foil, before moving forward and flicking Isaac on the forehead.

“Ow!” Isaac rubbed his forehead, flicking Derek right back. “I don’t know, asshole!” He growled again, yelling out his frustrations into the sky. Isaac folded over the back rail, glancing out into the distance. “I guess I hoped for an excuse to stay. Any excuse, so that I could make something better of myself, and have a diploma from Devenford. So I could— you know, be better than just what everyone thinks a Hale is capable of achieving.”

Gathering up the plate of food for his mate, Derek strode up to Isaac, smacking the back of his cousin’s head with everything he had.

“OW! You ass, what was that for?!” Isaac growled, glaring back to Derek.

“Because you’re an idiot.” Derek’s eyes flared to life, staring into Isaac. “Do you not remember anything Grandpa Rick has EVER taught you? We’re the Hales, Isaac. Our family founded this fucking town with nothing more than a leather knapsack, some wood, and a dream of having a peaceful place to call home.” He gestured out to the land that went on out towards the horizon. “Our family made a successful farm that’s survived 3 generations, fed our families, and managed to keep us warm and fed without needed any help from the outside world. Mom’s generation made it into a business that feeds our entire town, Isaac. We’re self-sufficient, and manage to help out our allies, all without hardship.”

Isaac hunched his shoulders, glancing away from Derek.

Derek laughed, ruffling Isaac’s hair. “Just because some rich uptight social assholes think we’re not much for being farmers, doesn’t mean that’s all we are or all we can be, Isaac. Like Grandpa Rick says, fuck them, and do what you want!”
They stood in silence, as a harsh chill blew in Isaac’s face. Yet, he smiled, nodding quietly. “Like I said, blunt.”

Derek and Isaac walked back towards the back exit, Derek smirking at the compliment. “I get it from Grandpa.” Too focused on Isaac, Derek failed to duck for the back door, slamming his head into the top of the door frame. He yelped in pain, rubbing the red spot growing on his forehead.

“You also get his coordination, Bambi.” Isaac cackled.

“Shaddup, string bean.” Derek spat back.

“How’s the weather up there, Giraffe?”

“I dunno, how’s the weather up your ass? Your head’s stuck up there plenty, you know.”

“Cowboy Reject.”

“Fashion geek.”

“Momma’s boy.”

Derek stopped as he and Isaac made their way into the kitchen, unable to help himself from grinning ear to ear. “Devenford dropout.”

Isaac paused, opening his mouth to fire back another insult, as Derek’s words reached him. He shrugged, unable to hold back his smile. “I mean… You got me there.”

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Derek, Isaac, Liam, and Stiles took ownership of the living room for the rest of Sunday. While Liam flipped through sports channels, and Isaac napped with his headphones on, Derek made himself comfortable with Stiles, bundled under a blanket, with the Omega resting on his chest.

Stiles’ eyes slowly blinked open, yawning as he woke up from his third nap that day. He nuzzled his face on Derek’s chest, grumbling in his sleep.

Reaching out, Derek ran his fingertips through Stiles’ hair, earning a satisfied huff from the Omega. “How are you feeling?”

Stiles rubbed the sleep from his eyes, scooching up and resting his head on Derek’s neck. “Sleepy. Hungry. Surprisingly clingy.” He yawned again. “I just feel… Funny. A little hot, too, but it’s a good hot? Does that make any sense?” He laughed, shaking his head.

Derek shrugged. “I’m an Alpha, I wouldn’t know what it’s like.” He tipped his head forward, pressing a kiss against Stiles’ temple. “Unfortunately, you’ve still got a while. Your heat just really set in, but it’ll be over in a day or two. You need anything, just let me know. Or, I’m sure, Liam wouldn’t mind fetching you something.”

“Anytime!” Liam waved from his spot on the couch.

“Same.” Isaac muttered sleepily, barely out of his own nap.
In that moment, Derek felt Stiles shift uncomfortably on top of him. As he gazed into the Omega’s face, he saw panic, disbelief, and a slew of emotions that forced Stiles to pale immediately.

“Stiles?” Derek muttered, reaching out and massaging Stiles’ back. “You okay, you look a little… Worried.”

Stumbling to find the words, Stiles sat up, running his hands up and down his body, touching the warm, sweetly scented skin. “I’m in my… My… What?”

“Your heat. What, you didn’t realize it? Are they usually stronger, or something?” Derek sat up next to Stiles, cocking an eyebrow. He’d never heard of an Omega not recognizing their own heat, but he supposed a milder one might be mistaken from time to time.

“My… My what?!” Stiles shook, the man’s jaw practically slamming to the floor. “I’m in heat?!” No, that’s… That’s impossible!”

Reaching over, Derek patted Stiles on the shoulder. “Stiles, I’ve grown up with Cora my whole life. I’m pretty sure I know what a heat smells like.” He smiled, leaning over and pressing a kiss on Stiles’ cheek. “Don’t be embarrassed, it’s no big deal. Just a part of nature, all Omegas go through it. Nobody around here cares.”

Several sets of tears ran down Stiles’ face. “I’ve… I’ve never had one, Derek….”

“What?” Derek muttered.

“I… I’ve never had one, Derek!” Laughter ripped out of Stiles, as he clutched his hands over his abdomen, and a bright smile crossed his face.

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Chapter Music

We catch up with Derek in this chapter, as he interacts with his cousins, and helps Stiles realize something important about himself! :) Next chapter, Stiles gets to react to this news, and share his lovely experience with Derek and his new family. (This won't be the only time we get to see Derek with his family!)

Comments and kudos are greatly appreciated! Let me know what you think!
Chapter 15

The ungodly scent of sugar.

Clinging onto Derek’s ever move, and wearing his clothes.

Low grade fever.

Fatigue.

Excessive hunger.

A peak in his sex drive that had him consulting some trashy romantic reading material that Jackson let him borrow, and spending a little longer in the shower than was probably necessary.

Stiles couldn’t believe he’d missed the signs, and couldn’t believe it took an Alpha and a couple of Betas to point out his body’s natural function. Even adolescent Omegas could see the signs of heat.

After a mild freakout that somehow found himself sitting in Lorraine and Peter’s bedroom, with the Omega Denkeeper pouring them both a special herbal teal, Stiles came back to reality. As he sipped the tea, he felt the fever in his cheeks slowly flush out, and the cramps in his stomach settle into little more than a mild twinge of pain.

“Lovely drink, isn’t it? Great Grandma Hale’s herbal mix, the best cure for those nasty heat symptoms. Talia taught it to me when I married in. My fifth month’s gift.” Lorraine sat the tray of tea to the side, hovering about her tidy bedroom.

Stiles sat on the edge of Lorraine’s antique bed, atop a mass of quilts that smelt of the Hales, both past and present. “Am I actually in heat?” He squeaked out, hands trembling as he shot back the last of the tea, tapping his feet anxiously against the floor.

“Well, sweetie, either you’re in heat, or you’ve taken a bath in sugar,” Lorraine chuckled, with a wide, bright smile that spread warmth throughout the room. She sat next to Stiles, wrapping her arm around the teen’s side. “I doubt that’s the case, so yes, sweetie, as someone who’s had more heats than she cares to admit to, yes, you’re most definitely in heat.”

“How?!” Stiles shot up, pacing back and forth in the room, clinging his hands desperately into his chest. The bloom of hope caught on his insides, flickering joy, but kept at bay by the harsh, cold reality of everything potentially being… Just a joke. “I’ve never had a heat before in my life! Why did I start about 4 years late?! I’m SIXTEEN, Lorraine! I… Why?!?”

Lorraine shook her head, gathering up one of the many quilts on her bed. She stood, walking to Stiles, and wrapping the Omega in their family’s quilt. “Stiles… Do you know why Omegas go into heat? Or what its purpose is?”

The scent of the quilt calmed Stiles’ nerves. He stopped pacing, turning up to face Lorraine head-on. “It’s a monthly cycle? Like our other visitor?” He gestured to his abdomen. “Supposed to show that everything’s rearing and ready to go?”

“I see the stunning lack of proper sexual education is prevalent as ever….” Lorraine sighed, shaking her head. She guided Stiles to a chair in the corner of the room, sitting him in it. There, she poured him another cup of tea, and gently brushing his long bangs out of his face. “Stiles, Omegas only go into heat when their body, mind, and spirit are in harmony. A Heat is a sign to other wolves that an
Omega is healthy enough, psychologically ready, and living in an environment functional to raising children. Normally, if an Omega failed to show a heat, it would be a red flag that something was wrong in the Omega’s life.” Lorraine handed the cup to Stiles, dropping cubes of sugar into it. “So, Stiles, unless those conditions are met, a Heat, and the ability to conceive a child, won’t materialize.”

Everything clicked in Stiles’ mind. His trembling hands froze, and the young man dropped his head. “Oh. Oh. Oh…”

A month ago, he’d been lucky to have a meal outside of school. A month ago, his life had been an endless ball of stress, anxiety, and depression. A month ago, he lived in a place where he’d never wish any child to live in.

A month ago, he’d have given anything to make all the shit in his life disappear forever.

“Something else he took from me, huh?” Stiles sputtered out.

Lorraine nodded, gently patting Stiles on the knee. “Stiles, your body was malnourished at best, and you lived under the thumb of a cruel man. So your body reacted, as a defense mechanism,” She offered a gentle smile, taking a seat next to Stiles, and keeping physical contact, as white veins protruded from most of her body, taking the negative thoughts away from Stiles. “Your instinct kept you from experiencing heats, because it knew you weren’t capable or ready for that phase of your life. In ye olden days, it kept Omegas safe from being “taken” or “used”.”

Sat in silence, Stiles felt years of worry, anger, despair, and shame over his body rush to the surface. The tears didn’t come along with them. Only a numb realization that all the insults he’d survived from his father, and all the loathing he had for himself… Wasn’t his fault at all.

“So, I’m… Not… Broken?” Stiles buried himself under Lorraine’s quilt.

The white veins on Lorraine’s body doubled in size, as an endless stream of tears ran down Lorraine’s face, feeling everything Stiles felt in that moment. “Oh sweetheart!” She wrapped her arms around Stiles, knocking the teacup out of his hands, where it fell to the floor in a clatter. Lorraine shook her head vehemently, unable to hold back the sobs that wracked out of her throat. “Of course not, Stiles! Nothing about you is “broken”, pumpkin. Not a single diddly darn thing! Do you hear me? Nothing!” Raising herself up, she wiped the tears from her face, and pressed a kiss on Stiles’ forehead. “Stiles, you are a sweet, wonderful, amazing young man, who’s survived and endured more than anyone your age, or any age, should have to go through. Nothing, and I mean nothing, is “broken” about you.”

“I…” Stiles felt the hope rise in his chest. The warm, fluttering vision of a future. Having the one thing he’d always wanted, but knew he could never have. In that moment, he allowed himself to, if only for a brief moment, to have that vision. Of a little boy, or a little girl, sometimes one of each, growing up in a home, without fear, without pain, and with all the love Stiles never knew, and always wanted to give. “I can…”

Lorraine chuckled, drying her tears, and patting Stiles’ stomach. “To answer the question I know you’re really asking…. Yes dearie, you are more than capable of enjoying ALL of the benefits of being an Omega. One of them being, and that I’m hoping, will be a big family that Auntie Lorraine will get to spoil someday.”

Stiles refused to cry, willing away the tears. The hope in his heart surfaced, and he felt everything inside him soar. He felt the heat of his skin, smelt the sugar in the air, allowed his stomach to rumble in a dull hunger, and allowed himself to feel the experience that ran throughout his body.
The white veins on Lorraine’s body shrunk, bit by bit, until they vanished all together.

“Thanks… Lorraine,” Stiles sputtered, with a soft giggle. A giggle that gave way to a chuckle, into a laugh, and finally into a bellowing, deep laughter. He doubled over, clutching at his heart, eyes glowing a shimmering, bright silver.

Lorraine nodded, breaking contact with Stiles, and giggling excitedly with Stiles.

Stiles stood, and with Lorraine, they both laughed, hugging, and jumping up and down in genuine excitement. Lorraine beamed, ruffling Stiles’ hair. “Now that all of that depressing talk is out of the way, I say you head back to your mate, and enjoy your first heat!” Grinning, she nodded to the door to her bedroom. “He, and my less than tactful sons have been hovering outside the door for about the last ten minutes, trying to eavesdrop on a soundproofed door.”

“Oh really?” Stiles rolled his eyes, striding to the door. He pushed it open, and the wood met the surface of Isaac’s face.

“OW! MY FUCKING NOSE!” Isaac screamed, falling backwards. He groaned, crumbling into a heap.

Liam stood over his brother, offering a fake, forced smile.

Derek cleared his throat, removing his ear from the wall, and stepping over Liam and Isaac. “Uh… I can explain?”

Stiles folded his arms, ready to sarcastically berate his friends, but stopping as he (and probably everyone in a mile’s radius) heard his stomach rumble with the ferocity of a tiger. Instead, he chuckled, moving forward and patting Derek on the shoulder. “Take me out for greasy cheeseburgers, and you can explain all you want.” He grinned, sheepishly.

Derek nodded, grinning right back at his mate. “I think we can do that.”

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Mel’s diner was the cheapest place in Beacon for a good, greasy, old fashioned hamburger. Trapped in the 1950’s with its old decor and dusty booths, not many people in Beacon, other than the truck drivers, Hale farmhands, and high school kids frequented the establishment.

Off in the farthest booth, Stiles and Scott sat slurping sodas, watching as Isaac, Derek, and Liam stood at the front counter, taking care of their group order.

Scott cleared his throat, gently nudging Stiles in the side. “So like… Everything’s okay, right? I’ve only gotten the cliff notes of what’s going on from the car ride.”

“Yes!” Stiles still felt the giddy flutter in his chest, knowing that everything really was okay. He grinned, flashing a white smile in Scott’s direction. “I’ll uh… I’ll get to be a father. Someday. I mean, like… Not anytime soon, because I’m like… Still in school, but…” He tripped over the words, trying not to seem so excited about something that wouldn’t happen for YEARS down the line, but… It was hard keeping a cool head over some of the best news he’d gotten in years. “Never thought I’d get to have this.”
“Dude….” Scott smiled right back at his friend, clasping a hand on Stiles’ shoulder. “I’m sorry I couldn’t have been there for you like I should have been. Sorry you had to deal with all that shit alone.”

“Scotty…” Stiles rubbed the back of his neck, sinking into the soft red booth. “Nobody knew, because I didn’t know how to tell anyone. I just always thought… I worried that if people knew, then…” He huffed, glancing across the restaurant and watching Derek and Isaac fish out money to pay the cashier, pushing and shoving each other with big smiles. “Derek’s a family man, Scott. I don’t have to tell you what that means for an Omega who thought he couldn’t have kids, right?”

Scott’s eyes flared gold for a moment, and the Beta chuckled under his breath. “Hey Stiles, do you remember how we all met? Me, you and Derek?”

Fiddling with his straw, Scott took a long slurp of his soda before taking a deep sigh. “Well, did you know that Derek and I had just gotten told by a bunch of asshole five year olds that we couldn’t be friends, because we were “Hales”, and their moms and dads said not to play with the Hales?”

Stiles felt his smile evaporate, turning to meet Scott’s downtrodden gaze. The Beta’s eyes glowed a fierce gold, fuming with anger under the skin. “Six years old, and kids were already playing the Pack Class game. So, of course I’d been crying, because I was a sensitive fucking flower and couldn’t believe that nobody wanted to play with me. Made things worse hearing that my mom and dad weren’t “good” enough.” He chuckled, shaking his head. “Derek tried to console me, but he was pretty fucked up too. They’d insulted Talia, his Alpha, and his family’s name. Sure, he wasn’t the pack’s inheritor, but it’s still his family’s honor. Even as a kid, that stings.”

Stiles cursed under his breath.

Scott beamed, playfully kicking Stiles in the shins. “Then came this pale, dorky goober, falling face-first into the sandbox, and nearly destroying our awesome sandcastle. That goober just smiled, dusted himself off, and asked if he could play too,” He gestured to Stiles, laughing. “Turns out, the dork had a lot in common with us. We talked all during recess, and even shared a mat to sleep on together during nap time. The absolute worst day of our life turned around right then and there. I stopped crying, and Derek felt better about his pack.”

“Seriously?” Stiles asked, feeling his jaw slowly fall agape.

“Yep,” Scott threw his arm around Stiles’ shoulder, leaning on top of the Omega. “For the next decade, that same dorky goober stayed our friend. Made us feel like we belonged in school, and like we had a place in the world,” He prodded Stiles in chest. “So if you think for one fucking second that anyone in our family would care if you could or couldn’t pop out a kid, you’re ridiculous.”

“Scotty…” Stiles chuckled, shaking his head.

“You realize I love you, right?” Scott leaned forward, nuzzling Stiles’ neck, and scenting his pack mate. “Not the same way that Derek loves you, but… I love you, man. After everything we’ve all been through, I hope that’s pretty obvious.”
Pausing, Stiles returned Scott’s kind gesture, scenting Scott back in the same manner. “I know. I love you too, man.”

Derek, Isaac, and Liam reached the booth, each slamming a tray stacked to the brim with dozens of burgers each. They scooted inside the booth with the rest of their pack mates, passing out the wide array of double cheeseburgers.

“Dinner’s up!” Derek said, unwrapping a burger, and presenting it to Stiles.

Drooling, Stiles chomped into it, leaning on his partner’s shoulder and purring happily as the meat hit his stomach, and the burger’s flavor danced on his tongue.

Isaac raised his burger up, as if to toast the situation. “Here’s to Stiles, and his monthly heats. May they continue to be sickeningly sweet and create awkward boners for everyone around!”

“Dick!” Stiles reached over, smacking Isaac on the head, but grinning all the same.

Liam grinned mischievously with his brother, flashing golden eyes in harmony with Isaac. “Here’s to Stiles, and to a speedy four months, so he and Derek can finally get it on!”

“Little shit!” Derek flushed, smacking Liam on the back of the head as well.

Scott took his own burger, raising it up in the air. “Here’s to Stiles. Best friend, brother, lover…” He paused, unable to hold back a bright grin. “…and to a less depressing future, with the continued success of the Hale Pack, and our future generations to come.”

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After dinner at Mel’s, the group came back to the Hale home, showering, and getting ready for bed, and the school day that would soon come to follow.

However, instead of his usual spot in his shared room with Isaac and Liam, Stiles strode confidently into Derek’s room, pillow and blanket in hand. With a confidence in himself and his body he’d never felt before, Stiles felt comfortable in his heat, and in his own skin.

Scott pulled off his shirt, standing in little more than his boxer shorts. “Uh, Stiles?”

Stiles moved past Scott, and instead hopped on Derek’s bed, taking his spot next to his pajama clad partner, and snuggling up close to him. The Alpha put away the book he’d been reading, beaming ear to ear at the pleasant addition to his bed. “Hey Der,” He leaned up, planting a kiss on Derek’s lips, before glaring in Scott’s direction. “Hey Scott. Out, buddy boy. Take the couch or my spot with Liam and Isaac.”

Scoffing, Scott folded his arms. “Dude, you’re kicking me out?”

“Unless you want to see me and Derek half naked, and making out, then yeah, out.” Stiles smiled at Scott, with a flash of white.

“I’m out! Crashing with Li and Isaac!” Scott spat out immediately, waving them both off, but pointing straight at Derek. “You are cleaning the sheets tomorrow. I don’t want any nasty on my
“Finally!” Stiles peeled off his shirt and pajama pants, but leaving his boxer briefs on, that clung to his healthy figure.

“Mrs. Robinson, are you trying to seduce me?” Derek purred, leaning forward, and pressing gentle kisses into Stiles’ exposed neck, sending shivers down both their spines. “Pretty sure… Mom made a rule about stuff like this.”

Stiles shrugged, taking his own turn to cram his nose into Derek’s neck, leaving a trail of kisses along the way. “Don’t worry, I cleared it with Lorraine and Talia. Door can be closed, so we can get a little privacy, with the understanding that there won’t be any “funny business”. There will be a sniff test tomorrow morning.”

“Mmm…. I’ll take what I can get.” Derek growled playfully, as he and Stiles descended into slow, languid kisses, and hands that trailed up and down each of their bodies.

Derek planted his hands on Stiles’ ass, squeezing.

Stiles hitched his breath, growling into Derek’s neck, where he gently nibbled down on the Alpha’s neck. His hands reached out, grabbing Derek’s pecs through the fabric of the Alpha’s t-shirt, and squeezing with as much gusto as Derek had.

Lips connected, Derek took the initiative, switching their positions. He flipped Stiles to his back, and Derek straddled the Omega, not breaking their kiss in the process.

“Think it’s the hormones talking.” Derek pushed his thumb through one of the many holes on his shirt. “Though, if I were to slip them off…” Leaning back, still straddling Stiles, Derek peeled off his shirt, revealing his playground of soft, natural muscles, and the thin layer of fuzz that covered most of his body. Reaching down, Derek kicked off his pajama pants, leaving just a pair of white briefs between him and Stiles. The Alpha’s manhood (as impressive as Jackson had implied) strained at the soft fabric, and Derek’s very obvious scent of arousal hit Stiles’ nose like a cannon. “How about now?”

Pulling Derek back down, Stiles planted his body against his Alpha’s. The contact alone sent a shiver down both Derek and Stiles’ bodies, forcing a thin layer of sweat to appear between them. “What’s the old saying?” Save a horse, ride a cowboy? ” Stiles bucked up, making the contact between them all the more… Sensual.

“Don’t tease me, Stiles.” Derek growled, running his lips from Stiles chest, all the way up to his neck, and back to the Omega’s lips. “This Cowboy might be on a hair trigger, and I’d rather not have to explain THAT smell in the morning on you.”

Glancing down, Stiles saw his own “excitement” start to show. He gulped, shuddering under Derek’s touch. “Sorry, sorry! I uh… I’m a little clingy. Not used to feeling like this.” Heat boiled out of Stiles’ skin, happy for the cold contrast as he planted himself against Derek’s body.

“Don’t be sorry…” Derek chuckled, reaching over and turning off the lamp, leaving them in the darkness of the room, illuminated by the faint glow of the moon outside. “Trust me, I’d love to take this further, but… I’d just rather wait for the fun stuff until after we’re courted, not counting the fact
mom would murder me. So everyone knows I did by you right. So that we can make that last night special.” He brought himself and Stiles to rest on a shared pillow, running his hands up and down the Omega’s back, gently massaging the hot, tense muscles. “I’m an old fashioned wolf, Stiles. I know it’s probably stupid, but… I hear stories about Grandpa Rick and Nana Becky, and their relationship, and I… I want that for us to.”

Stiles took his own turn, to run his hands up and down Derek’s abdomen, and burying himself in the Alpha’s chest, using the soft pecs as a makeshift pillow. “You’re too sweet, Derek. Seriously? Do you even have a flaw? How perfect can you be?”

The kisses, gentle touching, and harmless exploration of each other’s bodies went on for quite a while. Only after Stiles felt asleep on Derek’s chest did the Alpha turn his gaze to the side of the room. His red eyes flared red, turning to face a picture hanging up on his side of the bedroom.

A portrait of his older brother, Ennis Hale, in a graduation cap and gown, holding a master’s diploma, surrounded by his friends and family. A massive hulk of a man, much like Derek and Richard, but sporting a head of bald hair. All smiles, Ennis’ blazing red eyes spoke of the confidence and ambition bubbling under the oldest Alpha’s confidence.

Next to Ennis’ portrait was Laura’s, at her high school graduation, with honors tassels, and holding her valedictorian plaque, eyes burning red with the same confident ambition as Ennis.

Cora’s picture was much the same, beside Laura’s. As she held her black belt, between Talia and their dad, who looked so proud of their youngest child.

High achievers, all of them. Wanting more than just a simple farm life. Making mom and dad proud.

“Yeah. I’ve got plenty of flaws.” Derek huffed, reaching down, and running his hands down Stiles’ back. He shut his eyes in the process. “I just wish I didn’t have to drag you down because of them.”

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Chapter Music

Oooh… Stiles and Derek got to be a little grabby this chapter, and what's this about Derek's flaws? More to come soon!
Chapter 16

By the next morning, Stiles’ heat boiled down to little more than a simmer.  Sure, he milked the heat for all it was worth, managing to get another night with Derek, but by the middle of the week, Stiles went back to his normal routine with Liam and Isaac.

Still, despite the fun of his heat being over, it was an experience he'd never forget, and looked forward to having the following month.

Practically exploding to share his bonding experience with someone, but knowing damn well that Scott would gag, Stiles went to his favorite confidant in all things Omega.  He dragged Jackson to the school’s yearbook room during lunch, under the guise of working on the sports pages.

Yet, Stiles and Jackson sat in front of a computer screen, in between a pile of chocolate bars, more focused on each other than the program running on the screen.

Stiles bit into his chocolate bar, beet red in the face.  "...so then, we were down to just our underwear, skin to skin everywhere else.  Oh my God, you don’t even know how fucking hot Derek is in those briefs!  Seriously, he was like a cowboy stripper.”  A shiver went down Stiles’ spine, recalling all of the amazing masturbatory material he now had to draw from.  “...and he rubbed up and down my body, digging his hands in, massaging all my sore spots, clinging onto me for dear life, and...  God, you have no idea how good it felt.  To be wanted!  To feel sexy and right!"

"Oh, I might have some kind of inkling.”  Jackson crossed his legs, leaning over to Stiles, in a whisper.  "Fun fact.  Long, manicured nails running up and down your bare back, and deep into your hair, when your skin's all sensitive during heat?  Christ, I could sit still for hours and have me some of that.  Lydia knows how to get me to do just about anything nowadays."

Stiles snorted, slapping Jackson on the shoulder.  “Like you’d EVER tell Lydia “no”.”

While Stiles and Jackson laughed, and Stiles continued his heated discussion about Derek’s massage talents, neither noticed as a bubbling, bright blonde teenage girl snuck inside the computer lab.

Dressed in a tight skirt and top, with her hair neatly cascading down her shoulders in a mess of curls, the woman’s sturdy build left little to the imagination.  She snuck up behind Stiles, bright red lips grinning from ear to ear.  "How's my favorite sports editor doing?  Having fun after your amazing night with Derek?  Oh honey, you’ve got to give me the details!  A guy that tall has to have some seriously impressive—"

"Oh, hey Erica!”  Stiles waved, smiling.  Erica became of his friends in the weeks since he’d joined the yearbook crew, and had the same amount of tact as Jackson did with all things sexual.  She was a fun person to hang around.  "This is Jax, he's helping me out with some of the guys' names on the sports team pages.  That’s our story, anyway, if Mrs. Morrell asks,” He turned to Jackson, nodding Erica’s way.  "Jax, this is Erica.  She's the co-editor for the yearbook with Lydia, and one of my friends."

Jackson nodded.  “Nice to meet you.  Lydia talks about you a lot.”

Erica choked on the air, waggling her fingers in a meek wave.  "Oh!  Oh, hello there, Jackson.  Er,
Omega Whittemore! A pleasure to make your acquaintance. Truly it’s an honor to be in the presence of such a-

Jackson rose up a hand, silencing Erica. "You can chill out, Reyes. I'm not an uptight asswipe like my dad and brother. None of the holier than thou bullshit. I’m like Lydia."

The frozen, constipated fear on Erica’s face melted away. She let out a soft sigh, slamming down next to Stiles, and stealing one of his chocolate bars. "Oh thank God, my mom would have skinned me alive if I'd mouthed off in front of a Whittemore." She grinned, poking Stiles’ face. "So, anyway, I have it from a particularly good source that you and Hale got a little touchy feely last night? Some extra good smooches?"

Stiles rolled his eyes, sighing. "Who blabbed?"

"Scotty complained in math class that he had a crick in his neck from sleeping on Liam's pillows, after he got kicked out of his own room." Erica giggled, elbowing Stiles in the shoulder. "I put two and two together. Doesn't help that Derek has a smile like the cat who got the cream."

Jackson chuckled. "No cream last night, unfortunately for Stiles."

Erica cackled, all smiles, and snorted through her nose.

"What?" Jackson shrugged, a sly smile over his face. "Come on, you know that's the best part in all the porn shots. When the Alpha’s balls deep, growling, grunting, and then finally he hits his-

Stiles slammed a hand over Jackson’s mouth. "Don't need any graphic details, thank you Jax, I know how an Alpha orgasms." They two bickered back and forth with quick, cynical jabs, while Erica watched them in awe, smiling their direction. “What? What are you staring at?”

Erica waved them off. "It's funny... I guess I always expected the high class packs to be a little more... You know? Stuck up?" She gestured to Jackson. "Seeing you two hang out together, and seeing how the lunch tables are starting to get a little more mixed up these days, it's... Weird. Like, I'm pretty happily middle class, and I never thought I'd see the day when I talked about Alpha dicks with a Whittemore and a Stilinski."

Pausing, Stiles froze in thought. Sure enough, in the last couple of weeks, the lunch tables weren’t as divided as they’d once been. Jackson and Lydia usually sat with the Hales these days, bringing with them some of the other high class packs. Naturally, Stiles had struck up a friendship with Erica, and her mate Vernon, bringing the Reyes and Boyd packs along with them. With that mingling, Derek’s numerous cousins outside of the Alpha’s family began fast friendships. Passing back and forth, on who sat where, the school’s tables were no longer a segregated mess, and a tad chaotic.

"Most of them are pretty stuck up,” Jackson interjected, leaning back in the computer chair and folding his arms. “Money, class, how people act, what they eat, what they wear? It's a fucking nightmare, and a 24/7 job. I’ve seen my older brother spaz out over what he was wearing, to the point where he broke a mirror out of frustration.” His eyes flared to life, in a dull, lifeless silver. "Me though? I like the way Lydia’s pack handles things. They're honest, and open. Don’t worry about the petty things, or any of that bullshit.” He turned, nodding to Stiles. "Pretty happy with the Hale Pack these days, too. I'd rather hang out with Stiles, Derek, and the rest of their crazy family than have to deal with my own. In fact, there's a stupid party at my place after my basketball game. I would literally commit murder to get out of the nightmare."
"Guh... My pack got invited to that thing too." Erica sighed, slouching into the computer chair, and gesturing wildly with her hands. "My mom and dad will spent all night kissing upper class ass. Trying to find some way to scrape to the top."

Jackson rolled his eyes. "My father will spend half the night trying to drum up new business, or flaunting my stuck up asshole of a brother as a potential mate to the highest bidder."

Stiles felt the dread wafting off both Jackson and Erica. Genuine, horrible dread, reverberating in a swirl of horrible shame. He felt his heart crumble from the secondhand emotion they both gave off.

"Then you should come over to my place instead of that stupid party!" Stiles sputtered out, shooting up from his seat, and glancing between Jackson and Erica. "Sleep over, even! We’ll all crash downstairs in the pack room! I’ll invite Kira Yukimura, too! It’ll be a perfect excuse to get everyone together! I mean, come on, who can say no to this face, or my tragic backstory?" He grinned, thumping his chest.

Erica and Jackson exchanged peculiar glances. Slowly but surely, their faces both melted into a sweet smile.

Jackson chuckled. "You're serious? I'm invited to stay the night?"

"Yeah! Bring Lydia, too!" Stiles turned to Erica, offering her a thumbs up. "You come over too, Erica. Bring your mate! The guy barely talks, I’d love to get to know him more!"

Erica beamed. "Really?! Your Alpha won’t mind? We kind of just dropped this on you, after all!"

"Yeah, really! We’ll make a night of it!" Stiles reached into his pocket, pulling out his flip phone. He instantly sent a text Talia’s way. "Talia told me ages ago to invite friends over, anytime we wanted on the weekends! There’s plenty of room, and you will die when you try their food! All home cooked, all natural crops and meat from their own farm! Trust me, it’s amazing."

By the end of lunch, Stiles’ message to Talia and the rest of his group flew widespread. Immediate responses later, and Stiles’ weekend to save his friends from a Whittemore bore came to a close.

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After Friday night’s sports games (a win for both the basketball and lacrosse teams), Stiles’ circle of friends gathered at the Hale Home, and soon unfurled themselves in the downstairs living room, while the adults in the pack slept away upstairs, well after midnight.

A mass of blankets, pillows, snacks, and even a few inflatable beds gathered around the Hale’s older model TV, where the ending credits to a movie began to roll that the pajama clad group lazed around.

A disgusted, horrific groan echoed in the room as the movie ended, flashing back to its main menu.

Huddled in the corner nearest to the fireplace, Stiles shot daggers Isaac’s way. "Okay, Isaac, I know we’re searching for the worst movie of all time, but I think this time, you’ve outdone yourself.” He chucked a pillow Isaac’s way.
“I try.” Isaac grinned, yawning as he stretched out on the couch, next to Liam. “Still, this definitely wasn’t the worst. Not by a long shot.”

Erica shot up from her inflatable bed, knocking over her mate, Boyd, a broad figure with dark skin, and a solid build of muscle from his place on the football team. “No, come on! This is bullshit! This isn’t even the worst movie you’ve seen? The “monster” in this monster movie had a zipper visible the entire movie! Hell, the guy was missing a glove half the time, with a bare hand sticking out!”

“THAT’S your problem with the movie?! They kept spiking the camera and forgetting their lines!” Lydia groaned, falling back onto Jackson, and laying her head on his chest.

A pale teenage girl, with a petite figure, and soft, long black hair wrapped up in a bun, politely rose her hand. Kira Yukimura, the next in line to be the Alpha of the Yukimura pack, and Scott’s potential future courting partner, sat quietly next to Scott on a loveseat, clearly shy of the large group of people. “Umm, I’m a little confused. Was the alien the monster, or was the monster the monster? What about that ray gun that turned things into chickens? Why did that disappear halfway through? Wouldn’t that have stopped the monster a lot sooner?”

“It’s best not to ask questions on Isaac’s bad movies. You’ll lose your brain,” Scott rolled his eyes, flashing a goofy smile Kira’s way.

“On that note, want to watch another one?” Isaac shot up, flipping through the pile of discount DVDs. “Uh, next on the list is Thankskilling 3?”

“Thanks… Killing?” Kira rose an eyebrow, turning in absolute horror to Scott for an explanation.

Liam buried himself in the nearest pillow. “Be thankful you never watched the first one. I still have nightmares. Long, horrible, god-awful nightmares.”

Derek’s eyes lit up a deep red, growling at Isaac while he wrapped his arms around Stiles’ waist. “No. Fuck. No. We are not watching that trainwreck. Never. Again.”

