Seven Years ago Stiles Stilinski had boarded the Queen's Gambit, in an attempt to escape the memories of what had happened during the last few months in Beacon Hills. It was only supposed to be for a week. He was supposed to be back home for Christmas.

Then the Queen's Gambit had gone down somewhere in the North China Sea, and everything changed.

Now, Seven years later, Stiles is back in Starling City, the closest he's been to home since he left...but is he ready to make that final journey back to Beacon Hills?
Disclaimer: I own nothing.

See the end of the work for more notes.

- Inspired by Malen'kiy Volk by Lunabell_Marauder_Knyte
Stiles Stilinski would never forget the night that would forever change his life. It wasn’t the night that he had sat by his mother’s bedside, aged only nine years old, holding her hand comfortingly, watching as she struggled to breathe, until at last the breaths stopped and the heart monitor gave a single, long, drawn out beep, as her heart ceased to function. It wasn’t the night that his barely sixteen year old self had dragged his best friend Scott McCall out into the woods surrounding his home town Beacon Hills looking for half a dead body, nor was it the night he, Scott, and Scott’s former girlfriend Allison offered themselves up as sacrifices to save the lives of their parents, later that very same year.

All of these fateful events, Stiles knew, would live on in his memory forever, and would forever play a key role in who he was, but it wasn’t any of those nights he was reflecting on. Instead, it was a stormy night in the North China Sea, and Stiles had been almost seventeen years old as he watched the Queen’s Gambit sink beneath the waves, treading water and not knowing if anyone else had survived the sinking. It had all been so sudden. One minute Stiles had been in his little cabin on board the yacht, given to him with a reassuring, carefree smile by Oliver Queen, the next the world had tipped up, and Stiles had been thrown from his bed and into the icy cold water of the South China Sea.

Seven long years had passed since that night…the night that had torn him away from almost everyone he’d ever known…his dad, Scott, the rest of the pack, Melissa McCall. Stiles hadn’t seen any of them since before that night, but not a day passed by that he didn’t miss them all.

Now his thoughts were filled with memories of his dad and the pack even more. It had been one thing when he’d been on the other side of the world to the pack, but now he was in the same country as them. All Stiles needed to do was board a plane to Sacramento and in a few short hours he would be back at home in Beacon Hills.

It was the closest he’d been to his family, physically, in seven years, since the day he and Sara had snuck aboard the Queen’s Gambit, having been invited by Oliver Queen himself, and they’d set off. With everything that had happened since then Stiles couldn’t even remember where exactly they were going. He knew it had been a Chinese port city, but he wasn’t sure Oliver had even told him which one exactly. It didn’t matter, really, since they hadn’t even made it there, the yacht sinking during that storm before they had reached their destination.

Getting on the yacht had probably been one of the stupidest things Stiles had ever done, and not a day went by without Stiles regretting his decision. At the time the prospect of getting away and seeing the world…doing anything to distract himself from his own problems…had seemed like the perfect idea. Stiles had never denied the fact that he was a big fan of ignoring problems until they went away, and it had been proven the moment he decided that getting on the Queen’s Gambit and basically running away from everything he had left behind.
Hell, the reason he’d been in Starling City to start off with was because he’d been running away from his problems. Nobody in the pack had called it that, they’d been much nicer about it, telling him that he needed to have some space, a change of scenery. A visit to one of his dad’s best friends in Starling City had been the ideal situation, and Stiles had gone along with the plan. In hindsight Stiles knew that a change of scenery had been what he needed. Those first few days in Starling had shown that, glimpses of his former self showing through for the first time since everything had gone to hell. How much Stiles was getting back to normal was demonstrated by the fact that he had gotten on the Queen’s Gambit, actually interested in doing something without being told to.

It had all started back when Stiles was newly freed from the Nogitsune. It actually probably went further back than that, all the way to Scott getting bitten, or perhaps ever before that, but really, the Nogitsune’s death was the start of everything. Stiles hadn’t been coping well. The only time he left the house in the first two weeks following the Nogitsune’s death was for Allison’s funeral, and that had been an ordeal in itself.

Stiles had been practically catatonic, spending his days curled up in bed, either sleeping or gazing at the bare walls of his bedroom. He hadn’t been eating, and his sleep was heavily disturbed by nightmares. Stiles was never alone in the house, Scott and Derek alternating shifts around school and Scott’s shifts at Deaton’s. Nobody said it, but Stiles knew it was because they were worried that Stiles would hurt himself. Lydia too was with him a lot, trying to coax food into him, trying to encourage him to talk, but Stiles had been too broken. Even his dad hadn’t had much luck when he’d tried to talk to Stiles about what happened. Isaac left Beacon Hills with Chris Argent, and Stiles didn’t get any better, guilt welling up within him and dragging him back down every time he considered trying to keep going.

After the initial two weeks, getting out of bed was easier, although Stiles was still barely sleeping, not eating enough, and wasn’t talking. A trip to a psychiatrist that Alan Deaton recommended ended with a prescription for anti-depressants, and they were helping, slowly, but even Stiles knew, at the time, that he wasn’t recovering from the ordeal, not really.

It was nearly month after the Nogitsune’s death, in early December, when Stiles’ dad had suggested that Stiles needed a change of scenery, to get away from Beacon Hills, and the memories that it carried. The entire pack had been against it at first, but Deaton and Melissa quickly realized that maybe it was what Stiles needed…he certainly wasn’t getting better in Beacon Hills.

The night the pack finally agreed that maybe a change of scenery would be best (Stiles had been present for the conversation, but he hadn’t contributed much to it); Stiles’ dad had made a phone call to his best friend, Quentin Lance, a detective in Starling City who had gone through the Police Academy with Stiles’ dad. Stiles and his dad had gone to visit Quentin and his family before, and the Lance’s had come to Beacon Hills at various points over the years. Both of Quentin’s children were girls, and they were both older than Stiles, but they still got along, and Quentin’s wife was very fond of her husband’s best friend and his son.
Stiles’ dad had told his friend what had happened, using the official timeline of events they had given for Allison’s death. As far as anybody in Starling City was concerned, Stiles and Allison had been out for a walk together when they had been mugged. Stiles had managed to escape serious injury, but Allison had been stabbed and had died while Stiles watched on. Stiles’ dad had gone on to tell his best friend about Stiles’ behavior since then, how he was showing signs of PTSD, and had been diagnosed with depression, about how he was having nightmares, and that he thought Stiles needed a change of scenery, and that the Lance family were the only ones he could trust with stiles as fragile and broken as he was.

Within a few days Stiles was bundled into warm clothes at least two sizes too big (which said a lot as they had fitted Stiles well the previous winter, before Scott had been bitten), put in the jeep, his dad driving, with a packed suitcase loaded up with everything he’d need for a two week vacation to Starling City, including all of his medication. The whole drive Stiles’ dad had apologized for not going with him (Stiles understood, with things the way they were there was no way his dad was going to get any more time off work), explaining over and over again that he wasn’t being sent away, and that he was still loved.

A few hours later Stiles was on a plane leaving Sacramento and heading for Starling City, and by the end of the day he was tucked up in the spare bedroom in the Lance’s apartment, being fussed over by Quentin’s wife Dinah and his older daughter Laurel, while Quentin watched over them all, his expression still shocked at the shadow of his former self Stiles had become.

The next day Sara Lance had returned home from college for the Christmas break. Four days later, after Stiles had left a note for Quentin explaining where he was and telling him not to contact his dad (knowing that he’d caused his father enough trouble in the last year) Stiles and Sara had snuck on board the Queen’s gambit, ready to enjoy their short holiday, both of them fully expecting to be back in Starling City within a week, a few days before Stiles was supposed to go back home in time for Christmas.

Four days later the Queen’s Gambit had sunken beneath the surface, and Stiles had realized that he would probably never make it back to Beacon Hills….would probably never see his father, ever again.

So many things had happened since then, and none of them Stiles had been able to predict. Every day had meant a new situation. Stiles hadn’t had the opportunity to dwell on what had happened in the past anymore…if he did he would have ended up dead, or being responsible for the death of someone else he cared about. It was funny, in hindsight, that it took being thrown head first into yet another life and death situation to drag Stiles from his depression, forcing him to push aside the thoughts that had tormented him since he had been separated from the Nogitsune. Stiles would be the first to admit that he wasn’t over what had happened those last few months in Beacon Hills; he still had nightmares on a regular basis about what he’d done when he was controlled by the Nogitsune, but now those nightmares combined with all the things that had since then. His time
being possessed by the nogitsune still had helped shape into the person he was today, but now it was simply one of the first in a long series of events that shaped him in to the man he was today.

The man, who was sitting on the sloped rooftop of one of the tallest buildings in Starling city, looking thoughtfully out over the city, not at all fazed how high off the ground he was. Stiles had never been scared of heights, but even his sixteen year old self would have been a little nervous about being so far off the ground, especially since there was no railing or ledge, nor any rope or harness in sight.

“I wondered when you were going to show up,” a familiar voice said behind him, and Stiles smiled to himself, although he didn’t turn his head to look at the speaker. He’d known she was there the moment she stepped onto the roof, and he trusted her enough to not stab his back.

“Nyssa called and told me where to find you…although I was already on my way. It didn’t take a genius level brain to figure out where you’d headed.” Stiles shrugged as the newcomer approached him from behind.

“Typical Stiles…have to check things out for yourself. You haven’t changed since you were four.”

Stiles couldn’t deny that his companion had a point, “Can you blame me…I had to make sure you weren’t dead.”

“You do know a phone call would have worked just fine.”

“I wasn’t sure you would answer. Relations between you and the League aren’t all that pleasant at the moment, Sara. I know for a fact that Nyssa had to do some groveling to make sure Ra’s didn’t wipe you off the face of the planet…personally.”

Sara Lance, or rather, the Back Canary, smiled, “I think you played a role in that too. Ra’s al Ghul wouldn’t want to do anything to upset his little pet. He knows how close we are, and even Nyssa likes you. I’m surprised he even let you leave.”

“I’m kind of surprised I got to leave Nanda Parbat as well,” Stiles admitted, “It’s the first time I’ve gotten to go this far away from there since we were brought in.”

Sara paused thoughtfully for a moment before she shrugged, “Oliver will want to know that you’re
back…he’ll figure it out eventually…I know those two thieves that got left tied up outside my dad’s work were your doing.”

“Like I was going to leave it and do nothing. I saw them break into some old lady’s apartment and threaten her with a gun.”

“Dad called and told me that they got a call about a breaking and entering, and an attempted armed robbery, with the victim claiming that a boy with a mask saved her. I didn’t say anything to Oliver, but he’ll hear about it soon, and then he’ll get one of his people onto it.”

Stiles shrugged, “Does he even know that I’m still alive?”

Sara hesitated, before she shook her head, “Honestly I don’t think he does…He’s never asked about you since I got back. He probably doesn’t want to accidentally say the wrong thing and upset me or something. He thought I was dead, so I guess it was too much for him to hope that you were still alive too.”

“Probably,” Stiles nodded in agreement, knowing Oliver Queen well enough from the year and a half they’d lived together on Lian Yu to know that the man took the whole being noble and brooding and wallowing in your own guilt thing to levels that even Derek Hale would be impressed by.

“Sorry I was a bit late to the party…by the time I heard about everything coming to a head in Starling City it was all over,” Stiles apologized, referring to the recent battle between Sara, Oliver, and their friends, and Slade and his goons.