“Oh, okay! Fine! Putting it away! Put away the fangs, cuz!” Isaac tossed the movie behind him, laughing nervously.

Lydia leaned up from Jackson, a wry smile crossing her face. “Let’s play a game instead! Something fun!”

Jackson sighed, shaking his head. “Lydia, no.”

“Lydia, yes!” Lydia grinned, pinching Jackson’s nose. She pointed to the group all around her. “Let’s play… Truth or dare! If you don’t tell the truth, you have to take a dare! If you don’t take a dare, you have to tell the truth. If you don’t do either? Well, I’ll think of a suitable punishment.”

“Don’t do it, guys.” Jackson muttered, shooting a warning glare to the rest of the group.

“Come on, it’s a traditional teenage sleepover game. It’s in all the movies, you’ll be fine!” Lydia waved off Jackson’s concerns.

Kira flushed, clearing her throat. “My parents always told me these games usually end up with someone getting naked and doing something embarrassing… Umm… That’s not going to happen, right? I have a hard enough time getting permission to go out normally, so uh… Yeah…” She chuckled nervously.

“Most of Lydia’s games end up with nudity. Lots and lots of bare nakedness,” Jackson smirked.
Lydia smacked Jackson upside the head, as Kira froze in horror. "Shut up, that does not happen! Just get us started, you dork!"

The group moved to sit in a circle, around the fireplace, facing one and other. Stiles sat next to Derek, watching in awe as his friends were all smiles, and bundles of nervous energy.

"Truth or Dare, Lyd?" Jackson asked, nudging his mate in the side.

"Truth."

Jackson smirked, flashing his silver eyes at Lydia. "Have you ever had the hots for another Omega besides me?"

The group froze, turning their attention to Lydia, for her response.

"Well, of course. There's plenty of cute Omegas out there, just look at John Boyega!" Lydia flashed her red eyes right back at Jackson, prodding a nail into his chest. "Just like I know you have the hots for Alpha Chris Hemsworth, and have that half naked poster of him hanging up in your room."

Snickers covered the room, as Jackson blushed. "Fair enough."

"My turn, then!" Lydia pointed across the circle, right at Scott. "Scotty, truth or dare?"

"Uh… Truuuth?" Scott paused, suddenly sweating under Lydia’s harsh gaze.

Giggling, Lydia reached back and popped open a soda, gazing innocently between Scott and Kira. "You and Kira are so cute together, but I’m curious… Have you and Kira gone past first base yet? You seem very comfortable around each other to be "just" potential courting partners."

As red as Derek or Lydia’s eyes, both Scott and Kira sweated vehemently, panicked, fearful looks crossing each of their faces. While Scott hadn’t answered the question, directly, by the sheer horror on their faces, the answer was fairly obvious.

"I mean DARE. DARE. ALL of the DARE." Scott yelled, gulping loudly.

"Okay." Lydia toasted in Scott’s direction. "Kiss Kira. On the lips!"

The group devolved into a mess of whistles, hoots, and a few inappropriate jokes.

Yet, Scott turned to Kira, blushing bashfully. "I uh… I mean… I’ll take a punishment if you don’t wanna."

“No! No, I mean… It’s the game, you know? Not like… We have to do something crazy! It’s just a kiss, I mean! We’re going to be courting as some point, you know! Someday, so… What’s the big deal? Just a kiss! A simple, plain kiss!" Kira giggled nervously, gulping as she brushed away her hair. A giddy grin crossed her face, all the same. "That nobody is going to tell my parents I’ve done."

Scott leaned forward, tilting his head with a wide smile of his own.

Kira tipped forward, and their lips met, for a short, sweet peck on the lips, instantly met with applause from the group.

Leaning back, Scott smiled, flashing his white teeth, and chuckled as he and Kira blushed in unison. “My turn, huh?” He cleared his throat, dropping his hand down and linking it with Kira’s. "Um… Oh, Isaac! Truth or dare?"
From his spot, Isaac thought momentarily, before finally shrugging. "Mmm... Dare. Let's spice it up! Come on Scotty boy, hit me with your best shot!"

“I say he has to go skinny dipping in the lake.” Liam rubbed his hands together maniacally, with a grin to accompany the suggestion.

“Isn’t it frozen over?” Stiles quipped.

“And?” Liam asked.

Scott rolled his eyes, immediately struck with an idea. He snapped his fingers, pointing right at Isaac. "I dare you to say something nice about Liam, and actually mean it. We’ll know if you’re lying, Isaac, so don’t even try."

Stiles watched Isaac’s face soften. The snide smirk he usually wore melted away, as he stole a quick glance to his younger brother. "That's it?" He scoffed, clearing his throat. "Liam's a tiny fucking terror that drives me up the fuckng wall. I swear, he exists just to annoy me."

Liam pouted.

Scott cringed.

Derek dropped his head.

"BUT,” Isaac sighed, reaching over and ruffling Liam’s hair. “He got a bum rap with all the shit that happened to him, and deserved better than what he got. Liam's a cocky bastard, but he's the most loyal Beta in our pack, and wouldn’t hesitate to put himself above others. He did that with Stiles, a couple months back, and pulled out all the stops to heal his friend,” He looked around to the group, and smirked. “I trust Liam with my life, and hope the rest of you do, too. That’s the kind of guy my little brother is. At heart, he’s everything a Beta is supposed to be. A Guardian of the Pack.”

Stunned silence filled the room, as Liam’s jaw dropped in awe, glancing back at his brother.

Scott and Derek’s faces melted with relief, and the rest of the group eventually followed suit.

"Aw! That was so sweet!” Kira clapped, grinning from ear to ear.

Isaac waved off Kira’s sentiment. "Like I said though, he's a tiny fucking terror. Like seriously tiny, he hasn't grown an inch in years. Either in his height, or with his equipment downstairs. Poor guy has to get the extra small jockstraps and everything!"

Before Isaac could finish the last sentence, Liam flew across the group’s circle, and slamming Isaac into the ground. They devolved into a mess of flailing limbs, Liam’s snarls, and Isaac’s cackling laughter.

Kira paled, while the rest of the group quietly sighed in resignation.

"We'll just skip Isaac, then.” Erica said, pushing Boyd’s shoulder. “Go ahead Boyd, you try!"

Nodding, Boyd glanced around the room, before settling his gaze on Stiles. Blank faced, he nodded.

"Truth or dare, Stilinski?"

Stiles felt his stomach roll over. He wasn’t all that keen on admitting any “truths” that a curious mind might have about him or his situation. Nor was he really all the keen on doing some stupid dare.
These games were fun to watch, but a bitch to be a part of. Reaching over, he grabbed onto Derek’s hand, gulping as he laughed nervously. "Dare, I guess."

Munching on a chip, Boyd thought for a moment or two, before shrugging. “I dare you to get me some more snacks.” He held up the empty bowl of chips, shaking it in the air.

“Oh come on! What kind of a cop out is that?” Erica screamed, shoving Boyd.

Boyd shrugged. “What? I don’t want to go rummaging through a strange pack’s kitchen.” He tossed the empty bowl to Stiles, and winked. “Besides, I’m a boring guy. You knew that way before we mated.”

Despite Boyd’s claim, Stiles felt the compassion bubbling inside the Beta, directed at Stiles. Somehow, Stiles knew that the wimpy dare had probably been on purpose, with Boyd probably taking it easy on him.. Breathing a sigh of relief, Stiles laughed, hopping up and breaking through the circle. “My pleasure, Boyd. I can do that!”

While Stiles got up and refilled everyone’s snack bowls, he listened in on the game of truth and dare continue from a distance. Erica chose truth and admitted her bra size, Jackson (unabashedly) shared his dick length, Kira was dared into shotgunning an entire 32 oz bottle of soda (which she did quite easily, to the group and Scott's surprise), and Boyd dared to deliver an impromptu five minute speech about Erica’s radiant beauty. The Beta spoke more in that five minutes than Stiles had ever heard him.

As Stiles came back into the living room, he watched Derek taking his “dare” of the night.

While all Alphas had the potential to become the beastly “Alpha State”, where their overwhelming strength and power was at its zenith, they also possessed a much more docile talent for hunting wildlife. That being their ability to shift into a regular wolf, on all fours, complete with a muzzle and a tail.

Derek’s dare had been just that, and Stiles felt his jaw drop at how his giant of a courting partner now looked as a short, black haired wolf, with floppy ears, and a wagging, bushy tail. More husky than wolf, Derek's wolf form could have been mistaken for a domesticated puppy. Stiles felt the secondhand embarrassment flooding out of Derek as the group gathered around him, cooing and awwing at the sight.

“Awww! He’s so cute!” Kira cooed, leaning forward and scratching behind Derek’s ears.

“What an adorable Alpha Wolf! I can’t imagine such a cute little face hunting in the big bad woods like this!” Erica grinned, joining Kira in the petting.

Scott laughed, patting Derek on his wolfish shoulders. “Believe me, he can’t! The first time he shifted, Laura tried to take him hunting. Instead of coming back with dinner, he came back with a pet rabbit named Thumper that still lives out in our back garden.”

Derek growled, snapping at Scott in his form, and flaring his red eyes to life. He shook off Kira and Erica’s hands, huffing through his nose.

“Aww, don’t tease him!” Stiles handed off the bowls of snacks, before plopping down back in his spot, and pulling a wolfish Derek into his lap. He carded his hands through Derek’s fur, earning a happy purr through Derek’s stomach. “How long did you guys dare him into this?”

“Half an hour. I’ve always been curious about other Alphas wolf state.” Lydia grinned, gesturing to Stiles as she dug into her fresh bowl of snacks. “Anyway, Stiles, it’s your turn! We skipped you
earlier.

Nodding, Stiles paused for a moment, gazing about the room, before settling on his fellow Omega. "Uh... Jax! Truth or dare?"


“Hmm…” Stiles thought for a moment, before a sneaky grin crossed his face. “Let’s take a callback to an earlier question. Besides Lydia and apparently Chris Hemsworth, are there any other Alphas you’ve ever had your eye on?”

Jackson opened his mouth, ready to reply with a quick quip, but stopped just short. Instead, he glanced away from the group, staring into the flickering flames in the fireplace beside him. "Well, after tonight, and seeing how this pack works, I’d probably have to say Talia Hale. Not in a sexual, or romantic way, of course but…” He sighed, shutting his eyes. “How she runs this pack, and cares for her family. She invites anyone into her home, and treats them like they’re part of the pack. Gives her pack members the freedom to chose their own fate.”

Kira balled her hand into a fist, leaning on Scott’s shoulder. Scott wrapped an arm around her shoulder.

Erica dropped her head. Boyd shut his eyes. They exchanged a flash of golden eyes.

Lydia reached over, grasping Jackson’s shoulder tightly, offering a gentle smile.

Shrugging, Jackson chuckled. “So yeah… I’d say I admire Alpha Talia Hale quite a lot. I’m a little jealous.” Silence covered the room, until Jackson barked out a bit of laughter. “Sorry, didn’t mean to get depressing. Let’s get back to the game, huh?” He glared over at Liam, raising an eyebrow, and fighting away the frown that just crossed his face. “So… Liam? Truth or dare?”

Liam flashed a cocky smile. “Dare me, motherfucker,” He exclaimed, breaking the tension in the air, and bringing back the warm smiles all around the group.

“Really, huh?” Jackson flashed an equally cocky sneer. “I dare you to run outside the house, touch my car, and run back completely naked. I’m curious if you’re just as short as Isaac claimed you were.”

Liam’s face flashed a beet red.

Laughter erupted through the group, and Derek let out a ripping howl.

Isaac wiped away the tears from his laughter. “Nah, he won’t do it. The little chickenshit would rather die than show off his tiny little-”

Liam’s pajama pants and underwear smacked Isaac in the face, followed by his shirt and a biting, evil growl. “Fuck you, Isaac! I’m no chickenshit!”

A flash of a white blur, and dangling bits dashed past the group, out the front door, and into the bitter, cold night.

“...and there’s the nudity,” Kira covered her eyes, blushing wildly, as the rest of the group coughed out a mixture of laughter, awe, and a few impressed glances.

Shifting back into his human state, Derek grabbed for his clothes, redressing behind Stiles’ body. “You know, the Hale men are known for massive growth spurts. If Liam’s anything like me at that
age, he’s going to be shooting up like a weed any day now.”

Jackson nodded, laughing as he peeked out the window of the living room, and watching Liam dash back. “He’s already grown in one area pretty spectacularly.”

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Chapter Music

Stiles has certainly made some friends, huh? :)

Next chapter will be the 2nd Month's dinner, and Stiles will be presented his gift, and we'll see a little more about Uncle Noah. Then we'll have another brief time skip, and head into month 3, and focus on the next big stage of Stile's life with the Hales!

Comments, thoughts, and kudos are always appreciated! :)
With a soft fabric wrapped around his head, Stiles felt Derek’s arms on his shoulder, guiding him as they walked down a busy street sidewalk. He heard and smelt the rest of Derek’s family behind him, following behind. “Really, Derek? We’re doing the blindfold thing?”

“Yes, Stiles, we’re doing the blindfold thing. Now come on, just a few more steps and…”

Stiles felt a door open in front of him, and he stepped out of the brisk cold of winter, and into the warmth of a builder. The smells of simmering Chinese foods, ranging from flavorful vegetables, to their piping hot soups, hit his nose.

“Surprise!” Derek exclaimed, ripping off the blindfold from Stiles’ eyes.

After flinching from the light, Stiles’ eyes focused on the room before him. One he immediately recognized as Oum’s Chinese Restaurant. A tiny venue, with only enough room to comfortably seat around 30 people, but a hometown favorite of Beacon Hills. The soft shades of jade and red colored the room and its furnishings, which currently sported a veritable buffet of foods, spread out across multiple tables.

Stiles’ mouth fell agape, as he turned back to meet Derek’s face, and the rest of the pack that soon crowded all around him. Grins crossed their faces, as they spotted Stiles’ excitement.

“…so on this day, the second month of our courtship, I present to you the Gift of Prosperity,” Derek said, stepping forward, and guiding Stiles deeper into the restaurant, and to the biggest table in the center. “So that I can give you a life without the worries of our world, and celebrate our joy with those that mean the most to us,” He pulled out Stiles’ chair, gently guiding the Omega into his seat.

“Derek! Oh my God! This is my favorite place in town!” Stiles practically drooled over the spread in front of him, while Derek and the rest of the Hales took seats at the main table. “Please tell me you guys didn’t spend a small fortune on this!”

“Of course not, Stiles,” Peter strode up, taking the seat across from Stiles, winking to the Omega as he tucked a napkin in his lap. “The Hales have a contract with this restaurant. We provide most of the meat and vegetables for this place, so the owner let us rent out the place for free, for our years of loyal service.” He gestured to Derek Of course, the dinner is on Derek, so no big deal for the pack. Every cent of this dinner and dessert come out of his pocket.”

Stiles spun to meet Derek’s gaze, and then to the piles of food across all the tables, soon filled with several other guests of the pack that began to wander in from the exit. “You? You did all of this?”

Derek flushed a beet red.

“You’re surprised?” Talia took the seat next to Stiles, pouring the Omega a glass of tea. “Derek’s a farmhand and gets paid the same wage as any of our other workers. Of course, he only works part time, but I have a very frugal son who knows how to save for his partner and for the important things in life.” She hummed happily, reaching over and pouring Derek a glass as well. “I’m very proud of him for taking this courtship so seriously.”

“Derek!” Stiles reached over, smacking Derek on the shoulder. “You shouldn’t have done all of this!”

Rolling his eyes, Derek huffed, reaching over and patting Stiles on the shoulder. “Trust me, it wasn’t
anything fancy, Stiles. This isn’t some grand gala ball like the Martins threw for Jackson. It’s a
dinner for our friends and family, in a small restaurant. That’s what I can do for you, as your
Alpha,” He reached over, pressing a gentle kiss on Stiles’ cheek. “So let me do that. Let me spoil
you and my pack a bit.”

Laura nodded, chomping on a mouthful of an egg roll. “Seriously, let him spoil you and the pack! I
don’t mind at all! Say, how about we make this a monthly deal?”

“Yeah!” Cora beamed, raising her glass in a toast, and winking playfully at her big brother.

“Moochers, the lot of you! Next time, I’m leaving the both of you home!” Derek flashed his fangs,
as the rest of the table laughed alongside, while Laura and Cora chucked their napkin his way.

Grinning, Stiles leaned over, returning the kiss to Derek’s cheek. “Thank you, Derek. I accept you
gracious gift.” Reaching into the pocket of his shirt, Stiles fumbled through it. “Actually, I’ve got-”

A warm hand met Stiles’ shoulder, interrupting him.

Jumping, Stiles turned around, meeting the gaze of his Uncle Noah and Aunt Claudia. He stood,
immediately met with a firm bear hug from the both of them.

Noah chuckled. “Hello, Stiles.”

“Uncle Noah!” Stiles released their hug, beaming from ear to ear. “Thanks for coming! I’m glad
you could make it!”

Noah nodded, reaching out and patting Derek on the shoulder. “Wouldn’t miss it for the world.
Good to see you, as well, Derek. Keeping well?” He sat a small present on the table, in front of
Derek and Stiles.

“Yes, Alpha Stilinski. Thank you for coming, sir, it’s an honor. Thank you for the gift, it is most
appreciated.” Derek nodded, standing up, bowing, and offering a firm handshake to the Stilinski's
head Alpha. He stumbled over his words, nervous under the respected Alpha’s gaze.

As Laura and Talia stood to offer their own respects, Noah rose a hand to stop them, signaling it
wasn’t necessary. “Enough of that nonsense. Bow to me again, young man, and I'll smack you one.
Same with you two,I think our Packs are close enough to quash that bullshit.” Despite the harsh
tone, Noah reached over, ruffling Derek’s hair, and then quickly turned back to Stiles, with his
wizened features softly turning into a smile. “Shame we haven’t seen you lately, you’ve been a busy
little thing lately, haven’t you?”

“Noah!” Claudia nudged Noah in the ribs forcefully, earning a loud grunt from the Alpha.

Stiles laughed nervously, rubbing the back of his head. “Yeah… Sorry! I sort of… You know, got
mixed in with a lot of stuff lately.”

“Don’t apologize!” Claudia pushed Noah out of the way, kissing Stiles atop the head. “We’re glad
to see you’re having fun, that’s all we really want. Have all the fun you want, Stiles, and don’t
worry about these old farts.”

“Though, could I trouble to snag you after school one day this week? Just you and I? There’s some
things I’d like to go over with you.” Noah said, clearing his throat.

Claudia shot Noah a flash of silver eyes. “Noah Allan Stilinski… Is tonight really the right time to-”
As Stiles paused to make a solid plan, a flash of red hair flashed by, wrapping around Stiles.

“Stiles, darling!” Lydia shrieked, releasing Stiles from her hug, and shoving a card into Stiles’ hands. “Congratulations on your second month! Much love and affection from the Martin pack!”

“Absolutely!” Natalie Martin rushed up to the main table, bowing respectfully to Talia, Laura, Derek, and Noah, before offering a tight hug to Stiles. “How are you all doing?! Oh, this food smells wonderful! Talia, come, talk, we need to catch up! How’s that Ennis of yours doing? Still planning on coming up for the Winter Holiday?”

An influx of people soon game and gathered inside Oum’s. Talia, Laura, Lorraine, and the Martins went off to one side, sampling food and chatting up a storm. Among them, Jackson, Kira, Erica, and Boyd made their way inside, striding up to Stiles and Derek’s spot on the table.

“Though my mother and father couldn’t be assed to show up like respectable people, here’s some respect from at least one member of the Whittemore Pack.” Jackson said, planting a small red box on the table next to Stiles. He grinned. “I wouldn’t open it in public.”

“Do I even want to ask?” Derek asked, raising an eyebrow, and backing away slowly from the package.

“Probably not.” Stiles and Jackson answered in unison.

Kira moved forward, offering a polite bow to Derek, a fellow Alpha. She, too, offered a small gift, presenting it on the table in front of Stiles. Two individuals, an Alpha and a Beta, clearly Kira’s parents, offered their own polite bows. Yet, unlike Kira’s casual, flowery attire, her slim parents dressed in formal suits. “Happy Second Month, Stiles! Please accept this gift from the Yukimura Pack!”

“Truly a pleasure, Omega Stilinski. I’ve heard only good things about you from my daughter, and in proper company. I understand from Natalie that you’re in contention for the highest marks at Beacon. Quite an accomplishment, I must say.” Alpha Noshiko Yukimura said, offering an additional flash of red from her eyes. “Congratulations are in order to you as well, Derek. You’re quite a strong and brave Alpha, if all the rumors are to be believed.”

Erica and Boyd stepped up, brushing past the Yukimuras. Winking, Erica plopped down a couple of cards in front of Stiles, stealing a seat at the table and prepping herself a plate. “So, guys… Four more months, huh? How’s them blue bal-”

“Erica, no.” Boyd muttered, stuffing a crab rangoon in her mouth.

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As the party went on, guests ate their fill, visiting with one another, and bringing together a wide array of different packs, cultures, and people. Stiles and Derek opened their gifts from the other packs, as was the typical tradition for the Second Month of Courtship, marking the announcement to the public of a couple’s courtship.

The Stilinski pack gave Stiles and Derek the generous gift of a treasury bond, to be used in their future endeavors, which Talia took ownership of until they were a proper age. Derek and Stiles both
paled at the number of zeros at the end of the bond’s beginning balance.

The Yukimuras gave several sets of leatherbound books, copies of their pack’s comprehensive bestiary and magical concoctions (of both eastern and western cultures). Lorraine went giddy over the gift, while Talia and Peter nearly fainted over the bond of trust they’d seemingly gained with the Yukimuras.

Stiles regretted opening Jackson’s gift in public. Besides a massive gift card to Amazon, Jackson smuggled in a copy of Alpha-Beta-Omega: Pleasuring Partner Parts from A-Z. Which got quite a laugh out of most, but earned a deadly glare from Noah towards Derek, and a bright red coloring from both Derek and Stiles.

Erica, Boyd, and Lydia all gave thoughtful cards. Lydia’s gift ended up being a partner massage at a local spa retreat, Boyd got them a gift certificate for dinner and a movie, and Erica… Well, Stiles would definitely be using her gift card before his next heat, with express shipping. He’d have to find an appropriate hiding place in his room, far away from Isaac and Liam.

After the main events were all said and done, and most of the party descended onto Lorraine’s 12 tier chocolate cake, Derek pulled Stiles away from the party, towards Oum’s parking lot. “There’s one last gift I’d like to give you. I honestly hope you didn’t think a meal was the only gift I was going to give.”

Stiles cocked an eyebrow at Derek. “Yeah, actually. Derek, that dinner was to die for. Seriously, thank you, I’ve never eaten that much in my life, but it was SO good, Der.” He reached down, groaning at the food he’d somehow managed to stuff into his tiny frame.

“Glad you liked it.” Derek grinned, wrapping his arm around Stiles’ waist, and walking side-by-side. “As soon as we started courting, I knew I wanted to give you something special. Right now, you still rely on other people to move all around town. I talked with mom over this, and decided you of all people deserved it. Because I wanted to give you something that would let you do or go wherever you wanted.” He took a deep breath, offering Stiles a gentle smile. “You told me you felt trapped in that old house, so… Here.”

Stiles and Derek stepped around the final corner, and in the far corner of the restaurant's parking lot, Stiles saw it. “Derek, you did not…”

A 1980’s modeled Jeep, with a tiny red bow hanging on the side-view mirror. Soft blue in color, it looked like it’d just come off the manufacturing floor, sparkling new, without a dent or scratch on it.

In the depths of Stiles’ mind, he realized… He’d seen it before. “Is that… Is that the Jeep that was old and rusty, that was outside the front house for so long? Did you restore that thing into this masterpiece?! Because HOLY SHIT, Derek!” His heart thudded rapidly in his chest, beaming wildly as he ran to the car, popping the hood and dropping his jaw at the flawless engine sitting inside.

Derek nodded, ears turning pink as he caught sight of Stiles’ excitement. “Grandpa Rick let me buy the rust bucket for cheap from the family farm. I repaired it, and restored it to what it used to look like. We had some parts on hand, I ordered some online, and, uh…” He paused, unable to hold back a smile. “Scott, Isaac, Liam, Laura, Cora, and I pitched in to get the right kind of paint, and new door panels. I can’t take all the credit, but I did about 99% of the work.” He reached out, dropping a pair of keys into Stiles’ hands. “Still, it’s yours. I gave it my all, Stiles, and I promise you, it’ll be a reliable car.”

“Derek…” Stiles glanced down at the keys in his hands, then back up to Derek. “This is…” This is
amazing, thank you!” He leapt forward, hugging Derek around the chest.

Glancing away, Derek buried his head into Stiles’ hair. “It’s not a brand new car. I mean, that was a little out of my budget, but this is what I can do for you Stiles.” He gulped, hard. “I’m not probably going to be a super rich Alpha, Stiles. I am, however, an Alpha that knows how to provide for us. I’m pretty handy as a mechanic, know crops and animals like the back of my hand, and I’ll probably make enough money to give us nice things from time to time. I hope it’s… Enough.”

Stiles snorted, unable to believe the things that came out of Derek’s mouth sometimes. Did he really not realize how amazing he was, or the wonderful things he’d done? Why was Derek so self-deprecating all the time when it came to money and the future? “Do you even REMEMBER that rust bucket, Derek?! It was trashed a month ago, and you’re telling me that you turned THAT into THAT!” He gestured to the Jeep. “You’re amazing Derek, you gave me a Jeep! You gave me a car”

Derek’s stoic features melted into relief. “Oh, uh… Thanks. I’m glad you like it.”

“I love it.” Stiles patted the hood of his Jeep. “I’m going to name him… Roscoe.” Gasping, Stiles smacked himself in the front of the head. “Shit, I’m such an ass,” He reached into his front pocket, producing a thin black box, and pushed it into Derek’s hands. “Don’t think I’m slacking on my part in all of this. Here, this is for you, from me. Happy month of Prosperity, Derek.”

“Me? You shouldn’t have, Stiles.” Derek smiled, cracking open the thin jewelry box, with a silver pendant dangling on the end, forged in the shape of the Hale Pack triskelion.

“I wanted to get you something that means a lot to me, too, after you gave me this ring, I mean,” Stiles fiddled with the ring on his finger, watching in joy as Derek pulled the necklace over, where it came to lay perfectly around his mate’s thick neck. “The leather chain was my mother’s, it’s from a necklace that she used to wear all the time, and that she got from her mother’s side of the family. Uncle Noah found it for me after they went through my dad’s house. The Pendant? That was… That was my Uncle Noah’s work. He used to be a smith that worked in one of our gun factories.” He grinned, remembering the joy that his Uncle had in helping Stiles out with the project. “I wish I had any kind of talent in smithing, but I’m more of a bookworm, but… My Uncle said he was happy to make someone for his favorite Hale.”

Sniffing, Derek felt his jaw drop. “This is real silver.” Reaching up, he palmed the pendant in his hand, in awe. “This is… This is officially the nicest thing I own now, Stiles… How did you-”

Stiles nodded, waving Derek’s concern away. “I mean, my Uncle Noah gave me a big discount on the materials they use for the silver bullets in my family’s gun plants, but yeah, I wanted to get you something nice, Derek.” Up on his tippy toes, Stiles planted a firm kiss on Derek’s lips. “You deserve it.”

“Thank you, Stiles…” Derek beamed, as the two wrapped around each other, embraced in the cold night, and not caring about the strange looks from the street passerbys. Not long after, Derek leaned back, nodding in Roscoe’s direction. “Want to take it for a spin? Maybe park somewhere a little dark and out of the way to…. Do a vehicle safety inspection?” He wagged his eyebrows suggestively.

“Don’t we have guests in Oum’s we should be entertaining?” Stiles muttered, sighing annoyingly.

“I guess we do…” Derek pouted.
Nuzzling into Derek’s chest, Stiles chuckled. “How about tomorrow night? We can consult Jackson’s book before our “inspection”.”

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Chapter Music

We're going to skip forward a bit in the next chapter, and head into the third month of Stiles' courtship with Derek, and we start to see more about the relationship Stiles now has with Noah and the rest of the Stilinskis.

Comments and kudos are greatly appreciated! :)z
Chapter 18

Parked on the side of the road in front of the Stilinski Community, Stiles took long, even breaths behind the steering wheel of his Jeep. For the first time in three long months, he’s alone, and staring at the intricate gates to his home, emblazoned by the sword-like emblem of his birth pack.

Stiles peeked through his window, able to see his old home from the distance. Again, the first time he’d seen the building in a quarter of a year. He was surprised to see that the front door still sat ripped off, and the entrance sealed off in a plastic wrap.

Taking a deep breath, Stiles threw open the door to his Jeep, and stepped out into the bitter cold of January, glancing at the lifeless mess of trees that scattered the landscape, as nature itself hibernated for the season. “Come on, Stiles… You can do this… Nothing here is going to hurt you anymore. Just remember what Dr. Deaton said…”

Stiles walked across the street, and met the small contingent of armed Betas that guarded the front gate, met with immediate smiles. He recognized them as his distant cousins, on the other half of the family tree.

The trio bowed to Stiles, with a touch more formality than Stiles would have expected for an Omega.

“Good to see you, Stiles. Please, go on in. Alpha Noah is waiting for you.”

“Alpha Noah says to just let yourself in.”

“Welcome home, Stiles.”

Stiles offered a polite smile back, stepping forward and finding himself met with three warm embraces. “Thanks, guys… Let’s catch up sometime soon,” He strode through the opened gate, and walked down the sidewalk that lined up and down his old streets.

Cousin Mary’s old dog kept its usually vigilant watch on their front porch, wagging its tail happily as Stiles walked by.

Tommy, Tina, and Tim Stilinski, the tiny triplets of Marilyn Stilinski, tackled and wrestled in the front lawn, fighting for dominance between the playful Alphas.

…and of course, his mother’s rose bushes were dead for the season. While he didn’t dare stare at his house, he couldn’t bare to steal a quick peek.

Shaking off the bile rising in his stomach, Stiles forced his way down the rest of the sidewalk, stopping in front of the Alpha’s Home. An older, classic American home, that stood in contrast to the rest of the cookie cutter homes in the community.

Stiles took a deep breath, made his way to the front door, and went to knock. As his hand hit the wood, he realized the door laid ajar, and quietly opened inward without much struggle. He rose an eyebrow, and stepped inside the old home. Stiles walked along the hardwood floors, and inside the spacious abode, lined with countless pictures of their countless generations of family upon the walls, and the somewhat tacky hunting motif.
“NOAH, you’re not making any sense! Why won’t you move forward with this!? Did you even LISTEN to Jacques at the last Board meeting?!”

Frozen, Stiles stopped at the angry bellow that echoed through the halls.

“I’ve made up my mind Geoffrey! The answer is no!”

Cautiously, Stiles maneuvered his way to the source of the noise, just outside the Alpha’s Study. He peeked inside, watching as a trio of Stilinski Alphas stood over Noah’s desk, shaking papers violently in the head alpha’s face. The tallest and strongest of the three was his distant cousin, Geoff Stilinski, who radiated fury out of every pore in his body, taking Stiles aback.

“Noah, this is insanity! We can pay off that loan, and start turning a massive profit! Why won’t you go through with this! You’re not thinking of the Pack, and the amount of stress this would take off all of us!” Geoff roared, quickly supported with nods from the other two Alphas.

Noah folded his arms, flaring his red eyes back at Geoff, unwavering. “I’m THINKING of the hundreds of families that work at those plants you’re wanting to sell off. Packs that rely on us as their only source of income. Packs that know and respect our name, and worked their asses off to make our brand what it is. I will not NOW or EVER downsize our plants, just to serve our own pack’s interests.”

Geoff slammed his fist on the table, forcing the wood to shatter underneath. “Alpha Whittemore is clear on this, Noah! We could finally be free! Free of Grandpa’s stupid mistake, that’s kept us drowning for ages! Do you not know or care that we’ve nearly gone bankrupt 3 times in the past ten years?!”

“My answer is no.” Noah shot up, growling as he flashed his fangs. “I suggest you leave right now, before I consider this challenging my authority. You’ve said your peace, Geoff, but the pack, and my authority have spoken. We’re not going to sell.”

A tense atmosphere erupted, and Stiles cringed at the swirls of rage dancing around the room. He felt sick to his stomach, and took a step back, away from the scene.

“Maybe it needs to be challenged.” Geoff spat.

Stiles froze in place, hitching his breath.

Noah’s blazing eyes grew brighter, and he balled his hand into a fist. “Care to repeat that, pup? Because I better not have fucking heard what I just heard.”

A dirty sneer crossed Geoff’s face. “Face it, Noah, you’re old. You’re thinking with your heart more than your head, and what kind of Alpha does that? Would any other pack care that much about us, if the roles were reversed? No, they wouldn’t. They’d sell, and kick us out on our asses. Why bother giving them that kind of courtesy.”

Trembling in fury, but maintaining his distance. Noah shook his head, laughing menacingly. “You clearly have no respect for our family’s honor, or what morals our family stands for. You’re out of line, Geoff. Get out of my face now, before you say something stupid.”

The two Alphas behind Geoff bolted instantly.

Geoff, however, stood his ground. He laughed, shaking his head. “You’ve failed this pack enough already, Noah. No heirs because of your own impotency, you let that asswipe brother of yours mooch off our family, beat up your nephew, and run off one of our smartest kids to the Hales, all
while dragging our family name through the mud. Now you’re letting your senile heart dictate our business’ success, because of people and packs we don’t even know.” He growled, flashing his own fangs, and shifting on the spot. “Sounds to me like we need a new Alpha.”

Stiles barely caught who threw the first punch. Both Alphas vaulted over the study’s desk, and tore into each other. They fell to the ground, as Geoff tried to fire off a few punches, eventually bucked off and thrown into the opposite wall by Noah’s legs. Noah shot forward, slamming himself into Geoff, who countered with a kick to the gut. Both Alphas tumbled over each other, fighting on the ground as they struggled for dominance, kicking, punching, and snapping at each opportunity they had.

A glass vase fell from Noah’s desk, shattering into a million pieces.

Stiles’ eyes glowed a pale, dusky silver.

“Stop it! Stop it, daddy, it hurts! I’m sorry! Please! I.. I didn’t hurt mommy! I didn’t! I promise!”

Geoff grabbed Noah by the neck, hurling the older Alpha across the room, where he slammed into a bookcase, falling to the floor with a pained grunt.