“We managed,” Sara shrugged, “and Slade is gone now.”

“I still maintain what I said when we first met him that he’d go nuts on us…I never really liked him.”

Sara rolled her eyes beneath her mask and lightly cuffed Stiles over the head, “of course, oh wise one with his mad abilities to detect the bad guy.”

“I haven’t been wrong yet,” Stiles defended, rubbing the sore spot on the back of his head. Unlike the masks of some of the league of shadows, Stiles and Sara had both chosen a simple domino style mask, which, while it helped conceal their identities, didn’t offer much head protection.
“I’ve gotta go, I’ve gotta touch base with my dad and Laurel before turning in for the night.”

“Okay,” Stiles nodded, rising to his feet and shooting off a grappling line towards a neighboring building.

“You’ve got a place to stay?” Sara asked over her shoulder as she began walking away in the opposite direction.

“Yeah…little hotel near the Glades…no questions asked, just how I like it. I’ll see you around.”

“Bye Stiles,” Sara called in reply before she shot off her own line and swung into the night. Stiles turned back to his own line, smiling to himself before he too leapt off the building and swung through the city skyline.
“Hey, Oliver” Felicity greeted as Oliver entered the basement base of Team Arrow. Oliver approached Felicity’s desk, removing his jacket as he went.

“What’s new, Felicity?”

“I’m fine, thanks for asking,” Felicity replied, her voice chiding for Oliver’s lack of manners, although Felicity was well used to it, “It’s all pretty quiet out there…although I think you’ve got competition. Somebody has been catching crooks in the act and tying them up and leaving them where Starling City police will find them.”

“Has he hurt anyone yet?”

“Nothing more than a few minor concussions…whoever it is knows how to knock someone out without injuring them.” Felicity reported with a glance to her computer screens, “There have been a couple of witnesses, but the descriptions are vague. Generally it’s accepted that whoever it is has to be less than 6 feet tall and probably weighs less than 160 pounds.”

“Who are we talking about?” Diggle asked as he walked down the stairs, followed by Roy.

“The new Vigilante in Starling City,” Felicity replied, spinning her chair so she was facing the newcomers, “he or she has been doing Oliver’s job for him.”

“Well…that’s nice of them,” Diggle offered.

“Not if they get themselves killed,” Oliver growled, “or if they start killing people. Any information on where this vigilante is using as a base?”

“No…and he’s been active all over the city. I’ll see what I can do to track him down…but there is something else…they have a bow, according to the few witnesses the police got statements from.”

“Really? Another copycat?” Diggle rolled his eyes.
“I don’t know…but we need to find this person before somebody else finds them first and hurts them….or this new vigilante accidently kills someone.”

Roy and Diggle nodded in agreement as Sara stealthily walked down the stairs into the basement.

“Did I miss anything?”

“We’ve got another copycat on our hands,” Diggle told her, his arms crossed over his chest as Oliver began to gather his equipment, with Roy following Oliver’s lead.

“Yeah?”

“Somebody with a bow and arrow has been leaving little presents for Starling City P.D.”

“Yeah…dad mentioned them today when I was talking to him. At first they thought it was you, but then they realized that things weren’t matching up. They’re looking for whoever it is, but their resources are stretched pretty thin at the moment. I personally think Dad is grateful for the help, even if it is a little outside the law.”

“We need to do something, before somebody ends up dead.” Oliver affirmed, “I don’t want any blood spilled in this city, not if there is anything we can do to avoid it.”

“Agreed,” Diggle nodded, all of the men too busy getting ready for their patrol to notice the smile that crossed Sara’s face. Felicity was absorbed by her computer, searching for the most recent sightings of the copycat, so she also missed the gesture, although she turned in her chair curiously when Sara spoke.

“Dad said that if we were going to meet this guy…girl…whatever, he thought looking in this area would be the best idea…it’s where they have been the most active.” Sara reported, pointing out an area of ten blocks close to the border of the Glades. Since the earthquake the area had been a criminal hotspot, so it wasn’t overly surprising that the new vigilante was using it as a base for his or her operations.

“We’ll start off there,” Oliver offered, now in his full Green Arrow uniform, “Felicity keep an eye on
the police scanners in case there is a sighting.”

Felicity nodded as Oliver, Diggle and Roy filed out, but she reached out and clasped Sara’s arm before Sara turned to leave.

“The Starling City Police reports about the copycat vigilante say nothing about a specific area he’s been most active in…your dad didn’t say anything, did he?” Felicity reasoned, although she sent a distrustful; look at Sara.

“No…my dad didn’t say anything.” Sara admitted with a smile, “truth is, I know the guy…he’s not a threat, not to Oliver or Roy or Diggle…he just wants to play with Oliver a bit. I’m just sending Oliver in the right direction.”

“You’re sure…I can’t picture a member of the league of Assassins wanting to play nice.”

“He’s not a member of the league, not really,” Sara replied reassuringly, “In fact, Oliver already knows him. It’ll be fine.”

“As long as you’re sure,” Felicity replied, letting go of Sara’s arm, “You’ll keep an eye on Oliver though, make sure things don’t get out of hand?”

“Of course,” Sara smiled, before she turned and followed the others up the stairs. Felicity watched her go, before she let out a sigh.

“I hope you know what you are doing,” she said to herself, returning her attention to her computers.

TW/A

“I hope you’re ready for company,” Sara told Stiles the moment he opened the door to his hotel room, walking over the threshold before Stiles could even open his mouth. Stiles simply rolled his eyes as he closed the door, turning to he could watch Sara as she looked around the room.

“You and I have both slept in places way worse than this…you know that.”

“I do,” Sara nodded in agreement.

“I’m guessing the company I should be ready for isn’t you?” Stiles commented dryly, walking across the room and dropping down onto the bed. Sara sat down beside him.

“No…Oliver is out there looking for you…or rather, whoever it is that’s doing his job for him.”

Stiles snorted, “You would think he’d be grateful for the help. Starling City might have lower crime rates than it did before he started all this, but it’s still a big city with a huge crime problem. You would think Oliver would be grateful for the help.”

“Once he knows who it is that’s offering the help I’m sure he’ll stop complaining about it,” Sara offered, “he was happy enough to see me when I came back to Starling City.”

‘Yeah, but he never screwed me,” Stiles offered teasingly. Sara laughed and lightly smacked Stiles in the arm.

“Just be careful, alright? I don’t think Oliver will shoot before he has the chance to talk things through with you, but if he thinks one of the people he works with is threatened he won’t hesitate.”

“Right…don’t look threatening towards Oliver’s friends…he still goes all overprotective then?”

It’s was Sara’s turn to snort, “You know what he’s like.”

Stiles nodded, remembering with a smile how much Oliver used to try and protect Stiles when they were on the Island…even though Stiles had adapted to living on the island far better than Oliver had, and in much less time.

“I just wanted to warn you,” Sara told Stiles as she rose to her feet, “be careful out there…Oliver has enough crap to deal with without thinking his team is in danger and eliminating the threat, only to
find out that it was you all along. He’d never forgive himself if he accidently killed you.”

Stiles nodded again, knowing Oliver well enough to know that if he did kill Stiles, even if Stiles was obviously threatening a member of his team, he would never forgive himself. He reminded Stiles painfully of Derek in that regard. They both brooded far more than they should, and felt as though every bad thing that happened was their own fault. Of course, Stiles knew that he was just as bad some of the time, so he couldn’t hold Oliver and Derek’s respective guilt complexes against them. He wasn’t that much of a hypocrite.

“Stiles…Stiles!” Sara called, snapping her fingers in front of Stiles’ face. Stiles startled backward, instinctively reaching out and grabbing Sara’s hand. He let go after a moment.

”Sorry,” he apologized, ducking his head a little, “I was just thinking…must have spaced out a little.”

Sara frowned and crouched down in front of Stiles, “What’s wrong, it’s been ages since you’ve reacted to something like that. You’re usually really good at it. Something has got to be bothering you.”

“It’s just…being back in the States…It’s making me think of home, and the ones I left behind.”

“Is that good or bad?” Sara asked. Stiles shrugged. He’d never told anyone the truth about what had happened back in Beacon Hills, or why he’d needed to leave. Some of the League had already known, but Sara didn’t know, and Oliver certainly didn’t.

“A little of both. I miss them, I always have, but just, being this close, it’s weird. I could be back in Beacon Hills within six hours, if I wanted to.”

“Why don’t you?” Sara asked, “You could go see your dad, and your friends…see what’s changed.”

“No…they don’t need me there…I’m more useful here.” Stiles shook his head. Sara opened her mouth to argue the point, before she shut it again, knowing not to push the topic. Stiles would return to his hometown when he was ready, and not a moment before.

“Look, just…be careful tonight, okay Stiles…and not just around Oliver. The streets of Starling City are dangerous, and you’re not as protected here as you were with the league, okay?”
Stiles licked his lips slightly, nodding, his eyes meeting Sara’s.

“Thanks.”

“You’re welcome,” Sara smiled, before she turned on her heel and strode out of the room, closing the door behind her. Stiles let out a sigh, glancing at the growing darkness outside. It was time to start getting ready to head out. He rose to his feet, crossing the room to the locked box he kept his gear in. He opened it up, taking in the black leather within, the bow and the quiver, the mask… everything he had become since the Queens Gambit had gone down…ever since he left Beacon Hills…ever since he sacrificed himself alongside Scott and Allison and left himself vulnerable to the Nogitsune.

Sara still called him Stiles, and he thought of himself as Stiles, but really, Stiles was beginning to wonder how much of Stiles Stilinski was left within him.

If he went back to Beacon Hills…would his father even recognize him?

TW/A

Stiles crouched on a rooftop, peering over the ledge, scanning the street below for any suspicious behavior. It had been a busy night for Stiles, but now it was early morning things were finally starting to settle down.

Stiles hadn’t really had a chance to be on the lookout for Oliver, or anyone that Oliver was working with. He hadn’t even seen Sara out and about, which really wasn’t all that surprising. Stiles figured that she would stay out of the way and let Oliver find Stiles himself.

Movement on the next rooftop over caught Stiles’ eye, and he automatically flattened himself down against the concrete roof of the building he was sitting on, sticking to the shadows in order to remain unseen. Slowly and carefully, he slunk through the darkness towards where he spotted the movement, his eyes constantly scanning his surroundings, searching for potential dangers.

Stiles rose from his crouch and broke into a run, his feet making next to no noise as they met the concrete roof of the building. He jumped into the air, leaping over the narrow distance between the building he was on and the building beside it, landing nearly silently and rolling on the concrete into a crouch, his body hidden by the shadows and a conveniently located air conditioning unit on the
Curious, but yet at the same time, cautious, Stiles peered around the air conditioning unit, trying to catch a glimpse of whoever it was who had moved. He didn’t have to look very hard, quickly spotting the solitary figure standing on the opposite side of the roof, a quiver of arrows strapped to their back and a bow in their hand. Stiles glanced down at his hand, where his own bow was gripped tightly, swallowing his emotions just like he always did when he caught sight of a bow…the painful memories that were always brought to the surface.

Allison had played a significant role in Stiles’ life from the moment that she walked into the classroom and Scott fell head over heels for her. From that moment on, through everything that happened when they were allies and pack mates, even through Allison siding with Gerard after her mother died, and the Nogitsune…and what happened the night before the Nogitsune was finally defeated.

Even now, years after Allison died Stiles hadn’t been able to let himself forget about her. It was one of the reasons he carried a bow…not so much because he was good with the weapon, but instead as a sort of tribute to his fallen friend…the one whose death he felt the most responsible for. Yes, Aidan had died too, as well as a lot of other people, but Allison was the one that Stiles felt the most guilty about. Her death would be the one which had the biggest negative impact on the pack. Stiles hadn’t been there for very long following the Nogitsune ordeal before he left Beacon Hills, but even thought he hadn’t been aware of much as he’d slowly recovered from the possession; he’d definitely noticed how much things had changed without Allison being around…how Scott wasn’t smiling anymore, how Isaac had reverted back to how he was before he’d met Derek, how Lydia wasn’t nearly so confident about herself, how her mask had been cracked open. Even Derek had been different, guilt and grief and pity written in his eyes and every move his eyebrows made. Stiles had noticed it all, and every pain filled look and gesture had made his own guilt multiply.

Shaking his head, Stiles pushed the memories of his friends to the back of his mind. It was too dangerous for him to be distracted now. His teachers at the League had often lectured him about the importance of being focused, just like every other teacher he’d ever had. Unlike the others though, the lessons of the League’s teachers had actually stuck…mainly because of they thought Stiles wasn’t focused enough the lessons got very painful…for Stiles anyway. It was a sad truth that the vast majority of scars on Stiles’ body had been inflicted by the teachers at the League, and not by actual fights.

Stiles looked back up at the figure with the bow, immediately noticing that he was a little closer now. The fact that whoever it was had a bow was reassuring. It meant that they were probably working with Oliver (although Stiles was pretty sure it wasn’t Oliver himself…the person’s silhouette wasn’t the same as Oliver’s).

As Stiles was watching, the person, whoever he was, passed a security light, his features, although
hidden by his hood and a mask, were briefly illuminated, and Stiles froze.

No...no way...it couldn’t be...there was no way it was possible...Stiles brain spun with thoughts and memories as he ducked out of sight before he was seen, while at the same time checking to see which way the wind was blowing. Luckily for him he was down wind of the other person, so his scent wouldn’t be carrying towards him. It wasn’t even something Stiles had taken into consideration...until he’d seen what little he could of the other man’s face.

Blinking in shock, Stiles cautiously peered around the air conditioning unit, trying to get another glimpse of the person. He was still standing there, but he was looking away from Stiles, for the moment. Stiles guessed that he had a communications unit of some sort in his ear, because...the person...was softly speaking.

“I haven’t seen anything, but I haven’t been here for long,” he was saying softly, and Stiles closed his eyes, forcing himself to keep his heart rate steady. Even though it had been over seven years since he’d heard that voice, it was still unmistakable.

“What the hell are you doing here, Jackson?” Stiles whispered to himself, although he regretted speaking almost the moment the words began to leave his mouth. Jackson’s head whipped up, and he looked straight at Stiles. Stiles immediately moved to rise out of his crouch so he could start running (he’d already scoped out a good escape route...although he doubted it would be very useful considering he was fleeing from a werewolf.

What Stiles hadn’t anticipated, was the forceful impact of two booted feet in his back just as he began to rise and his balance was at its most precarious. Stiles lurched forward, the sharp corner of the air conditioning unit looming in front of him. Stiles didn’t have time to throw his hands up in defense or anything like that before his head smacked against the corner, and everything went dark.
“I said track him down, not knock him out!” Sara hissed as she stalked towards Oliver, her stance threatening. It was enough to make Roy take a few cautious steps back, away from Oliver, but Oliver stood his ground.

“You knew it was him?”

“Of course I did…I spoke to him less than a few hours ago, warning him that you were looking for him.” Sara scoffed, peering at the limp figure that Oliver was cradling in his arms. Stiles’ head was resting on Oliver’s left shoulder, a trickle of blood running down his head from a gash at his hairline. Stiles’ mask now hung loosely around his neck, although Sara knew that Oliver would have been able to recognize Stiles even with his mask on.

Oliver had his left arm around Stiles’ back, and his other arm under the younger man’s legs. Stiles was undoubtedly a few inches taller than he had been one the Queen’s Gambit had first gone down, but he still looked like a teenager when Oliver was holding him like that.

“What did you do?” Sara asked, forcing her voice to remain calm, although she was inwardly still annoyed that Oliver had knocked Stiles out.

“He was watching Roy…I thought he was going to attack him, so I attacked him from behind and kicked him into the air conditioning unit,” Oliver admitted, “At the same time he started to stand up, and his balance was off, and he didn’t have time to stop himself from hitting it…He looked heavier than he was from behind. If I knew how light he was I wouldn’t have used so much force. I wasn’t planning on knocking him out, even before I knew it was Stiles.”

As Oliver spoke, Sara felt Stiles’ pulse and watched his breathing, the old protectiveness she’d always felt over Stiles coming back.

“I think he’s going to be okay,” she concluded, taking a step away from Oliver and Stiles, but not before she hit Oliver in the arm as hard as she dared while he was holding Stiles.

“Ow,” Oliver whined.

“Oh shut it, you’ve had worse and not whined about it,” Sara retorted. Wisely, Oliver said nothing in response, instead following Sara as she walked away from him, towards the fire escape. Neither
of the pair noticed Roy sneaking in the opposite direction, leaving the rooftop by his own means and disappearing into the night.

“I don’t get it,” Oliver finally said, breaking the silence once they were back at street level, “why didn’t you tell me it was him, or that he was even still alive and a part of the league. I thought that, because you never brought him up, even through all the stuff with Slade, he was dead and you were trying to forget about him.”

“Oliver…It was never my story to tell, and you know that. You’re going to have to get the full story out of him,” Sara nodded her head towards Stiles, “and you know full well that I could never forget Stiles. He’s the closest thing to a brother I’ve had since he was born. As for him being a part of the league…he isn’t, technically. He’s gone through the training, but Ra’s has never officially made him a member, or sent him on any missions…as far as I know anyway.”

“I know, Sara,” Oliver visibly deflated, “I get it, and I know how close he was…is…to you, how close he and Laurel were…not to mention your parents. Does his dad know?”

“Not that I’m aware of…Stiles probably wouldn’t want to take the risk of accidentally leading anyone back to Beacon Hills, not unless he had encouragement, or he saw no other option.”

“Fair enough,” Oliver nodded, reflecting that Stiles’ choice to not return to his home town had been a smart one. Sara’s own encounters with the League had proven that the League kept close watch of its members.

“What do we do now?” Sara asked quietly, “You can’t ride the bike with him like this, and I don’t have transportation with me tonight. We need to get him to somewhere safe before he wakes up, otherwise he’ll start panicking. He knows us, but you know how risky it is when someone with training like ours wakes up after being knocked out.”

“I’ve already notified Diggle, he’s bringing the van, and we’ll take him back to the foundry. He can recover there.” Oliver replied, “Diggle won’t be far away.”

“I can go with him, and you can bring your bike back…I know you don’t like leaving it behind…alternatively you can stay with him in the van and I’ll bring the bike back.” Sara lifted her eyebrow hopefully.

“Nice try, but you’re not riding my bike…You can take the van with Dig and I’ll meet you back at
“Damn,” Sara cursed quietly as Diggle’s van came into sight, and Oliver permitted himself a small smile. The van pulled to a stop in front of the alleyway they were hiding in, and Oliver stepped out onto the sidewalk as Diggle pulled the back doors of the van open, the engine idling quietly.

“Kid looks smaller than I imagined.” Diggle observed as Oliver easily climbed into the back of the van and lay Stiles down on the floor, his head in Sara’s lap.

“I’ll see you soon,” Oliver told Diggle and Sara, before he jumped out of the van and disappeared from sight.

Diggle closed the van doors and got into the driver’s seat, “So…this kid dangerous?” he asked Sara.

“He can be,” Sara replied.

“You know, that doesn’t really answer my question.”

“Let’s just say that we don’t want him waking up in the back of a moving van. He’ll react before he fully wakes up and realizes that we’re friendlies.” Sara elaborated honestly. Diggle nodded and started driving, a little quicker than he would normally. Sara’s warning making perfect sense to him.

It didn’t take long for the van to roll to a stop in the alleyway behind Verdant. As the van’s rear door opened Sara smiled when she spotted Felicity standing by the rear door, ready to hold it open. Diggle grunted a little as he lifted Stiles into his arms, before he began carrying him down to the basement. Sara quickly locked up the van and followed after Diggle and Felicity. By the time she had caught up with them Diggle had laid Stiles out on the stainless steel examination table, which Felicity had thoughtfully covered with a sheet.

“Do you think he needs monitoring?” Felicity asked, eyeing the unconscious man, and the medical equipment where it was stashed away. Sara calmly took Stiles’ hand, feeling his pulse, while at the same time watching his breathing.

“He should be okay,” Sara offered, letting go of Stiles’ wrist and taking his hand, squeezing it gently.
“Should we restrain him? How likely is it that he’ll lash out when he wakes up?” Diggle asked. Sara hesitated. Stiles was normally pretty level headed, but he wasn’t the best sleeper in the world, prone to nightmares and night terrors, even before his mother had died. Before his arrival in Starling City Sara hadn’t seen Stiles in over a year, and who knew what he’d been through since then.

“I hate to say it, but it wouldn’t be foolish. I’ll stay with him, and Oliver probably will too. Hopefully he won’t be too out of it when he wakes up and recognize us quickly.”

Diggle nodded in understanding, while Felicity dashed away and came back with a set of restraints that, while not exceptionally heavy, and not overly restricting, were very strong. Diggle and Sara quickly secured them around Stiles’ ankles and wrists, as well as the table he was lying on, while at the same time making sure that the younger man still had some movement, both of them knowing how terrifying it could be to wake up and be unable to move completely.

“What’s Roy doing…I haven’t heard from him since before you guys announced you were on the way back?” Felicity asked as Sara and Diggle worked, “Oliver told me that he’d been delayed by something…but he said that Roy should be back here before you guys…but then Roy’s tracer signal didn’t come back the whole way.”

“Maybe he just got delayed too and forgot to tell you guys…he’s still getting used to this whole pack mentality thing after all, you know, being part of a team,” Sara offered.

“I guess,” Felicity admitted, looking back over her shoulder at her computer screens. One of them was showing a map of Starling City, with a green dot marking Oliver’s location, and a Red dot marking Roy’s. On the other screens, however, was the file that the people investigating the Queen’s Gambit sinking had put together on Stiles. Sara blinked, knowing that she herself had a file about her, but she’d never seen it, or Stiles’. She smiled to herself at the picture of Stiles attached to the file. Naturally it had been taken back when Stiles was only sixteen, still all bright eyes and a big smile.

“Sometimes I forget how young he was back then…how young he is now,” Sara said quietly. Felicity followed Sara’s eye line to the screens.

“Oh…Sorry, I…I didn’t want to trigger anything, or something like that, when Oliver said who you were bringing in, and I recognized the name as one of the other Queen’s Gambit victims…which…apparently not so much of a victim…not that what he’s been through since then hasn’t been horrible and made him a victim and everything…not saying that you’re a victim too…I was just commenting that, obviously, didn’t die when the Queen’s Gambit went down…like you and Oliver…and end of babble.”
Sara snorted, “maybe we should introduce you two once he’s awake…He used to be so much like you…Getting him to shut up was impossible…Even on the Island he was far more talkative than anyone else. Slade was constantly telling him to shut up…it never worked though. Eventually Oliver and Slade realized that it was all just a facade to hide how broken he was…even before the Queen’s Gambit.