Noah growled, struggling to get back up on both feet, while a newly formed cut on his cheek dropped blood down onto the flooring.

Stiles shook, as his body bubbled up in a rage, watching Noah suffer on the ground. Running on autopilot, Stiles rushed into the room, stepping in between Geoff and his Uncle. He rose both arms up, aiming to catch Geoff’s latest punch. “STOP IT!”

Geoff’s fist stopped on a dime, barely an inch or two away from Stiles. Both Geoff and Noah’s eyes fade from their red glow, painting in and out, sweat dripping down their bodies from the exertion of the tussle.

“S.. Stiles?” Geoff finally stumbled out, backing away from the Omega, with apologetic gestures. Trembling in a mixture of fear, anger, anxiety, and everything in between, Stiles felt his throat waver in and out as he spoke. “This is your ALPHA! The man that gave you a job, and feeds your family! He’s given you a great life, and this is how you repay him!? Are you insane?”

Noah pulled himself up, stepping in front of Stiles, planting himself as a shield in front of Geoff. As an older Alpha, the scuffle had left him far more drained than Geoff. “Stiles… Get back.”

“You’d defend him?” Geoff scoffed, gesturing to Noah, as a newfound anger ripped out of him. “This old bastard, who let you suffer for ten years? Who didn’t give a fuck about you, and let that monster Brandon stay in this pack? That useless, good for nothing, leaching bastard?” He paced around the study, shaking his head in disbelief. “Anyone with a fucking brain could see Brandon was a time bomb. How many fucking times did we ask for this pathetic Alpha to do something about his lousy brother?! Every goddamn meeting, Stiles. Every. Single. One.”

The room shook from Geoff’s roar.

Noah’s face fell, balling his hands into fists that drew blood as the Alpha’s claws dug into his skin.
If he’d listened… Maybe you wouldn’t have suffered as much, Stiles,” Geoff spat on Noah, leaving a wet stain on the Alpha’s face.

“Get out,” Stiles growled, body shaking as the fear and anxiety left him, replaced with hot, boiling anger. “You don’t know a fucking thing about my life, or what I went through, so don’t use me as some pity story to get what you want!”

Geoff stared blankly at Stiles, chuckling to himself. “How sad. This Omega is more like Jakub than you could ever hope to be, Noah. The Stilinski line would be better off with him, than your spineless ass.” He rolled his eyes, stomping out of the room, and slamming the door behind him as he left.

Catching his breath, Stiles turned immediately to Noah, reaching up and tracing the cut that lined his Uncle’s face. The wound wasn’t deep, barely a scratch. Yet, an injury from an Alpha would take longer than normal to heal, their combat abilities far outclassing any other type of wolf. “Uncle Noah, are you okay?”

Noah gazed at his nephew in disbelief. He reached out, planting his hands on Stiles’ shoulders, and offering a proud smile. “I’m… I’m fine, Stiles… The bastard just… Nicked me. Are you okay? I… I didn’t mean for you to see more fighting, the first time you come back home.”

Stiles sighed, chuckling. “Not a big deal, Uncle Noah. You should see Isaac and Liam go at it back home, or Derek and Scott if Scott eats the last ice cream bars.” He waved off Noah’s concern, dragging the Alpha out of the study. “Come on… We’ll get that cleaned up.”

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Stiles did his best to stop the bleeding on Noah’s cheek, with a quick patch job for an Alpha wound, mixed with an Omega’s touch. Still, the large bandage on Noah’s cheek was telling of the type of injury he’d sustained.

Putting away the first aid kid, Stiles sighed, taking a seat at the kitchen table with Noah. “So, what was that all about? I know Geoff’s always been a hothead about pack stuff, but… He’s never actually gone for a punch before.”

Noah slid a can of soda to Stiles, taking a deep sigh. “We hired Jacques Whittemore last month to go over our business, and see where we could start making a little more income, to offset our debts. Instead, he found a way to generate enough money to pay off our family’s old loan that’s been sucking us dry for decades.” He glanced away, popping the top to his own can of soda, and guzzling half of it. “We’d sell two of our plants to one of his other clients, but they’re not interested in keeping the same staff, or using them for gun and ammo manufacturing. So we’d be laying off hundreds of Stilinski Arms employees. People who’ve worked for our company since it founded.”

Stiles grimaced. That was definitely a Jacques Whittemore type of plan. “That’s awful.”

“Most of the pack agreed we couldn’t do that,” Noah nodded, offering a sympathetic smile Stiles’ way. “Unfortunately, there’s a vocal minority in the pack who disagrees with me, and are wanting to support Jacques’ plan. The allure of multi million dollar profits each year, distributed between the business and the pack, without debt, was too much, I guess… Hotter heads prevailed.”

Uncle and Nephew sat in mutual silence, as the ticking clock above them clicking loudly.
“So, uh… You wanted to see me? To talk about something serious?” Stiles finally asked, popping open his soda and sipping at it.

Noah nodded. “Oddly enough… The family business has a lot to do with this. I suppose… the family in general,” He stood, glancing outside the kitchen window, and away from Stiles. “I’ve got about another 20 or 30 years in me as Alpha for the pack, and running our family’s business. Eventually, I’m going to need to step down and retire. I don’t have a son or daughter who’s an Alpha, so I’ll need to find a Heir to succeed this pack, our family business, and our town’s defense. Someone of our own blood, or married to our blood.”

“So, really? Who’d you have in mind? Jordan Parrish? He’s your second in command, right?” Stiles smiled, recalling his cousin Sarah’s husband, and what a good man he was. As far as Alphas went, Jordan was definitely a keeper.

“I’ve already got an Alpha in mind. Had my eyes on him quite a lot lately.” Noah smiled, turning back to Stiles, and stepping close to his nephew. “For the business, though, I’ve had my sights set on a strong young man. Good head on his shoulders. Knows what’s important in life. He’s got… Amazing potential.”

“Someone I know?” Stiles asked, cocking an eyebrow. Splitting up the running of Stilinski Pack and the business? That would be an odd practice for a pack, to say the least.

“You could say that.” Kneeling down on the seat next to Stiles, Noah took a deep breath. ‘Stiles, what I wanted to talk to you about is about you and—”

“Noah!” Jacques screamed, slamming open the front door and stomping through the hallways. He let himself inside the kitchen, huffing angrily Noah’s way. “There you are! Why haven’t you returned my calls? My secretary has left twenty messages, and I….” He caught sight of the bandage on Noah’s cheek. “What on earth happened to your face?”

“Disagreement with one of my Alphas,” Noah stood, glaring incredulously at Alpha Whittemore. “I’m busy right now, Jacques. I’ll return your calls when you stop offering me the same business advice, over and over again, that I’ve already rejected.”

“Come now, Noah, let’s be reasonable.” Jacques slammed a briefcase on the table, opening its contents and shoving papers over the kitchen table. “Look at this! They’ve doubled their offer for those plants! DOUBLED! If we act on this now, not only can you pay off that ridiculous debt, but you can have a nice payoff, as well! Give those workers a tiny severance? Soften the PR blow?”

“…and the rest of that payoff going to your ridiculous administrative fees?” Noah scoffed, offering a quick wink Stiles’ way.

Stiles rolled his eyes, chuckling with his Uncle.

“Well, I don’t mean to brag, Noah, but I’ve been quite savvy in working this all out. I’m firm on the 10% commission, along with my regular billing. It’s only fair.” Jacques waved off Noah’s snide remark, pushing a contract the man’s way. “Come now, Noah. Let’s talk this one through. I’ll go by it line by line, and we’ll just—”

Noah took the contract, shoving it back in Whittemore’s briefcase. “The answer is no, Jacques. We’ll pay off the debt in 20 more years, and can stay static with our current employees. I’m not changing my mind.”

A blank, horrified glare crossed Jacques’ face. “Are you insane, Noah? All of this over people who
are bleeding your business dry!” He laughed, shaking his head and waving the contract back in Noah’s face. “I don’t care what kind of man Jakub Stilinski was, Noah, but offering this blue collar trash pensions AND this kind of pay?! It’s unheard of! Not even unions are this generous! Drop the trash, Noah. They’re not worth your time.”

Noah sighed, rubbing the bridge of his nose.

Stiles shot up, glaring at Jacques. “Are you really that much of a heartless bastard? Good fucking God, do you even hear yourself talk?!”

Jacques jumped, having not paid Stiles any attention the entire time. He glanced up and down the Omega, scoffing. “Young man, I suggest you keep your nose out of this. The Alphas are talking, and the young Omega should know his place,” He dismissed Stiles entirely.

“How about no, and a giant fuck you?” Stiles slammed his hands on the table, flashing his silver eyes. “You’re just casually talking about firing a couple hundred people, who’ve been nothing but loyal to our family all this time? Besides, whose reputation do you think think would get the flack for that? Probably not the Whittemores. Not that you really care about reputation much, apparently.”

Noah stifled a laugh.

Jacques’ eyes flared red, growling in Stiles’ direction. “You snotty little brat, do you have any idea who you’re speaking with? Do you know what kind of man I am?”

“A heartless bastard, weren’t you listening?” Noah said.

“A stuck up snob.” Stiles folded his arms.

“An overpaid businessman who won’t listen to his client, and just insulted his favorite nephew?” Noah folded his arms as well, standing shoulder to shoulder with Stiles.

“Someone shady as fuck?” Stiles glanced over to Noah, scoffing. “Why’d you hire this guy, anyway? Seriously, did you not see the 60 Minutes special?”

“I’m beginning to think I’d lost my mind.” Noah nodded, shrugging.

As Noah and Stiles quipped back and forth, Jacques’ face turned into a frothing mess of anger. He stuffed the papers back into his briefcase, huffing angrily. “I can see continuing this conversation is pointless right now.” He stomped his way out, stopping just short of the kitchen’s exit. “Noah, I’ll be in touch, soon. When you have a more level head, and… Aren’t quite as beaten up.” A low scowl crossed his face. “Pretty disgraceful that our Sheriff’s in such a state. Can’t even protect himself from his own people.”

“What’s disgraceful is you thinking those pants actually fit, or that anyone gives a damn what you think.” Stiles spat, gesturing to Jacques.

Alpha Whittemore growled one last time, before spinning around and taking his leave of the place, in a snobby fit.

As the front door slammed shut again, Noah just laughed, patting Stiles on the back. “Geoff was right about one thing. You really are Jakub’s grandson. Hell, you’re the man re-born. You act just like my father…”

“Really?” Stiles asked, glancing up to Noah. He’d never met his grandfather, the previous Alpha of
the Stilinski pack, and apparently a well-respected member of the community.

“Yep.” Noah ruffled Stiles’ hair. “My father never knew when to shut his mouth, either.”

“Hey!” Stiles gently shoved at Noah.

Noah kept laughed, shaking his head. “Never shut his mouth, but… Always came to the defense of the ones he loved. Didn’t matter if he was arguing with some random Joe, or the Queen of England. Everyone was equal in his eyes…”

Stiles folded his arms, cocking an eyebrow at Noah. “Runs in the family?”

“I have no idea what you’re talking about.” Noah wrapped an arm around STiles, guiding him out of the kitchen and towards the attached garage. “Come on, let’s forget about all the serious talk today. How about I take you out for dinner and a movie? Just the two of us?”

“Sounds good,” Stiles said, as he slid into the front of his uncle’s Sheriff’s car.

Noah started the ignition, staring over at Stiles before nodding in affirmation at his choice. “Why don’t you call Derek and invite him along, too? I’d like to get to know that young Alpha better.”

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Chapter Music

In this third month of Stiles' courtship, we explore the relationship between Stiles and the STilinksis, learn a little more about Stiles' life before his rescue, while he and his friends continue to upset the balance of social standing in Beacon Hills! :)

Comments and kudos are always appreciated! :)
Chapter 19

Stiles rushed to the front door of his childhood home. The harsh knocking against the wood sent panic down Stiles’ spine. He rushed to unbuckle the four locks, praying that his father’s hangover kept the man unconscious. At least, for long enough. Ten minutes, at the most. That was all he needed... Wasn't it?

Swinging the door open, Stiles met his Uncle Noah’s gaze, and relief flooded through him. Exactly who he'd hoped for.

“Hey there, Stiles, how’s it going?” Noah reached out, planting his hand on Stiles shoulder.

Stiles flinched at the touch. “Fine, Alpha Noah, just fine!” He glanced behind him, focusing ears on the general direction of his father’s bedroom. General rustling could be heard, and a garbled, angry muttering. Stiles didn’t have long.

“Is your father home? I need to speak with him about stuff from work. Hate to be here so early, but it can’t really wait,” Noah started to move inside, blocked by Stiles.

Shaking, Stiles planted on a feigned smile. “Uh…. Uncle Noah, do you, uh… Do you need any help around your house, by any chance? Maybe with your garden? I wouldn’t mind at all! It’s warm outside, and I’m pretty good with mom’s roses, did you see them outside?” He pleaded, with his eyes. “I could go help you, right now! Really, I’m free and everything!”

Noah chuckled, shaking his head, and ruffling Stiles’ hair. “No, that’s alright, Stiles. My wife loves taking care of her plants, even if she ends up killing half of them each year. Besides, you’re busy with school, aren’t you? You’ve missed our last couple of pack gatherings to study, right?” His eyes narrowed in on Stiles’ neck, and the fabric that hung off it. “Say… You’re looking a little skinny these days. You eating enough? That old man of yours buying enough groceries?”

“I…”. Stiles dropped his head, to hide the pitiable glow of his eyes. “Uncle Noah, can we talk? I just-”

A firm hand slapped on Stiles’ back, yanking him backwards. Brandon’s hand gripped Stiles’ skin, as the man’s smiling face came into clear view. The smell of booze overwhelmed Stiles’ senses, forcing him to stifle a gag. “Stiles is on one of those fad diets, Noah. Worried about getting too tubby, and not finding himself an Alpha! As if nobody wouldn’t want Alpha Noah Stilinski’s nephew, the good son of Jakub, who wasn’t the failure!” He laughs, drunkenly, patting Stiles on the shoulder, and shoving him behind. The feigned smile faded, glaring back at Noah . “How are you doing, Noah? What can I help my successful, wonderful, amazing big brother with? Or is this the Sheriff coming to bitch out his deputy?”

Noah’s friendly face melted. He crossed his arms, bowing up and growling at Brandon’s mocking tone. “Came by to ask why I’ve got a stack of complaints a mile high about your speed trap. How many times have I told you not to pull that shit? Hell, how many times have you been written up about that?!”

“You’re really going to bitch about that?” Brandon rubbed his forehead, fumbling over his feet to grab the front door, missing the knob several times. He tried to slam the door in Noah’s face.

Noah caught the door, slamming it back open, and forcing Brandon to topple backwards, into the house. “Brandon, take this seriously! I can't keep covering your ass! You keep this up, and I'll
really have to fire you!”

Brandon grumbled incoherently, stumbling up on both knees. “Didn’t I bring in plenty of revenue for the city? Besides, the assholes were speeding, Noah. They broke the law.” He turned back, cocking a half smile in Stiles’ direction. “Besides… Are you really going to leave me unemployed? I’ve got a son to feed. I’m your brother, Noah. I’m all the family you’ve got left.”

Noah sighed, exasperated. “Brandon… You know I love you. I’d never leave you in the lurch, but… You’ve got to meet me halfway at some point!”

Stiles backed away, unable to watch Noah’s guilt ridden face. He pushed his long sleeves down, hiding the bruises on his arms. Walking off, Stiles ignored his father and uncle’s argument, knowing he’d get the brunt of it later.

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“You’d defend him?”

“…he let you suffer for 10 years…”

“Every goddamn meeting, Stiles. Every. Single. One.”

“If he’d listened… Maybe you wouldn’t have suffered as much, Stiles.”

“Stiles!” Isaac yelled, shaking Stiles’ shoulder in the middle of their seventh period classroom.

Jerking up, Stiles spun his head around, watching the last of his classmates vacate the room, leaving just Isaac and Stiles behind. “Oh, hey Isaac,” He shook off his thoughts, packing away his blank notes for the day, and the textbook that sat closed since the start of class.

Isaac hopped up on the desk next to Stiles, dropping his bag and scarf off, stretching out into the air. “Class is over, dude. Ready to head home? You still okay with giving me a ride to Danny’s place? We’re going over the lines for drama club with that new girl, Allison.”

Stiles smiled, happy to see Isaac adjusting to Beacon High so quickly. With the start of the new semester at a new school (and taking every advantage of the lax dress code), the tense posture and lines of stress vanished from the Beta. He’d immediately made fast friends with Danny Mahealani, and a new girl, Allison Argent, with the rest of the drama club. The Beta seemed a hundred times happier these days, and not quite as “crabby”.

“Yeah! Yeah, sorry…” Stiles nodded, moving to stand up, but immediately pushed back down by Isaac.

“Okay, Stiles… What’s wrong with you? You’ve been dazing off a lot lately, and I know you’re not sleeping well. Everything alright?”

Stiles cringed. Isaac wasn’t the first person to ask him that since his visit back to the Stilinski pack. Of course, Isaac wasn’t that far off. His mind found itself wading in and out memories of his old life, and the people he’d interacted with on a daily basis. Dozens upon dozens of people, from his
own family… None of which ever…

“Yeah! Just another Monday, you know?” Stiles shook off the ache in his chest, and the rumbling in his stomach.

“Don’t bullshit me, Stiles.” Isaac rolled his eyes, prodding Stiles in the chest. “I may not be an Omega, but even I can tell when something’s up with you. You’ve been stuck in your head all day. Come on man, we’re worried about you.”

Slinking back into his seat, Stiles huffed. He tapped his fingers anxiously against the table.

This very topic had been a part of his last three sessions with Deaton.

“Don’t be afraid to share your past with the people you love. They’ll be there to support you in ways that I’m not able to, at times other than Wednesday afternoons, for an hourly session. Let people help you, the way you help them. Learn to trust others to be there for you.”

Stiles glanced up, watching Isaac’s face. He felt the concern swirling in the air, and knew that Isaac would listen. Knew that of anyone, Isaac knew how to keep a secret. After all, the Beta kept plenty of his own, from his time at Devenford and the Raken bullying.

“Learn to trust others to be there for you.”

Shutting his eyes, Stiles felt his throat waver. He stumbled over the words, but soon found comfort as Isaac reached over, wrapping his own scarf around Stiles’ neck, up to the Omega’s nose. The Hale Pack’s familiar scent overtook him, and a sense of safety streamed down his body.

“Just thinking about… My old pack,” Stiles answered, opening his eyes back up to meet Isaac’s gaze. The Beta sat silently, listening to Stiles’ every word attentively. More ease settled down Stiles’ body. “About… Some of the worst days. The days when I… When I tried to reach out for help, or when I thought about telling someone, and it backfired. Horribly. I never had the courage to try it often, but when I did, I… I regretted it.”

Stiles shared a memory of such a day with Isaac, not a month or two before Derek’s rescue. A day after his father’s drunken rage re-ignited Stiles’ urge of self-preservation, and injuries close enough to the neck that could have been fatal. Of a plan to ask to help around his Alpha’s home, to do chores, something innocent, something his father wouldn’t suspect. To find a brief moment, no matter how small, to be away from his father’s prying ears and eyes, and with his Alpha. To tell him everything, to beg for protection, and ask to be saved.

A failed plan that ended up convincing Alpha Noah that Stiles was on a diet, and his “thinness” was just a phase. A plan that resulted in baggier clothes, to hide the bones that protruded from his body, and a beating that left Stiles unable to go to school the next day. A plan rewarded with a week of Brandon watching Stiles’ every move, and further distancing their small family from the pack even further than they already were.

Stiles wasn’t allowed to speak with any of the pack afterwards. Or leave the house, except for school.

Isaac sat in silence, well after Stiles finished his story. The Beta’s eyes ignited a sharp yellow, bordering on orange from the rage that bubbled in and out of his body. A rage on Stiles’ behalf.

“Can I ask…” Isaac stopped himself, struggling to find words, and eventually huffing. “Look, I’m not good with being sensitive, so forgive me for being blunt, but… Why didn’t you ever run to someone for help? Why the schemes? Why dancing around the subject!? I mean… Your Alpha is
the Sheriff, and you know damn well that Talia or Derek or Scott would have stepped in to help, too. Why’d you let it go on for so long?”

Stiles dropped his head, gulping audibly at the question, and hiding deep in Isaac’s scarf. He reached up, gripping at his chin.

Isaac flinched. “Sorry, sorry! That was… That was blunter than it meant to be.” Reaching over, he took Stiles’ hands, gripping them tightly. “Still… That question has been driving me crazy since the day you moved in. I mean… I know it didn’t happen to me, but I’d… I’d think I’d run for help.”

Pausing for a short eternity, Stiles rose up from the scarf, short tears running down his face. “My dad’s a deputy. A deputy with a bad reputation, but…” He stopped, balling his hands into fists. “A deputy that my Uncle Noah always swooped in and saved from getting in too much trouble. If any other deputy pulled the shit my dad pulled, they’d be fired immediately. Hell, even in the pack, my father did some sketchy, horrible shit, and still managed to stay in the pack. A lot of people hated him. Hell, everyone hated him. Everyone but my Uncle. Everyone but my Alpha.”

“So… My dad was untouchable. A lot of times, I thought… Even if I went to Noah, and admitted everything… How could I really know if anything would be done about it? What if my dad sweet-talked his way out of it, making me out to be the bad guy, or some hormonal teenager that was exaggerating the facts? Or hell, even worse, if I went to Derek or Talia, whose side would Noah pick? His brother whose ass he always saved, or an Alpha of another pack? What if it sparked some kind of fight between packs, or… Worse,” Stiles sighed, shaking his head, and shooting up from his seat, pacing around the empty classroom. “Didn’t matter, anyway… In the end, my dad was pretty damn clear with me. If I ever said a word to anyone, he’d kill me, and everyone that meant anything to me. That he was a cop, and cops can get away with anything. He had “his ways”. Have you ever seen the news? They really do get away with shit, Isaac, and…”

Stopping at the end of the classroom, Stiles gazed outside, where the basketball team were running laps with the lacrosse team, prepping for the District Finals. “Derek and Scott. He knew how much I cared about them both. How could I risk it?”

“A speechless, paled Isaac stood up from his own seat, facing Stiles. The Beta’s lips moved to speak, but failed to produce any significant noise.

“In the end, I was scared. Scared for myself, and scared for others, plain and simple.” Stiles muttered, leaning against the outside window, and staring off into the distance. “...and I always held out hope. Hope than when I was 18, I could leave. Or get mated off to someone.”

“You didn’t trust your Alpha.”

Stiles turned around, surprised by the frustration in Isaac’s tone.
The Beta stomped over, coming to Stiles’ side. “What I’m hearing is that you didn’t trust your Alpha to save you....”

“I…” Stiles clutched his chest, laughing off the accusation. “I love my Uncle Noah, Isaac. He and Aunt Claudia were the only things that kept me from losing all hope. You guys, too! Just knowing that there were people who loved me, that… That went such a fucking long way, you don’t even know!” He chuckled, shaking his head. “Uncle Noah… He-”

“Yeah, I get that you love him, but that doesn’t mean you trusted him.” Isaac said, reaching around and pulling Stiles close. “You didn’t trust your Alpha to protect you. You assumed that he’d play favorites, and not look out for the well being of one of his pack members over his relationship with your brother. You didn’t have faith in him, to be there for you. That just… Stiles, that’s so sad. That’s… That’s not what an Alpha is supposed to be! That’s not what a Pack is for!”

Dread flowed out of Stiles. The same dread that came on that fateful day, when Noah didn’t take Stiles’ offer to work in their garden. When the Alpha finally noticed Stiles’ thinness, only to believe Brandon’s stupid remark about a “diet”. A disappointment that slowly crushed his heart for months after.

Isaac swore under his breath, watching Stiles’ face crumple into a lifeless mess. “Sorry, sorry, I didn’t mean to blurt that out, it just… It pisses me off, Stiles. 10 years, and nobody in your pack helped you. Nobody noticed. Nobody saved you,” He took Stiles’ hands again swearing over and over again. “I’m… I’m sorry. I wanted to say that for a long time, but… I didn’t...”

Shaking his head, Stiles brought himself out of his dread. He laughed. “Derek did. So did Liam and Scott. They saved me.” Breathing in and out slowly, Stiles remembered everything Deaton taught him. He remembered all the good he now has in his life. The soft bed and warm bodies he had each night, food. The family he finally had. A new Alpha, who- Stiles smiled, feeling his chest bloom. “You. Peter. Lorraine. Laura. Cora. Talia. Nathan. Robert. Scott… All of you saved me. I mean, it took a while, but… You know, better late than never?”

The last of the dread melted out of Stiles, and he leaned happily onto Isaac’s scarf, for warmth, and the scent of his pack. “I’ve got a family now. A family, and a Pack. Isn’t that all that matters now?”

Isaac’s features relaxed, and he laughed, throwing an arm around Stiles and yanking him out of the classroom. “Damn right it is! Say, how about you and I do something fun this afternoon? Fuck drama club practice, the guys can do it without me, I never get to hang out with you! Let’s go shopping! There’s an awesome thrift store where I get all my stuff for dirt cheap. I think you deserve something nice, thick, and warm, for your third month of Courtship! Month three is the Gift of Protection, right? A scarf would be perfect! I’ll protect you from the cold!” He grinned, playfully prodding the scarf currently around Stiles's neck. “That, and… That’s kind of my favorite scarf. My mom knitted it for me.”

Stiles nodded, laughing as he and Isaac made their way to his Jeep in the parking lot. “Only if I can buy you something back. How about a CD or something for your collection?”

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Derek entered his home, kicking off his muddy boots, and stripping out of his muddy shirt. He
sighed, stretching into the air. Better after school practice, and his chores that night, he felt 
exhausted. “Plant the leafy greens, they said! Easier than fiddling with the farm equipment they 
said! Bullshit. Give me an engine to fix, or livestock to tend to, any day of the week.”

Walking through his home, Derek passed by Liam and a couple of the Beta’s freshman friends 
(Hayden and Mason, a Beta and Omega respectively) working on a school project. Laura, as 
always, had her nose deep in one of her med-school books. Malia, too, seemed just as intently 
focused on her agri-business books. He brushed past Scott, on the phone with Kira, with that usual 
forlorn “starry-eyed” gaze about him.

Derek dumped his dirty shirt in the laundry hamper, with the rest of his family’s dirty farming 
clothes. He sniffed around, surprised that he didn’t catch Stiles’ fresh scent anywhere. “Hey mom, 
where’s Stiles?” He asked, stepping into the kitchen, where his mother sat, working on a stack of 
bills and paperwork.

“He texted and said he’s gone out shopping with Isaac. They’ll be back later tonight, I think they 
were going to meet up with some of Isaac’s new friends, too.” Talia chuckled, setting her documents 
to the side, and focusing on Derek. “From what I hear from Stiles, Isaac is quite smitten with the 
new girl, Allison. From the Argent Pack? Well, I believe it’s just her and her father, so I’m not sure 
if they’re really a “pack”, per se, but hey, size isn’t anything!”

“Oh, cool.” Derek smiled, happy that Stiles had started to spread his wings more. He wasn’t always 
cooped up in the Hale Pack house, or stuck with Derek and Scott going everywhere. “Well, 
knowing Isaac, I won’t wait up for them. They’ll be out till curfew.” He turned to head upstairs for 
a shower and a change of clothes.

“Oh, Derek! Wait a minute!” Talia shot up from the table, rushing to Derek’s side, and beaming 
brightly. “I haven’t told you about the good news yet! Ennis is flying in from New York! He wants 
to catch up with the family, and meet your courting partner! Of course, he’s bringing Kali and little 
Brett with him!”

Derek’s blood froze over. His face fell flat, with a blank expression covering his features. “He’s… 
What?”

Talia scoffed, patting Derek on the shoulder. “Of course, he’s excited to see you too, Derek! You 
and your mate! He didn’t even know you’d started courting someone! Didn’t you call and tell him 
about Stiles?”

“I, uh… I haven’t talked with Ennis in a while. We’re all busy, you know?” Derek turned around, 
laughing easily. “I’m going to hit the shower, mom. I’m pretty ripe right now. See you at dinner… 
We can talk about Ennis then.”

With a polite nod, Derek made his way out of the kitchen, around the corner, and off to the staircase. 
“Of course he’s coming home. Of course Ennis would have to come home NOW. Of fucking 
course, he’d.” He stopped, nearly slamming into the broad physique of an older man, about a foot 
shorter than Derek, sporting a deeper tanned color of his skin, and jet black hair punked up similarly.
to Derek’s. A thick beard covered most of his face, neatly tamed into soft brown curls.

“Oh! Sorry, dad!” Derek chuckled, meeting his father’s stern, golden gaze.

Much like his own natural muscles, Nathan Hale’s strong physique grew from a childhood working near the border between Mexico and California, and the Riviera Pack that raised him to be a strong, remarkable Beta. One who’d been courted by Alpha Talia Hale, after a chance meeting during a trade agreement between two of the most successful farming Packs in California. Trade secrets between the two packs that led to mutual successes for both parties.

Nathan nodded, chuckling. “That’s alright, son.” He crossed his arms, looking up to his son’s gaze. “Not excited to see Ennis, I take it?”

Blushing quietly, Derek looked away. “Not really. I’ve gotten used to sharing a room with Scott, and he snores. He can have the guest room while he’s here.” He came up with the quickest lie he could think of. Then immediately regretted it, knowing his father could hear it, clear as day.

“Ah. I see. Well, if that’s all that’s worrying you, then why the foul language?” Nathan’s stern gaze, and wry grin made it clear to Derek he’d been found out. “Try harder, son. If you want to lie, at least try and lie better than that. Peter’s particularly skilled with that.”

Derek bit his lip, huffing angrily at himself. “Why do I let Ennis get to me like this? Why am I so weak? Why do I let him pull me down?!”

“You know… From what I understand from Richard, Peter and Talia had their differences about what they wanted for the future, too.” Nathan said, sighing as he shook his head. “That sparked more than one argument, and yet, they run this Pack together now.”

Derek felt his jaw fall, trying to read his father’s face. Stoic as a statue in his expressions, Derek only managed to really read his father’s emotions through the man’s bushy eyebrows.

“I know you and your brother have your… Differences. I know that Ennis takes far more after Peter than either Talia or I, and that he’s a proud, ambitious Alpha, who wants the world, and more.” Nathan rolled his eyes, folding one. “One who likes to think he knows what’s best for everyone. Especially his younger siblings and cousins, and our Pack in general.”

Derek scoffed, crossing his arms. “That’s putting it mildly.”

“Regardless.” Nathan brushed past Derek, heading off to the other end of the house. He chuckled, with a wide grin. “Try and play nice. He’ll only be here for a week, and he’s family. Really, Ennis is excited to see you and your mate. He wouldn’t fly across the country for Laura’s birthday, but he’s flying for this. Deep down, the little shit cares. Deep, deep down.”

Heading up the stairs, Derek rolled his eyes. “Yep. A week with my successful, wonderful, amazing big brother. Talia and Nathan Hale’s only good son. I can’t wait.”

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Chapter Music

As we learn more about Stiles and his pack, we also learn more about Derek and his relationship with his own family, and perhaps a little more about where Derek's insecurities lie... Next chapter will tone down the angst a bit, and we’ll have a much happier chapter. :)
A pond sat on the outskirts of the Stilinski land, coated in a thick ice, and dotted with the white snow from the previous night's snowstorm. A man, woman, and child gathered on the pond, in thick jackets, warm mittens, and sporting several pairs of ice skates.

The child, just shy of his fifth birthday, clutched onto the woman's soft figure, with cascading hazel hair that dipped down to her waistline, tied off in a red ribbon. A bright smile crossed her face, in between a pair of ruby red lips, and dazzling honey-colored eyes that glowed silver as she guided the child to the middle of the lake.

“Come on, Stiles! You can do it! Just let go of Mommy, and try to glide all on your own!” The woman said, prying the child’s hands off her hips, and clutching them tightly in her hands.

“Come on, just like Mommy!” Taking a standing pose, she demonstrated a basic skating technique. “One, two, one, two, and one two! Bend your knees forward, and glide!”

“Then just try it!” Stiles’ mother winked, bending down, and planting a kiss on Stiles’ cheek. “You’ll fall on your booty, and maybe it’ll hurt for a second. No worse than when you climb up and jump off the kitchen counters into the laundry hamper, is it? That’s much higher than you falling out here.”

“I guess.” Stiles pouted, still grasping onto his mother’s hands tightly. His angry puff let out a foggy cloud in the frigid atmosphere.

“Wow!” Stiles shrieked, scrambling away from his mother and back on the ice. He held both hands together, pleading before her. “Show me how! Show me, show me, please!”

“Show me how! Show me, show me, please!”

Chuckling, Stiles’ mother ruffled the child’s hair. “How about we start off with the basics, first? I’ll show you the special moves when you’re older.”

After many attempts, Stiles’ footwork smoothed itself out. By muscle memory, and sharper reflexes that came with being a werewolf, Stiles caught the basics of movement, and could glide short distances on his skates with ease. The pup’s eyes bugged out, and flashed an excited silver. “I’m doing it! I’m doing it! Look Mommy, I’m doing it!”

“Yeah, you are!” Stiles’ mother caught the child as he ran into her arms, picking him up with ease. She giggled alongside her son, bopping their heads together. “If you practice hard enough, someday you might even be able to do one of these!” With Stiles still in hand, the boy’s mother made a simple jump spin on the ice, with a single rotation. As she touched down, she spread her left leg out, giving it the style of a ballet pose.
Hand-in-hand, Stiles and his mother skated around the edge of the pond, while the pup learned how to glide faster, stop, turn, and make simple (non-jumping) spins.

“Watch me! Watch me! I’m going to do it now on my own!” Stiles exclaimed, skating off from his mother, and focusing on his wobbling legs as he spun around in a circle. Yet, as he came back around, he staggered forward, gliding a long distance as he tried to come to a stop.

Eventually, Stiles thumped into a second body, a warm mass of muscles that hadn’t moved since Stiles and his mother took to the ice.

Stiles fell backwards, nearly landing on his rear-end again, when the man reached out, grabbing Stiles by the arm and yanking him back to an upright position.

“Careful. Watch where you’re going, Stiles.” Brandon met Stiles’ gaze, with a tiny smirk crossing his face. “Showing off for your mother? Haha… Good to see you’ve got a little of me in there.”