“The report mentioned that he’d had a tough time not long before…he had a stint in a psychiatric facility, and then he was a victim of a mugging that left one of his closest friends dead.”

“His dad sent him to Starling City for a change of scenery, after everything that had happened. He was in bad shape when he got here. He hadn’t slept in days, wasn’t eating, wasn’t talking…my mom wanted to send him to hospital or counseling or something, but dad said to give him more time…and then Oliver saw him, and he ended up getting invited on the Queen’s Gambit with us, and…and that was it, as far as everyone else knows. Losing Stiles probably hurt my parents almost as much as losing me…they sort of were Stiles’ second set of parents…or, at least, my dad was Stiles’ second dad…especially after his mom died. Apparently he was really close to his best friend, and his best friend’s mom kind of earned the second mom spot before my mom did, but my mom still cared a lot about him.”

“Sounds like the kid’s been through Hell, just from what you’ve told us.”

“He has,” Oliver agreed from the entrance to the lair, descending down the stairs and removing his hood. He put his bow back in its holder within his costume case, before removing his mask, shrugging when Diggle sent him a questioning look.

“Stiles would recognize me, even with the hood on…hell…he’s known the hood just as long as I have. He was on the island with me for over a year,” he explained, Diggle nodding in understanding and relaxing minutely, although he still ensured that he stayed in between the unconscious kid and Felicity.

Perhaps calling Stiles a kid was a bit of a stretch, Diggle found himself thinking. If the report Felicity had found about Stiles was correct, then the young man was 23 years old, but Diggle thought he looked barely older than 19, despite everything he’d been through.

Felicity turned back to her computers, returning to her task of trying to get a response out of Roy.

Oliver’s eyes narrowed in concern, “Hasn’t Roy made it back yet?”
Diggle shook his head, “no…nobodies seen him since you guys left the rooftop you found him on,”

“I’ve located his tracer, it’s not all that far from here,” Felicity added, “He hasn’t moved from that spot in awhile though, and he’s turned his comms off.”

“Is there any security cameras or anything like that in the area you can hack into Felicity?” Oliver asked.

“No, most of those buildings have been abandoned since before the earthquake, nobody really has cared what happens to them. I know that sometimes the police go through them checking for homeless people and drugs, but other than that, they’re deserted.”

“It hasn’t been very long,” Oliver reasoned, “we’ll give him another five minutes. If he’s still not moving by then I’ll go looking for him.”

“I’ll help,” Sara offered, but Oliver shook his head.

“I need you to stay with Stiles. He knows you, when he wakes up he’ll look for a familiar face. If there isn’t one there he’ll panic, and I don’t know what he’ll do.”

“I don’t think those sorts of plans are going to necessary,” Felicity intervened, a finger pressed to her com unit, “Roy just made contact.”

“Put him on loudspeaker,” Oliver ordered, and Felicity tapped the appropriate buttons of her keyboard.

“Roy, are you okay?” she asked.

“Yeah, I’m fine…I…I just needed to check on something.” Roy’s tone was thick, and both Oliver and Diggle heard the way his voice caught…as if he was lying…or had been crying.

“Roy…are you safe?” Oliver asked, letting the younger man know from his tone alone that Oliver was serious.
“Yes,” Roy responded with no hesitation, “and no, I’m not hurt.”

“How long are you going to be?”

“Not long, I’m just finishing up now. I’ll be back at the lair soon.”

“Do not switch your comms off again, they are there for a reason… and we will be having a discussion about this when you get back.”

“Ok,” Roy replied, before going silent again. Oliver gestured for Felicity to switch the comms back to their normal setting, so they could have a conversation without distracting Roy from whatever it was he was doing.

Sara was smirking, “God you sounded like my dad just then,” she grinned, “I hope you’re not gonna be too harsh on him.”

“She’s right, Oliver, it was a one off…and from what you said it sounded like Stiles had Roy in his sights…maybe it was just a nasty shock for him and he needed time to process the whole ‘I almost died tonight and didn’t even see him’ thing.”

“See…that’s what doesn’t make sense,” Sara interjected thoughtfully, “Why would Stiles be targeting Roy. They don’t know each other, and If he was sent over here on a mission…which I doubt, because technically he’s not even a member of the league like I am, why Roy?”

“Well…he wasn’t actually targeting Roy. Stiles had a bow with him, but he wasn’t aiming at Roy, he was just watching him from the shadows. I can’t blame Roy for not seeing Stiles though…Stiles was always very good at hiding, even early on when we were on the island. Sometimes even Slade and Shado couldn’t find him when we were training. Add that onto the training he would have gotten with the League, and I’m surprised that I was able to knock him out like I did.”

“Some things don’t change…Stiles was probably just being an uncoordinated spaz like he was as a teenager.” Sara grinned, and Oliver chuckled thoughtfully.

“Yeah, Slade was always bemoaning Stiles’ lack of coordination. We’ll find out why he was
watching Roy when he wakes up. If we need to, we'll keep them separate.”

“Sounds fair,” Diggle agreed. Oliver pulled out a chair for Sara to sit in so she was beside the stretcher, while finding one for himself, so he could sit on Stiles’ other side. Diggle and Felicity watched from the computer bench as Sara held Stiles’ hand gently, rubbing it reassuringly as they all waited for him to wake up.

They didn’t need to wait for very long before Stiles’ fingers flexed in Sara’s hand, and he let out a soft moan. Felicity immediately dimmed the lights, knowing from experience with Oliver, Diggle and Roy that the lair lights were very bright when you just waking up from being knocked out.

“Stiles…Stiles it’s okay, you’re safe. It’s okay,” Sara began murmuring, gently tightening her grip on Stiles hand, anchoring him as she tried to reassure him. Oliver shifted his chair so he was a little further from Stiles, knowing that it had been too long since they last saw one another, and that Sara needed to be the first person Stiles saw. At the same time, Oliver had moved himself to a spot that put him in the most direct line between Stiles and Felicity, just in case Stiles became violent.

Stiles stirred with a mumble, before he jerked and went rigid, every muscle in his body going tense, as if his semiconscious mind had registered Sara’s hand wrapped around his, and her voice. Felicity held her breath as Sara spoke a little louder.

‘Stiles, relax…it’s Sara…the Black Canary…you’re okay, you’re safe, You’re in Starling City, remember…come on, wake up, it’s okay.”

After a tense ten seconds, the younger man visibly relaxed, bleary eyes opening and looking up at Sara.

“Sara?”

“Hey, Stiles, how’s the head?”

“Like I just got hit over the head by Nyssa…again. Who knocked me out?”

Sara smiled and glanced over at Oliver, and Stiles followed her line of sight, a smile breaking on his face when he laid eyes on Oliver.
“Dude…long time no see…nice haircut. Much less island hobo.”

“Like you can talk,” Sara scoffed, “you were pretty island hobo yourself.”

“Island Hobo suited me,” Stiles told Sara seriously, before he moved the chains securing him to the table pulling taught.

Stiles immediately stilled, his muscles visibly tensing, “Er…Sara…care to explain? Have you been reading 50 shades of Grey without me?”

Sara laughed, “No…we weren’t exactly sure how you were going to react when you woke up…it was just a precaution.”

“Probably a fair move,” Stiles said, relaxing once again, “I would get up and say hello properly, Oliver, but I’m kind of tied up, literally. “ Stiles turned his head, and cringed, “and I think if I move too much right now I’ll pass out again or throw up…and I would rather not do either. What the hell did you hit me with?”

“I kicked you into an air conditioning unit.” Oliver admitted, “You should be more aware of your surroundings.”

“Now you sound like Slade….and Nyssa…and Ra’s…and ever single teacher I had when I was training,” Stiles cringed, “sorry,” he apologized. Oliver knew he was apologizing for mentioning Slade, and realized that Sara or Nyssa had told Stiles what had happened to his mother.

“What are you in Starling City for?” Oliver asked seriously, knowing full well that Stiles may have been sent by somebody to do evil. Oliver had learned long ago not to underestimate the kid…they all had, and a long time had passed since the last time they had met. Who knew were Stiles’ loyalties lay now. Sara trusted him…but Oliver wasn’t going to rely on Sara’s judgment alone…he wanted to make his own choice.

“I’m not here because I got sent here by anyone in the league. I’m not even technically a member. I got trained like I was one, but I’ve never been a real member of the league.”
“He’s telling the truth. Ra’s Al Ghul won’t make Stiles’ position within the league official,” Sara offered.

“And what was your interest in Roy?”

“Roy?” Stiles asked, confusion flickering across his face.

“The man you were watching when I knocked you out.”

Stiles frowned, his sluggish mind struggling to recall the moments before everything went dark. His eyes widened when the memories slowly started to filter back into his mind.

“Jackson?” he asked, looking first around the room for the former school asshole turned Kanima turned werewolf, then looking towards Oliver and Sara, waiting for an explanation.
Chapter 4

Roy Harper let out a pensive sigh and resumed looking out over the skyline of Starling city. Despite being in the glades, the building he was perched atop offered a good view of the city, and Roy often came here when he wanted to be alone. As far as he knew, none of the rest of the team knew about his hiding spot, or at least, none of them had asked him about it, something he appreciated.

Having discovered the rooftop in the weeks following his arrival in Starling City, Roy had chosen the rooftop as his sanctuary because it was nothing like anything he was trying to get away from. It was surrounded by other buildings, and had been positioned on a busy street (although following the Glades earthquake traffic had been slow to return to this area). It was impossible to forget you were in the middle of Starling City from that spot…and that was one of the things Roy liked most about it.

The rooftop also offered a good view of the night sky, and although the bright lights made stars difficult to spot, full moons were fully visible from this rooftop for most of the time they were in the sky, assuming it wasn’t cloudy. Assuming he wasn’t busy helping Oliver, Roy often came here on full moons and let his wolf out as much as he could.

Over seven years had passed since Roy had become a proper werewolf, and over the years he had managed to get good control of his inner wolf. Leaving his hometown had probably been the best thing he could have ever done, and the things he had learned abroad had proven invaluable when it came to controlling himself. There was no way he would have been able to conceal the fact he wasn’t human from Oliver, Felicity and Diggle for so long without the training he had received while he’d been in England.

Now, however, Roy knew the whole sordid truth was going to come out, and he’d be forced to leave Starling City, to leave his friends…his family…behind.

It wasn’t that Roy suspected that Oliver and the rest of Team Arrow would hate him for not being human, but he had lied to them all for almost a year about his true nature…and that kind of lie was about to have consequences…like kicking him off the team.

“Why couldn’t you have just stayed wherever it is you were, Stilinski?” Roy sighed, tilting his head back until it the brick wall he was leaning against, although there wasn’t any heat behind the words. He’d seen how much Stiles’ sudden disappearance and assumed death had hurt those back in Beacon Hills…back before he was Roy Harper.

He’d still been Jackson Whittemore back then, still living in London with his parents and getting help from a werewolf pack that lived close by. A week before Christmas 2007 the news about the
Queens Gambit sinking had broken, monopolizing the news. Jackson’s adopted parents had both met the Queens in the past, although only fleetingly, so Jackson had heard all about it. Then the news of the two young stowaways that Oliver Queen had recklessly snuck aboard. One, Sara Lance, the 19 year old sister of Oliver Queen’s girlfriend, and the other, almost seventeen year old Stiles Stilinski, a family friend of the Lance family originally from Beacon Hills California, who was staying with the Lance family before Christmas.

Jackson had immediately called Danny, who had been keeping him up to date on what had been happening. Jackson had already known about the Nogitsune that had taken control of Stiles, and about how Allison had died, and Lydia’s current boyfriend (ironically the twin brother of Danny’s boyfriend) as well. Danny had explained how Stiles had been struggling to cope, drowning in guilt. They had all thought a change of scenery would have done Stiles good, but none of them had anticipated something like this happening.

Jackson had flown back to Beacon Hills the next day, returning to the town he had never planned on returning to. Derek Hale, Scott McCall and Danny had sat him down and explained things in detail, while Lydia sat beside him, silent and broken. Losing the three people she cared the most about within the space of a month, first Allison, then Aidan, and then Stiles, had shattered the Banshee, and Jackson hadn’t known what could put her back together. He was used to breaking things, not putting them back together.

What had hurt the pack the most, at the time, was the fact that Lydia had never screamed for Stiles. She’d had visions, of cold water and a boat being tossed about by a wild storm, but she hadn’t screamed. Deaton had explained with unusual clarity that distance had played a part, as well as Stiles’ mindset at the time of his death. His mind had been closed off from anything and everything as it tried to heal following the nogitsune, and it had impacted on the pack bonds that would normally exist between them all.

Obviously, though, Stiles hadn’t been dead at all, instead surviving the Queen’s Gambit and eventually ending up back in Starling City, just like Oliver and Sara had. Roy knew that Stiles hadn’t gone back to Beacon Hills…that was the sort of thing that Danny would have told him about.

Roy had broken all his ties with Beacon Hills except for Danny. It had been impossible for him to break that particular tie to the town he’d been born in. For one, Danny had been the one who had helped Jackson fake his disappearance, and to set up his new identity, while at the same time Roy knew that, even if he did somehow give Danny the slip, Danny would, eventually, be able to track him down…and then punish him forever thinking that he could get away.

Jackson had stayed in Beacon Hills for a month after Stiles’ presumed death on the Queen’s Gambit before he’d left town again. He’d made it general knowledge that he was leaving, saying goodbye to the rest of the pack, while at the same time discretely severing the weak pack bonds that had established since his return to Beacon Hills. Derek and Scott had both known what he was doing,
but at the same time they knew Jackson well enough to expect it...neither of them had expected him to hang around for long.

Two weeks later Jackson had abandoned his car on an isolated road in the middle of nowhere, leaving everything of importance behind except for the secret, new identity papers Danny had forged for him. The car was found by hikers a few days later, but by then Jackson, or as he was now known, Roy Harper, was already two states away.

In coded emails, Danny had told him months later about the desperate search Jackson’s adopted parents had started, with a huge reward on offer for anyone with information regarding his location. Scott and Derek had both searched for him, more for Lydia’s sake than anyone else, but eventually Derek had concluded that Jackson had been vulnerable on his own and had been ambushed and killed by hunters. Chris Argent had agreed, citing a report from a group of hunters not connected to his family which claimed that a young male werewolf travelling alone had been captured and killed in the same area that Jackson had left his car at roughly the same time. Roy didn’t know anything about who the young werewolf was, or if it was an invention on Chris Argent or Danny’s behalf to offer cover up for Jackson, or closure for Lydia, but he was grateful that it gave him a better chance of making a clean break from Beacon Hills…and grateful that it had offered Lydia an answer.

A little over a year later, after constantly moving around, Roy arrived in Starling City, choosing the location in part because of Stiles, and he settled in the glades, under the guise of a high school dropout who had little more to his name than the clothes on his back. Fast forward a few years, and he was a petty thief working in the Glades who grabbed Thea Queen’s purse, and was dragged into the Arrow’s mission to save the city from there.

None of the rest of the team had ever given any indication that they knew that Roy Harper wasn’t the name he’d been born with, although Felicity had to know that there was something off about Roy’s records. He did, after all, know that Oliver had made he look into him when Roy and Thea had first started dating, and Roy had seen Felicity break through false identities that were far better than the one that he and Danny had put together. Danny was very good at what he did, but Felicity was better, and Roy knew that thinking that way didn’t make him a bad friend…Danny would say the exact same thing if he had the chance to see Felicity at work.

Roy had loved working alongside Oliver, Diggle, Felicity, and more recently Sara. He had belonged with them; in a way that he’d never belonged in Beacon Hills. As far as he, and his wolf, was concerned, they were his pack. Oliver was his alpha, and Felicity, Diggle and Sara his pack mates in a way that Derek, Scott, Peter and Isaac never had been, despite the summer Jackson had spent being taught control by Derek and Peter, and training alongside Isaac before he’d left for London.

But now they would know the truth about his teenage years, and they would be so disappointed in him for his deceit. Concealing elements of their past was something they’d all done, but Roy was supposed to be the one with the least to hide…not something big…like being a werewolf. As far as
Roy knew none of the others even knew that the supernatural even existed.

Despite himself, Roy was curious about what on earth Stiles was doing in Starling City…and for that matter, what had Stiles been doing ever since the Queen’s Gambit had sunk. Judging to Oliver’s reaction to him, and Sara’s as well, Roy was willing to guess that both of them had known Stiles survived the Queen’s Gambit going down, and some of what he’d done since, if not the whole story, and honestly it stung a little that neither of them had ever mentioned Stiles when they’d talked about what happened. Sure, neither of them had known the connection between Roy and Stiles, but Stiles had earned a sort of fame following the Queen’s Gambit, and most people who knew the story knew of Stiles and how he’d stowed away on board with Oliver’s assistance, never to be seen by his family and friends again.

Letting out a heavy sigh, Roy got to his feet and began to walk towards the fire escape he used to access the rooftop. He knew that Stiles had recognized him, and while he could hope that Stiles had forgotten all about it thanks to his head injury, Roy had learned the hard way that things never turned out the way you wanted them to.

As Roy climbed down the fire escape towards where he’d hidden his motorcycle, a part of him…the more Jackson like part, wanted to get back to his house so he could start packing and get out of Starling City, but Roy pushed the thought aside. He’d promised Felicity he would come back to the Arrow cave, and he would, even if it was only to drop off his costume and weapons and to say goodbye to Felicity, because there was no way he couldn’t say goodbye to her. He would have to say goodbye to Sin and Thea as well…even if it was just a message on Thea’s phone, since she wasn’t talking to him at the moment.

With his gut churning and his heart heavy in his chest, his inner wolf wining anxiously in his chest, Roy mounted his bike and headed towards the Arrowcave, for what was probably going to be the last time.
“Jackson?” Oliver asked, shooting a concerned glance at Sara…maybe he had hit Stiles harder than he thought…maybe the younger man needed to be in hospital. Sara bit her lip, her thoughts obviously going in the same direction as Oliver’s.

“Who is Jackson?” Sara gently asked Stiles, ignoring the way Felicity had her tablet out ready, just in case she needed to start looking someone up in some police database.

“The guy on the roof…you know…had a bow, red hoody …he totally stole my look, the douche bag. I was wearing that way before he even thought of it.”

“Wait, do you mean Roy?” Oliver asked.

“No…I mean Jackson,” Stiles frowned, “you know, the dude who made my school years hell…and then mysteriously turns up on a rooftop in the first American city I return to since we got stuck on Lian Yu.”

“Roy’s one of us, Stiles, you can trust him…he’s okay, he’s not going to hurt you…he’s not this Jackson guy.” Felicity offered. Stiles turned his head to look at her, his head tilted in confusion.

“Oh, we haven’t been introduced yet, I’m Felicity Smoak.” She offered.


“Ok…can I just say that this is really cool meeting you, because I’ve always had this really burning question about you ever since the news broke about you being on the Queen’s Gambit.”

“Yeah?” Stiles asked,

“How do you pronounce your real name, exactly, because I don’t even know where to start with it?”

“Felicity,” Oliver interjected gently as Sara snorted.
“Good luck getting him to answer that one… I’ve known him since he was a baby, and he hasn’t responded to that name since he was four.”

“Because it’s ridiculous,” Stiles announced, “You try going to school and having that monstrosity for a name... and you would come up with an alternative pretty quickly too…and my dad still can’t pronounce my real name right anyway.”

“Stiles... back on topic... Roy... what were you doing watching him?” Oliver interrogated, losing a little of his temper.

“Hey... I was just minding my own business, waiting for you to show up,” Stiles defended himself, “And then this guy who looks freakishly like Jackson, and I mean exactly like I imagine Jackson would look seven years older, turns up, and of course I get curious. You know me, Oliver.”

“If you weren’t targeting Roy, then what are you doing in Starling City... and I’m guessing it had nothing to do with leaving Starling City P.D. little presents.”

“I wanted to come back home, okay?” Stiles snapped, “You came back, so did Sara. I wanted to see you guys... I wanted to feel safe like I used to before we got taken in by the League... I wanted to get away from Nanda Parbat for a bit, and Ra’s let me go, said I had earned a break... although I’m not sure why, because it’s not like I ever get to do anything... it’s all training this, meditate that, bla bla same old.”

“In other words, you were annoying the hell out of him, and he wanted you out of the way.” Sara offered reading between the lines.

Stiles shrugged as much as his restraints would allow “I think Nyssa might have had something to do with it as well, but yeah, maybe.”

“So... are you a member of the league?” Diggle asked.

“That would depend on your definition of being a member of the league,” Stiles replied with a shrug.

“How about we define a member of the league as being someone who has trained with members of
the league, by members of the league, under the instruction of Ra's al Ghul himself, and has completed this training.” Oliver offered.

“See, by that definition, I would be a member of the league,” Stiles conceded, “but, my definition is different. I don’t qualify as a member of the league because I’ve never been formally inducted as a member. I don’t have the same expectations on me as, say, Sara has…or Malcolm Merlyn.”

“He’s telling the truth. It’s the very final part of training, when membership is conferred on a trainee. Stiles, as far as I knew, and Nyssa would have told me if it had happened, hasn’t gone through it.”

“But why, I mean, you look pretty strong, and you’ve got weapons and everything?” Felicity asked, stepping around Diggle to get a better look at Stiles.

Stiles ducked his head for a moment. It was a question he’d asked himself countless times over the years…why hadn’t Ra’s al Ghul made him a proper member of the league. Ra’s had explained it once, but it hadn’t made a great deal of sense to Stiles…the ramblings of a mad man, if anything…and Stiles knew the leader of the League of Assassins to be anything but mad.

“There’s a prophesy, supposedly,” Stiles said eventually, “and Ra’s is convinced that it’s about me. In some ways he respects me, and he wants to protect me, and he can’t do that if I’m just a member of the league, so he keeps me close.”

“What do you mean by just being a member of the league?” Oliver asked.

“If Stiles was a member of the league, he’d have to go out on missions and be put at risk. Early on he was talking about marrying Nyssa to Stiles.”

Stiles cringed, “Nyssa told Ra’s that if he did that she’d slit my throat herself…it wouldn’t have ended well for anyone. Nyssa isn’t my type, and I am not hers.” Stiles shot a sideways look at Sara and smirked, before Sara smirked back and poked him in the side.