Stiles grinned, grabbing his father’s warm hand tighter, with a giggle. “A little. Did you see me, Daddy?! I spun around and around really fast!”

Brandon nodded, face bright with the same enthusiasm as his child. “I did. You’ve got your mother’s legs! You’ll be a great skater, just like her.” He winked across the pond, towards his wife. “Hear that Anna? He’s got your legs! We’ll be beating off the Alphas and Betas with a stick!”

Rolling her eyes, Anna skated to the middle of the pond, smacking her thigh with a suggestive wink. “Shut up! You know as well as I do that it was my sparkling wit and snarky sarcasm that nabbed you! Who else would put up with that mouth of yours??”

Stiles glanced up, catching his father’s bright, happy gaze, devoid of darkness. As though Brandon’s entire world stood in front them.

The light of his life.

H is reason for living.

Brandon’s everything.

+++++

“Don’t let go! Don’t let go! Don’t you dare let go!”

Stiles shook his head, breaking out of his daze. The Beacon Hills Ice Rink surrounded him, the home of the local hockey league, and a few yearly figure skating competitions for the youth. Not quite as impressive as bigger cities would have, but a popular attraction for the small town, and well-tended, if the crisp state of the ice was any indication. Sure, the barrage of advertisements that literally covered the walls was a tad on the tacky side, but it kept he place running.

Glancing ahead, Stiles still had hold of Scott’s left arm. The Beta hugged the wall while he tried to learn how to ice skate.

Except for Scott and Stiles, the rink was practically empty.
Sighing, Stiles shook his head, gliding on the ice with a natural ease, on instinctive muscle memory from over a decade ago. “Scott, you’re sixteen. Don’t act like a five year old putting on his first pair of skates. Don’t be so scared! What’s the worst that could happen? You fall on your ass and get a boo boo?” He chuckled, patting his friend on the shoulder.

Growling, Scott gestured to his trembling legs, like a newborn deer. “I am on tiny little blades, trying to learn how to move, all so I can skate with my girlfriend during her birthday party! The worst that could happen? I make an ass of myself in front of the Yukimuras, and all of Kira’s friends! They realize I’m a shit Beta, and make Kira pick someone else to court! That’s the worst that could happen, Stiles!”

“Oooh,” Stiles grinned, nudging Scott in the side, as he tried to pull his friend away from the wall, and walking on the ice all by himself. He ignored the Beta’s whimpering protests. “When’d you and Kira start using the boyfriend and girlfriend labels?”

A bright blush crossed Scott’s face, and he seemed to not realize he’d been stuttering forward to the middle of the rink. “Shut up, you know what I mean.”

Laughing, Stiles let go of Scott’s hands (with a great deal of awkward flailing on Scott’s part), gliding off a short distance. “Come on big guy, get a move on! One, two, one, two, and one and two! Bend your knees forward, and glide!” Stiles gave a short, and oddly familiar, demonstration on the basics of movement in skating.

Scott fell on his ass more than once as he tried to mimic Stiles’ moments, but kept at it for well over an hour. Eventually, he managed to finally perform something that looked remotely like ice-skating. (With emphasis on “remotely”.)

“I think I’m sort of getting it?” Scott said, gliding forward short distances. His posture looked off, and he kept his arms out for balance, looking something like a messed up scarecrow.

“Perfect!” Stiles clapped, skating circles around Scott, and slapping his buddy on the back. “Good enough that you’re not completely useless, but still bad enough that you’re going to need some serious help. I’d say this is a job well done!”

Scott cocked an eyebrow, staring intently at Stiles. “Huh? Why’s that a good thing? Come on man, the party’s going to start any second! Show me how to-”

“Scotty!” Kira exclaimed. From the entrance of the rink, Kira shot out from the crowd of her family, hitting the ice and skating with a natural ease of a professional. She made a circle around Scott, grinning as she came to a graceful stop in front of her boyfriend. “You’re early! That’s awesome, we can-” She stopped, staring at Scott’s wobbling legs. Reaching out, Stiles wrapped his arm around Scott’s shoulders, grinning at Kira. “Hate to say it, Kira, but Scott here doesn’t really know how to skate all that well.” He waved to the other Yukimuras as they piled in, and the other party-goers began to skate around the rink. “I tried and tried to show him, but he’s beyond my help. Pretty sure someone with years of experience and expertise would have to step in.”

“Stiles! You didn’t have to say it like that!” Scott burned red in embarrassment.

Leaning forward, in between Scott and Kira, Stiles held by a sly smile. “I think he’s going to need some “hands on” lessons, Kira. I’m sure a talented Alpha such as yourself would be more than willing to lend a “helping hand”, and your parents wouldn’t think it’s weird or anything. I mean, it’s an Alpha’s prerogative to help Betas and Omegas, right?” He waggled his eyebrows.
In unison, Scott and Kira turned to one and other, mouths agape as realization struck them.

“Yeah! Yeah, I uh… I’m hopeless! Just like Stiles said!” Scott announced, loudly.

“Oh! Oh, you don’t know how to skate, Scott? Well, then let me show you how!” Kira exclaimed, in the general direction her parents (who seemed a “tad” put out, but did nothing more than roll their eyes), sheepishly putting an arm around Scott’s waist, and pushing them forward. “I’ll guide you! Come on, I’ll even teach you how we can dance on the ice! That’s a skill everyone needs to know! Obviously!”

While Scott and Kira slid off to have their “lessons”, Stiles skated off on his own, beaming as he spotted Derek and the rest of their circle of friends make their way into the rink.

Gliding across the rink, Stiles slid into Derek’s arms, as the duo spun into a circle with the rest of the skaters. Music filled the rink, as lights above and around the ice gave it a wide glow of colors.

“How’d teaching Scott go?” Derek asked, spotting Scott still hobbling along with Kira, both laughing as they goofed around on their skates, touching a little more than was probably necessary for a mere skating lesson.

Stiles shrugged, taking Derek’s hand, gliding side-by-side. “Better than I thought, honestly. I’m pretty sure Scott would do anything to win Alpha Yukimura’s approval for her daughter at this point.”

As they rounded a corner, Derek fumbled over his feet, caught by Stiles at the last second. He chuckled, leaning on Stiles for support. “Sorry. It’s been a few years since I’ve done this.”

Stiles rolled his eyes, watching Derek’s legs correct themselves on the next turn. “Pfft. You know us werewolves. Do anything once, and our instinct makes it like we never forget. You’re pretty good at this!”

“Meh, years of skating as a kid on our lake back on our lands. Laura and Ennis taught me when I was little, and–” Derek stopped himself, clearing his throat. “Anyway, my family likes to skate in winter, when the ice is thick enough. We had a lot of fun back then.”

Catching the inkling of sadness under Derek’s skin, Stiles started to ask, as the lights changed again, covering the rink in a gentle violet. A slower, more rhythmic song started to play overhead.

Derek sadness faded, and soon found itself replaced with a low hum of excitement. Spinning around, Derek took Stiles’ hands, guiding him to the middle of the rink, alongside several other couples. “Wanna dance?”

“I’d love to.” Stiles took both of Derek’s hands, taking the lead position in the dance.

They spun in circles, arm in arm. Derek leaned forward a time or two to steal a kiss, while Stiles’ hands wandered up and around Derek’s chest, waist, and neck. As he became more brave and confident on the ice, Stiles released his hold on his Alpha, taking joy in dancing around Derek, with swift spins, a few glides on one skate, and glad for Derek being there to catch him for a dip or two. Even Derek took joy in the dance, guiding them along the ice with his hands on Stiles’ hips, and swirling them in a tight circle, ending with another kiss to Stiles’ lips.

The fun ended as the lights grew brighter, and the song faded into an energetic kpop tune, killing the mood.

Derek and Stiles chuckled, rejoining the rest of the skaters, who glided around the edge of the rink.
Alpha and Omega picked up the pace, passing by a few of the slower skaters with ease.

“You’re really good at this! Who taught you how to skate?” Derek asked, as he and Stiles earned several spectators from their form.

“My mother.” Stiles paused, gripping Derek’s hand tightly as they rounded a curve. “She started teaching me how to skate the winter before she died. Mom used to be a competitive skater. I mean, nothing big, but she made it to a state competition or two. That’s before she started coaching at the high school, but I think she probably wanted me to figure skate at some point. She always got really excited when we went skating out on our family pond.” A low thud caught in his chest, a mixture of a fond memory, and soul-crushing reality. Instead of either taking over, Stiles laughed. “I remember this one time… Mom tried to get me to try on some kind of glittery shirt, that I think was probably a skater’s outfit, but I… I didn’t like it. I just wanted to wear my plaid shirt, because it was cold outside, and I didn’t like glittery stuff. Pretty sure I crushed her soul a bit then.” He managed a short grin.

Derek snorted, leaning on Stiles, and offering his sympathies in a half-hug. “I dunno. I think you’d be pretty in one of those outfits.”

“Nope, not going to happen.” Stiles nudged Derek in the side. He gulped, sensing the tension in Derek’s body from the touch. Not surprising, given the topic of dead mothers. “Sorry, I made this awkward, huh?”

“No, no!” Derek countered, immediately. He huffed, a thick fog of hot air flowing out of his mouth and into the cold air. “I just… I don’t want to make you feel uncomfortable, or say the wrong thing. I usually just say what I think, and sometime that bites me in the ass.”

Leaning on Derek, Stiles guided them to the corner or the rink, away from the rest of the crowd, where they stood, listening to the music play overhead. He smiled, linking his hand into Derek’s. “I only have good memories of my mom, Derek. I don’t mind talking about her. I lost her so fast, that I… I guess I have a hard time even realizing she’s gone, even after all this time.”

A drunk driver.
A mangled car, scattered with groceries, blood, and a snapped Omega’s neck.
An instant, painless death for one, and a slow, agonizing pair of lives left to live behind.

Stiles shook the unpleasant thoughts off, shutting his eyes while he leaned on Derek’s shoulder for support. “Mom was… Honest. Kind. A great mother, and a strong Omega. I mean, I don’t remember all that much of her, and never got to know her like I should have, but…” He paused, recalling the day on the icy pond. There were plenty more memories like that in the back of his head. Days on the beach, picnics in the park, holidays, birthdays, and a summer vacation with Uncle Noah and Aunt Claudia to Canada. “I remember her. I remember life being good back then. Back when my family was still… Normal.”

Giggles and laughter crossed over the party, as Scott fell on his ass, and Kira struggled to help him up. Despite a nasty bruise on Scott’s arm, he got back up, taking Kira’s lead as his skating continued to improve with her.

Derek leaned to the side, resting on Stiles’ head. “You should talk to my mom about her.”

“Huh?”

Nodding, Derek brought Stiles’ hand up, pressing a kiss on the top. “I’ve seen pictures of my mom
and your mom in some old family albums. I’m pretty sure they were friends back in high school. Maybe she’s got some stories to tell? Stuff you might want to know about your mom. Couldn’t hurt to ask.”

Stiles laughed, waving the very thought off. “I… I couldn’t do that. Talia’s so busy, she-”

“My mom’s your Alpha.” Derek cut Stiles off, pulling Stiles back out on the ice. He forced Stiles to rejoin the circle of skaters, and the flow of people surrounding them. “She’s never too busy for you, or anyone in the pack. That’s her job.”

Stiles glanced away, focused on Mr. and Mrs. Yukimura, who seemed to be whispering in hushed tones, pointing to Scott and Kira’s bright smiles. Mr. Yukimura kept nodding eagerly, with an honest, happy look about his face. Mrs. Yukimura, on the other hand, continued to glare in Scott’s direction, with a pursed set of limps. “You think she’d really have the time?”

Derek laughed, pushing the two of them to skate faster, on the outer lane, adding in a few spins as they turned, to spice things up. “Stiles, my mom and Laura have a dedicated hour every Saturday morning, where they do literally nothing but drink coffee and gossip back and forth about Laura’s classmates. Liam has a standing “pep talk” with her pretty much every Sunday night, where she helps him find some confidence in himself for the coming week. Scotty’s spent hours in her office with her, talking about Kira, and all his worries that the Yukimuras would reject him.” He grabbed Stiles around the waist, gliding around Scott and Kira, bumping Scott on the side as they passed, earning an angry growl out of their buddy. “Trust me, Mom would listen.”

“Learn to trust in others.”

Stiles took a deep breath, nodding hesitantly. ”Maybe… I will.”

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Chapter Music

Ah yes, how about a happy memory for Stiles? I think he deserves one or two!

Next chapter will feature Derek, and we’ll get to meet quite a "character", and peek a little more into Derek’s insecurities. ;)
Derek opened the door to his home, on a particularly wet and rainy Saturday morning. He shook off the layer of water coating his body, tearing off his rain jacket, boots, and overshirt. Mud cluttered over most of them, earning them a one-way trip into the hamper next to the front door, where the rest of his family’s muddy attire went.

“Fucking cabbage. Just had to be ready to harvest when it started pouring down, and on a weekend when none of the temps could come in!” Derek rolled his eyes, dumping a few of the larger vegetables out from under his coat, and tucking them under his arms. A gift from Aunt May to the Alpha’s Family, for helping with the muddy, wet, and generally miserable harvest from that morning. “Mom! I’m back! We’re all done with lot 7, 8, and 9! May’s going to ship them off today! The spinach is probably flooding in lot 12, May says to write it off and call the insurance!”

Striding through the home, Derek dried himself on a spare towel from the nearest laundry basket he could find. His nose caught the whiff of coffee.

Rich, flavorful, home-roasted coffee.

The kind of shit none of them ever bothered buying, due to the outlandish cost, and inability to buy in bulk.

Derek felt his body sag, knowing all too well the kind of person that DID waste money like that. Suddenly, the muddy cabbage harvest didn’t seem quite as bad.

“In the kitchen, Derek! Your brother got here early! Come on in!” Talia yelled, echoing throughout the room.

With a much less enthusiastic hop to his step, Derek slumped his way into the kitchen, where he spotted his mother, Stiles, and his big brother Ennis sharing mugs of coffee over the dining table.

Ennis spun around from his seat, shooting up as he spotted Derek entered the room. As tall and broad-shouldered as Derek, with an equally impressive physique that fit snugly inside a well tailored suit and tie. Though, the clean-shaven head and significant lack of beard was a new sight to behold, aging the 25-year-old Alpha by decades. “Hey! There’s my baby bro! I wondered when you’d get in! Already working for the pack at the crack of dawn? Ha! You never change!” His tone, as jovial and loud as always.

Derek’s nose wrinkled. Something about Ennis smelled… Off. Like a layer of mold lined his body, covered up by the man’s poor taste in cologne. The man’s heartbeat sounded off as well, missing a beat or two here and there, thudding along slowly. He shook it off, meeting his brother’s blazing red gaze, and his usual aura of perfection. “Dressed up like a total tool, even on vacation. You never change, either.”

“Shut up and come here, you dork,” Ennis barked out laugher, grabbing Derek and yanking him into an overbearing hug, laughing gleefully. He pulled away soon after, realizing he was around an inch or two shorter than his “baby” brother. “Good grief, you shot up like a tree and out like a tank! Where’d my tiny little brother go to? The one who looked like Liam!”

Derek rolled eyes, running a finger over Ennis’ bald scalp. “Apparently the same place your hair went to. Where’d my big brother’s thick, luxurious hair go to? Kali must be in tears.”

“Oh ho! The little man has jokes!” Ennis grinned, pulling Derek into a headlock and giving the
Alpha a hard noogie (much to Derek’s chagrin). “You know, I seem to remember a certain someone who went through a spiky hair phase, with the blonde highlights, and looked like a little douchebag too!”

Stiles’ eyes shot up, full attention to Derek. “Wait… You had blonde highlights!? When!? I’ve never seen you with those!”

Talia chuckled, patting Stiles on the knee. “Poor thing looked like a skunk after Aunt Lorraine was done with him, so we had to cut it all out before school on Monday! Do you remember him having a high and tight haircut back then? When he looked like someone out of the army?”

“Oh my God, YES! Please tell me you have the before and after pictures!” Stiles sat his coffee to the side, mouth agape, full of laughter and life.

“Oh sweetie, I have enough blackmail on all my children to last a hundred years,” Talia winked, wrapping an arm around Stiles.

Derek growled, yanking out of Ennis’ grasp, with a red blush crossing his face. He smiled, feeling his brother’s warm, playful aura. THIS was the big brother he missed. The annoying, overbearing rival that pushed Derek into becoming a strong Alpha, and a strong person. “You want to talk about little douchebags? Remember the piercing you got in the 10th grade at Deucalion’s birthday party?!”

“You WHAT?!” Talia’s eyes flashed, blazing into Ennis.

“The holes grew back, mom!” Ennis laughed, smacking Derek in the back of the head. “You swore that secret to your grave!”

“Same with my hair.” Derek folded his arms. “…and that weekend at Kali’s when you two accidentally kno-”

Ennis shot forward, wrestling Derek to the ground and covering his younger brother’s mouth. “Say it and DIE, Derek!”

Derek and Ennis devolved into a mess of flailing limbs, and into a pair of arguing siblings, not all that unlike Liam and Isaac. In that moment, Derek felt like they were 15 and 6 again. Back when they’d been friends.

“Come on, Stiles. They’ll be at this for a while. Leave the man-children to act like little boys!” Talia scoffed, grabbing her purse, and taking Stiles’ hand. She guided the two of them out of the kitchen. “I believe you and I had reservations this afternoon at the theatre that we’re about to be late to. Which we’re not going to miss because a certain Alpha didn’t think to call me ahead of time that he’d changed his plans!” As she passed her sons, Talia nudged Ennis in the rear-end with her heel.

“Uh, yeah,” Stiles chuckled, waving as Talia drug him along their way. “Have fun, Derek! Nice meeting you, Ennis!”

Left to their own devices, Ennis and Derek settled their differences amicably. Hefting themselves up from the door, Ennis cracked a crick in his neck, sighing as he rubbed a spot on his chest. “Gonna have to keep an eye out on you, Der. Hell, you’re probably as strong as I am these days,” He tilted his head, smirking in his brother’s direction. “Of course, I’m not all that surprised. If you can take on a cop, a Stilinski at that, I’d say that makes you the strongest in the pack.”

Derek folded his arms, leaning against the kitchen wall. “I guess mom told you about everything?”

“Yep,” Ennis took off his outer jacket, shucking off his tie in the same movement. “Poor kid, that
Stiles. Shit situation. Let me know if there’s anything I can do for him. I mean, if he needs anything that mom or dad can’t afford. Three months into courtship, he’s practically my brother-in-law. I feel like I should be able to do something.”

Derek’s stomach wavered, coating in ice. There “it” was again. That tone in Ennis’ voice that made Derek feel thousands of miles apart from his brother. The air of “superiority” he’d somehow gotten in college. “Stiles is fine, Ennis. We’re taking care of him just fine.”

“Well, I-” Ennis stopped, mid-sentence. He and Derek turned in unison, to the tiny heartbeat that echoed at the edge of the kitchen.

Standing there, a small boy, that barely came to Derek’s waist, hid behind the corner wall. Soft black hair fell down his head, curling just above his shoulders. Silver eyes glowed, watching Derek and Ennis with intrigue.

Ennis beamed proudly. “Hey there, little man, you can come on out. It’s just your Uncle Derek! You’ve got to get over this shy stuff! You start kindergarten this next year!”

Derek’s jaw dropped. Emmett Hale, Ennis’ son, had been in diapers the last time Derek saw the boy. It didn’t seem quite right to see his little nephew all grown up like that. He beamed, stepping forward, and bending down to Emmett’s level. “Hey Emmett! Been a long time since I saw you last!” He held out a hand, offering his wrist to the child to scent. “I saw the video of you at your piano concert last month. You’re really good at it! I couldn’t even believe how fast your fingers moved!”

The shyness of the boy, if only for a moment, faded. He smiled, stepping forward and taking Derek’s hand, rubbing his Uncle’s wrist with his own.

Ennis beamed, slapping Emmett on the back, roaring in laughter. “Oh, he’s better than that, Derek! My little Omega is the best in his class! His teacher is already so impressed with him! He’s all talent, so I know he’ll do even better next time! Just like his Daddy, he’ll be the very best!”

Derek felt Emmett shy away, tucking his head down. He smelt the anxiety flowing out of the pup, in droves. One he knew all too well, and had smelled pretty much “I bet he will.” Derek reached out, clapping a hand on Emmett’s shoulder. A low glow of red surrounded the spot where Derek touched Emmett, which subtly flowed into the pup’s heart. The Omega relaxed into Derek’s touch, turning around and watching his Uncle in awe. “Or, he’ll do the best that he can.”

Ennis took his turn to clap a hand on Derek, completely ignoring his son’s change in scent, or the look of quiet fear in the pup’s eyes. “Speaking of talent, I hear that you’re going to the district finals soon! Stiles kept bragging about you and one of your friends, Jackson, being the dream team for the state! See? What did I tell you Derek, you are a perfect natural for basketball!”

“Jackson’s the talented one,” Derek stood up, meeting eye to eye with his brother. “I just had the good luck to be born tall, and know how to handle a ball.”

Ennis went back to the kitchen table, picking up his coffee and sipping it quietly, looking back to Derek with wide, eager eyes. “Quit being so unsure of yourself, Derek! You’ve got limitless potential in you!” He waved Derek off. “Either way, planning on a basketball scholarship? How’s your grades doing? Did you ever take my advice and start taking advanced placement classes?”

Derek balled his hand into a fist. He sighed, rubbing his forehead. “After high school, I’ll probably
just start working full time on the farm, and training with Grandpa. Dad and Grandpa need all the help they can get.” He shook his head, glancing away. “Stiles showed me some online classes I could take at Beacon University for all the stupid undergrad stuff. I’m thinking of getting some Agriscience classes, and maybe some agribusiness classes, if I’ve got the money and time when I’m done with the online stuff. Just depends on how things go, and if I’ve got the money or scholarships to do it.”

Frozen in place, Ennis gaped at Derek. “You’re not going to college? You’re joking, right?”

“I never said I wasn’t going. I said it depends on how everything turns out.” Derek glared back at his brother, eyes burning a bright, heated red. “I’m inheriting the farm and the family business, Ennis. There’s a lot to learn that I still don’t know. That’s what I’m going to focus on, so Laura can focus on getting her degree, and learning how to run the Pack.”

Emmett stepped back, watching as his Father and Uncle’s shining red gazes bubbled under the surface.

Scoffing, Ennis slammed the mug down on the table. “That’s why you’re not going!? I Worked my ass off and earned a law degree, and started my own firm in half the time any normal human could!” He gestured to Derek. “You really want to spend the rest of your life on a farm, cleaning up after livestock, and breaking your back over crops? I swear, I thought you’d have grown out of this by now.”

Derek growled, stepping forward and pressing his face up against Ennis’. “No, I want to spend the rest of my life doing what I’m good at, and what I like doing. Providing for my family, my mate, my pack, and supporting Laura when she becomes Head Alpha.” He pressed his nose up within inches of Ennis’. “Being there for my Pack.”

Ennis pushed forward, scowling at Derek. “You really think the pack needs another farmhand? Someone you can find off the street, and train in the span of a few days? Why aren’t you doing more, Derek!? I know you’ve got it in you!”

“Like you’d know what our pack needs.” Derek pushed back, bumping his chest against Ennis, and pushing the other Alpha backwards. “You haven’t been home in five years, after you run off to New York and made your own pack! What the hell do you know about any of us anymore?!

When’s the last time you ever talked to any of us besides mom, and not bragged about how fucking great your life is?! You’re rich, and doing better than our pack, you know what, we fucking KNOW that!”

Ennis’ red glow faded in his eyes. A pale white coated his face, and he backed down and away from Derek. He shut his eyes, reaching up to rub his face.

“You didn’t even bother coming for Laura’s graduation! Or Cora’s tournament she spent a YEAR training for! Hell, you never even called Liam to give him even the LEAST bit of support when he went through his shit! You didn’t even know I’d started to court Stiles! Know why? Because I haven’t talked to you in YEARS, Ennis! I’m not even worth your time anymore! None of us are!” Derek fumed, as his eyes bled red, the glow slowly fading throughout his entire body.

Ennis gulped, audibly.

Derek breathed in and out, watching Ennis walk away from the situation, as the scent of mold and decay Derek whiffed earlier became far more prominent. In that moment, he saw the signs of
weariness under Ennis’ eyes, and the decaying muscle tone under his brother’s shirt. For someone in their late twenties, Ennis looked just shy of 40.

“I’m sorry, Derek. I know I’ve not been supportive with the family since I left.” Ennis grasped for his chair, shaking his head. “I didn’t mean to fight with you about this again… I… I really did come out here to see everyone… To catch up, and…” He paused, sighing loudly as he felt lost for words.

Derek folded his arms. “Then why is it all you ever bring up when we talk? Not about my friends, my mate, or what I’m doing in life, or how my friends are, it’s… It’s always about what I’m not doing. How I’m some colossal disappointment to you because I don’t want to be like you and Laura.” He shook his head, laughing. “Ennis, I’m not like either of you. I’m my own man, and I’ve got my own life I want.” He paced in the kitchen, not noticing Emmett listening to his every word. “I’m not like you, Ennis. I have ZERO desire to run off and be an Alpha of some other pack just to start a brand new legacy. I want to be with my family, support Laura, and give Stiles a good, happy, simple life. I’m not like Laura, either. I don’t have the ambition or time to dedicate to 12 years of college and a lifetime of learning, not when I’m just as happy out in the sun, using my hands to make a living for us all.” He stomped his foot, glaring back to Ennis.

Derek waited for Ennis’ counterargument. The witty, intellectual, holier-than-thou speech about ambition, and Derek’s “wasted talent”. An endless conversation that they’d had since Ennis started college.

Yet, to Derek’s surprise, a low chuckle left Ennis’ throat. He shook his head, shrugging in Derek’s direction. “Then I suppose that’s what you’ll do, and you’ll do great at it. Better than anyone else.” Turning back to Derek, Ennis reached out, patting his little brother on the shoulder. “I’m sure you’ll do this pack right. Better than I did, anyway. Again, I’m… I’m sorry for the fight.”

“Hu… Huh?!” Derek’s jaw dropped, watching Ennis brushed past him, walking off.

“Let’s catch up some more after dinner. I’d like to know about that mate of yours, and how you’ve been doing. We’ve… We’ve got a lot to catch up on.” Ennis strode out of the room, with a hurried step, heading through the home’s corridor’s. Derek caught the sound of the guest bathroom opening and closing, on the far end of the home.

“W.. Wait, what?” Derek replayed the conversation in his head. Had Ennis… Really just admitted he was wrong? Had he actually backed off his convictions? “Who are you and what have you done with my brother?”

Tiny hands tugged at the bottom of Derek’s shirt. He glanced down, meeting Emmett’s shimmering silver eyes, and excited, practically vibrating features. “Uh? Yeah?” Derek knelt back down to Emmett’s level.

“Nobody ever talks to Daddy like that,” Emmett said, barely above a whisper. As though speaking loudly were a crime punishable by death. Yet, a wide, innocent smile crossed his entire face. “Mommy says that Daddy’s too rich and important to get yelled at. I’ve never seen someone yell at Daddy or say he’s wrong. Except other lawyers in court, but they’re buttheads who talk too loud and object to everything Daddy does, even when he’s got evidence and expert witnesses. Lawyers don’t count though, they’re sharks. Mommy said so. I think that means they only do stuff for money. My daddy’s not one though. He only helps the innocent people, and doesn’t take bad people money. Head Prosecutor Gavin likes him a lot, and told me my Daddy’s one of the good ones. That’s why nobody yells at him. He’s important and has REALLY cool friends.”

“Huh?” Derek blinked, taken aback by the child’s expansive vocabulary for someone so “shy”, and
the boy’s rather keen take on the world of law and societal standings.

Eyes wide and eager with silver light, Emmett let out a tiny squeal, hugging Derek around the waist. “That’s why you’re so cool, Uncle Derek! I’ve never seen an Alpha talk back to my Daddy, before! I always thought my Daddy HAD to be right, all the time!” With little hesitation, Emmett tugged at Derek’s hand, trying to pull him up. “Can we play together?! Please? Pretty please?! I wanna talk more to you!”

“Uh… I uh…” Derek stood, amazed at the pup’s strong grip already tugging Derek to the outside door. “Sure?”

Emmett beamed, dragging Derek out the front door, and into the softly clearing skies overhead, where the rain finally seemed to let up. “I want to see the animals on the farm that Grandma Talia talked about! Daddy said they were stinky and mean, but I read books about animals, and saw them on the TV, and they looked really fun and nice.”

A contagious grin from Emmett passed onto Derek. “You know, I bet my cousin Scotty could use some help with the cows and horses today. Have you ever seen one before?”

“No! All I ever saw were the bears and tigers at the zoo back home! I’ve never seen a horse!” Emmett gasped, stopping to look up, eager eyes baring themselves into Derek. “Can I pet them?”

Derek grinned, nodding. As if he could say no to a pair of cute eyes like that. “Of course. Scotty’s horses are some of the gentlest creatures you’d ever seen, and love to be pet. Heck, I bet we can saddle on up and get you a ride on Old Bella!”

Emmett gasped again, covering his mouth. The shyness returned, as a look of concern struck his features. “I don’t know… Mom and Dad don’t like me to do dangerous stuff.”

“Well, I’m your Uncle, and I say it’s not dangerous.” Derek gripped Emmett’s hand tighter as they made their way down the muddy path to the McCall farm, not a 10 minute walk from the Alpha’s Home. “Your Dad and I used to ride them all the time. Heck, he was the one who showed me how. It was… It was fun.”

As they walked, Derek couldn’t help but picture Ennis’ tired face again, and recall the musty scent his brother wore. Or the argument that Ennis gave up on so easily, completely against his usual character.

“Is your Daddy doing okay back home?” Derek asked, turning to Emmett.

Daydreaming of horses and cows, Emmett haphazardly nodded, turning back up to Derek. “Uh huh. When Daddy comes home on Friday, he always looks really happy, because I get to play with him, since he’s not too busy!”

Derek winced.

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Ennis stepped out of the guest bathroom, lugging his suitcase behind him. He’d chucked off his suit and tie, wearing a far more comfortable relic of his past. The kind of atrocious flannel that would earn him the bottom rung of the social ladder back in New York. Yet, the comfortable fabric, and the easy fitting jeans made his body feel lighter and more free than he’d felt in a lifetime.
Opening the guestroom, Ennis spotted his wife lounging on the bed, resting as she clutched a small bump on her stomach. At twenty one weeks, Kali’s usual toned body of an Alpha turned soft for the pregnancy, highlighting her willow skin.

Kali brushed long black curls out of her hair, meeting Ennis’ gaze. “Did you tell them?”

“No.” Ennis laid next to his wife, reaching over and grasping his hand over her bump. “I don’t deserve their help, Kali. After everything I said and did these last couple of years… After abandoning them to do my own thing, how can… How can I ask for their help, now? They’ve already got one charity case in the house. They don’t need another one.”

“Ennis…” Kali clasped her hand over Ennis’, turning away from her mate’s gaze. “You can’t go back home to New York. Your heart can’t take it. You KNOW what the doctor said.” With her other hand, Kali reached over, planting itself over Ennis’ heart. Pulling the fabric down, Kali’s fingertips traced over a thin, slowly healing scar. “I don’t know why you insist on killing yourself. Or leading that stupid pack back home, that don’t even bother living with us. They’re moochers, Ennis, plain and simple. They don’t deserve someone like you leading them.”

Snorting, Ennis shook his head. “Come on, Kali. Doctors don’t know everything. They don’t know me. They don’t know how hard I’ve worked, or how much I’ve sacrificed to get where I’m at. They don’t know my limits, or what I’m capable of.” He offered Kali a feigned, broken smile.

Kali huffed, nudging her husband in the side. “Maybe not, but I’m pretty sure your heart attack was real enough, and your blood pressure was still through the roof before we left New York.”

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**Chapter Music**

Sorry for the lack of updates here lately! Last week was our month-end close for our office, and meant about a 50 hour workweek. Regular updates returning this week. :)

Next update, we’ll pick back up with Talia and Stiles, on their lovely night out on the town.
Stiles walked out of the Beacon Hills Community Center with Talia, having finished watching the Community Theatre’s presentation of “Hamilton”, as the stars and moon began to shine overhead in the darkness of night. He left with a smile, with the songs playing over in his head. Stiles hummed along as they walked down the sidewalks of Beacon Hills’ downtown district, lined with shops and stores.

“How did you like the show? I thought they did a great job this year!” Talia exclaimed, tucking the program in her purse after scribbling a date and “Stiles” in the upper corner. “Honestly, I wasn’t a fan of last year’s Matilda, too silly for my tastes, but this one was so dramatic and interesting!”

Stiles beamed, turning to meet his Alpha’s gaze. “Great! I can’t believe a small community theatre was that good! Okay, the props were kind of dingy, but that Jennifer had one heck of a voice!” Practically walking on air, Stiles dropped his head, hiding a shy smile. “Thanks for inviting me out, Talia. This was really fun, I’d always wanted to see a big production like that.”

“You’re welcome! I’m so glad I’ve finally got someone to appreciate the finer things in life with! My husband and my father would rather sit in front of the TV all night, watching their “shows”.” Talia reached around, snagging Stiles in a tight hug from the side. “Well, I don’t know about you, but I’m not ready for this lovely night to end. Want to stop off for some coffee? How about a Caramel Mocha? I know it’s your favorite!” She gestured to the small cafe to the corner, owned and operated by the Steiner family, which made Starbucks eat their hearts out on a daily basis.

Stiles drooled at the thought of a Steiner Cafe drink. “I’d love some, thanks!”

Talia guided them inside the cafe, both hit with the dreamy scent of coffee beans, sweets, and the warm aroma of chocolate. She ordered for the both of them, added an order of cookies, before sitting them at the far end of the cafe.

After Alpha Aiden Steiner brought their order to the table (offering Talia a polite bow, and proper respects, oddly enough), they took their drinks, gently blowing on the piping hot drinks.

Talia removed the scarf from her outfit, setting it and her purse off to the side. “I’ve got to say, kids must be getting more polite these days, or I’ve gone into the twilight zone. That’s the sixth or seventh Alpha this week that bowed and offered me respect. I’ve been an Alpha ever since my father retired, and I can count on one hand the number of Alphas who’ve offered me respect up until here recently.”