“So…can we ditch the chains…I know you fit the multimillionaire mysterious hot guy stereotype, but we don’t need any 50 shades of Grey reenactments.”

“Looks like he paid more attention to pop culture than you did, Oliver,” Diggle observed as Oliver
and Sara released Stiles, who didn’t move from his spot on the bench, the slightly glazed look in his eyes telling the others that he hadn’t recovered from being knocked out quite yet.

“Stiles always has been very up to date with his pop culture references, haven’t you?” Sara boasted proudly.

“Once a nerd, always a nerd,” Stiles replied with a grin, “besides, the League isn’t that backwards…they do have satellite and all that…Ra’a gets stroppy when he misses out on watching Game of Thrones…we all had a massive party after the episode when Joffrey died.”

“I would have thought people in the league would have liked Joffrey and Ramsay,” Felicity offered thoughtfully, “no offence,” she added.

Stiles, however, laughed, “No…most of us are huge Arya fans…and Oberyn was very popular as well…and everyone loves Dany. The Hound was pretty popular too, and Brienne. I think we all watched the episode when they fought each other, everyone was betting on who would win.”

“I like Jon Snow the best, personally,” Felicity admitted, “but of the Lannisters Tyrion is the best, and he has the best lines in the entire show. I think I cried for hours when Robb and Catelyn died at the red wedding, and I’m still trying to figure out how I feel about Stannis, I mean, he’s okay, but something about him just…I don’t know.”

“I like Arya the best, house Stark all the way,” Stiles beamed, leaning forward, his amber eyes lighting up a little at the prospect of talking about one of his favorite TV shows, “and Sansa has developed so much as a character…she’s mastered the game, after learning from some of the best…like Cersei and Littlefinger. I think Jaime is so misunderstood as a character…I mean, yeah, some of the things he’s done are kind of evil…or a lot evil, but at the same time he’s a lot better than most of his family. I have a lot of respect about Tyrion, and you’re right, he has all the good lines…although the Tyrells have good lines too. Jon Snow is hot, despite his name, I thought he and Ygritte were so perfect together…but that didn’t work out. I am convinced that R plus L equals J is real, there is no way Ned Stark would have done that to Catelyn…he’s not Robert Baratheon after all, and I kind of like the idea of young Lyanna running away with Rhaegar in order to get out of her marriage to Robert, neither of them knowing what chain of events it would start off.”

“My god…there are two of them,” Diggle groaned, rubbing his palm over his face as he listened to Felicity and Stiles chatter about Game of Thrones. Oliver crossed his arms over his chest, looking from Felicity, to Stiles, and back at Felicity, the bemusement on his face becoming more and more pronounced with each word.

“Stiles…Felicity,” Oliver finally snapped, and Stiles and Felicity startled, looking up at him with deer like expressions.
“What?” Stiles shrugged innocently. “Just getting to know one another. It’s amazing how much you can learn about someone through discussing popular culture, and Game of Thrones is perfect for it.”

“Back on topic,” Oliver instructed. “How long do you have until Ra’s starts sending people looking for you? If he’s so protective of you, why are you here?”

“At least until the end of the month, possibly longer. He said that I’d earned a bit of freedom…and that as long as I didn’t get myself killed and touched base with Nyssa every now and again I could do whatever I wanted…within the code of conduct of the League of course. Last time I spoke to Nyssa, who was annoyed that Ra’s made her my contact, she said that if I contacted her any more frequently than once a week barring an emergency she would kick my ass…right before she told me where I could find you and Sara.”

“Good,” Oliver relaxed a little, leaning against the back of a chair comfortably, “so what do you plan to do?”

Stiles shrugged again, “I don’t know…it’s been too long since I’ve had time off…maybe chase some bad guys…see the sites”

“Visit Beacon Hills?” Sara suggested, Stiles stiffened, and let out a defeated sigh.

“I don’t know, maybe,” he shrugged, “how in the know is your dad?”

“He knows that I’m alive, and that I’m in league with the Arrow…and also that I was involved in the League of Assassins in the past. He doesn’t know that Oliver is the Arrow. Laurel knows all of the same, except she knows that Oliver is the Arrow as well.”

“So…he wouldn’t have a fatal heart attack if I rocked up at his house one night…just to test out the waters and get an idea on how my dad’s going?” Stiles asked hopefully. Sara bit her lip.

“I might give him a bit of a heads up, but he should be okay…I don’t know how much he’ll be able to tell you. From what I’ve heard they haven’t spoken much since the Queen’s Gambit sank.”

“Damn,” Stiles cursed, “I hoped that wasn’t what happened. I hoped that they would, I don’t know,
“They might have done that at first, but I don’t know if my dad has told your dad about my return,” Sara admitted, “He might have felt weird talking to your dad when he knew I was alive, and yet you were supposedly dead.”

Stiles rubbed his hand over his face, letting out a heavy sigh, and Oliver and Sara exchanged concerned looks. They both knew how much Stiles cared about his dad. Sara had seen it in Stiles’ behavior going back years before they boarded the Queen’s Gambit…even before Stiles’ mother had died, and Oliver had seen it during their time together on the island.

Early on, when they’d both thought they were going to get rescued, Stiles had often talked about how much he was looking forward to going home, although he never mentioned his father aloud, knowing that Oliver’s pain regarding his own father’s death was still very raw; they’d both witnessed Robert Queen’s suicide after all.

As time had progressed, and rescue looked less and less likely, Oliver had held onto Stiles when the younger man…boy really, back then, had gone through nightmares that left him pale and shaking and struggling to breathe, his throat raw from screaming and calling out for his father and his friends back in Beacon Hills. Even Slade had been gentle and sympathetic after one of Stiles’ bad nights. Slade had told Oliver that Stiles was showing clear signs of PTSD, and even now, after everything Slade had done to him, Oliver believed that Slade had been telling the truth about Stiles that day.

The slight groan of the hidden metal external door into the basement hideout brought Oliver out of his thoughts, and he looked up, relieved to spot Roy approaching, bow strapped to his back, although the younger man’s posture was tense, and he looked pale. Oliver frowned in concern.

“Roy, are you okay?” Felicity asked, although the question was ignored. Roy’s gaze was fixed on Stiles, and Stiles was watching Roy, the air around them thick with tension. Diggle, Felicity, Sara and Oliver looked between the two youngest people in the room, Oliver discretely moving to pull Felicity out of the way in case things did turn violent, because, although Stiles had denied it, it was impossible for Stiles and Roy to not know each other just from the tension in the room and the looks on their faces.

“Jackson,” Stiles said finally, breaking the silence, inclining his head just the slightest bit in greeting, although he didn’t break eye contact.

“Stilinski,” Roy replied in a neutral tone, returning the gesture.
“Last I heard you were in England, fulfilling B grade horror movie stereotypes.”

“Last I heard you were dead.”

Stiles snorted, “Touché…what are you doing here…and by the way, you stole my look…I didn’t know you liked my sense of style so much.”

“What sense of style?” Roy replied, putting his weapons away as he spoke, “and I wore red more than you did.”

“I didn’t know scales came in red,” Stiles smirked, “unless you’re Smaug,” and Roy levelled a glare at him.

“Do you really want to go down that road, Stiles?” he asked, “I could go on all day about red bushy tails,” and Stiles’ mouth snapped shut.

“Sorry…that was low,” he acknowledged, ducking his head guiltily. Roy pulled off his jacket, hanging it back up, before he cautiously approached the medical bench Stiles was still sitting on, both of the younger men keenly aware of the eyes of everyone in the room on them.

“I’m glad that you’re not dead…I know the others will be too…they missed you a lot.” Roy offered finally, and Stiles looked up at him, studying Roy’s face, before a tentative smile broke out on his face.

“I’m glad you’re still alive too…when did you come back to the states?”

“Danny called me when everyone thought you’d died on the Queen’s gambit…I went back to Beacon Hills for a bit to help Lydia…she took it pretty bad. After a couple of months she was coping better so I left Beacon Hills. I’ve been here most of the rest of the time,” Roy replied. It was close enough to the truth, Stiles didn’t need to know that it had been him calling Danny, not the other way around.

Stiles cringed at the mention of Lydia’s name. After everything that had happened, Lydia had lost Allison, Aidan and Stiles within a few short weeks of one another. It had to have been awful for her,
and Stiles was glad that Danny had called Jackson for help, for her sake at least.

“Thanks for looking after her,” Stiles told Roy, who nodded briefly, discretely breathing in, his inner wolf latching onto Stiles’ scent, different from how he remembered it, but yet, still very similar to what he remembered from the summer after he’d been turned, before he’d gone to England. His wolf was practically begging him to touch Stiles, to connect to a pack member thought to be lost.

No matter how distant they’d been before Jackson became a werewolf, Stiles had become a member of Jackson’s pack. Isaac Lahey had as well, and Derek of course. Erica and Boyd had already disappeared by then, and Roy was man enough to admit that Peter Hale scared the crap out of him, and that was before even considering what he’d put Lydia through while he was dead.

Scott hadn’t spent much time with the others that summer, even keeping Stiles at arm’s length because he had been moping over Allison, so Jackson’s wolf hadn’t connected to any of them as much as he had Derek, Isaac and Stiles. Danny and Lydia, of course, had been members of Jackson’s wolf’s perceived pack, although neither of them had been very aware of the fact at the time (as far as Jackson had known at that point…he had later learned that Danny had known far more than he’d let on thanks to Stiles and Scott being incapable of using hushed voices when they discussed the supernatural in class).

Roy bit his lip, trying to use the pain as an anchor to subdue his wolf for now, but he knew Stiles could see through the gesture. Stiles had always been far too perceptive, and he’d known werewolf behaviors better than anyone else in the pack that had been born human.

Stiles slid off the bench he’d been sitting on and put his arms around Roy, hugging him in a way that allowed Roy to discretely scent Stiles’ neck without it becoming obvious to anyone else in the room. Roy put his arms around Stiles, his wolf practically jumping around within him in excitement at the contact. Aside from the occasional touch on the shoulder from Oliver and Diggle, and Felicity giving him little hugs every now and then, it had been a long time since Jackson had been in this much contact with someone he considered to be pack. Thea of course, was a different story, but although Roy loved her, and he wanted to spend the rest of his life with her, he didn’t necessarily consider her a member of his pack, as such.

“We need to talk,” Stiles whispered in Jackson’s ear, so quiet that he was only able to hear it with his werewolf level hearing. In response, Jackson nodded his head ever so slightly, before he pulled away, giving Stiles an affectionate pat on the back to make everything look more natural.

“It’s been too long, dude,” Stiles nodded, going along with the act.
“I’m looking forward to hearing some of your stories,” Roy replied.

“Whoa…you guys actually know each other…but you said his name was Jackson?” Felicity said from beside Oliver.

“Back when I was in high school my name was Jackson,” Roy admitted, “I had a friend who was good with computers and I wanted to get away from everything…so we came up with a whole new identity.”

A stunned silence met this announcement. Stiles was cringing and sending Roy an apologetic look, probably for blowing his cover, although it was hard to tell with Stiles, while Roy himself was carefully avoiding looking anywhere near Oliver, knowing the disappointed, mistrustful look that would be on the vigilante’s face. Avoiding looking at Oliver also meant that Roy was avoiding looking at Felicity, which was good, because Roy had grown close to Felicity over their years of working together. She reminded him of Danny, and sometimes of Scott and Stiles, and he’d enjoyed the little reminder of people that he missed (although he’d never admit to it out loud, and especially around Stiles.)