“That’s crazy,” Stiles said, shaking his head. He picked up the cookie from his plate, taking a large nibble. “You’re the most level-headed Alpha I’ve ever met. Seriously, knowing the head Alphas that I know, you’re definitely #1 in my book.”

Talia chuckled, waving off Stiles’ compliment. “Oh, come now. You can’t say that after I bribe you with coffee and a cookie. You have to wait until after it’s digested before it counts!”

Laughing back, Stiles shrugged. “It’s still true.”

The low hum of the cafe’s crowd turned into a low roar as Talia and Stiles settled into the warmth of their mugs.

“How’s your sessions with Deaton going lately?” Talia asked.
“Good.” Stiles answered, truthfully. Whatever stigma he’d had about talking about his sessions with Deaton were long gone. Sure, he wasn’t keen on getting down into the intimate details, but three months of sessions, and Talia’s gentle encouragement made his therapy something comfortable to talk about. “Basically, it’s turned into fifty minutes of me venting about whatever memory I remembered that week, and ten minutes of Deaton pausing to ask how I feel about stuff. Oh, and probably five minutes of Deaton encouraging me to open up more. I’m starting to like my Wednesday afternoons again.”

“Then it sounds like it’s going lovely. I’m glad to hear that.” Talia took a sip of her drink, leaning forward to whisper in Stiles’ direction. “Though, are things okay with you right now? I know that last week you didn’t quite seem like your usual self. Did anything happen when you visited your Uncle? Problems at school? Can I help in any way?” Reaching out, Talia patted Stiles on the hand, allowing a soft red glow to travel up Stiles’ arm, settling in his chest.

Stiles smiled immediately. While Omegas could drain emotion, and Betas could drain pain, Alphas possessed the gift to share either. To share their emotions with members of their pack, or to share the physical pain they currently held to lessen the burden on themselves.

In that moment, Stiles felt Talia’s confidence and honesty radiating through him. Something she always managed to poke into him when he needed it most, it seemed.

“Yeah.” Stiles nodded, taking a deep breath. He stared at his reflection in the mug of coffee. “My Uncle and one of my relatives, Geoff, got into a fight. When it was over, Geoff said some stuff that made me think a lot about my Uncle Noah, my dad, and… My mom,” Stiles paused, shutting his head. “I just… This is going to sound terrible, but I… I guess I’m mad at Uncle Noah. I’m mad at my dad. I’m mad at my old family.”

Gripping his mug tightly, Stiles let out a long, exasperated sigh. After his talk with Isaac, and a session with Deaton, Stiles couldn’t deny it any longer. He was furious with his previous Alpha, and how much of a blind eye Noah turned to Brandon. Not only had it negatively impacted Stiles’ life, but apparently, it negatively impacted the police force, the Stilinski pack, and who knows what else. After meeting Talia, and seeing what a real Alpha behaved like, Stiles couldn’t help but feel a bubble of rage come up from the surface.

“Because he didn’t see the situation you were in?” Talia asked, poking Stiles’ hand again, injecting a calming effect that settled Stiles’ insides.

“Yeah. That sounds… Stupid, right? As if it was his fault that I got… Hurt.” Stiles dropped his head.

“I don’t think so at all,” Talia set her drink to the side, scooching her chair closer to Stiles. She reached over, clasping her hand with Stiles’. “You have every right to feel whatever it is you want to feel, Stiles. Your mind is your own, and you should embrace that. Don’t be afraid to feel.”

Reaching up, she booped Stiles on the nose. “Just don’t let it eat you away. Don’t hold it back and let all that negative energy bring you down! Yell! Scream! Do whatever you need to do to come to peace with it, and then tell Alpha Stilinski exactly how you feel! Get it all out, and start to mend that relationship, on both sides. You’ll feel better if you do, and I’m sure Dr. Deaton would agree.”

Stiles gulped. His stomach rolled over, not all that keen about bringing up that kind of talk with his Uncle Noah. Awkward wouldn’t even begin to describe it. “I guess I should talk to Deaton about that… But, you think that’s really what I should do?”

“I know so.” Talia paused, a story pursing on her lips, which struggled to move to form the words. Eventually, she sighed, shaking her head. “My son, Ennis… I’m not exactly proud to admit this,
but Nathan and I have had a strained relationship with Ennis since he graduated college. We offered him the family business to run and manage at his own discretion, but…”

Stiles felt a wave of disgust flood out of Talia, mixed with shame, and a healthy stack of pure despair.

Talia tapped her nails anxiously against her mug. “He vehemently declined at his graduation party. Which was fine, but then he proceeded to tell us he’d rather die than be stuck here with us.”

“What?!” Stiles’ heart spiked, as a growl began to form deep within him. Fueled by anger at the disrespect of HIS pack. “Why would he say that?!”

“Ennis’ best friend growing up was Jason Whittemore, Jackson’s older brother. Inseparable, those two were… For ages, I honestly thought they’d end up mating.” Talia’s eyes grew misty, and she took a long shot of her drink. “That is, until high school, when Jason chose a group of friends with a little more social class. Ennis got pushed out of his old circle of friends, because of his family’s status in Beacon Hills, and our lack of money. I remember that day… I think it was the only time I’d ever seen my son’s heart break.”

Stiles cringed, suddenly not as angry at Ennis anymore. “That… Sucks.”

Talia nodded. “So, Ennis became obsessed with chasing after what he never had; fancy cars, expensive vacations, tailored suits, the works. I’m sure Ennis never wants Emmett or his second child to go without, and feel that kind of pain. So he ran off and started his own pack. Started his own legacy.” She smiled, dully. “As a mother, I couldn’t be prouder of everything my son accomplished. Owning a law firm at his age? I doubt many people under thirty could claim to have accomplished that! No, my son has the ambition of a million men.”

The shame and disgust disappeared from Talia’s aura. Instead, Stiles only felt the waves of sadness festering under his Alpha’s skin.

“As an Alpha, and a member of his pack? I felt betrayed. A lot of us did. Ennis wanted so much in this world, and he chose to discard his family to accomplish it. I’ve only ever seen my grandbaby in diapers once, right after he was born, and they never came back after that one trip.”

Stiles frowned, surprised to see his Alpha so honest about such a private matter. Though, that was Talia. She rarely kept secrets (or her opinions) to herself. “I’m sorry…”

“Don’t be.” Talia beamed again, chuckling as she patted Stiles on the back. “He and I hashed it out over the phone on multiple occasions. Told him exactly how I felt, as a mother, and as his Alpha. That I didn’t care if he went out to stake his own claim, but DAMN him to hell and back if he’s going to keep me from my Grandson, or himself! He can hate our family’s background, or the fact that we’re not aiming to be the greatest pack in the world, but he should respect his roots, and where he came from!” Talia’s eyes flashed red, for all of a moment, before they faded back into their normal hue. “…and, if anything were to ever happen, he always had a place back home. Or, even if nothing happened, our guestroom was always open, and we’d welcome him home with open arms.”

Stiles realized this story wasn’t just for the sake of sharing. He pictured himself, momentarily, “hashing it out” with Alpha Noah. “Did it work?”

“He came to visit, didn’t he?” Talia took in a breath of relief. “I think we’ve started to mend that bridge, Stiles, but only because we talked through it. Trust me, I know it’s not a pleasant conversation, but you’ll be glad you had it someday. Just be honest, and your heart will never let you down.”
Stiles nodded. “Thanks for the advice. I’ll keep that in mind, Talia.”

“By the way, speaking of Ennis…” Talia glanced away, biting the bottom of her lip. “Something seems off about my son. I can’t pinpoint it, but his scent is off, and his heartbeat didn’t seem quite right. Did you sense anything from him, emotionally? I’m worried.”

Stiles thought back to Ennis walking into the Hale Home, and their conversation that spanned several hours, catching each other up on the families. “He was really nervous chatting with us. Almost anxious, I’d say. Some guilt, too, I guess? Though, to be honest, based on what you just told me, he might actually be nervous about coming home. When Derek got there, though, he perked up, and was genuinely excited. All of that seemed to disappear for a bit.”

“I see.” Talia nodded, seemingly satisfied with the answer, but a worried glance still covering her face. “Thank you. I suppose I’ll just have to hash that out with my son some more, as well.”

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Walking up to his room, Stiles stretched out into the air, yawning. He stopped outside Derek’s room, knocking to enter. “Hey Derek, I’m back! How’s-” Stiles’ jaw dropped, taking in the state of Derek’s room.

White bedsheets strewn themselves across the room, hung up in the corners, creating a massive blanket fort the likes of which Stiles had never seen. Underneath the fort, Stiles spotted Derek, Scott, and Emmett bundled up in quilts and their pajamas, watching a movie on the TV set.

Emmett squeaked, hiding behind Derek, and burying himself under a quilt.

Stiles folded his arms, scoffing in Derek’s direction. “A slumber party, and I wasn’t invited?! With a fort this epic, too?! Derek, you’re holding out on me!”

Scott grinned, giving a thumbs up to Stiles. “Hey, we’re the king of forts! This isn’t even our best work! We were a little strapped for time and supplies!”

Derek reached down, pulling out Emmett from under the sheets. “Hey, relax. This is Stiles, my mate. I told you about him, remember? He’s an okay guy, too.”

Eyes wide, Emmett shyly sat next to Derek, hiding his face in the Alpha’s shoulders. “Hi.”

“Hi there!” Stiles let himself in Derek’s room, plopping down on the bed with the rest of his friends. He held his hand out to Emmett. “I’m Stiles.”

“I’m Emmett.” He sheepishly took Stiles’ hand, scenting quickly, before stealing a quick peek up at Stiles’ face. “You’re an Omega, too?”

“I sure am!” Stiles sat cross-legged, as he and Emmett broke contact. “Did you and Derek hang out today?”

Pausing for only a moment, Emmett slowly crawled next to Stiles, nodding eagerly. “Uh huh! Derek let me feed the horses and cows, I pet a pig, and Cousin Scotty helped me ride a horse, then I got to pull some spinach out of the ground!” He pointed up to the fort all around them. “Then Scotty and Derek showed me how to make a castle with sheets, and said I can sleepover with them.”
while I’m on vacation here!”

Derek ruffled Emmett’s hair. “Little man was a natural on horseback.”

“The animals loved him, too! Ol’ Bessie’s a good judge of character, and she definitely says Emmett’s one of the good ones!” Scott reached over, taking his own turn to tousle Emmett’s hair.

Emmett giggled, beaming from ear to ear. Pure, uncontained joy emanated from Emmett, which gave Stiles his own smile. That was how a child should feel, all of the time.

“Cool! I’m glad you guys had fun today!” Stiles flashed his eyes at Emmett, who flashed his back in return. “Say, you care if I hang out with you guys tonight, too? I bet we’d have a whole lot of fun!”

Emmett nodded, leaning on Stiles’ shoulder. “Yeah! That’ll be fun! Hey, Derek says you know how to ice skate! Can you teach me? Daddy was going to take me one time, but then he had to go work! My mommy and daddy said I can learn if it gets really cold around here, and the lake freezes! Do you know when it’ll freeze? The weatherman says it might this week, but they don’t get it right a lot. I think they make stuff up sometimes!”

“You know what, I think you’re absolutely right!” Stiles nodded along with Emmett. “Actually, the weather is complicated to predict. They’ve got models they look at, and use patterns to guess, but it’s not always easy to do. So, I don’t know when it’s going to freeze over next, unfortunately. I bet we could go to the ice rink, though! Scotty could use a few more lessons, too!”

“Oh? How do the weatherman do it, then? How come they don’t know when it’s going to get cold? Don’t they have computers to do that?” Emmett asked, cocking his head to the side.

While Stiles went into a simplified explanation of meteorology with Emmett, and plans for skating that became a long, rambling explanation, Scott leaned over, whispering in Derek’s ear. “I don’t think letting those two near each other was a smart idea.”

Derek shrugged, smiling as he watched Emmett climb into Stiles’ lap, hanging onto the older Omega’s every word. He watched Stiles break down the boy’s shyness in record time, making Emmett feel welcome and warm in the home, and secure enough to share his numerous thoughts with.

A bit of warmth caught in the Alpha’s chest, alongside a slight blush.

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Chapter Music  

In the next chapter, we have more pack family feels, and possibly Derek’s third gift to Stiles. :)  

Comments and kudos are always appreciated! :)
In ancient days, wolves died over the third month’s gift, “The Gift of Protection”. The date marked the halfway point of those who’d initiated the courting, and the initiation of a battle with a member of their courting partner’s pack, often in a match that would leave both ends a beaten, bloodied, and defeated mess. Concepts of honor were far more brutal in ancient times, but of course, the idea of “protection” being one the core moral values of any werewolf in a pack, Stiles wasn’t surprised that their ancestors took the idea to such extremes.

Even in modern days, wolves had been known to be particularly “aggressive”, especially in cases where two packs didn’t meet eye to eye. Stiles recalled a bigger case in the Eastern States not a few months back, where a limb had been lost in one particularly “charged” conflict.

While most wolves would be thrilled to have their mate fight in their honor, in heated fights that left everyone on the edge of their seats…

Stiles felt thankful as the third month’s anniversary started, and Derek whisked him out of the house, away from anything that looked remotely like an arena, or a pack fighting ring. As far a

Arm around Stiles’ waist, Derek guided Stiles inside The Jungle, a local club that catered to the more “rambunctious” teens and college aged students. At the height of the evening rush, strobing colored lights spiraled above a packed house, where hundreds of people danced to the thudding techno tunes played out by the resident DJ. Most of the patrons danced half-naked, with the black lights giving a vivid color to the paint that covered their bodies in artistic swirls, designs, and patterns.

Stiles wedged himself through the crowd, with Derek’s hands still firmly attached to Stiles’ hips. Oddly enough, he felt a tad overdressed in his tank top, after shredding his winter coat at the front door. He glanced back, meeting Derek’s eyes and half-naked torso, yelling over the crowd and music. “Does your mom know where we’re at? Isn’t this the place where people… You know… Do “stuff”? Like, I heard stories from Danny. Sexy stories, but not the kind of stories I’d imagine Alpha Talia being okay with.”

Derek grinned, nodding as he and Stiles bobbed through the crowd, reaching the edge, and towards the mostly empty tables, where a few patrons were busy grinding up against themselves. “Mom’s not stupid, Stiles. She knows we’re all going to do stupid teenage shit. Her rules are pretty much if we drink, do anything we wouldn’t do at home, or pop anything that even remotely looks like drugs, we’re both socially dead the second we step back inside the house. We won’t be allowed to leave our rooms for the rest of our lives.” He patted Stiles on the shoulder, trailing his fingers under the collar of Stiles’ shirt and stealing a quick, heated kiss on the Omega’s neck. “So relax, this is okay! Laura went to WAY sketchier clubs when she was in high school. Let’s have fun tonight, and party hard! Hey, looks like Jackson and Lydia got a table just for our group!”

At the far end of the club, Stiles spotted their ever growing group of friends, and grinned.

Isaac, Danny, and their new friend Allison (a slender Alpha with pale features, sharp brown hair, and a voice in the drama club that could summon forth angels from heaven), were toasting colored drinks, currently busy painting each other in the blacklight paint. Allison seemed to take her time as Isaac’s chest, and Isaac’s smile never faded as he painted a pink rose on Allison’s face.

Liam seemed to be awkwardly hitting things off with someone in the corner, a bare-chested Omega teen with dark skin, and a dorky smile that reminded Stiles a lot of himself. He overheard this “Mason” complementing Liam on his eyes, and invited the Beta for a dance. Before he knew it,
Liam found himself drug off to the dance floor, and shirtless not long after.

Erica screamed from the dance floor, waving to Stiles before going back to dancing with a motionless Boyd, who’d been painted on almost every part of his skin in a cute font, with countless compliments to his attractive physique.

Scott and Kira danced off on their own, with Scott’s chest colored in Japanese characters, and a rather remarkable hickey on his neck. Kira’s features were, oddly enough, relaxed as she giggled into Scott’s arms.

Which left Jackson (newly mated, and newly named as a member of the Martin Pack) and Lydia, in their own state of half-nakedness, saving the group’s spot at the largest table in the club. Jackson toasted Derek and Stiles as they approached, a happy red blush on his cheeks, and a slight slur on his words. “STILINSKI!” “HALE! Get your asses over here! Here, have a drink! On me and Lydia! May you be as happy as we are!”

Stiles sat down at the table, inspecting the pink drink that Lydia handed him. He sniffed it, catching the scent of sugar and fruit. “Is this… Uh?”

“Just a fancy virgin drink. We’re underage, Stiles, and the bartender isn’t an idiot.” Lydia rolled her eyes, reaching over and running her nails through Jackson’s scalp. “Jackson, on the other hand? Well, my mate is an idiot and brought his own supply of booze, because apparently “everyone” does it.”

Jackson hiccoped, still pouting as he looked up and scanned Lydia’s face. “You love me, though.”

“I do.” Lydia smirked, pressing a kiss on Jackson’s sweaty forehead. “Even when you’re a fucking moron.”

Jackson grinned again, all smiles. He turned back to Stiles, lifting up a metallic flask out of his jeans, shaking it in the air. “How about you, Stilinski?! This is your big day! Three months! You’re halfway into Hale’s pants!”

Lydia sighed. Derek chuckled, leaning over and wrapping his arm around Stiles’ shoulder.

Derek eventually stood up from the table, and offered his hand to Stiles. “Come on, let’s party!”

After visiting with the newly mated Martins for a bit (and laughing their ass off how much of a cuddly drunk Jackson was), Derek eventually stood up from the table, and offered his hand to Stiles. “Come on, let’s party!”

“Same.” Derek reached over, taking a virgin drink for himself and downing it.

Beaming, Stiles took Derek’s hand and felt his chest bloom in a pleasant warmth as they waded onto the dance floor. All the noise around him, the people, the friends, and his pack… The idea of where he was, today, having fun, and being his own man? Stiles laughed, watching as Derek took a
paintbrush, and started to paint a mixture of silver, blue, and gold lines over Stiles’ arms, and a fairly accurate, neon red triskelion on Stiles’ left cheek.

Stiles snatched the brush out of Derek’s hands, smirking at his mate, quietly pondering his own designs he’d want to make. “I can do stuff like this, now. This is my damn life. I can go to parties, to clubs, hang out with my friends, my family, and…” With quick, even brushstrokes, Stiles made his own playful re-creation of the Hale’s triskelion, over Derek’s heart. On Derek’s opposite pec, Stiles drew the mark of his own pack, swords and shields of the Stilinski Clan. “I’m protected. I’m loved. This is what a normal life is like.”

After finishing decorating Derek’s abs, biceps, and neck with a slew of colorful lines and designs, Stiles passed on the paint and brush to the nearest couple, and joined Derek on the dancefloor. Where both proceeded to laugh (and be laughed at) for their less than skillful routines.

Stiles laughed out loud as Derek threw his hands up, attempting to roll his arms in some weird dance that might have been popular in the 70’s. Of course, Stiles got his own fair share of laughs from Derek and others, as he threw a hand to the back of his head, and pivoted his elbow wildly.

Derek attempted to twerk, and Stiles felt actual tears rolling down his cheek as he laughed.

Stiles ground up against Derek from the front, and the wild, pulsating crowd all around them, where their lips were mere inches away from one and other. They’d press against each other for a quick kiss, or a long stripe of a tongue against their exposed necks.

Eventually, Stiles’ laughter began to fade, as sweat poured off his body, dripping against the floor in unison with Derek’s. He yanked Derek out of the dance floor, and back for another drink from their table. “Oh my God, I looked like a dork! Did you see me? Jesus Christ, I hope nobody got a picture of that!”

“You look like you’re having fun!” Derek snagged a bottle of water, downing it in one go. He wiped the sweat from his chest. “Hell, if you’re a dork, then what do I look like? You think I’m much of a dancer?”

“I think you look perfect. My perfect, dorky, sexy boyfriend.” Stiles stood on his tiptoes, stealing another kiss from Derek’s lips, and wrapping his arms around his boyfriend’s hot, overheated body. “I also think you took me out to a loud club for our third month, because you know I hate the idea of watching people beat the pulp out of each other.”

Derek glanced away, but nodded. “I knew you didn’t. Your Uncle offered some guy named Parrish for me to fight, but I… I know I’m breaking tradition with this shit, but like hell was I about to “gift” you me beating some guy up,” He reached around Stiles, gripping the Omega’s ass through the tight jeans he wore. “So instead of protecting your body, I’ll protect you from bad memories, and help you make new ones. Like seeing Jackson wasted. Or Scott dancing. Or Liam making out with that Mason kid.”

Melting into Derek’s touch, Stiles grinned, reaching around and taking his own handful of Alpha ass. Both men growled in a playful unison, soon glued onto one and another from the front.

Stiles broke their kiss, laughing again. A fun, joyful laugh, that he’d never get tired of feeling. “You know, this is my first time out, doing something crazy like dancing in a club. Or anything like a normal teenager would probably do. Like, literally, this shit would have NEVER flown in my old life, or hell, even if I’d been with Uncle Noah!” He patted Derek’s ass, taking another playful squeeze. “Babe, this is perfect! Thank you so much!”
“My pleasure.” Derek squeezed right back, nibbling on the edge of Stiles’ ear. He broke contact, planting one last quick peck on Stiles’ lips. “I need a quick piss, and we can get back to making idiots of ourselves for someone to videotape. I’ll be right back.”

“Don’t use the bathrooms out by the back! Those are for “festivities”, if Danny’s to be trusted!” Stiles yelled, watching Derek jog off to the men’s restrooms.

While waiting for Derek, Stiles strode over to the bar, ordering himself another virgin drink. As he paid, he felt someone edge up next to him, whistling playfully.


Stiles snorted, lifting up his left hand, and showing his courting ring. “I’m taken, sorry. My boyfriend’s using the bathroom. We’re celebrating our third month of courtship.”

“You are? Well damn, that’s too bad.” The Alpha took Stiles’ hand, inspecting the ring before scoffing. “Say, you looking for an upgrade? If that’s the best courtship ring your boyfriend can offer, I think I could do you one three times better. How’s a real diamond sound?” He pulled out a pen, and a black notebook out from his back pocket. “What say you get me your number, and I show you how a real courtship is supposed to go?”

Stiles growled, taking his hand back and immediately flipping the bastard off. “How about you fuck off and not insult my boyfriend’s gift. Asshole.” He turned to walk away.

Again, the Alpha snagged Sties’ hand, yanking him back. “Oh come on, cutie… Let’s just talk about this. No need to run off!” His words slurred, clearly drunken.

Stiles felt the Alpha’s grip, growled, and long dormant instincts exploded. In one swift movement, Stiles slammed his shoe down on the Alpha’s foot, crushing it with as much force as he could muster. He smacked the palm of his hand into the Alpha’s nose, pushing him far away as Stiles scrambled away.

“OW! You son of a-” The Alpha shot up, eyes glaring a sharp red, matching the blood dripping down his nose. “What’s your problem, bitch!?”

Stiles growled, eyes flashing silver as the Alpha took another step forward. “Fuck off, or I scream for my boyfriend and the rest of my pack to come take care of you. Trust me, you don’t want to deal with my friends and family. Or me. My new sis, Cora, has been showing me her kickboxing moves for months. I’m not some wimpy little pushover.” He took a step forward, brushing past the Alpha and flipping the bastard off again. “Not anymore,” Stiles spat, eyes blazing.

Before the Alpha could adequately argue with Stiles, he found himself up against Derek, who stood a good 2 feet above him, and a good 100 pounds of solid muscle over him.

Derek fronted on the Alpha, growling menacingly as fangs popped out of his mouth. “Stiles? Everything okay here?”

The Alpha backed off immediately, slinking off with his tail between his legs, ditching the club altogether.

“He was just leaving, Derek,” Stiles said, rolling his eyes. He downed his drink, slamming it back to the bar before yanking Derek back to the dance floor. “Come on, let’s go dance!”

“Are you okay?” Derek asked, as he and Stiles made their way to the middle of the floor.
“I’m fine. Just another drunk asshole who didn’t like the answer “no”. He’s not worth our time.”

Stiles smiled, guiding Derek’s hands back to where they’d been before the Alpha’s bathroom break.
“How about we just dance and you keep me close by? Nice and safe?”

Derek nodded, pouting angrily about the whole situation, but happy to resume in the fun where they’d left off. “I think I can do that.”

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Noah strode down the long hallway of California’s State Werewolf Penitentiary. Cells of silver, wolfsbane-lined bars and bricks covered the area, preventing the escape of their kind’s superhuman strength. He came to a stop at the end of Hall 20, Cell 5, one of the few isolation chambers in the prison.

A toilet, concrete floors, and paper-thin bed was all Noah could spot in the abysmal cell. Except, of course, for the skin-and-bones remnant of his younger brother, Brandon Stilinski. A walking skeleton in an orange jumpsuit.

“Brandon?” Noah stepped just shy of the silver bars, feeling his skin crawl at the wolfsbane radiating out from it.

In the corner of the cell, Brandon didn’t bother looking up or towards Noah. He stayed curled in a fetal ball. “What do you want? Come to laugh at the failure of the Stilinski Clan? The Monster of Beacon Hills?” He shook his head, “Or just to rub in the fact that you got me a 50 year sentence with your bullshit connections and trumped up charges?”

Noah folded his arms. Honestly, he hadn’t done much of anything. The use of claws against a minor, and having rock-solid evidence of it was what nailed Brandon’s coffin. “This has been on my mind since that night you were arrested. I came to ask… Why?”

Immobile, Brandon curled tighter into a ball. “Fuck off, Noah. Go back to being Daddy’s perfect little boy, and the pack’s hero.” A low chuckle left the man’s throat. “The big army man who got his balls blown off, and couldn’t pop out a proper heir. Everyone’s favorite. The pitied, worthless bastard of a wolf who can’t even get it up anymore.”

Noah sighed. He turned away from the cell, unable to see his brother in such a state. Coming here had obviously been a mistake. “You died on the inside after Anna passed on. You quit trying. You didn’t want help, and didn’t seek help.” He glanced up, staring into the grey, lifeless ceiling above.

“I saw Stiles being miserable, and I figured he was in mourning too. The bond between mother and child is as strong as any bond between mates. At least, I thought you two were… Mourning together. Maybe that was just wishful thinking… Maybe I didn’t want to see the truth. I couldn’t… I couldn’t think of you falling any further. Or doing… What you did.”

More laughter left the cell, haunting the hallway with a dark, deep echo. “Trying to make yourself feel better, blaming me in the process? Because you didn’t “save” Stiles from his big bad mean Daddy? Because the truth of it all is simple enough? You’re not worthy enough to be an Alpha. Dad made a mistake with you.”

Noah roared, rearing back and slamming his foot into the bars of the cell, ringing out through the halls. Brandon flinched at the noise, whimpering quietly. “That boy… Did everything for you.
Every goddamn thing you could have ever needed from a son. Hell, I don’t know why he didn’t take a knife and stab you to death in your sleep. How the fuck do you repay him the way you did?!!”

Brandon scoffed. “I don’t fucking care about Stiles, Noah. I never fucking cared about Stiles. Quit pretending that little bitch ever mattered to me.”

“Don’t fucking play that with me, Brandon!” Noah shrieked, roaring as a partial shift ripped out of him. “Why you would willingly torture your own son?! The boy you did nothing but brag on the day he was born, so excited to have an Omega in the family! You CRIED over your son, the first time you held him, Brandon, THAT’s my brother I remember! Back when you were still a person!”

Silence broke out between the brothers. Eventually, Brandon peeked back, eyes glowing a dusky, holly black, devoid of color of life. “That man is dead. He died in a car crash over a decade ago.”

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Chapter Music

Comments are greatly appreciated! :)

Next chapter, we head into the fourth month of courtship and another short time skip! :)
Chapter 24

The first week of February started with a soft snow covering most of Beacon Hills, complementing the vomit of red and pink holiday decor that covered the stores, schools, and households across the city.

Stepping out of the school library with Liam, Stiles slapped his hand on Liam’s shoulder. “Dude, you are killing it lately! You didn’t even need me today! You aced that study guide on your own. Hell, have you seen your grades? They’re up to all A’s!”

Liam grinned, tucking a math book under his arm. “You know, I was never a complete dumbass. Actually, I think I’m finally caught back up from missing a month of school. Thanks for helping me through all of it.”

“No problem! Anytime, Li.” Stiles grabbed Liam, hugging him from the side.

Things had been going well for Stiles, without a doubt, but things had been going even better for Liam. Some of the college scouts he’d been in touch with before the “incident” had started to notice him again on the Beacon Hills lacrosse field, during the district finals. A month in Juvie or not, nobody could deny Liam as one of California’s best players. Many said they would be watching him during the state competitions, and invited Liam for a tour of some of the college facilities.

Of course it helped that the rumors of Liam’s heroics with Stiles, his stellar grades, and the 110% increase in scoring for Beacon Hills had become more widespread than his time in the slammer. Nobody even bothered listening to the Raken smear campaign these days. Liam Hale’s name meant a great number of things these days, most of them positive.

Liam continued to check his flip phone, a short blush crossing his face every now and then.

Stiles cocked an eyebrow, gently nudging the Beta in the side. “Hey, what’s with that face? You look like Scott when he’s texting Kira and pretending to do homework.”

Flinching, Liam scrambled to stuff his phone back into his pants. He cleared his throat, quickly ducking his head down. “Hey, uh… Can I ask you something… I mean, you’re an Omega, so… You might…” He stumbled over his words, before shaking off his nervous energy. “I need some advice. You’re courting Derek, so you’ve got some experience with dating. Can I get some advice?”

“Sure, what’s up?” Stiles and Liam walked past the cafeteria, and outside to the commons. They crunched through the snow, taking seats on a bench underneath a tree.

Liam sighed, folding his arms. “Uh… Remember that Mason guy I was dancing with at the club last weekend?”

“Yes.” Stiles chuckled, prodding Liam in the side. “You looked like you had a fun time.”

“I did. He was a cool guy, and uh… Really good looking,” Liam laughed, a wide white smile flashing in the process. “Mason, uh… He gave me his number today during English class.”

“Li! That’s great! Are you going to ask him out!? You should go on a date!”

“I uh… I’d like to…” Liam’s bright face faded away. “Thing is… He’s a Hewitt. They’re a pretty high class pack, and they’re about a million times better off than we are.” He groaned, leaning on
Stiles’ shoulder, kicking at the snow with his feet. “That, and… They know the Rakens really well. His parents, and family, and their allies, they probably know all about… You know. Who knows what they’d say about me.” Crestfallen, the Beta looked up to Stiles, on the verge of a teenage meltdown. “What should I do? I mean, you were a high class pack, and you fell for Derek… What can I do to make Mason’s family like me?”

Stiles rolled his eyes, scoffing. “Well, Mason seemed to like you enough! What do you need my advice for? Everyone else in the school likes you, too, you know! Come on, you’re Beacon’s star lacrosse player! Who wouldn’t want you?” He shoved at Liam, gesturing to the Beta’s physique. “Not all that bad looking, either. Come on, you’re hot. You know it. Look at those muscles!”

“But…” Liam blushed.

“But nothing! Call him, text him, do whatever! What’s the worst that can happen?” Stiles waved Liam’s fears off, pointing to the phone in Liam’s pocket. “Either you land yourself a date with a cute Omega who obviously digs you and his family gets to know you for the great guy you are, or nothing happens and you find somebody else!” He glanced away for a moment, before shaking off the brief moment of sadness that crossed his face. “Best advice I could ever give anyone, Liam, is not to wait to find happiness. Seek it out and fight for it. Otherwise, you’re just stuck in a hole your entire life.”

Stiles threw an arm around Liam, hugging him tightly. “You’re a great guy, Li. Just do it! Fuck what the world thinks, and what those high class snobs think!”

“You know what?” Liam’s eyes flashed a bright gold. He yanked the phone out of his pocket, furiously texting with a confident smile. “You’re right! Fuck the Rakens! Fuck their allies! Fuck Devenford! I made my own name here at Beacon High! I’m not Theo’s bitch anymore!”

“Fuck yeah!” Stiles reached up, high fiving Liam. “That’s my badass Beta! Go get ‘em!”

“I’m asking him on a date!” Liam finished the last of his text, before hitting the send button. “There! I sent it! I asked him out on Friday!” As he tucked the phone away again, a pale horror slowly crossed Liam’s face. The adrenaline that previously fueled him vanished without a trace. “Oh my God… Oh my God, I just asked an Omega on a date. A Hewitt! A cute Hewitt! Oh my god!”

Stiles snorted, patting Liam on the head. “Oh, come on, don’t stress out. The worst of it’s over. Trust me, I won’t let you leave the house looking like you usually do.” He winked.

“Stiles! Don’t tell me that!” Liam groaned, shoving at Stiles as he playfully growled.

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Late Friday afternoon, after a few hours, a trip to a thrift store, and a slight amount of hair product later, and Liam was a tad more presentable than his usual sporty attire.

Liam stared in a mirror hanging in the front entryway, adjusting the collar to his buttoned shirt, that dipped down, exposing a expanse of warm skin. He picked at his gelled back hair, gulping as sweat dripped down his neck. “Stiles, come on, are you sure? This isn’t too casual or too fancy?! I have to meet his parents, and deal with his older sister as a chaperone! I don’t want to look stupid!”

Stiles shook his head, flicking Liam on the back of the head. “You look fine, Liam! Doesn’t he,
Emmett?” He glanced down at his “helper”, who'd put the finishing touches on Liam, with a spritz of cologne.

From below, Emmett gave Liam a thumbs up. “Yeah! ‘You’re super duper cool!’

“See? From the mouths of babes.” Stiles patted Liam on the shoulder, pushing him closer to the front door.

Liam gulped, fidgeting with his top button. “The unbuttoned collar and no shirt underneath isn’t too douchey? I’ve seen Jackson try this look before with Lydia, and he looked like a tool.”

Stiles laughed, leaning over to whisper in Liam’s ear. “Pro tip, Li… Omegas like to see a little neck. Tends to make us want to kiss them. Or nibble, if it’s our time of the month.”

A bright crimson crossed Liam’s features. “Uh… Really? You think?”

“Yeah, really.” Stiles whistled through his fingers, yelling down the hallway for Derek. He turned back to Liam, and opened the front door to the Hale house. “Now go on! I’ve done all that I can! Just be yourself, and you’ll do fine!”

Derek strode up, twirling his truck keys before grabbing Liam by the arm and escorting him out of the house. “He’s right. You’re going to be fine. Now come on, dork, I’m you’re chaperone, and you’ve got a 10 PM curfew on this date. We need to get going.”