Roy sent a quick sideways glance towards Sara, and saw the surprise written on her face. That didn’t hurt so much as he thought it would, but then he wasn’t as close to Sara as he was to Felicity, and he didn’t look up to Sara like he did Oliver. What did hurt was the disappointment on Diggle’s face, the frown on the older man’s face that told Roy that Diggle expected more of him…that Roy had lost some, if not all, of the trust and respect Diggle had in him.

“Why…why didn’t you say anything? Tell us about it? Didn’t you trust us with that sort of information.” Felicity asked, her voice catching with emotion. Roy forced himself to look up, facing Oliver and Felicity, meeting Felicity’s gaze and seeing the tears gathering in her eyes.

“You guys didn’t need to get involved in it. I left because it was dangerous, and I didn’t want to risk you guys getting dragged into my…our past, and getting hurt because of it” Roy glanced at Stiles, who nodded in agreement with what he said.

“What was it…gang related? Drugs?” Oliver frowned, “what would happen if someone tracked you here…what would you have done then? If we didn’t know we’d be in danger as well…and not just us, but Thea too.”

Jackson shook his head, “The risk was to me, not directly to you guys…and if I knew someone was coming I would have told you guys, but Oliver, I don’t think you can have a go at me, when you have so many secrets about what happened on the island, and what’s happened since then.”
“That is to protect you all,” Oliver yelled.

“I did the exact same thing…to stop you guys getting involved. If you did somehow get involved chances are you would be dead…no amount of training or anything would be able to save you.” Roy exclaimed loudly, his anger getting to him.

“If it makes you feel better, it’s not drugs, terrorism, or anything like that,” Stiles offered quietly.

“You were involved in this too?” Oliver snapped at Stiles, who met his gaze with determination…the same fire that Roy remembered Stiles having back in Beacon Hills. It was the same spirit that had made Stiles capable of going face to face with Derek, or Chris, or Peter, or Roy himself when he felt it was needed.

“Yes, I was. You know what I was like when I came to Starling City…when we got on the Queen’s Gambit? The stuff Jackson…Roy…left behind…that is what it does to you…if it doesn’t kill you. Don’t even try and get involved.”

Oliver’s mouth snapped shut, his eyes going distant as he remembered the broken shell Stiles had been when he’d first met him, the day before they boarded the Queen’s Gambit. He glanced at Sara, who had concern written across her features. Stiles had never told them anything about what had happened to him before he arrived in Starling City, although it was obvious that the kid had been through hell. He was barely eating, not sleeping, and constantly on edge. Even Oliver, as self absorbed as he had been back then, had felt sorry for the then sixteen year old.

“Alright…we won’t push you to tell us…but if either of you even so much as get a hint that whatever it was in endangering you, or us, or Starling City in general, you need to talk, got it?”

Roy and Stiles both nodded, accepting the terms without hesitation. It was what Roy had planned to do anyway, and Stiles thought it was fair enough.

“I doubt you would believe us even if we did need to tell you,” he told Oliver confidently, and Roy had to admit that Stiles was right. It had been hard enough to believe back in Beacon Hills when he’d been sixteen, but here in Starling City, with little to no evidence other than his being a werewolf it would be a lot more difficult to convince Oliver, Diggle, Felicity and Sara that werewolves were actually a thing.
At least, for the time being, they wouldn’t have to worry about that…and maybe with Stiles there it would be easier…Stiles was far better at talking than Roy was anyway.

“So what was your real name, just out of curiosity?” Diggle asked Roy.

“Jackson Whittemore,” Roy replied calmly, having regained control of his emotions, “and Felicity, feel free to look me up…there isn’t anything on the internet or any database that I know of that I don’t want you to know about.”

Felicity blushed and Roy grinned, knowing that the moment he was gone Felicity had been planning on looking Jackson up. She was like Stiles in that manner, insanely curious about everything.

“Speaking of computers, how’s Danny?” Stiles asked offhandedly.

“He’s good…working for one of the big IT firms in L.A. but he often chats with Lydia and Scott… keeps me up to date on how things are going.”

“That’s cool…at least he got out as well.” Stiles nodded, leaning casually against the bench.

“Since we’ve established that Stiles isn’t a threat, does that mean he’s free to go?’ Sara asked Oliver, “I think he and his boyfriend want to catch up in private.”

“Shut up, Sara.” Stiles yelped, jerking away from Roy

“Oh, hell no,” Roy spat, disgust on his face.

“Yeah, he can go…but not alone…like it or not, Stiles, you’re still concussed.”

“Well, I wouldn’t be if you weren’t so damn protective of Jackson…Roy…whatever he’s calling himself…let’s just settle for douchebag, shall we?”

“Shut up, Stilinski,” Roy growled.
“Good, Stiles, I assume you’ve got somewhere to stay while you’re in town?” Oliver asked.

“Yeah, of course I do…and I don’t need a babysitter.”

“Yes, you do,” Sara said, taking Stiles by the arm and leading him towards the door, with Stiles being forced to lean on Sara a little to avoid face planting.

“Go with him,” Oliver instructed Roy.

“What, but…isn’t there something you guys need me to do here?” Roy asked petulantly.

“No…I want you with him. Go…catch up with one another…be normal…do whatever it is you guys used to do back in high school.”

“What, snark at each other and try to kill one another…ok,” Roy replied, not untruthfully, “Besides, I don’t think Stiles has ever been normal in his entire life.”

“Just go,” Oliver growled, and Roy sighed, grabbing the jacket he wore normally when he wasn’t being a superhero and following Sara and Stiles out the door.

“I hope I don’t regret that later on,” Oliver said to himself as the door closed, leaving him alone with Diggle and Felicity. Felicity was already moving towards her computers, her fingers twitching in eagerness to look up the person who Roy used to be, but Diggle heard Oliver’s comment and laughed.

“Worried they might actually kill each other?” Diggle asked.

“Either that, or they’ll be friends by the end of the night, and the idea of them ganging up together is a little worrying.” Oliver admitted.

“Aren’t they already friends…oh…not friends…wow, I didn’t expect that.” Felicity commented, her gaze on her screens, already filled with information.
“That didn’t take long,” Diggle commented as he and Oliver crossed over the room to stand behind Felicity and look over her shoulder as Sara walked back in.

“Trust me, it wasn’t difficult to find. Apparently Stiles once kidnapped Roy…Jackson, and held him in the back of a prisoner transfer van. Jackson actually put a restraining order on him.”

“You know…I would have picked that going the other way around, just from looking at them,” John offered.

“I wouldn’t,” Oliver and Sara said in unison.

“Stiles has always a bit…grey…when it comes to the law. He’d never deliberately hurt somebody, but his moral compass is a bit…left of centre,” Sara explained.

“Even though his dad is the Sherriff of his home town,” Oliver added.

“Having a cop for a dad doesn’t necessarily mean being a good person all the time,” Sara pointed out, “even Laurel has her grey areas….and when we were all kids she was the best behaved of the three of us.”

Felicity was already looking into the background of Roy’s former identity, so Diggle left her to it, busying himself with packing away the medical equipment they had gotten out in case Stiles’ condition had deteriorated. Sara and Oliver too, catching the pointed look Felicity sent them, left the hacker to her task and sparred on the mats, although they weren’t being very serious about it, neither of them wanting to be distracted the moment Felicity was finished. They were both on their feet, only ten minutes later, mere seconds after Felicity clasped her hand over her mouth and let out a sob.

‘Oh my god, that’s horrible.”

“What is it?” Diggle asked, still managing to beat Oliver and Sara to Felicity’s side.

“Roy…he was adopted as a baby by the Whittemore’s. His biological parents, Gordon and Margaret Miller, were in a car accident the day before he was born. His dad died on impact, and is mother lived only a few more hours after they got her to hospital. They did a c--section on her to try and
“The kid was lucky to make it to even knowing Stiles, as much as they apparently didn’t like one another,” Diggle commented lightly, while Oliver frowned, and Sara cringed sympathetically for Roy.

“Does he know about this?” Oliver asked.

Felicity nodded, “He was told when he was seven…his biological parents were rich…not like Oliver is, but way more money than any of the rest of us are ever going to have. When he turned 18 Jackson inherited everything, including his parent’s very healthy life insurance payouts…except, as far as everyone else in concerned, Jackson Whitmore disappeared about four months before his eighteenth birthday…which…actually…how old do we think Roy is?

“25, according to his staff file at the club,” Oliver replied, “Why”

“He lied about his age when he made up his new identity…he’s turning 24 next month…we should throw a party for him.”

“Which actually makes him younger than Thea…and you were worried about her and an older guy…” Sara teased Oliver with a smile.

“You know it wasn’t as if she was underage when they met,” Felicity pointed out, “She was 23 when they met, and he was 22, and even if you go by his new identity he was only 24. Still not a big age gap.”

“Are we loosing track of the point?” Diggle prompted, and the others all fell silent, knowing that he was right.

“All of this makes me even more curious about what the hell Roy and Stiles were involved in before they left Beacon Hills,” Sara frowned, “Roy could have lived a comfortable life, instead of struggling to live day to day in the glades, but instead he chose to leave his home town only months before he would have inherited everything. It doesn’t make sense.”

“Anything on his adoptive parents? Maybe he was trying to get away from them.” Oliver asked.
“David and Louise Whittemore adopted Roy when he was a few days old,” Felicity reported promptly, “David Whittemore is a lawyer…fairly high profile, while Louise does a lot of volunteer work, mostly with the elderly. They both live in England, they have since the summer before Jackson disappeared from Beacon Hills during a holiday to visit friends.”

Diggle tilted his head curiously, “Was Stiles one of the friends that he visited?”

Felicity shook her head sadly, “Jackson arrived in Beacon Hills two days after the news broke that the Queen’s Gambit went down, and that Stiles was on it.”

“Who reported Jackson missing?” Sara asked curiously.

“David Whittemore, when he hadn’t heard from Jackson in awhile. It’s noted here that Jackson left Beacon Hills having told his friends that he was going on a road trip. Hikers found Jackson’s car…a Porsche…a few weeks later, abandoned on a dirt road in Wisconsin. There hasn’t been any sign of him since.”

“Damn,” Diggle said to himself, “he covered his tracks well. Why would he run though? Roy wouldn’t leave his friends behind if there was trouble.”

“Roy wouldn’t…but Jackson might have. People change, Diggle. It was a long time ago… he was just a kid himself when it all happened anyway.” Oliver reasoned, “he came back for them when he found out Stiles was dead, it shows he cared, even if it wasn’t enough to make him stay.”

“Or something changed and scared him off,” Sara offered, “Maybe the idea of inheriting that much money intimidated him.”

“His adoptive parents were wealthy…Jackson wouldn’t have been intimidated by his inheritance…and he’s known about it for long enough that it’s not as though it would have been a shock,” Oliver countered, “besides…he was driving a Porsche when he disappeared…he wasn’t scared off by the money”. Sara inclined her head…Oliver would know best, after all.

“Is it just me, or are you guys struggling to imagine sixteen year old Roy behind the wheel of a Porsche?” Felicity asked. Sara and Diggle chuckled, and even Oliver smiled.
“He’s adapted well…knows how to act like someone from the glades,” Diggle leaned against a bench thoughtfully; “none of us picked it.”