Waving off his friends, Stiles rested against the frame of the door. “Good luck, Li! Have fun! Eat lots of popcorn, and tell me how the movie is! I might drag Derek there next weekend!” He watched Derek and Liam drive off the property, waving the whole time.

Stepping back in the house, Stiles instinctively opened his arms up, as Emmett flung himself into Stiles. The pup’s eyes shimmered silver, batting his puppy-like eyelashes Stiles’ way. “Hey, Stiles, now that we finished with Liam, can you show me more Omega stuff? I wanna practice taking feelings again! I almost did it yesterday, remember?!”

“Awww….” Emmett buried himself in Stiles’ neck, whining through his nose. “But Mommy, I want to hang out with Stiles!”

“After your bath, young man!” Kali waddled into the entryway, tapping her bare foot against the floor. She folded her arms, glaring Emmett’s way. “Come on, I let you skip this morning so you could play with Stiles, you’re not skipping tonight!”

“After your bath, young man.” Kali’s Alpha eyes flashed out, in a no-nonsense tone. “Then you learn all you want, up until bedtime. Stiles isn’t going anywhere!”

Stiles ruffled Emmett’s hair, setting the pup down next to his mother. He booped Emmett’s nose. “Go on. Do what your mom says, you could really use a bath, buddy. When you get out, we’ll do whatever you want.” He winked at Emmett. “We can camp out in the living room tonight. I bet Liam will want to stay up late and tell us all about his date!”

Pouting, Emmett reluctantly took his mother’s hand, and trotted off with her to the bathroom.

“Okay, Stiles…. You gotta stay up super late, though! Later than 10 o’clock, because that’s when the LATE show comes on. The one mommy and daddy don’t let me watch!”

“I will, I will!” Stiles chuckled, stretching out and collapsing on the living room couch. He snagged a blanket, wrapping himself up in the warm, familiar fabric. He flipped on the TV, and settled for a game show network.
No tutoring. No homework. No immediate tests on the horizons. Most of the Pack was out on dates, or hanging out with their other friends. Lorraine didn't need help with dishes or the other housework. Those who weren’t out, Stiles could hear their heartbeats throughout the house, and the subtle markings of their fresh scent all over the house.

For the first time since the night Derek saved his life, Stiles was alone with his own thoughts, and….

He didn't hate it.

The nerves he used to feel in the silence of his old house, he didn't feel in the Hale home. He could nap, watch TV, do homework, or read a book in peace. It took four months of therapy to get to this point, but…. Stiles felt right in his own skin, just being him.

As Stiles eyes fluttered in and out of consciousness in the tingling warmth of his newfound peace, he jerked awake as a spike of anxiety shot through the house. One that, for once, wasn’t his.

Pulling off his blanket, Stiles walked through the Hale home, stopping just short of the kitchen and dining room. He peeked inside, watching Ennis pace back and forth, clutching at his chest, speaking into a cell phone. Anxiety and stress rolled off the Alpha in droves, spiking with panic that made Stiles cringe uncontrollably. The poor Alpha’s heart raced, faster than Stiles could keep pace with.

“No… I can't come back yet, Lucy. I won't be able to make the gathering. You’ll have to go with Lance. He's taking care of the Pack while I'm away. I told you this twice.” Ennis stopped, slamming his first against the table. He paused, a shrill shriek piping up on the other line that forced Stiles to cover his ears from the harsh noise. “You know damn well why I had to leave! This isn't forever, Lucy, I'll be back by the end of the month! I’m not abandoning-”. Another shrilled voice erupted on the phone. From what Stiles could make out, the other woman was screeching at Ennis with every word and insult in the book. In between those words, he heard rather vivid threats, that Stiles couldn’t quite make out over the woman’s ear-splitting volume.

Stiles backed away, watching Ennis partially shift, and eyes blazing in pure, uncontained rage. Then, just as quickly as it came, Ennis flopped down into a chair. Broken and defeated, Ennis sighed, ended the call, and proceeded to crack the smartphone in half. “Fuck you, bitch. Fuck you to hell and back. I don’t know why I even recruited you… Your father’s name in my pack was not worth your constant bitching.”

The shattering of glass forced a quiet gasp out of Stiles, and a spike of panic rushing down his spine. Ennis glanced up, spotting Stiles at the edge of the kitchen. He gulped, sighing loudly. “Stiles…” He ran a hand down his face, crossing over the lines of worry. “Sorry you had to hear that. It's not very becoming of a Head Alpha, is it?”

Stiles took a deep breath, calming his nerves from the glass shattering. He took an open seat next to Ennis, recoiling at the scent of stress that boiled all around them, like a hot fog that clogged at his nostrils and sent an icy pit in the depths of his stomach. “What happened? Is everything alright?”

Huffing, Ennis nodded. “One of my Betas, Lucy, had a Gala Event tonight for some art museum opening she was working on. I was supposed to escort her, but coming all the way out here changed all of my plans. She didn’t take that news well, and insisted I fly back tonight and call off the rest of my vacation,” He dropped his head, shaking it. “Now she and everyone else in my pack back east are threatening to leave, because of my trip back home. Apparently, the governor's nephew has started up a pack all his own, and has more funds to throw around than I do. I don’t expect anyone to be there when I return...”

“I’m so sorry…” Stiles reached over, taking Ennis’ hand. He took a deep breath, syncing his
heartbeat with Ennis’. White veins popped up from Stiles arms, as he took the stress away from Ennis. “Though, talk about a shitty reason for leaving. Didn’t they join your pack for a reason?”

Ennis’ eyes widened, as his breathing became easier with Stiles’ aid. He slumped back against his chair, chuckling. “Sadly, no. I made them offers of a good lifestyle, and the hopes of becoming a high class pack. Now that there’s someone else out there that can give them better, I…” His laughter grew, and he covered his face with his free hand. “…I guess I’m nothing like my mother. I can’t hold a pack together like she can. Hell, I can’t hold a relationship for beans anymore, either. You’ve seen how the family thinks of me. I’m… I’m pathetic.”

Stiles glanced away. Truth be told, Stiles noticed that the family treated Ennis far differently than anyone else in the pack. Laura had little time or energy to talk to him, though Stiles could write that off as a med student’s busy schedule. Isaac, Malia, and Liam didn’t even know him all that well, or felt comfortable opening up around him. Peter seemed to snip at Ennis constantly, though Lorraine made up for that with gentle touches, and pleasant (albeit, casual) conversation. Richard and Nathan talked very little with him, if at all. Talia maintained a motherly relationship on the surface, trying her best to include Ennis with the family’s activities and pack nights, but not as warm in her dealings with her older son. Though perhaps the saddest was Cora, who felt like a complete stranger around her oldest brother, and admitted to Stiles in private that she’d barely spoken 10 words to the man over the course of their life.

Derek? Derek tried, but the underlying harshness in his tone with Ennis crushed any kind of tenderness they might have shared.

Of course, having heard Talia’s side of the story (and Derek’s problems with his brother’s overbearing nature), Stiles assumed that there were plenty of hurt feelings all around regarding Ennis. The family’s eldest son, who spat in the Pack’s face, and distanced himself completely from the “dirty farmers”.

The two sat in silence, as Stiles continued to drain the excess stress away. Ennis’ composure continued to waver in and out, as waves of frustration struck the Alpha.

“You know… I pushed Derek and the others to want better, because I didn’t want them ending up like me in high school.” Ennis sighed, taking his hand back from Stiles. A soft smile crossed Ennis’ face, soon replaced by a bitter frown. “Because I didn’t want Derek to be the loser sitting by himself at the cafeteria every day, after he got cast away from the rest of our broken society. I felt that firsthand, Stiles, and it was the worst I ever felt in my life. Being ditched by the people I called friends, and told I wasn’t good enough because of who and what my family did for a living.”

Stiles nodded. “Talia told me about you and Jason Whittemore. I’m sorry that happened to you.”

Ennis shrugged, waving the thought off. “Me too. Frankly, I let those years in high school dictate my life to the point where I threw away the only good thing I had left in my life.” His shoulders sagged, and the last remnants of light in his face faded away. The man’s heart thudded, picking up a harsh, off-tempo beat that hurt Stiles to hear. “I threw away my family, because I wanted a better life that they were never going to want to pursue. I pushed away my brother, because he wouldn’t listen to reason. I made a complete ass of myself, and in the end, it got me nothing. Just a pack out east who are going to throw me away for someone with a few more zeros in their bank account.”

The heavy scent of regret permeated the area, joining the pungent despair and heavy stress that already billowed deep inside Ennis. Stiles reached out to drain it all away, stopped as Ennis shook his head, shoving away Stiles’ offer of help.

“I’m sorry. Of all the people I chose to spill this out to, I choose an Omega who went through hell
and back. I’m a selfish bastard, Stiles. Don’t worry about me.” Emmett stood up, taken aback as Stiles stepped in his way.

“Do you… Want to go do something tonight?” Stiles asked.

Ennis paused, mouth dropping. “What?”

“When Emmett gets out of the bath, let’s go do something! Cora’s upstairs moping about getting second place in her kickboxing tournament, so she could really use a strawberry ice cream cone to cheer her up. Let’s take Kali, too! Chocolate’s her favorite craving right now, right?”

Ennis chuckled, folding his arms. “I’m pretty sure Cora wouldn’t want anything to do with me. I appreciate the sentiment, Stiles, and I know what you’re doing, but I-”

Stiles shook his head, silencing Ennis with a harsh, silver glare. “One of the first things my therapist told me was that I had to want to take my life back, or that I’d be stuck in the past forever.” He offered Ennis a soft smile. “So if you want to be a part of your pack again, then make the effort. Work for it. Take it back!”

“I don’t think-”

Stiles cut Ennis off, chuckling. “You’re not a bad person.”

Frozen, Ennis paused at Stiles’ choice of words.

Stiles nodded. “Emmett’s a happy kid, maybe a little stressed out over your expectations, but, happy. Your wife obviously loves you, and you’ve got another kid on the way. I think everything you’ve done was for the sake of Emmett, Kali, and your unborn child. Hell, I think a lot of what you did with Derek came from a good place, but got executed poorly.” He dropped his head, staring at the ground. “I know what a cruel, awful person is like, Ennis, and you’re not one of them. Yeah, you’re kind of a jackass for what you did, and honestly, you’re ten kinds of stupid for turning your back on the best pack in the world….” Stiles recalled Talia’s story, and how he’d felt pissed off at Ennis for passing up a good pair of parents, and a loving, caring pack. “…but a cruel man wouldn’t be hurt by it. A cruel man wouldn’t want to change or openly admit he was wrong.”

Ennis’ mouth fell agape. He stumbled over his words, trying to argue with Stiles, but unable to form an intelligible counterargument.

“So, if you want to have your old life back… Or if you want to try and forge a new path, then do it.” Stiles shrugged, rolling his eyes at Ennis. “This isn’t rocket science.”

Slumping back to his seat, Ennis sighed, rubbing the bridge of his nose. “…I don’t think I deserve a second chance. Not after everything I’ve done. Derek hates me. My family hates me. The only reason they even tolerate me is for Emmett’s sake.”

“Good God, I don’t remember you being such a whiny brat back when you were a pup. How old are you, four!?”

Stiles and Ennis glanced up, spotting Richard clopping through the kitchen, kicking off his worn, muddy, boots and washing the black smudges on his hands off in the sink. “I swear, kids these days… All that book learning, and you’re still as dumb as a sack of potatoes. What good was that college education if you don’t have a lick of common sense? Thank Christ your younger brother has a better head on his shoulders.”

“Grandpa?” Ennis asked.
Richard dried his hands, huffing in Ennis’ direction. “Sonny, I’ll be blunt and tell you exactly what most of us think of you.” He stomped to his grandson’s side, folding his arms and flaring up a pair of deep red eyes. “We’re disappointed in you, and frankly, you piss us the hell off with that nose of yours stuck up in the air, like you’re better than the rest of us, because you “got out”. Good God, talking to you is sometimes worse than city council meetings with that son of a bitch Jacques.” Richard’s stern face glared down into Ennis’ eyes, forcing his grandson to recoil, like a child being chastised by their parent.

Stiles cringed at the abrasive, blunt insult, and saw the sting on Ennis’ face. The day Stiles disappointed Richard Hale was the day he would crawl in a corner and die of shame. He could only imagine that the rest of the family shared that sentiment.

Richard flicked Ennis on the forehead. “That doesn’t mean we stopped loving you, dumbass.” Grinning, he slapped a hand on Stiles shoulder, erupting in laughter as he ruffled the Omega’s hair. “Stiles here is absolutely right. You’re not a bad man, Ennis. You’re one hell of a lawyer, have been raising a fine son, and caring for your family, giving them everything they could ever want, and stuff I couldn’t even dream of giving my own family. You’re a smart, ambitious man. Just one hell of a pain in the ass to be around.”

“...Gramps...” Ennis dropped his head out of shame.

“If you want to come back to us, Ennis, all you have to do is ask. Don’t expect that we’re changing our minds on putting Laura and Derek in charge of the pack and the farm, you ungrateful little snot, but we’ll welcome you back with open arms.” Richard excused himself from the kitchen, smacking Ennis upside the head as he left. “In the meantime, how about you pull the stick out from your ass, before I have to ram my hand up there and do it myself.” With the darkest glare of his life, Richard’s aging features, for a brief moment, caused the much younger and virale Ennis to pale in terror. “...and trust me Ennis, you don’t want a livestock farmer to be the one to do that.”

Left to their own devices, Stiles and Ennis sat in mutual silence. Though, as Stiles turned to face Ennis, he felt a lot of the stress and anxiety that once permeated the Alpha’s features to slowly melt always, replaced by a sweet, savory scent of relief. The man’s heartbeat returned to a slow, even rhythm.

“Yeah, I wouldn’t want that. I’ve seen his hand up places I wouldn’t repeat in kind company.” Ennis laughed, taking a deep breath and rubbing the back of his neck. He eased backwards, slumping in his chair. “...so, uh? How about that ice cream? I think you said Cora’s favorite is strawberry?”

Stiles nodded, hopping up from the table. “I’ll go pull Cora out of her room, you go get Emmett out of the bath, ten bucks says he’s playing war with his rubber ducks, and will be a while.”

“Sounds good.” Ennis stood with Stiles, and while Stiles ran up the stairs to Cora’s room, and Ennis tossed his broken phone in the trash can. He made his way through the bottom floor, running into Richard, who stood outside the guest bedroom, leaning against the door and blocking Ennis’ path.

“So, when are you going to tell anyone your heart’s fucked up worse than a rabbit through a combine harvester?” Richard spat.

Ennis sighed, folding his arms. “You knew?”

“Sonny boy, I’m an old fart who’s been around old werewolves. I know a post heart-attack heartbeat better than anyone,” Richard rose his head, staring blankly into the wall in front of him. “You’re not even thirty, Ennis. What the hell have you been doing with your life?”
“...it’s a long story.”

+++++

**Chapter Music**

As Stiles continues his recovery, it's time for him to unify the Hale Pack, at last, and repay their kindness tenfold (without him even realizing it). Though while he brings the Hale Pack into the forefront of the Beacon Hill's social ladder, there might be some who don't take that as well as others, as well one of their own, who might not like a certain someone being welcomed back into their ranks.

Keep reading to find out! :) Comments and kudos are greatly appreciated! I'd say we're at the halfway point of this fanfic, and heading to the end.
With the first major yearbook deadline approaching, Stiles spent most of his lunch hours with the rest of the yearbook class in the Beacon High computer lab trying desperately to finalize the cover design, and the final page count. Erica and Lydia’s whip knew no mercy these days.

Thankfully, Stiles had Jackson’s support on the sports pages, with his fellow Omega’s eye for the best shots of the season, and his familiarity with all of the sports clubs made quotations and captions a breeze.

“Nah, cut that one. Put in that shot of the Steiner twins during the district finals instead. They killed it on that last game, and they never get any credit on the defensive line.” Jackson said, munching on a protein bar as he pointed at Stiles’ computer screen.

Stiles stuffed his face with one of Lorraine’s thick steak sandwiches, wiping his chin as he made the adjustments to the screen in front of him. “What about this one? It’s-”

The door to the computer lab swished open, smacking against the nearby wall, as Scott rushed down the lab aisles, clutching his cell phone to the point of breaking. He sat himself down in the open space between Jackson and Stiles. “Dude, you’ve got to help me! Please tell me you can help me!”

Stiles glanced up from his work, grinning wryly in Scott’s direction. “Help in general, or something more specific? I mean, “Help” is pretty vague, Scotty-boy. There’s so much that could me!”

“God, I hope it’s about that hair of yours,” Jackson chimed in, crossing his legs and winking in Scott’s direction. “How Kira manages to tolerate that ridiculous bush is beyond me.”

Stiles shrugged. “I dunno. I like the windswept boy next door thing.”

“Pfft. He’d look a thousand times better with a crew cut and a little gel. Maybe then he wouldn’t look like an eternal prepubescent twelve year old. Though, that’s just me.” Jackson chuckled.

“Very funny, guys. Oh, and fuck you Jax.” Scott smacked Jackson upside the head, turning his entire focus towards Stiles, with a pair of puppy-like eyes. “Stiles, are you busy this afternoon? I asked Kira to hang out tonight, but her parents got on the phone and wanted me to come over tonight for a sit down dinner. They want me, and a chaperone for a formal sit down dinner, and Derek’s got his stupid basketball State tournament practice.” He sighed, rubbing his forehead. “Like hell am I asking Isaac or Liam. Don’t get me wrong, I love my cousins, but they’d spend the whole night making innuendos. Mom’s working a late shift, Dad’s busy in the barn all day, and I don’t think it’s serious enough to warrant Alpha Talia.”

Stiles reached over, patting Scott on the shoulder, in an attempt to calm the rabid Beta. “Breathe, Scotty! I’m free tonight. I can be your chaperone.”

“Thank you! You’re the best!” Scott reached around, tugging Stiles into a tight bear hug.

Jackson popped the rest of the snack bar into his mouth, cocking an eyebrow Scott’s direction. “What are they wanting to talk about? Thought they weren’t doing the formal sit down thing until you got accepted into a college.”

“I don’t know! That’s the thing!” Scott’s panic returned, and he slumped down into his seat, eyes scrolling over the wall of text on his flip phone. “I mean… I’m not courting her, and she’s not courting me. We’re always back by curfew, I don’t ask her out on nights when she’s got practice or
clubs, and I know that neither of our grades are suffering! What have I done wrong?"

A smug grin crossed Jackson’s face. “Maybe they found out that you’ve basically been corrupting her soul? Taking her out to a club where you guys danced half-naked, all the constant making out, and that one night at the movies when you were totally touching each other’s-”

“Shut up, Jax!” Scott shoved at Jackson, playfully slugging the Omega on the shoulder. Despite Scott’s grin at Jackson, it slowly faded into a deep, pressed frown. “I’m not stupid. I know we do stuff that her parents would kill her for doing, but she’s never had a chance to have real fun before, or just be a teenager. So, I… I just want to make her happy, the way she makes me happy. I… I really like her, guys.” He looked up into the ceiling, eyes slowly misting out of the group’s sight. “Kira… Kira likes me for everything I am. All the stuff with the livestock I do for the Pack, lacrosse, and everything in between. Hell, she loves the Hale Pack as much as I do.” A short smile crossed his face. “…and I like Kira, because she’s the most dedicated Alpha I’ve ever met. She puts up with constant shit and all kinds of expectations from her parents, her family, and the extended Yukimura pack, all for her Pack’s honor, and to be a stronger Alpha than any of her predecessors. Ever since the first day I met her, Kira’s entire life has been for someone else. She’s dedicated, and…”

Stiles felt the anxiety flooding out of Scott’s pours. The fear, uncertainty, and genuine, unquenching admiration.

“…I don’t want to lose her.”

“Scott, don’t worry so much.” Stiles took a deep breath, wrapping his arm around Scott’s shoulder. He chuckled, knowing that Scott’s fears were unfounded, at the end of the day. “Kira’s a head Alpha in training. When she’s 18, she can legally mate anyone she chooses, even if her parents don’t agree with it. Right now, her parents are just being overprotective, and that’s just the way some families are. Nothing you can do about it.” She gestured to Scott, and the Beta’s well-toned physique. “I mean, if you think about it, if they really hated you, Scott, they wouldn’t let you go on dates with Kira. The fact that they’re letting you in her life at all, with all the training she has to do, and the piles of extra curricular stuff she’s in, means they probably respect you on some level!”

“He’s right.” Jackson clasped a hand on Scott’s knee. For a brief moment, Jackson’s eyes flashed silver, and an unusual serenity fell over the Omega’s features. “Trust me, my dad is the most stuck up son of a bitch that ever lived, with all that bullshit classist crap, like the Yukimuras do. If he didn’t want me dating someone, or thought they weren’t “worthy” of my level, I wouldn’t be dating someone. Simple as that. All the stuck up snobs in this town are exactly like that.” Reaching up, Jackson flicked Scott on the nose, returning to his usual, snarky glare. “So quit being such a drama queen. Chances are they just want to make you sweat, or get some kind of information out of you. Like if you’ve got a college picked out, or some shit.”

A brief moment of hope flickered in Scott’s face. From Jackson’s words, of all things. “You think so? You think it’s something that simple?”

Jackson nodded, tossing a protein bar at Scott’s head. “Here, have a snack, get some normal blood sugar, take a seat, and calm the fuck down.

Oddly enough, Scott did calm down. He took the snack from Jackson, unwrapped its contents, and heard Jackson’s many stories about the upper-class snobs, and the stupid things they would do at fancy dinners.

Stiles worked in silence, smirking as Scott’s anxious jitters wore themselves down and out.
The Yukimura Community, unlike any of the other packs in Beacon Hills, sported a single mansion to house their small pack of 50 members. Though, despite their lackluster numbers, the Yukimuras made up most of the professional occupations in Beacon Hills, and were just under the Whittemores in terms of financial worth. Doctors, Lawyers, Professors… Only the most illustrious jobs were good enough for a Yukimura.

Such facts weren’t as obvious when around Kira herself, though as Stiles stood beneath the palatial mansion of red and gold, he felt the difference in class between the Hales and the Yukimuras almost instantly.

Scott gulped, walking with Stiles up to the front door, passing by two security guards, each armed with deadly swords, curved into the shape of fangs.

“Nice place. I bet it was cheaper in the long run than all the houses my Uncle Built for our pack. Or even the Hale cabins, if you think about it.” Stiles stopped with Scott at the front door. He tried to keep conversation light, to help Scott’s nerves. When lost in his head, Scott tended to spiral out of control.

They continued to make smalltalk as the front door cracked open quietly, and Mrs. Noshiko Yukimura, the sharply dressed woman in her late thirties, with pristine black hair curled to her sides, offered a polite bow in Scott’s direction. “Welcome, Scott. Thank you for coming at such short notice. We were hoping you and-” Noshiko stopped, spotting Stiles and offering a second bow in the Omega’s direction. “Oh. Normally Scott brings Derek as his chaperone. Though, it’s quite a pleasure to see you again, Omega Stilinski. I must say, it’s an honor to finally meet you in person.”

Noshiko smiled, gesturing for both to enter. “Well, lovely to see you. Please, come in. Dinner's almost ready.”

Walking inside, Stiles glanced around the household’s minimalist decor. Not much space was wasted on grand entryways, or large rooms, save for a traditional Japanese living area, where most of the Yukimura Pack took up space, the adults lounging around under warm blankets, or the children playing quietly with toys.

Passing through the winding hallways, Stiles and Scott followed Noshiko to the farthest area of the home, a traditional dining area.

Kira rushed around the massive table (ready and able to fit a solid 50 individuals or more), folding napkins into intricate designs, each plate and setting a unique shape. She glanced up from her work, spotting Scott and beaming. “Hi, Scott! You’re early!” Kira rushed to Scott’s side, ready to jump into his arms for a hug, but stopping as Noshiko and her father side-eyed her. Instead, she bowed respectfully when she came to Scott’s side. “Good evening, Beta McCall. Thank you for coming to
“Hi, Kir-... Alpha Yukimura.” Scott fumbled over the more casual name, catching himself and offering his own bow Kira’s way.

Stiles folded his arms and cocked an eyebrow. It was really a shame they had to be so robotic in front of the Yukimura pack.

Mr. Yukimura tapped Scott on the shoulder, gesturing to the long table. “Scott, if you would help us to set the table? There’s quite a lot of work to be done.”

“Yes, sir!” Scott answered, ditching Stiles and soon finding himself under Mr. Yukimura’s watchful eye.

“Dinner’s almost ready, Noshiko.”

Glancing behind, Stiles watched an elderly woman step out from hallway, smelling of spices and fresh meat. All in black, with a soft white apron wrapped around her waist, Stiles assumed she must have been the Yukimura’s denkeeper, or perhaps the pack’s chef.

“Thank you. I’ll go let the rest of the family know to wash up. Please let us know when everything is ready.” Noshiko said, taking her leave from Stiles.

The old woman stepped close to Stiles, with a wide smile crossing her face. “Ah, you must be Stiles. Kira’s told me so much about you, it’s a pleasure to finally meet you in person. Please, call me Satomi.”

Stiles nodded, reaching out his hand and shaking the old wolf’s hand. He wasn’t sure what kind of wolf she was, but Stiles bowed out of respect, anyway. By her smell alone, she was definitely old enough to deserve respect. “Same here. This is a lovely home, and the dinner smells great.”

Satomi chuckled. “Why thank you! Please, make yourself at home, Omega Stilinski. Is there anything I can get you? Some tea? Water?”

“I’m alright, but thank you!” Stiles glanced around, watching Scott and Kira working to help set the plates for dinner. “Anything I can do to help get ready for dinner?”

“Would you mind helping to plate the food? From what Kira tells me, you’re talented in the kitchen. Normally, I wouldn’t trust anyone in the family to touch a spatula, they’re so helpless with the workings of the common wolf’s life, but with you?” Satomi eyed Stiles up and down, taking his hand, and inspecting the Omega’s long fingers. She smiled, nodding approvingly. “Yes, I can tell, you’ve got the hands of a cook. These hands are the hands of one who’s not shy of work. Very impressive. Not many young people have such hardened hands…”

Stiles wasn’t quite sure about that. Sure, he cooked plenty, especially in the day with his father, and helped Lorraine out every chance he had, but… A cook’s hands? “Hardened” hands? That seemed a bit of a stretch. Probably just a old phrasing from a generation past. “I’d love to help. Show me the way!”

Satomi guided Stiles through the hallway, and into a rather bland, tiny kitchen. Pots and pans were left simmering on most of the burners, but he couldn’t help but notice the Yukimuras lacked any practical kitchen equipment. In fact, if the grocery bags were any indication in the trashcan, almost all of the food seemed to be freshly bought that evening.

“I swear… I go away for a couple of years, and this is the state they leave my kitchen in.
Remodeled for a “modern” era! Unacceptable. Noshiko is a darling, and a hard worker, but she has no idea what the heart of a pack is like. None of these new brats in charge do. Jacques? Bleh. A blight on his family’s name. If his father were still around, that little snot would be ten feet under.” Satomi said, scowling as she pulled down countless dishes, lining them up and down the kitchen’s island.

Stiles offered Satomi a helping hand, taken aback by the speed in which the old woman did things. Before he knew it, the old lady was back to the stove, fiddling with the last remnants of cooking that had to be done, while Stiles finished up lining the plates.

“Tell me, Stiles, have you known Scott for a long time? I understand you’re living with the Hale Pack now, but I was unsure of the relationship between you two.” Satomi said, stirring the vegetable medley in one of her oversized pots.

Stiles nodded, grabbing a clean washcloth from the nearest cabinet, and spot-cleaning some of the dustier (unused) plates. “I’ve known Scott since we were little kids in Kindergarten. He, Derek, and I were best friends from the beginning. So I guess a little over ten years?”

Turning around, Satomi tilted her head curiously. “Yet, you chose to court Derek, correct? Not Scott? No love in that department?” She watched Stiles cleaning off the dustier plates, smiling in approval.

“Yeah, no, definitely not.” Stiles snorted, picking up a particularly dusty plate and taking it to run under the sink to rub off a grimy spot. “My relationship with Derek has always been a little different than with Scott. I think Derek and I always had an eye out for each other, even though we just started flirting last year. Derek used to get me flashier valentine cards, or give me his sweets at lunch. You know, the elementary and grade-school crush kind of stuff. Not that Scott and I aren’t close. He’s a great guy, who’s always been there for me.”

“Oh?” Satomi removed a pot from the stove, grabbed a ladle, and began to dip out steaming heaps of mixed vegetables into portions on each plate. “Tell me a little about Scott. Most of the things Kira tells me involves his looks, or his hair, or how sweet he is. I’ve never heard Kira getting into specifics.” She pointed to the oven. “Oh, and if you would, take the pork out of the oven. Cut them into two portions each.”

Doing as he was told, Stiles removed several trays of pork tenderloin out of the oven, setting them to the kitchen’s side counter. He fished a knife from the nearest drawer, and cut into each section into two halves, as Satomi asked. “Scott’s… Nothing but a big heart. After mom died, my dad was inconsolable. My pack wasn’t much better, we were all… Really bad off.” Stiles focused on sharp, even cuts of the meat, eyes glazing over as he began to recall some of his darker days. “Mr. and Mrs. McCall invited me to come stay over for a few days, to get my mind off things. I think they knew how bad my pack was handling things, and offered to take a load off their plate. They let Scott skip school, and he hung out with me all week.”

“I see…” Satomi finished plating the vegetables, taking the first tray of cut pork loins, and plating those in quick succession. She did, however, keep her attention focused solely on Stiles.

“Scott never left my side. Not even for a second.” Stiles grinned, remembering that week out of school. He couldn’t say it was a “happy” memory, but he also couldn’t help smile in fond remembrance of Scott’s friendship. “Scott gave me his stash of hidden gummy bears he hid from his parents, because he knew gummy bears were my favorite snack in the work back then. I got to be player one in all the video games, and I’m pretty sure he let me win a couple of times. We watched all my favorite movies, even the Disney Princess ones he never really liked all that much.” Stiles chuckled, shaking his head, finished cutting up the last of the meat. He followed behind Satomi,
following her playing style. “At night, when I’d cry because mom wasn’t there to tuck me in at night, Scott gave me the stuffed animal he kept hidden under his pillow. The one he swore he didn’t sleep with anymore, because he was a big kid. Mr. Bobo, the teddy bear. Then, he gave it to me when I eventually went home, so I wouldn’t have to sleep alone, or be scared anymore.”

Thinking back… Stiles knew that nights with Scott that kept him alive. The little glimmers of hope that Scott and the Hales gave him, and proof that kindness existed in the world. Kindness, like Mr. Bobo, who sat on Stiles’ desk back home at the Hale House. Kindness, like Scott’s big smile, and the Beta’s companionship throughout the years, despite Stiles’ inability to hang out like a normal teenager.

A lot of kids wouldn’t have stuck around Stiles, and his constant excuses for not being able to hang out on 9/10 weekends.

Scott? Scott wasn’t one of those kids.

Turning her head away, Satomi wiped a bead of “sweat” from under her eye. “He sounds like a lovely young man.” She nodded politely in Stiles’ direction. “I’m sorry for your loss, as well. I understand you had a… “Difficult” childhood.”

“Scott’s got a big heart.” Stiles shook his head, not all that keen on replaying the events of his childhood to every Tom, Dick, and Harry that asked about it. “Sometimes I find it hard to picture Scott as a big, scary werewolf predator. All the animals in the barns flock to Scott, and he’s one hell of a handler. He’s like a Disney Prince with all the freaking woodland creatures. I know he’ll make a great vet someday.”

“…A vet?”

“Yeah. Scott’s always wanted to be a vet. He always complains that he’s not smart enough to get into college, or get the scholarships to pay for it, but I know he’ll do it. The 4-H club alone is going to get Scott a scholarship. All the animals he tames and raises are 10 times healthier and happier than any place else.” Stiles stepped in to help Satomi with the rest of the sides still on the stove, following behind her to help plate the potatoes and drizzle with gravy.

Satomi nodded. “Animals are a good judge of character. If that is all true, it speaks well of Young McCall.” She smiled, setting the last of the pots to the side, wiping her hands on the apron. “You seem to genuinely love your friend.”

“I do. I love all my friends.” Stiles washed off his hands in the sink, drying his hands soon after. “Scott, especially. I’d trust him with my life.”

Taken aback, Satomi shook her head. “You’re an honest young man, Stiles. Thank you for letting me know about Scott. I felt concerned about Kira’s choice in mate. Usually, successful
courtships are built on years of friendship, or other strong bonds to ensure a successful relationship. I feared this was little more than an infatuation over a boy’s handsome features”

Turning away, Satomi grabbed several plates, nodding in the direction back to the dining area. “Those fears have abated. I see that there is more to this boy than meets the eye. Now, could you help me serve? I’m sure this is the first home cooked meal my family has had in years, so I know they’re starved.”

“Yes ma’am.” Stiles grabbed several plates, following behind Satomi as they headed to the dining room. “So… How are you related to Kira, anyway? Are you two close? Sounds like you’re pretty protective.”

Before Satomi could answer, they stepped into the dining room, where a flood of Yukimuras sat, talking in loud volumes around the table.

Noshiko leapt from her seat, rushing to Satomi’s side, taking the plates off the woman’s hands. She sniffed the air, practically melting at the smell. “Oh, mother, this looks and smells wonderful! Here, let me help you with that!”

“M… Mother?” Stiles paled, barely noticing as Kira approached him, taking the plants, and serving them to members of her pack.

Kira came back, leaning over to whisper in Stiles’ ear. “Oh, you never met my grandmother? This is Satomi Yukimura. Our last Head Alpha, and one of the 10 Grand Alphas in the world!”

Stiles felt all the blood in his body freeze in an heartbeat. Grand Alphas, Grand Betas, and Grand Omegas were the most well respected wolves in the world. A title granted to those who reach 200 years of age or older (an uncommon feat that only 1 in 100,000 will achieve), Grand Wolves typically made up some of the most powerful positions of authority in the World, having seen and lived through multiple centuries. In most packs, their word was law.

“Grandma retired to Hawaii with Grandpa on her 290th birthday, but wanted to come meet and judge Scott as a potential mate for me.” Kira folded her arms nervously, a low blush covering her face. “Mom’s only been head Alpha for about 5 years, so Grandma still makes most of the big decisions in the family, since she’s the wisest wolf we have. If she didn’t like Scott, there’s no way I’d ever be allowed to court him. Grandma Satomi’s the most important wolf in the entire Yukimura Pack.”

“Oh… Oh, really?” Stiles gulped, turning back to watch the “cook” serve the rest of her pack. He ran the conversation he’d just shared with the woman over and over in his head, dying on the inside. Had he known she was a Grand Alpha, he would have done all of the plating and work himself, and spoken in a much more polite tone.

Kira shushed Stiles, putting a finger up to her mouth. “Don’t tell Scott! He’d freak out! I want him to act natural! Then grandma would definitely see him for what he really is! So act natural!”

Stiles nodded, internally squawking as he watched Noshiko introduce Satomi to Scott. He nearly vomited, watching Scott play the idiot and offer his hand to shake, instead of a proper bow to an Alpha. Not that Scott knew that Satomi was an Alpha, but the point remained, and Stiles slapped a hand over his face, unable to watch.

“Mr. McCall, a pleasure to meet you.” Satomi shook Scott’s hand. “I’m Satomi Yukimura, Kira’s grandmother. I do apologize for forcing you over this evening, but I’ll only be here a short while before I head back to my home on the beach. The winters out here are rough on these old bones.”

“Nice to meet you, too!” Scott said, as his voice cracked mid-sentence. He stiffened, realizing his
earlier mistake, and offering a polite bow to Satomi.

Satomi laughed, patting Scott on the shoulder. “No need to be so nervous, Scott. I’ve heard such lovely things about you from an honest young man.” She turned to Stiles, winking playfully in his direction.

“She knew I didn’t know.” Stiles felt his jaw drop, and a newfound level of respect rise for the cunning, sneaky old Alpha before him.


“Oh certainly. Of course, I don’t know why I was so surprised to find you’re such a nice young man.” Satomi guided Scott to the head of the table, with the rest of the Yukimura’s main family (Stiles cowered beside Mr. Yukimura and Kira). “You know, I seem to recall a strapping young wolf named Richard that I used to teach at Beacon High, ages ago. He was a respectable young man, from a respectable family. A little slow, had a big mouth, swore like a sailor, but always acted with a big heart.”

“That’s my Grandpa, on my mother’s side.” Scott snorted, smiling openly to Satomi. “Sailor’s mouth, huh? Yeah, sounds like him. You should see him during the Super Bowl Games. I don’t know who gets more worked up, him, or Uncle Peter.”

“Good to see some things never change.” Satomi reached over, taking Scott’s hands, and inspecting them carefully. “Tell me more about yourself, Scott. I want to learn more about my granddaughter’s future mate. Such an adorable little face! Kira’s quite lucky to have such a looker!” Finished inspecting his hands, Satomi gave a nod in Noshiko’s direction. “Hardened hands of a man who knows what hard work is. A good heart. I like you, Mr. McCall.”

“T… Thanks?” Scott lifted his hands up, inspecting them. “Uh… Hardened? I mean, I’ve milked plenty of cows and goats, I do a lot with horses, saddles, and I help out with birthing and all that jazz, but I don’t think they’re that hard. Are they?”

Satomi chuckled, clearly amused by the young Beta.

Kira reached over, touching Scott’s hands, and explaining her grandmother’s compliment.

Noshiko’s usually stern face softened, rolling her eyes in Scott’s direction, but unable to stifle a smile.

Stiles leaned over, turning to Mr. Yukimura. “So, uh… I take it that Scott’s got the green light to start courting Kira, or the other way around?”

Nodding, Mr. Yukimura leaned over, whispering in Stiles’ direction, with a coy smile. “My wife would rather jump off a cliff than defy our Grand Alpha’s advice. I expect we’ll have a conversation with Talia and Scott’s Parents by the end of the week, and an alliance by the end of the month.” The Beta couldn’t hold back his eager smile, glancing between his daughter and Scott. “Scott is a good man. A little goofier and more laid back than I pictured my daughter falling for, but… A good man. He makes her happy.”

“Cool.” Stiles grinned, from ear to ear.

Mr. Yukimura brought up a fist, gesturing to Stiles. “Cool.”

Stiles and Mr. Yukimura fist-bumped, watching from a safe distance as the Alpha Women of the Yukimura pack soon dissolved into a giggling mess, with Scott laughing louder than all of them, as
whatever nervous energy he'd had at the start of the evening melted away with Satomi's presence.

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Chapter Music

Well, it's February (both in the story, and in the real world), so what a perfect time to explore the relationships in the fic! :)

Next update will come back around to Stiles/Derek, and perhaps we'll get to see what some of the city thinks about the Hales becoming friendly with the Hewitts and the Yukimuras! Oh, and we might have a nice, hot, and steamy (literally steamy) scene as Derek tries to be romantic on the human holiday of Valentine's Day (which wolves have some rather amusing thoughts about what the holiday stands for)! ;)


Chapter 26

A cold sweat ran down the back of Derek’s neck. Genuine horror crept up from the depths of his stomach, as footsteps trailed down the staircase, through the hallway, and towards the kitchen.

“Shit! Shit, shit, shit!” Derek scrambled across the kitchen, grabbing bowls, utensils, and the piles upon piles of dirty dishes. Yet, even for all his speed, training, and extreme workouts in preparation for the State Basketball Tournament, nothing could have saved him at that point.

“Derek? What on earth are you doing up so early, and why-” Lorraine asked, quietly, as she sung open the scent-proof door, stepped into the pitch black kitchen, with only the cozy pink of dawn shimmering through the window. Horror struck her face as she flipped the light switch, and was met with the sight of a kitchen devastated with a mess of baking attempts, powder and chocolate sprinkled throughout her counters and floor, and Derek covered in flour, sugar, and chocolate.

“What is going on in here?!” She whispered, quietly enough to keep from waking the others, but with the chastising tone that Derek flinched under. Waving away the burnt stench, she shut the kitchen door, preventing the scent from wafting anywhere else.

Derek sighed, dumping the evidence of his latest monstrosity, hockey puck cookies burnt black all the way around, into the trash. “Making a big mess of everything…” He dropped his head, disgusted with himself. While he could cook any kind of meat or vegetable on the grill to perfection, hunt the biggest buck, or prepare meat in thirty different ways, baking had always been a challenge for him. No matter how simple the directions, somehow, someway, he’d always fuck it up.

“Oh… Oh, dear…” Lorraine wrapped her robe tightly against her figure, rushing to Derek’s side. She grabbed a washcloth, wiping a mess off his face. “What were you trying to do? Destroy my kitchen and use up every ingredient I have? I know you don’t have THAT much of a sweet tooth.” She chuckled, only slightly groaning at the sight of her depleted cupboards.

Taking a washcloth himself, Derek wiped along the kitchen counters, picking up his mess as he worked. “I wasn’t baking for me, Lorraine. I was trying to do it for Stiles,” He put in the elbow grease to take out a caked-on portion of chocolate stuck next to the kitchen sink. “When Stiles and I were little kids, we used to do Valentine’s Day parties at school. Stiles always loved the parties we’d have, and we used to exchange those goofy cartoon valentines. That’s when I first started even remotely attempting to flirt with Stiles. Which, of course, went over his head, and I chickened out until High School before I tried again.” Derek paused, a slight blush crossing his face. “So, I wanted to give it another shot. We’re not little kids though, so I was trying to make Stiles some Valentine sweets, like the humans do. I even tried to… You know, get the flowers looking pretty before I gave them to him?” He didn’t bother to glance across the room, to the second soul-crushing failure of the morning.

“Oh, my…” Lorraine turned back to the kitchen table, at the mess flowers stuck inside a vase. Or rather, bundles of random flowers from their greenhouse, shoved in random directions. Individually beautiful, but when gathered together, the colors and shapes left little to be desired. Like a pre-schooler’s attempt at gathering flowers for a parent. “I see you tried arranging the flowers, too…”

“Yeah, I uh… I’m not all that great at that, either. I saw a picture of a bunch of flowers in the human advertisements online, but they didn’t look turn out like I wanted.” Derek’s head turtled further down, at the shame of his colossal failures.

Stupid, simple little tasks that he couldn’t accomplish. Baking cookies, and sticking flowers in a glass vase. How hard could that be? How the hell could he screw something that simple up?!
“Derek, sweetheart…” Lorraine wrapped her arms around Derek’s shoulders, hugging him from behind. “I’m pretty sure the humans just buy the chocolate and flowers from the store most of the time. I know we don’t go there very often, but they had a small stand of valentine’s products in the corner last time I went.”

“What?” Derek rose an eyebrow. “That’s not all that romantic. What’s the point if you just buy the stuff? Stiles deserves better than some crappy chocolate bar or those crappy flowers they stick in the freezers at the store. You know where those bullshit products come from! Fucking mass-production corporate farming trash! Yeah, I’ll say ‘I Love You’ with genetically modified trash, over my dead body!”

A wide smile crossed Lorraine’s face, happy with her nephew’s response. “Glad to hear you have higher standards for your mate, and your grandfather’s pride in the family business.” She reached for a washcloth, a broom, and shoved both into his hands. “Here. You clean up this disaster area, and while I try to see what we’ve got left to work with, I’ll show you how to make a very simple basket of cupcakes with a creamy center. Then, toss those ugly flowers out, and go get Stiles a bouquet of red roses from Aunt Betty’s greenhouse, tell her Lorraine’s calling in a favor for some red, pink, and orange ones. I’ll show you how to make a simple bouquet that we’ll wrap up in a ribbon. If we hurry, I’m sure we can get this taken care of before Stiles wakes up.” She clapped her hands, already beginning to rummage through her cupboards. “You can repay me by going around the territory, and replenishing what you used up this morning, AND doing the grocery shopping for all the other items.”

Relief flooded Derek, and he immediately set out to complete his tasks. “Thanks, Lorraine. You’re a lifesaver.”

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After an hour or so of learning the art of cupcake baking and floral arrangement 101, Derek felt proud about the final products. Sure, he wasn’t able to make them in the perfect shape and design that Lorraine always managed, but they were by his own hands, and looked pretty damn good if he could say so himself.

Leaving just the “big” reveal to Stiles, Derek hid himself away in his mother’s study as the rest of the house woke up and began to rustle around the house. He sat himself in the corner, attempting to wrap a thin, slender box in red paper, and a white ribbon. A tad more skilled at wrapping than cooking, Derek taped off the corners, to the flawlessly wrapped box.

As Derek grabbed the white ribbon from the side, he flinched as the door to the study swung open, and Cora popped inside, yawning, and still in her pajamas.

“There you are. Derek, Aunt Shelia called and wanted to know if you’d come over sometime this week, and—” Cora paused, spotting the present in Derek’s hands. “Huh? What are you wrapping up?” Suddenly awake, and brimming with energy, Cora bobbed over to her older brother, pressing up against him and staring at the box in his hands. “Your fourth month isn’t for a couple of weeks. I’m also pretty sure that the Gift of Love isn’t something you can stick in a box.” She gasped, sluging Derek in the shoulder with a playful, joking grin. “Unless it’s a dick pic? Oh my God! You aren’t that tacky, are you big bro?”

“Shut up!” Derek gently pushed at Cora, giving some space between them. “This is Stiles’
Valentine’s day present.”

“Huh? You’re actually doing that stupid human holiday?” Cora folded her arms, with a curious glance. “I thought that was a big commercial nightmare where people go broke trying to get laid?”

Derek rolled his eyes. “Who knows or cares.” He wrapped the box in the ribbon, carefully tying it off like he’d learned ages ago from his Grandfather. “This month of Courtship is the Gift of Love. I have to publicly proclaim my intention to Stiles in a couple of weeks, in a boring ceremony that everyone agrees is the worst month of courtship, hands down.”

“Ugh, yes!” Cora groaned, shaking her head. “I still remember the last one we went to. 2 and a half hours of pain and misery.”

“Yes.” Derek sighed, setting the present to the side. “Before I get to that day, I wanted to show him that this isn’t some crush anymore. I love Stiles. I’ve loved him, in one way or another, since we were kids. I can’t imagine my life without him, anymore.”

Derek wondered if anyone in their pack could live without Stiles these days. Granted, the Hale Pack had always been a tightly knit Pack, but like any other family in the world, wasn’t without their own sets of problems.

Problems that Stiles had stepped in, and been a big part in fixing. Liam, who’d taken back his life, and started dating Mason Hewitt. Isaac, who’d been given freedom from a shitty school, and now loving life at Beacon High, and all but dating Allison Argent. Scott, who’d been given permission to court Kira at the start of Summer Vacation, in a surprise twist to the usual Courtship process.

Stiles’ presence affected Ennis as well, who Derek had noticed wasn’t quite as “high and mighty” these days. Derek wasn’t sure (or cared) what Stiles said to Ennis, but apparently, it had been enough to tame the snob in the older Alpha.

Regardless, Stiles was as much a part of their pack as anyone born or married into it. For someone who came from such a broken home, Stiles seemed to thrive coming out of his life of adversity.

Cora picked up the box, shaking it to inspect the contents. “Aw! That’s so sweet! What did you get him?”

Derek grinned from ear to ear. “I asked Grandpa to borrow the old family cabin, so we can go camping all weekend long. Just me, him, and a chaperone that I’m sure mom’s going to insist come with us. Probably Scott, who’ll gag all weekend when we make out.”

“Oh, Derek….” Cora gulped, audibly.

“It’ll be perfect! We’ll go hunt together, nab our own dinner, and cook out in the fire pit! We’ll have peace, and quiet, and time to talk, just the two of us…. And Scott, I guess, but we’ll make him stay in the guest room,” Derek tilted his head back, already daydreaming of the perfect weekend together. A weekend with just him and his partner, and nobody else there to steal Stiles away.

“Derek…” Cora sat the package down, rubbing the back of her neck.

“So I’ve got him a bottle of cider from Grandpa Rick’s cellar. You know? The good stuff he only cracks out for big events like weddings or anniversaries? I thought we could pop it open in front of the fireplace, and let him taste the best our apple orchard has to offer. That sounds great, doesn’t it?” Derek spent a good week’s paycheck on the single bottle, and a good month’s efforts of talking his Grandpa into selling it to him. In the end, Derek won, but at a fairly hefty cost.
“Derek? Uh…”

Derek finally caught sight of his sister’s hesitant expression. “Yeah? What? You don’t like the idea?” He rolled his eyes, huffing in her direction. “Listen, I know you’d personally hate that kind of plan, but Stiles loves doing camping stuff! We’ve already been talking about going camping on summer break with the rest of the crew for an entire week! You should see his face when we’re planning it, Cora, he’s going to love it!”

“Umm… Yeah, that would be a great plan, most days…” Cora chuckled, quietly. “…but Stiles started on his heat cycle this morning. He came begging me at 5 AM for my heating pad, and Isaac’s been draining his cramps away all morning. Stiles will be fine in a couple of hours, but as a fellow Omega, I can confirm that there is no way in hell that he’s going to feel like doing anything that involves the outdoors or a lot of physical activity.”

Derek’s face dropped, and instantly felt like an idiot. Granted, Stiles’ spotty heats (after his first cycle) had been a consistent issue as the Omega started to merge onto Cora and Lorraine’s cycles in the past few months, but he should have known that Stiles always tended towards the middle of the month.

“God dammit.” Derek buried his face into the palms of his hands. He let out a deep, frustrated growl. “…I didn’t even realize it. I haven’t seen him all morning, since I’ve been working on this plan. God… God dammit.”

Cora offered a sympathetic frown, patting Derek on the shoulder. “Don’t get all mopey, big bro!” She grinned, leaning over and hugging him from the side. “Tell you what, there is one thing that an Omega would go crazy over while they’re in heat! A best surprise gift ever!”

Derek scoffed, sighing. “Mom says we can’t do that kind of stuff until after we’re done courting.”

“Not THAT, you moron!” Cora smacked Derek upside the back of his head, glaring at him with sharp, silver eyes. “Take him to have a spa day, and spoil him rotten! There’s this great place in town that Lorraine and I go to when we’re miserable, and don’t feel like moving. They’ve got a hot spring, a professional massage therapist, a steam room, and everything you could dream of! It’s the same place that Lydia got him a gift card to all those months ago, and he loved it!” Hopping up, Cora ran to her mother’s desk, grabbing the portable phone, and running it back to Derek. “Don’t even worry about the cost, either. They’re one of our few allies in down, so they give Lorraine and I a huge discount! Just bring them a big case of veggies or fruits, and they call it even!”

Derek rose an eyebrow, as a sprinkle of hope stopped the overwhelming sense of dread and failure that covered over his shoulders. “You think he’d like that?”

Cora scoffed. “Big bro, if you’d like, I can recite to you the bullshit that Omegas go through each month. Days of hot and horny, miserable cramps as our bodies try to adjust to the idea of making babies, followed by a week of blood and—”

“Oh, okay, yeah, I’m well aware.” Derek held up a hand, not all the interested in hearing about his sister’s monthly visits. Not that he would be embarrassed to talk about it, but Cora had a flair for the dramatic, and could ramble on for hours, if left to her own devices.

“Anyway, yes, he would love a nice massage, a dip in a hot spring, and a long steam! You can take him camping later, but for right now, he could use a more gentle touch.” Cora grinned, ear to ear, giggling at the last words. “Just not “that” kind of gentle touch, big bro.”

Derek rolled his eyes, reaching up and tousling his sister’s hair. “Ha, ha, very funny Cora. Got their
Despite his original plan failing horrifically, Derek was fairly happy with the final turnout. At least, if the bright smile on Stiles’ face was anything to judge by.

Lunar Spa, a swanky, historical establishment that existed since the early days of Beacon Hills, offered traditional wolf-like treatments that anyone of any class could enjoy: A man-made hot spring that mimicked a real outdoor retreat, complete with rocks, trees, and grass for the outdoor scents that one could meditate through. Several professional massage therapists, that knew each class of wolf’s “soft spots”, and knew the proper amount of strength to utilize accordingly. Then, of course, most of the typical luxuries that any spa might offer, ranging from pedicures, manicures, and all the way to mud baths or facials.

Wrapped up in a cotton white robe, Derek held Stiles’ hand as they made their way out of the massage parlor, both of their skins glimmering with a soft oil. Steam billowed from under Stiles’s own robe, a combination of his previous dip in a hot spring, the heated oil his massage therapist had used, and the Omega’s natural monthly heat.

Humming in a jovial tune, Stiles laid his head on Derek’s shoulder. “That felt so good, Derek. Like, you don’t even know how much I needed that. That Lady worked out all the kinks in my body, and I feel like jelly!” He glanced up, the Omega’s pretty silver eyes in a constant half-glow during his heat. “How was yours?”

Derek blushed. Honestly, he’d meant for just Stiles to get the treatments, but somehow, his boyfriend talked him into joining along for the ride. Never really one to think about doing something so “Omega”, he couldn’t help but admit it was a great afternoon. “Felt good. I think the guy that did my massage un-knotted all the pain in my legs from Coach’s running drills, and from that harvest from last week.” Lifting his free hand up, Derek inspected his newly manicured nails. “Don’t really get the point of the manicure, though. The second I shift these into claws, they’ll grow back in an instant.”

“Yeah… That’s kind of dumb to have that for wolves.” Stiles inspected his own nailed, shrugging it off. “Anyway, was definitely worth it for the hot spring! I could have stayed in that water for hours.”

Derek grinned, recalling their hot springs adventure. Sure, they’d been wearing bathing suits at the time, the Spa’s policy on cross-class werewolves sharing a spring, but Derek found the opportunity to see Stiles’ growing, healthy frame, and the slightest hint of muscle tone on the Omega. A beautiful sight to see Stiles’ progress into health, as his mate became more and more beautiful by the passing day. “Sorry. You were turning beet red at the end there. I don’t want you to be hard boiled. No offense.”

“None taken.” Stiles sported a mischievous grin, one that came with the playful scent of arousal. “Of course… I could have used a little more time staring at you in that speedo. That thing hugged your butt perfectly.”

A sharp red crossed Derek’s face. He grinned, clutching Stiles’ hand tightly. “Give yourself some credit. You look like a fucking pin-up model now that you’ve got some meat on your bones.”
Licking his lips, Derek reached over and pecked a kiss on Stiles’ cheek. “One I could eat up, all night long.”

Practically purring, Stiles reciprocated the kiss. “You’re getting good at this flirting stuff. I’m liking the smidgen of dirty talk. It’s not quite filth, but just enough to get my motor running.”

“I feel like that’s just begging for a “ride me all night long” pun.” Derek released Stiles’ hand, stopping them as they reached the last destination on their trip. Before them were several private steam rooms, many built for a one-two capacity, alongside a much larger public room. “Thank goodness I’ve got class.”

Stepping into the steam room, Stiles shucked off his bathrobe, replacing it with a cotton towel from a nearby rack. “You’ve got the class, and one hell of an ass.”

Derek groaned, throwing a towel around his naked waistline, and following behind Stiles to take a seat on the hardwood bench. “I think if a flirt rhymes, that detracts from the sexiness.”

“Whatsoever. I’m horny as hell right now, so my mind’s not as sharp as it could be. Just let me appreciate the finer things in life.” Stiles grinned, leaning on Derek’s bare shoulder as they basked in the sharp, pleasant warmth of the steam room.

Sweat dribbled down their bodies, washing away the oil from their massage, as their hair began to sink in a wet mess. They changed positions several times, to acclimate to the heat, eventually settling on a position where Derek sat on the bench one level up from Stiles, giving the Omega a shoulder rub.

“Mmmm… This feels wonderful.” Stiles closed his eyes, leaning back further into Derek. “All the steam kind of melts with my heat, and I’m feeling… Real floaty, like I’m in and out a really good night’s sleep. Best surprise Valentine’s Day present, ever!”

“Good. I’m glad you like it.” Derek smiled, mentally taking a note to repay Cora sometime down the line. Through the scent of sweat, Derek made out the scent of satisfaction in Stiles, and a genuine happiness. He sighed, knowing he should offer credit where it was due. “To be honest, I thought about a camping trip in a cabin, but after I found out you were in heat, Cora suggested a spa day. You should thank her, too.”

“Aww! You two are the best!” Stiles tilted his head back, staring at Derek. “...but we’re definitely going to go camping when it gets warmer! We started courting so late in the year, we haven’t even had a chance to go hunting together!”

“It’s a date.” Derek nodded, returning to his efforts to give Stiles a proper shoulder rub.

Ten minutes in the steam, and Stiles let out a soft pant, glancing around the room. He spotted several coolers, labeled with “water”. Standing up, Stiles adjusted his towel, gesturing to the coolers. “Want some water? I’m getting a little dehydrated with everything.”

Taking a step forward, Stiles tripped over the bench, squawked, and began to fall backwards towards the hardwood floor.

“Stiles!” Derek kicked off the bench, catching Stiles before he could smash his head onto the floor, bridal-style. “You okay? You didn’t hit anything did you...you—.”

“No, no! I’m fine! Thanks for catching me. I’ll need to—” Stiles chuckled, quickly focusing on the bright blush covering Derek’s face. He glanced down, spotting his towel stuck on the floor, having fallen off his body as he’d tripped.
Horror and embarrassment covered Derek’s face, as he stared at Stiles, completely naked, in his arms. Or the realization that one arm was inches away from touching Stiles’ exposed bottom, and his other arm was across Stiles’ bare chest, hovering over a nipple. On instinct, his gaze traveled south, and caught sight of Stiles’... Bits.

A minute or two later, as both Alpha and Omega gently smiled at the tender touches and overall embarrassment of the situation, Derek put Stiles down, handing his Omega the dropped towel.

Stiles covered himself up, stepping across the room, and grabbing bottles of water for each of them. He handed one to Derek, cracking open his own, and sheepishly looking away. “I guess I gave you a little show there, huh? I hope that doesn’t break the mystery before our mating.”

Derek shook his head, a dorky smile on his face, unable to look Stiles back in the eyes. “No! No, uh… I mean… Stuff happens, you know? It was...” He gulped, chuckling as he opened up his own water, chugging it in an instant. “You look... Beautiful.”

“Thanks.” Stiles bit his bottom lip, covering his mouth as he chuckled. “You know… You’re looking pretty handsome too. With lil’ Derek out in the open there, I’m pretty damn turned on. Jackson was right about one thing, that’s for sure.”

“Huh?” Derek looked down, and then quickly behind him, where his own towel had snagged on the bench when he ran to catch Stiles. Much like Stiles, Derek stood in the open, completely naked in the midst of the steam, his member at “attention”. “Oh for fuck’s sake!” He nabbed the towel behind him, covering himself as a new shade of embarrassment covered him from head to toe.

Stiles laughed. “Well, at least we both got to see each other at our most natural. Wouldn’t be fair if you were the only one that got a show!” He whistled, waggling his eyebrows as he and Derek went back to their seat.

“I... I was not trying to make this day... About THAT, you know? Don’t get me wrong, you are incredibly attractive, and today made that all the more apparent, and don’t get me wrong, I look forward to our sixth month, it’s just...” Derek insisted, waving his hands up and around Stiles. “This was... This was supposed to be something special.”

Reaching up, Stiles cupped Derek’s face in his hands, and brought the Alpha down, into a heated kiss. They savored the kiss, peppered by the touch of tongues, before breaking free from it. “This is special, Derek. Believe me, my day started out as complete shit with the pre-heat cramps, and a craving for chocolate. I got a spa day, cupcakes, beautiful flowers, and some cider for tonight! You’ve made an otherwise shitty weekend really special. You know, I think this is the first time I actually feel a little spoiled rotten. I wonder if this is what Jackson feels like all the time?”

“Thanks,” Derek laughed in tune with Stiles, wrapping his arm around Stiles’ shoulders, pulling his partner close. He gazed off into space, sighing. “This month’s gift isn’t all that grand, and I’m worried I’ll fuck that up royally, so I wanted to do something else in case that bombs. Maybe even start a tradition, you know? Something for just the two of us.”

Curiosity piqued, Stiles took Derek’s hand, cradling it in his own. “Derek, are you that nervous about this month?”

A chill ran down Derek’s sweaty back. “The Gift of Love”, the fourth month’s gift in a Courting Process, marked the second half of the courting process. A change from proving the worth of the Courter to the Courtee, and a shift into the romantic expressions of love between partners. Starting with the “Gift of Love”. A declaration to friends, family, and packs across the town’s territory, of an intent to mate.
Of the many things Derek was great at, public speaking was far from one of them. Nor was his attempts at writing something “romantic”, to sway the hearts of an entire pack.

So, in short, Derek was a few weeks away from publicly pissing his pants.

“Not really nervous about declaring it to the world, but…” Derek sighed, taking his own turn to lean on Stiles’ shoulder. “I’m not that great with flowery words. I could write a thousand pages on historical crap about facts and events, but I’m no author that can weave some grand story. I don’t want to do the cookie cutter speech everyone else does either, but… I’m more nervous about slipping up, or saying something stupid.”

“You won’t” Stiles said, patting Derek on the knee.

Derek snorted. “How could you possibly know that? You saw me crash and burn in the 8th grade on my speech in English class? I still haven’t lived that down!”

“Oh, okay, maybe you will. Big whoop.” Stiles gripped Derek’s knee, offering a sharp glance Derek’s way. “You think I don’t know how much you care about me? How much your Pack cares about me? For God’s sake, Derek, you guys gave me a home! You gave me a brand new life! You really think I’m going to call it quits if you slip up, stutter, or not give the modern day rendition of the Gettysburg Address? Hell, do you think our friends are going to crack up over something like that?” Leaning forward, Stiles bopped his head on Derek’s head. “Because I’m not, and they’re not. You’ve always been important to me Derek. You’ve stood by me, through the best and the worst! Ever since we were kids, ever since… Ever since mom died. You and Scotty both, you were… You were there when nobody else in my family was. Not even my own Alpha.”

Derek opened his mouth to argue. Ready and able to talk about the many failed attempts he’d had that day with Stiles’ surprise. Willing to argue that Derek was just as blind as anyone else to Stiles’ situation. Able to explain, in great detail, why he wasn’t all that great of an Alpha, and how their life together wouldn’t be some grand life, like Ennis had with Kali and Emmett.

Yet…

As his mouth opened, something that had been dancing on his tongue for four months began to take shape. The words he’d always been too afraid to say, ever since he was a pup. The thing he’d wanted to scream at Stiles when they’d both been in the hospital, after the ordeal with Brandon. A genuine feeling he’d felt as he gave Stiles the keys to his jeep, and as they’d danced the night away at the Jungle, and while they painted each other’s body.

Because at that moment, Derek felt Stiles’ heart and his own as one. The uncertainty in his mind vanished, overwhelmed by Stiles’ words, and the Omega’s overpowering scent of love. Derek realized, at that moment, that Stiles was doing Stiles did best with everyone he came into contact with.

The broken Omega, who survived the worst that life had to offer, gave everyone the confidence to be stronger. He took away the fear and loathing people had about themselves, without the need to rely on his powers as an Omega.

Derek’s lip trembled, amazed at the wonderful man in front of him.

“You could give a speech about circumcision at the Gift of Love ceremony, and I’d still feel the same way about you as I do right now. In fact, why don’t we-” Stiles muttered, silenced as Derek reached forward, taking both of Stiles’ hands in his own.
A tear ran down Derek’s cheek. He kissed Stiles’ hands, chuckling, finally finding the words he’d been longing to have the courage for. “I love you, Stiles.”

Stiles’ words stopped. The Omega stuttered, and for the first time in forever, found himself speechless. The bloom of heat from Stiles exploded into an overpowering, floral, honey-like scent. He beamed, stealing back his arms, and wrapping them around Derek’s sweaty neck. “I love you, too, Derek. I love you so fucking much.”

Derek wrapped himself around Stiles, unable to hold back his own wide smile.

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Chapter Music

Hopefully that was worth the wait! Got a little longer than usual this chapter on the word count, but I think it was well worth it. We’ll shift back to Stiles for the next chapter, as he finds himself in the presence of the ultra-class elite members of California, and a certain somebody isn't too happy about that!

Comments and kudos are greatly appreciated! :)

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Despite Ennis’ best efforts at reintegrating himself into the pack, there were difficulties for the Alpha, to say the least.

While Talia, Rick, and Lorraine seemed willing to welcome Ennis back into the fold, the rest of the pack lacked much interest in the Alpha altogether, barely mustering the interest to include him in the pack’s day to day living.

Derek especially, for whatever reason, seemed to ignore Ennis’ presence altogether.

For Emmett’s sake, and the sake of the family who’d saved his life, Stiles tried his best to help out the struggling Alpha reintegrate into the pack life, and act as an intermediary between Ennis and the pack members.

Which led Stiles to the sunny day right after Valentine’s day, when the air wasn’t too frigid to stop himself, Isaac, and Ennis to have a quiet lunch on the outside terrace of a local cafe.

Hailed as one of the “upscale” establishments in Beacon Hills, the mugs of coffee steamed with a fresh, earthy scent of high class beans, and the empty soup bowls before them had been a exquisite treat. Though, a treat that Stiles couldn’t hope to pronounce, let alone afford.

Ennis handed the ticket, several bills of cash, and an order of chocolate moose for the three of them to their waiter, before turning back to Stiles and Isaac. He sipped his mug, offering a nervous smile Isaac’s way. “...so, uh… Where were we… Oh, you used to attend Devenford up until this semester, right? I always wondered what it was like going there.”

“It sucked.” Isaac shrugged, glancing off into the distance, not paying Ennis much mind. He sighed, leaning on his arm. “Lot of snobs went there. A constant pissing match of social standing. I was an idiot for staying there as long as I did.”

“Oh.” Ennis nodded, setting his mug to the side. He chuckled, rubbing off the sweat covering the back of his neck. “Still a big rivalry between the schools? I remember back in my days there, the competition was pretty fierce.”

“That’d be a Liam question. I’m the brains, he’s the brawn. He does sports, I do drama and the arts.” Isaac muttered, without adding much to the conversation. He checked his phone, reviewing the time, and sighing, loudly.

“Oh. I see…” Ennis paused, downing the last of his mug, before inspecting both Stiles and Isaac’s. “I’m going to ask for another cup. Would anyone like another while I’m up?”

“Yes, please.” Stiles handed his mug to Ennis, while Isaac shook his head.

As Ennis walked back inside the restaurant from the outside terrace, Stiles reached over and smacked Isaac on the shoulder. “Dude!”

“What?!” Isaac asked.

Stiles rolled his eyes. “Could you give him a little slack? He’s trying!”

“Stiles, what do you want from me? I don’t know the guy at all! When he lived in the house, the only people he ever paid any attention to was Derek, Laura, and Talia. I’ve never had a
conversation longer than 10 minutes with the guy! He’s nothing like Derek or Scott, and I really don’t know how to deal with him!” Isaac folded his arms, slinking back into his seat. “Why does he even care now, all of the sudden? From what my dad told me, he’s got everything he needs back in New York.”

Stiles frowned, leaning back in his own chair as well. “He’s trying to make up for lost time. Ennis wants to be part of the pack again. I think he realized that there’s more to life than fancy vacations, and a sleek black Camaro.”

Isaac shut his eyes, rubbing the bridge of his nose. He huffed. “We all appreciate you trying to wring the douche out of him, Stiles. Still, you’ve got to understand, it’s like talking to a stranger. A stranger that once pissed on your shoes and claimed you were “beneath them”.”

“Try?” Stiles smiled, meekly, batting his eyes.

“Whatever.” Isaac waved off the conversation. “I will expend the same amount of effort that I would expend on listening to Liam go on and on about his new crush, or Scott squealing about being allowed to court Kira this summer.”

“Thank you.” Stiles grinned, gently slugging Isaac on the shoulder.

“My, my. Isn’t this place a little too pricey for a couple of Hales? I think the Food Bank down the street would be a better option.”

Isaac and Stiles rolled their eyes in unison, not even bothering to look up from their coffee. Theo’s whiny, smug tone was all either of them needed to know what kind of asshole walked up to them.

“My, my, isn’t it our favorite trashy dipshit, Theo.” Isaac turned his head, glancing up and down Theo’s overpriced outfit. “What do I owe this pleasure?”

Stiles watched Theo walk up to Isaac, surprised that the Alpha’s usual entourage of Devenford friends were nowhere to be seen. All on his own, Theo’s scent seemed… Off. A mixture of hot rage, and peppered with frustration. He walked oddly, with a crazed look in his eyes.

“Huh… Well, it looks like my little bitch has grown some balls.” Theo brought his face up to Isaac’s, flashing his eyes. “I mean… After all, weaseling your way into the Hewitt, Stilinski, and Yukimura families has made you a little cocky, hasn’t it? Makes you think you and your pack are big shots, huh?” Spit sputtered from Theo’s lips, covering Isaac’s face.

Isaac wiped the spit from his face, shoving Theo out of his personal bubble. “Go away, Theo. I don’t have to kiss your ass anymore. What my family does is none of your damn business.”

“Oh, come on Isaac… That’s what you always wanted, isn’t it?” Theo laughed, eyes still billowing a red glow. Several of the other patrons at the cafe left the premises, shirking away from Theo’s erratic behavior. “To be a part of the high-life? Why else would you stay in Devenford, after all the shit that went down with your little brother? Why else would you lick my boots, after I dump you in the mud?! Fuck, you must adore the state of this town right now.”

Isaac stood up, folding his arms. He stood taller than Theo, glaring down the Alpha’s gaze with his own golden glow. “I have no idea what you’re talking about. How about you go fuck off, and leave us alone. We want nothing to do with you.”

“Don’t play dumb!” Theo slammed his fist down on the table, forcing the mugs to slip off the table, and shatter against the ground. “All anyone ever wants to talk about these days are the Hales! How classy they are, taking in the bitch Omega that has daddy issues! Or Scott McCall, who earned the
respect and admiration of a Grand Alpha! Hell, our own pack allies are letting scum like your little brother date someone as high class as Mason Hewitt?” Claws sprang from Theo’s hands, digging into the wood on the table.

Stiles cocked an eyebrow. He stood up as well, backing away from Theo’s shaking figure. He noticed one of the nearby waiters was on the phone by the front entrance, calling in a disturbance complaint.

Isaac stood in front of Stiles, growling in Theo’s direction. “What are you mad about, exactly? That we adopted Stiles into our family? That my cousin has a big heart? Or my brother actually found someone he’s comfortable being around? Seriously, you’re not making any sense! What the fuck is wrong with you?”

“Don’t act like you don’t know what I’m talking about!” Theo screamed, breaking off the edge of the table as he stalked towards Isaac and Stiles. “So what if you bastards have the Yukimuras and the Hewitts! So fucking what?! You think they’re the only ones in the town worth anything!? So what if we lost our alliances with those petty, half-assed nobodies! So what if Grand Alpha Satomi chastised my father for speaking out against the Hales?! We’ve got the Whittemores, and they’re on our side! They’re worth a thousand times more than either of those puny, pathetic packs!”

Stiles and Isaac exchanged confused expressions. Theo’s insane ramblings made little sense to them. Though, apparently, it would seem as though the Raken Pack were going through difficult times in the social spectrum. That, alongside their poor finances the past year, appeared to have set Theo off.

“You think you’re anything, Isaac Hale? You’re nothing. All of you, are NOTHING.” Theo laughed, shaking his head incredulously. The few remaining patrons began whispering at the teen’s insane ramblings. “Some dirty little farmers think they’re going to climb up the ladder? Think again, bitch. Because at the end of the day, you’re all the same. Disgusting, primitive wolves, who roll around in the dirt and play like we’re still in the dark ages, instead of the 20th century. That’s all you are, and that’s all you’ll ever be. They’ll all figure it out, eventually! Then you’ll be nothing! Back to zero!”

Striking through Theo’s dark laughter, a simple, quiet chuckle broke through. One that silenced Theo, in an instant.

Isaac shook his head, still chuckling in Theo’s direction. “Wow. Are you THAT jealous of Liam and our family? You’ve gone off your rocker, and straight into a chasm of crazy.”

Theo’s face paled, stumbling over his words. “What did you say?”

Shrugging, Isaac glanced away, shaking his head. “You know, in the few times I ever bothered thinking about you after I ditched Devenford, I realized something. You and Liam never saw eye-to-eye, beyond a “claimed” friendship. In reality, you did everything in your power to make him look bad on the lacrosse field, or put him down for being a Hale, all to inflate your own self-worth. Unfortunately, Liam had way more talent in his pinky finger, than you did in your entire body. No amount of badmouthing or social class can hide that to a Coach, or to Recruiters.”

Fangs shot out of Theo’s mouth, curving around his lips. “Shut up…”

Isaac grinned, smugly. “So, really… The only way you could EVER look good on the lacrosse field, is if you took my brother down a peg. Which is exactly why, I’m guessing, you did or said something that made Liam break your arm. Yeah, he lost control, and that was his bad, but any REAL wolf, or any REAL man would have got a Beta, healed the injury in a couple of hours and dealt with it. Scott’s gotten a broken arm five or six times in lacrosse practice and games, but he
never made a federal case about it.” He stepped away from Stiles’ side, waltzing up to Theo, standing strong and tall, with sharp composure, and an elegant stance. “Instead, you and your family dished out enough cash to get my brother arrested, expelled, and kicked off the lacrosse team. All because big spoiled Theo Raken threw a hissy fit, because someone was better than him. Am I wrong?”

“Shut… Up….” Theo’s face shifted into dark, wolfish features. Sparks of red exploded from his eyes. “The bitch couldn’t take a joke! He deserved what he got!”

Isaac laughed at Theo’s pitiful response. “After you kicked my brother off the team, and with you as the new team captain, the Rakens led Devenford to the worst season they’d had in years, and out of the District Tournament by the first round. Which left Beacon High with the REAL star player, and a spot in the State Tournament. I’m sure you already know my Brother’s practically already going to make the All Star team, right? First Freshman in history to do it.”

Theo balled his hands into fists. Blood dribbled out of the sides of his palms. “That wasn’t my fault, you idiot! Everyone else on the team SUCKED. How was I supposed to deal with this level of garbage?!”

“I guess that’s why you took shit out on me, too.” Isaac ignored Theo’s words, partially shifting into his own wolf. A lean, muscular, and towering form of a Beta. Showing strength and control far beyond Theo’s shaking, mess of an Alpha State. “Maybe because you know how good our family really has it. Or because Liam always had people cheering for him, every Friday night? Parents, cousins, a brother? What did you have?”

Theo froze.

Stiles spotted a dampness growing in the side of Theo’s eyes.

“Liam always asked us to cheer for you, too, before the accident. Said he felt sorry for you, because your family was always too busy to come out and support you.” Isaac offered, quietly. He reached out, grasping Theo’s shoulder, without a single claw touching the Alpha’s skin. “Yeah, you’re right about one thing. I did want to have a higher standard of life. Maybe I even idolized the upper class packs at one point. Living a life without fancy cars, or expensive gadgets, it makes you… Yeard for that kind of stuff. That’s normal.” Glancing back, Isaac smiled in Stiles’ direction. “Thing is… Having Stiles here with me, and hearing his stories… I’ve learned how fucking lucky I am to have a family like mine. To have Alpha Talia, my parents, my aunts, uncles, and all my cousins love and support me. No amount of smartphones, or muscle cars could ever replace that.”

Theo released his fists. The Alpha’s claws dribbled blood down to the pavement, as they hung lifelessly to his side.

Isaac let go of Theo, scowling in the Alpha’s direction. “In the end though, I get why you go out of your way to put my family or I down. I understand why you try to get others to the same.” He smirked, waving Theo off and walking away. “You’re jealous of what you can never have, and what no amount of money can buy. I feel sorry for you, Theo. Being born a Raken? I can’t imagine a worse fate.”

“SHUT UP!” Theo screeched, darting forward, fists out and aimed at Isaac’s face.

Ducking back and forth, Isaac easily dodged Theo’s repeated, wildly thrown blows. The unpracticed Alpha’s attacked were sloppy, and lacked any kind of control. Without a doubt, Theo never experienced a single day of Alpha training, or instruction from a real Alpha.
Isaac reached the front entrance of the cafe, kicking off the wall, and dodging out of Theo’s attack. The Alpha’s fist hit the brick wall, forcing Theo to wail in pain, as blood spurted out of his knuckles from impact.

“Really? You’re going to try and punch me? I thought the Rakens were the high and mighty members of Beacon Hills society? This isn’t very posh, is it?” Isaac laughed, rolling his eyes.

“Oh, I’ll show you posh.” Theo raised his hands, extending two pairs of claws. Each aimed at Isaac’s neck. “I’ll show you! I’ll show you all!”

Taken aback by the claws swiping the air around his head, Isaac gasped, barely missing several frenzied swipes.

Stiles ran forward, partially shifting as he moved to Isaac’s side. “What are you doing!? Stop it! You’re going to—”

A blur of red shot past Stiles, knocking him to the ground.

Appearing in between Isaac and Theo, the blur caught one of Theo’s hands, while taking the other hand’s set of claws directly to the face. Blood spurted across the pavement of the cafe’s terrace.

Stiles backed away on the ground, scrambling like a crab. A shiver ran down his spine, gazing upon Ennis in his full, Alpha glory.

Claws ripped from Ennis’s nails, long enough to be considered fingers by most human standards. Long, slender fangs dipped out of his mouth, curving to his chin. Sharp, wolfish features carved into his face, alongside a set of pointed, jagged ears. A low hue of red glowed around Ennis, emanating as much power in the man’s partial shift as Stiles ever felt in Derek’s Alpha State.

In an instant, Stiles understood Ennis’s endless confidence, and the respect he commanded back East. The man rippled strength and power that Stiles never fathomed possible by a single Alpha.

Blood ran down Ennis’s face, unphased by the ripped flesh of the fresh wound. He glared down Theo’s pale, fearful expression. “Is there a problem here?” Ennis snarled, grabbing Theo’s other hand, holding the smaller Alpha in place.

“Let go of me! Don’t fucking touch me!” Theo struggled to free himself, making little progress in that regard.

“You just assaulted my cousin, and came at him with claws!” Ennis roared, silencing Theo with the force of his voice. He lifted Theo up with one hand, eyes blazing into Theo’s. “What kind of Alpha are you, to raise your claws to another’s neck!? Have you any honor!?”

“...I… I didn’t—” Theo stuttered.

A slow realization struck Ennis’ features. His grip on Theo tightened. “You’re the Raken boy, aren’t you? The one who Liam got into a scuffle with? Yeah… I remember your face, now. Mother sent me your profile to me when that mess started.”

Isaac dropped his jaw, moving behind Ennis. He looked up to his cousin, watching the rage bubble up in his face.

“What’s going on here?!”

Several Beacon Hills Deputies arrived on the scene, stomping towards Ennis, Theo, and Isaac.
Stiles stood on the sidelines, as the wait staff recounted the events they’d just witnessed, and of Theo’s attack on Isaac, and the fresh set of wounds on Ennis’ face. After no time at all, Theo was cuffed, and held down by three of Stiles’ relatives.

Geoff Stilinski stepped up, sighing as he handed a medical wipe to Ennis. “Well, this is a mess. I take it you’ll want to press charges? Kids these days, I swear… Have no idea how dangerous those claws are…”

Ennis wiped the blood from his face, glancing down to Isaac, then to Theo, and back to Deputy Geoff. He smirked, chuckling to himself. “I believe we’ll file a police report at this time, but I don’t think we’ll press charges right now. This is just an immature child who made a costly mistake. Damiing their future for something like this would be far too cruel of a punishment.” He turned to Isaac. “Do you agree, Isaac?”

“You’re asking me?” Isaac said, taken aback by Ennis’ words, and cringing as the sight of the ghastly, deep wounds on his face.

“You’re the one he attacked. If you want, I’ll press charges. I’m sure you know that the law is my specialty. I can make anything happen.” Ennis answered, resting a hand on Isaac’s shoulder. “Whatever you want, Isaac.”

With little hesitation, Isaac shook his head. “Nah. I’m not some little bitch that needs to sue everyone I don’t like.”

Ennis smiled. “I agree. Even if he used his claws, the boy barely grazed me. Clearly, he’s not had any semblance of training as an Alpha, or he’s just poorly groomed as a successor.” Reaching up, he touched the wounds on his face, laughing. “A real Alpha would have gone about 3 inches deeper. This was just a child’s wild tantrum. Not worth our time.”

Theo’s face boiled red. He struggled in the grip of the Deputies. “…you… Don’t you fucking look down on me like I’m nothing! Don’t fucking pity me! Don’t act like you’re all high and mighty! You’re just a Hale! Just a fucking-” With little ceremony, the deputies threw Theo into the back of their vehicle, and slamming the door behind them.

Ennis rolled his eyes. He turned back to Geoff. “As I said, I would like a police report be filed. My Alpha, Talia, would probably be comfortable with a restraining order placed on that young man, and possibly talk about getting that boy into some much needed counseling. I’m sure I can settle this matter out of court.”

“You’re an attorney, aren’t you? All of you sound the same. I swear, it’s like you-” Geoff chuckled, quickly changing his tune while he inspected Ennis’ face more closely. “Wait… Ennis… You’re not… You’re not Ennis Hale, are you? You’ve got to be kidding me!” He erupted into a roar of laughter, hugging Ennis with all he had. “You son of a bitch, I thought you were living out east! Thought this place was too good for you!”

Hugging right back, Ennis clapped his hand on Geoff’s back, laughing just as ferociously. “Wondered when you’d recognize me, Geoff. You haven’t changed much!”

Geoff scoffed, rubbing the top of Ennis’ head. “Well, I would have recognized you, except for the chrome dome you’re sporting! Jesus Christ, I thought you were some old geezer in his forties!”

“As tactful as always, Geoff.” Ennis rolled his eyes, taking the time to catch up with an old friend. Stiles’ ears piqued up, catching Ennis’ heart rate, surprised to hear it so elevated, despite the man
leaving his shifted state. For that matter, Ennis’ features seemed to pale, and a new set of weary lines crossed his face. He appeared to be exhausted, as though he’d undergone an overwhelming battle between a horde of Alphas, instead of the simple act of grabbing and taming the Raken brat.

“That’s great and all, but would you sit down for ten seconds, and let me heal you? Your face looks like something out of a slasher film.” Isaac spat, sliding in between Ennis and Geoff, and planting his bare hand on Ennis’ wounds. Black veins shot up from Isaac’s arm, draining away the pain, and kick-starting Ennis’ healing. “You’re already frightening enough to small children. Do you really want people to jump into traffic, just to avoid walking next to you?”

“I, uh…” Ennis stammered, unable to talk as Isaac planted a second hand, draining the injury away with both arms. In no time at all, Ennis’ gaping wounds flattened out, stitching back together.

Stiles chuckled, stepping up and patting Ennis on the shoulder. “Isaac communicates through backhanded compliments, sarcasm, and depreciating humor.”

A gentle smile crossed Ennis’ face. He met Isaac’s eyes. They shared a quiet, simple nod.

“Thank you for healing me. You’re quite skilled at it. You’re definitely Peter’s son… He always had a knack for this kind of thing.” Ennis said, taking a seat at the nearest table, as Isaac sat across from him. Only a soft scar remained on his face, which Isaac began to gently massage into a soft flesh again.

Isaac shrugged, with a crooked smile. “Well, you took a claw to the face for me. Least I can do is heal you up. Say… How about I work on your scalp a bit too, and regrow your hair? You honestly can’t like that look, right? You’re like the Brawny man’s less attractive brother.”

Stiles groaned, rubbing his forehead.

Ennis laughed, sighing as he side-eyed Stiles. “Oh. So when you say “depreciating humor”, you meant he’s Peter? Good God, why did that man have to procreate another copy of himself?”

Isaac smirked, still softly working on eliminating Ennis’ scars, with pinpoint precision. “Oh Ennis, you have no idea. You’ve got a lot to learn if you think my old man can even hold a candle to my silver tongue.”

“I look forward to learning all about it.” Ennis muttered.

After a short moment of hesitation, Isaac nodded back. “Me too, I guess. You’re not as much of a selfish dick as I thought you were.”

Stiles leaned back in his own seat, beaming proudly at the loving display of Hale family “affection”, despite the day’s rather bloody event.

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Chapter Music

First off, sorry for the lack of updates! Let's just say that my worklife has been busy lately, and there hasn't been much time for writing. I wish I could say it was over with, but I've still got a lot on my plate for the next week or two. Don't worry though, I'm not abandoning the story, I might just not
update as quickly as I used to.

Thanks for being so patient!
Stiles hummed quietly on a quiet afternoon, lounging in the living room, nose deep in one of Cora’s Alpha/Omega romance novels, and snorting at the comical lewdness and anatomical inaccuracies. (All while making mental bookmarks for a few months down the line.)

Emmett, laid on Stiles’ lap, flipped the page of a children’s storybook, smiling at the pictures, and mouthing out the words to the stories as he read. “Hey Stiles, why’s the wolf the bad guy in Little Red Riding Hood? Wolves don’t eat Grandmas. That’s nasty!”

Reaching up, Stiles scratched Emmett’s hair, earning a giggle from the tiny Omega. “Because humans didn’t always like us, and thought we were bad guys.”

“Oh. Well that’s dumb!” Emmett went back to his book, smiling as he moved on to the next story. “Look, Stiles! This one’s about a Princess and a Frog!”

“That’s cool!” Stiles leaned over to stare at the picturebook, while Emmett pointed out the numerous drawings, and asked about the probability of the frogs outside being of the magical variety.

The front door swung open, as a mild scent of stress, fatigue, and coffee wafted through the home. Laura staggered into the living area, dropping her college books with a monumental thud, and collapsed onto the nearest recliner in a mess of limbs, and a low whine through her nose.

Emmett peeked up from his book, stared at Laura, pouting. “Aunty Laura, are you sick? You don’t look good…”

Laura lifted her head, blowing the bangs out of the way, offering the pup a short smile. “Yeah. I have terrible, horrible, incurable disease.”

“Midterms?” Stiles offered.

“Yep.” Laura collapsed back onto the recliner, releasing a short, comical sob. “Three down, two more to go. Then I’ve got the Organic Chemistry lab project, my research paper for Western Civ 2, training with Grandpa Rick for my Head Alpha Certification Exam, working with mom on all the god awful legal paperwork for my Head Alpha Transitional Seminar, and then I get the honor of doing most of it all over again in three months.”

Stiles groaned. “That sounds… Terrible.”

Emmett nodded. “Sounds like Daddy when he’s super busy at Court, and his client’s a real stinker.”

With tremendous effort, Laura sat herself right-side up, popped the recliner, and shut her eyes. “Where’s mom, by the way? I need to talk to her about taking some summer classes, if we can afford it. The sooner I can get to my doctorate, the better.”

Stiles shrugged, setting his book off to the side. He tossed Laura a blanket to wrap herself up in. “No idea. She and Derek went to go talk with my Uncle Noah. Just me here today. I’m babysitting Emmett while Ennis gets his face checked out, and Kali gets a checkup.” He cringed, thinking to the thin white lines that still crossed at the edges of Ennis’ face, just visible enough to be seen with ease. Despite his best efforts, Isaac’s healing wasn’t able to take away all of Alpha Raken’s markings.

With a snort, Laura shook her head. “Still can’t believe Ennis took a slashing to the face.” She
opened her eyes, glancing to Stiles. “I love my big brother, Stiles, but that man is more vain about his looks than just about anyone I know. Seriously, I hope Isaac appreciates how big of an act of sacrifice that was for Ennis.”

“We both do.” Stiles grinned. Ennis’ protection of Isaac had earned the Alpha some brownie points across the pack. Even Peter, the snidest of the group, offered a heartfelt thanks, and a tight embrace to his nephew. Leaning down, Stiles rested his head on Emmett’s. “Your Dad is pretty awesome, Em.”

“My Daddy is super cool now!” Emmett nodded in agreement, as a proud blush crossed his face. “I get to see him every night, and he always reads me a bedtime story with Mommy! Daddy used to be too busy at work to do that stuff, but now that we’re staying with Grandma and Grandpa, he’s nicer!” Leaning back, Emmett cradled himself into Stiles’ arms, leaning on his favorite person with a gleaming smile. “I love it here. I hope we stay forever.”

“You will!” Stiles lifted Emmett up, tossing him in the air as the pup giggled more. “I get you forever and ever, and you’re stuck with me forever and ever, little man! Derek and I are going to be the best Uncles in the world, I don’t care what Scotty or Cora says! Even when we embarrass you in front of your future mate, and show all your cute pup pictures!”

“You are, you are!” Emmett shrieked, as he landed on the couch cushions near Stiles. He curled up to Stiles, wrapping his arms around the older Omega. “You and Derek are the best!”

From her spot on the recliner, Laura watched the two interact. A short, curved smile crossed her lips as she wrapped herself in the family blanket, coated in Stiles’ warm, familiar, happy smell. Her eyes flashed red, if only for a moment.

Emmett released himself from Stiles’ grasp, setting his book of fairy tales to the side. “Stiles, I’m going to get some milk! When I get back, can we read the next story together?!”

“You are, little man.” Stiles ruffled Emmett’s hair.

As Emmett dashed off to the kitchen, Laura cleared her throat, leaned over, and prodded Stiles on the knee. “Have you had a chance to think about the future?”

“The future?”

“College, I mean? Or what you’re going to do after high school?” Laura crossed her legs, staring directly into Stiles’ gaze.

“Uh…” Stiles folded his arms, shrugging. He glanced away from Laura, chuckling to himself under his breath. “Honestly? Not really. I mean, Talia’s told me I’m going to college, no matter what it takes, so I guess I’ll figure it out then. I thought about teaching… I mean, I like to talk, and I’m pretty good with kids, even back when I was in the Stilinski Pack.” He laughed, shaking his head. “Typical Omega answer, huh? Childcare, medicine, education, or psychiatry?”

Laura’s grin widened. “You know, I’m next in line to be Head Alpha of the family. In ten years or so, I’ll be running the show.”

“Yeah.” Stiles laughed, bowing his head to Laura. “Dr. Alpha Laura Hale. Because apparently Ennis didn’t accomplish enough in his life, so you have to one up him!”

“I’m ambitious, and want a lot for this Pack’s next generation.” Laura dropped the blanket, and hopped up from the recliner. She stood above Stiles, hands resting on her hips. “Though… The thing is, I’m going to have to pick successors to all the other members of the hierarchy, as well. I’m
only a single cog in this machine.”

Stiles nodded, happy to hear Laura’s humble personality shining through.

Just as important as a Pack’s Alpha, the Pack’s Hierarchy reflected on the overall strength of the pack to the outside world. The Pack’s Second, Denkeeper, Head of Affairs, and Financier all worked in tandem with the Alpha of the pack, ensuring each part of the Pack worked like a well-oiled machine.

Talia, Peter, Lorraine, Nathan, and Rick kept the Hale Pack on the right path, far more cooperative and unified than the Stilinski Pack ever could hope to accomplish.

“Derek will definitely be head of the Pack Affairs. He’s been training to take over the family business since he was old enough to pick weeds out of Mom’s flower garden,” Laura rose a finger, pacing back and forth through the room. “I’m thinking about talking to Ennis about being our Financier. He’s got a solid five years of experience doing it for his own pack, and that kind of experience is valuable. Still thinking on that one, but I’ve been mulling around for a while.”

Stiles nodded. “He’d be great at that! I think that’d mean a lot to him, too, to be trusted in the pack like that.”

Laura nodded, slipping into the seat next to Stiles. “Lorraine insisted on picking her own successor to train. Of course, I’ll trust her judgement.”

“Who can so no to Aunt Lorraine?” Stiles laughed.

“Nobody, that’s who!” Laura took a seat beside Stiles, reaching over and planting her hand on his knee. “That just leaves my Second.”

“Derek? Scott? Isaac?” Stiles glanced up, pondering for a moment. “Malia’s solid. Cora, too. Of course, I’m sure there’s a ton of people in the Hale Pack that could fill those shoes.”

Laura giggled, patting Stiles’ knee. “I love them all dearly, but none of them have the heart to rally the pack together.” She turned, meeting Stiles’ gaze, with a pair of sharp, red eyes. “A Second is one of the most important roles in the Pack. They keep the Alpha in check, communicate between the pack, and in emergencies, can bring everyone together, even without an Alpha present. They command the heart of the Pack.”

“So who’d you have in mind?” Stiles cocked his head, waiting for an answer.

“I’ve thought about this ever since you calmed Liam down after that lacrosse game all those months ago, and gave him back his confidence. I was about 60% sure when you poured a soda over Theo Raken, and helped get Isaac out of Devenford. To be honest, I was all but convinced after Grand Alpha Satomi gave nothing but a grand blessing of you and Scott, but…” Laura grinned, wrapping an arm around Stiles’ shoulders. “Would you be, at all, interested in training to become my Second?”

Stiles laughed at the punchline of an obviously funny joke. Though, for some reason, Laura didn’t laugh back. There was no humor on her scent, and based on the simple glow of her red eyes, Laura was… Serious. He paused for a moment. “Wait, you’re not… Serious, are you?”

“There’s a lot involved with the process of becoming a second; Certification, combat training, ethics, and a metric ton of political bobbing and weaving that everyone has to learn over the years. A long, boring, and challenging period of training. Not many people can handle it.” Laura yanked Stiles closer, giving him one of her patented noogies, ruffling Stiles’ thick hair. “I’ve thought about
everyone in the pack, and who from our generation, has the most commanding presence among us, and the kind of drive to follow through with the difficult training. Mom told me to find someone who links our hearts together, and commands respect in everyone of our generation, like Peter does now for her.” She leaned off Stiles, booping him on the nose. “It’s you.”

“I’m flattered, but… You realize I’m an Omega, right? I’m naturally a nurturer, not a fighter, and not a leader.” Stiles held up both hands, waving the idea off as he stammered.

“Tell that to Cora or Jackson.”

“I’m not them, Laura.” Stiles rolled his eyes.

“What you are isn’t important.” Laura rolled her eyes in retaliation, gently slugging Stiles on the shoulder. “The position of Second, obviously, can’t be another Alpha. Too much competitiveness and natural rivalry. Sure, they’re usually Betas, but there’s no law or reason why an Omega can’t be one.” She grasped Stiles by the shoulder. “Especially when they’re someone like you, who practically stitched our pack back together, wolf by wolf.”

“I…” Stiles paused, raising a hand to argue, but silenced as Laura pressed her face up to Stiles’. Her playful grin and raised eyebrow, much like Talia, gave an overwhelming aura of “shut up and listen”.

“You and Derek have something special. There’s not a member in our pack that doesn’t respect my brother for taking down Brandon Stilinski, and all the hard work he does for our farm. He’s just like Grandpa, and everyone knows he’s going to be amazing at running our family business. Just like how everybody respects you doing everything you’ve done for our pack, tutoring our youth, and healing all of the broken hearts you’ve come in contact with. All after coming out of the shithole that was your life. You’re the most caring, compassionate young man I’ve ever met in my life. You’re not even out of high school, and people respect you. I can only imagine what you’re going to do with the rest of your life. You have a bright, amazing future ahead of you.”

Stiles bowed his head, a short blush crossing his face. “Thanks. I think you exaggerate a bit, but thanks.”

Reaching over, Laura prodded Stiles on the chest. “So, when I offer you this, Stiles, I mean it. This isn’t pity, for the kid that got beat, and this sure as hell isn’t nepotism, because fuck that nonsense.” She bore her eyes into Stiles’, warm and red, chin up. “I think after enough time, education, and training, you are the most qualified person in our pack to act as my Second. Maybe today you’ve still got things going on in your head, and aren’t ready to answer me, but with time, I know you could do this.”

Stiles blinked, mind reeling from Laura’s words. He’d assumed, at some point, he might be considered as the pack’s future Denkeeper, given his relationship with Lorraine, the chores he helped with around the pack, and his love for the Pack. Yet… He’d never fathomed, in his wildest imagination, to be considered Laura’s Second.

Being considered the status of Second was an honor above honors.

“Don’t stress about it right now. Mom’s not retiring for a long time, and I don’t have to have my final selections for at least five years. Plenty of time to think about it, but the sooner your decide, the sooner our generation can start working on making the Hale Pack even better than it was before.” Laura reached her hand out, waving towards the ceilings. “Big plans, Stiles. Very big plans.”

Stiles smirked, offering his hand to Laura. “I’ll think about it. Thanks for the consideration.
Seriously, that’s… That’s as big offer. I haven’t even been a part of this pack for that long.”

Laura shook Stiles’ hand, before leaning forward and kissing him on the forehead. “Feels like you’ve been here forever, my baby brother in law.”

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Derek felt his jaw hit the ground.

What started as a casual meeting with Alpha Stilinski over a few minor details of the Fourth Month’s Ceremony, had devolved into… The Twilight Zone. He wrapped his knuckles against Alpha’s Stilinski’s desk, turning to his pale mother’s face, and back to Noah. “You want me to… What? Because I’m pretty sure I must have heard you wrong.”

Noah took a deep breath, interlacing his fingers together and resting his head on them. “I would like for you and Stiles to train to become my successor to this pack. Someday, I would like for you and Stiles and take over the Stilinski Pack, and our Business.”

“You’re joking, right?” Derek shot up from his seat. Like his mother’s, Derek’s eyes flared to life. “Why do you want me for?! Do I look like Head Alpha material!?”

“Noah… This is… Out of the blue.” Talia’s eyes flashed red. She shot up, slamming the door to Noah’s office shut, and waltzed back, slamming her fist on his desk. “Why Derek and Stiles, Noah? They’re both members of the Hale Pack, and you have countless officers and Alphas to train as your successor. Why my sons?”

“Stiles is the last of the original family’s bloodline.” Noah glanced away from Talia’s harsh gaze, focusing on the farthest wall. “My family’s code is to always have a full blooded Stilinski at the helm. As an Omega, Stiles can’t take the position of Head Alpha. His future husband, and future children, however, can.”

“You’re joking, right?” Derek shot up from his seat. Like his mother’s, Derek’s eyes flared to life. “Why do you want me for?! Do I look like Head Alpha material!?”

“…you’re a strong, capable Alpha. Brandon’s presence in jail is enough proof of that.” Noah stood, folding his arms. He glanced back to Derek, zeroing in on the young Alpha’s gaze. “I’ve also watched you, these last four months. You have a kindness in your heart, towards my nephew, and towards your family, that I respect. That is something I believe that our pack needs. A sense of family, community, and warmth. Bravery and courage. The conviction to do what is right.”

Talia rubbed the curve of her chin. She chuckled, shaking her head. “Noah, with all due respect… I’m sure you can appreciate that Derek is the heir to our family business. My daughter intends to have him at her side, and Derek is a large part of our pack’s future.” She clopped her heels, waltzing up to Noah’s face, inches away from the Alpha’s face. “Frankly, Noah, this offer is insulting to our pack, to my authority as the Alpha, and to the alliance between us.”

Noah averted his gaze from Talia. “Probably just as insulting as I found your request to take Stiles from his birth pack. Somehow, I managed, Alpha Talia.”

Derek growled, baring his teeth towards Noah. “Insulting?! Taking him away from the pack that left him a Goddamn skeleton, beaten, bleeding, and half dead?! He’d be six feet under if we hadn’t accidentally walked in his house that night!”

Talia shot out an arm, covering Derek’s mouth. She shoved him behind, giving him a dark,
foreboding glare. “Derek, shut up. I will handle this appropriately.”

Shaking his head, Noah held up both hands. “We’ve gone off track. I’m offering Derek the opportunity to be a Head Alpha of his own pack. I will pay and supervise his training, personally. Geoff is very excited at the prospect of me being replaced, and is ready to take Derek under his wing at any moment.” He gestured to a bookcase, filled with financial reports, labeled under the Stilinski business. “Stiles, of course, would be able to run our family business. I would train him to be our Head of Affairs, as I, and his grandfather, did before him. This would be a great opportunity for him.”

“Yeah, I’m sure he’d LOVE to come back to this place.” Derek spat.

“Noah shook his head. “Not yet. I felt I should bring this up to you and Derek first. Something the three of you could discuss, about his future. I imagine it’s an important decision to be made.” He rubbed the back of his neck, wiping the sweat away. “Besides… This is something the Stilinski Pack owes Stiles. We owe him for all of our past mistakes, in the hope of giving him a better future.”

Derek slammed his fist into the wall, leaving a crack along the plaster. “There’s nothing to think about! Like hell am I going to let him anywhere near this place! Or anywhere near-”

Yanking Derek, Talia pulled her son towards the door to Noah’s office. She didn’t bother to hide her partial shift. “We’re leaving, Noah, and will have this conversation another day. When our heads are cooler, and we’ve had a time to discuss this with Stiles, like you should have done to begin with.” She shoved Derek out the door, firing her gaze back at Noah. “I know you’re a good man, Noah, but you need to get your priorities straight with your concept of family, and the relationship with your nephew. Stiles isn’t some object to be shoved into a position, or forced to go along with something without even consulting him. He had ten long years of that already.” She sneered, grabbing the door handle, cracking the metal from the force of her grip. “If you even knew Stiles, you would know he’s not someone who needs PITY. That young man is capable of doing great things all on his own.”

The force of the door slamming shut rattled every object in Noah’s office. A photograph fell from a wall, shattering on the ground in a mess of glass.

Noah rubbed his face. He leaned back against the wall, taking a deep, painful breath. After a short while, he stepped forward, hovering over the broken picture frame. He reached down, picking up the tattered, old photograph, dropping his head in shame.

A photo of himself as a young boy of seven, Brandon at the age of five, standing beside their father, the massive build of Jakub Stilinski. Beside them stood Amelia Stilinski, Jakub’s ex-mate. The picture took three years before the official separation, on a camping trip between the family. A young, iron-willed Alpha as tall and muscled as Jakub, with sharp blonde hair tied off to the side. Amelia smiled, leaning into her husband’s brawny arms, with a curved, sharp smile.

Neither Brandon or Noah smiled, keeping their heads down, focused on the ground, flinching away
from their mother’s touch.

Noah’s arms clutched around his father’s waist for dear life, far away from Amelia.

Brandon’s hand and body shied away from Amelia, genuinely pale under her touch. Clothes draped off the younger boy’s slender frame, practically falling off his body. In the corner of his collar, Noah could see the outline of a purple mark, hidden by one of Amelia’s hands. Her nails dug into Brandon’s neck.

“We let it happen again…” Noah sighed, crumpling the picture in his hand. He coughed out a laugh, shredding the picture in his claws. “…no… No, Dad, I can’t blame you on this one, can I? I’m not a little kid anymore. I had no excuse.” He slammed his eyes shut, letting the shreds fall to the ground. “I was the one who let it happen again. I’m the coward. Again.”

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Chapter Music

Thank you for the patience! As you might expect, the next chapter will be filled with a tad bit of drama, as we come into the first conflict between Derek and Stiles in their relationship. Thanks for reading! Comments and kudos are greatly appreciated!

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!