‘He’s been here a long time,” Sara pointed out, but Oliver shook his head.

‘No…Diggle’s right… This shows how much we’ve underestimated him…how much I’ve underestimated him. He tricked us all, and had us all convinced that he was somebody he wasn’t until seven years ago.”

“Oliver…don’t be mad at him…yeah, he hid some things from us…but we’ve all got secrets…skeletons in the closet…and yeah, maybe for some of us those secrets actually do involve skeletons, but I don’t think any of us can judge him for hiding what he did.” Felicity spoke up, looking up at Oliver beseechingly.

Sara nodded in agreement, “Felicity’s right…did you see his face when he realized he’d have to fess up?”

“And how he wouldn’t look Oliver in the eye? He’s always looked up to you.” Diggle added

“And he was scared I’d kick him out for hiding his past. I wouldn’t ever do that, I know that we’ve all got our secrets…things that we’re not proud of…I understand that,” Oliver sighed, “My only concern was that if it was bad enough that he had to make up a new identity to get away from it then it might be putting the rest of us in danger.”

Sara and Diggle both knew that by ‘the rest of us’ Oliver didn’t mean them, or at least, not specifically, but rather Felicity and Thea. Felicity and Roy got on well, and were good friends, and although Roy and Thea weren’t together at the moment, they had been together in the past…and there was a small chance of some sort of reunion.

“I keep remembering what Stiles was like when we were on the Queen’s Gambit…before it went down…and even after that, on Lian Yu. I don’t want something like that happening to any of you…and there is a part of me that is glad that Roy got out of whatever it was and hid before something like that could happen to him.”

“As much as I hate to say this,” Sara began heavily, “It’s been seven years…Stiles has mostly recovered…and has probably recovered as much as he ever will…what’s saying Roy didn’t go through something like that as well?”
Chapter 6

Despite his concussion Stiles managed to give Roy accurate directions back towards his hotel on the edge of the glades. The state of the building made Roy wonder, for a fleeting moment, what Stiles’ father would say if he knew Stiles was staying at a place like this, but then he forced the thought aside. The Sherriff, Roy was sure, would be too happy knowing that Stiles was still alive to care about the level of accommodation Stiles was using.

Luckily for Roy, Stiles was lucid enough to still be able to clamber up the fire escape of the adjoining building without any issues, which looked like it had been abandoned following the Glades earthquake, and had been condemned, but was still solid enough that it hadn’t been pulled down yet. From the roof of the building it was easy to enter the hotel and get to Stiles’ hotel room door without being seen by anyone…which was important as, although Roy was wearing his civilian clothing, Stiles was still wearing his gear and was carrying his bow in his left hand.

The minute they entered the room Stiles moved away from Roy, walking far better than he had at the Arrow Cave as he began thoroughly searching the room.

“Er…are you okay, Stilinski?”

“Shhh…I’m looking for bugs or bombs, douchebag.” Stiles hissed, his eyes clear and focused. Roy shut his mouth and watched in amazement. Even though he knew it was Stiles…the same old Stiles who had made warming the bench at Lacrosse an art form, used his wits as a weapon and sarcasm as his only defense and had flailed his way through P.E. class, thoroughly searched the room with a degree of seriousness Jackson had only rarely seen Stiles display in the long years that they’d known each other.

“All clear,” Stiles finally announced, before he heavily sat on his bed and rubbed a weary hand over his face.

Roy didn’t say anything, still too overwhelmed by how much Stiles had changed since the last time he’d seen him, the summer in between their sophomore and junior years of high school. This version of Stiles moved like a predator…like a hunter…like Chris and Allison, and Oliver and Sara, and Jackson himself.

“What the hell happened to you?” he finally choked out.
Stiles rolled his eyes, “when exactly are you referring to?”

“Since…” Roy began before he broke off. He knew what had happened to Stiles when he’d been taken over by the Nogitsune. Scott, Lydia and Derek had told him everything that had happened since he’d left, and they hadn’t stinted on the details. He knew how badly Stiles had been coping after they had finally defeated the dark Fox spirit…how broken he’d been.

Roy understood…he’d been there, after the Kanima. He didn’t remember what he’d done when he’d been the Kanima, but he’d been told who he had killed…what he’d done under Matt, and then Gerard’s, influence. Roy didn’t like even thinking about it, hating that he hadn’t been in control of his own actions at the time, and he hadn’t actually killed anyone that he’d known, (aside from sort of knowing Isaac’s dad), nor had any of his friends died during his time as the Kanima, so he guessed it must have been a lot worse for Stiles.

“Since the Queen’s Gambit went down,” Roy said finally, and he knew he’d said the right thing from the grateful look Stiles sent him.

“Take a seat, this might take awhile.”

“Are you sure you’re up for it?” Roy asked even as he moved towards Stiles, planning on sitting beside him on the end of the bed.

Stiles sighed and shrugged, “talking about what’s happened since I left Beacon Hills is so much easier than talking about the stuff before I left. Besides, you all seemed pretty convinced that I had a concussion…talking will keep me awake.”

“Are you concussed? I’m certain you’ve been concussed enough times by one of us shoving you into a wall to know what it feels like,” Jackson smirked.

Stiles snorted, “If I am it’s not too bad…I was actually acting when Sara was escorting me out… if they think I’m concussed I thought they might leave us alone together so we could catch up…and I wanted to lay a guilt trip on Oliver a little…although I don’t blame him for doing what he did. I would be the same if it was Sara that was being watched…I’m more annoyed at myself for not noticing him coming, getting caught up in watching you.”

“I do have that affect on people.” Roy bragged, something he hadn’t done much of since he’d let go of his former identity.
Stiles rolled his eyes, “You never change, do you?”

“And how did you know they were going to send us off together? You were practically hanging off Sara well before Oliver told me to go with you.”

“I know how Oliver thinks…I lived with him for over a year on a presumably deserted island…I got to know him pretty well. He would want to give both of us the chance to catch up, especially since he knew that you must have known me…the me I was before…before things happened, and he would hope that you would be able to bring that me back from the dead.”

“Is that even possible?” Roy scoffed.

Stiles shrugged, “I don’t know…Pretty sure that person was buried in the ground in Beacon Hills cemetery with all of…them.”

Roy didn’t need to ask to know who Stiles was referring to when he said ‘them’. It was fairly obvious…Allison, Aidan, everyone else who died in events related to the Nogitsune’s reign of terror in Beacon Hills.

“So…Oliver’s mentioned snippets of what happened after the Queen’s gambit went down, although he never mentioned you. I thought that meant that you drowned the night it went down and that was the end of it.”

“I don’t remember much of that night,” Stiles admitted, “it’s all this big blur…and no, that has nothing to do with the potential concussion I may have right now…I’ve never been really clear on the details. I remember lying in my bed on the boat, staring at the ceiling of the cabin Oliver had given me, and actually being grateful that I was barely eating, because I had been I would have thrown up by then. The storm…it was bad…and it felt like it had been going on for ages…and then everything tipped, and I was in the water, and I don’t remember much of what happened after that…I think I hit my head and blacked out. The next thing I know I’m lying in the life raft with Oliver and his dad looking down at me, and Oliver asking me if I knew were Sara was…and I knew then that she hadn’t made it. Apparently Oliver saw me lying on a bit of wreckage floating in the water and he’d argued with his dad for ages about whether or not to pull me into the boat…they were already worried about the supplies lasting. Oliver won, and he pulled me into the boat. I woke up a few hours later. We lasted another day…or maybe two, but the supplies were running out. Oliver’s dad shot the only member of the Gambit’s crew that survived, and then he turned the gun on me.”
Roy stiffened slightly beside Stiles, hearing the way his former pack mate’s voice caught ever so slightly.

“I was so ready for death,” Stiles continued on, his gaze distant, so much like Oliver’s when he was remembering his own experiences, or Diggle sometimes, “Of the three of us I was by far in the worst physical shape…I was drowning in guilt over what happened back at home, and I knew that I would be in so much trouble for leaving Starling City in the first place, if we ever made it back. I was exhausted…physically, mentally and emotionally. I looked Robert Queen in the eye and told him to shoot, that he and Oliver deserved the chance to live, and that I didn’t. I closed my eyes after that and began counting seconds in my head. Robert said something, but I didn’t pay attention to what it was. Ten seconds later the gun went off, and I opened my eyes. Robert Queen had shot himself in the head, and all I could do was sit there and watch as Oliver screamed. Not long after that we finally washed up on Lian Yu.”

Roy watched Stiles as he spoke, using his memories of Stiles from before to compare the two. Perhaps it was the topic of the conversation, or the fact that Stiles was older and more mature now, but he seemed so subdued…with nowhere near the level of energy that high school Stiles had possessed.

“I’m sorry you had to go through all that…after what you went through back in Beacon Hills,” Roy offered eventually, once it became clear that Stiles didn’t want to talk any more.

“Thanks,” Stiles murmured in reply, his voice soft as he looked at his feet, scuffing at something that looked suspiciously like a bloodstain on the carpet.

Roy looked around, not knowing what exactly he could do to help Stiles, not knowing what to say. Usually it was one of the others that did the talking and not him. Stiles didn’t seem to be keen on giving any suggestions.

“How…how’s my dad?” Stiles said after a lengthy pause. Roy let a touch of a smile cross his face. Stiles worrying about his dad was something he could associate with high school Stiles.

“Last I heard he was going okay. It was a bit rough early on…when I was still in Beacon Hills…but Danny’s been keeping track of him…the pack’s been taking good care of him. Derek moved in with him not long after I left. Um, there’s something I should probably tell you though, but you have to promise you’re not going to chuck a fit.”

“What…what happened,” Stiles’ voice caught with anxiety, his eyes filling with fear.
“It’s nothing bad…I promise.” Roy reassured quickly, “probably the best thing that could have happened to him.”


“Your dad married Scott’s mom a couple of months before Oliver got found. She was the one that held him together the most after you…”

“Died,” Stiles offered, “after I died. I’m glad that he’s happy…that he’s got her to look after him.”

“The rest of the pack looks after him too,” Roy gently corrected, “Scott, Kira and Lydia take turns taking him dinner when he’s working late or he’s on night shift so he doesn’t get junk food…and his main deputy…Parrish…he looks out for him while he’s at work.”

“That…that’s good.”

“Moira Queen came and visited one time,” Roy offered, and a frown crossed Stiles’ face.

“Not long after the boat went down,” Roy continued, “she wanted to pass on her condolences to your dad. We were all there that day…the entire pack, or what was left of it. She paid for your memorial…the empty grave with a headstone, the service, grief counseling for your dad, Scott and Lydia…”

“I thought she was involved in it, though? She and Malcolm Merlyn and the rest of their little crime syndicate planning to wreck the Glades?” Stiles asked, “A couple of members of the League told me about it when they got sent after him.”

“That’s what Felicity and Oliver thinks, but there isn’t any evidence…not anymore. When she was in Beacon Hills she did smell a bit off…Guilt, Derek said. She reeked of guilt…but we put it down to the fact she blamed herself for Oliver letting you and Sara on board, not that she was actually involved.”

“And now she’s dead…thanks to Slade…” Stiles mused thoughtfully.
“Did you meet him…you said you were on the island, did you meet Slade?”

“I did,” Stiles nodded, “I was suspicious of him at first…I always was good at picking the bad guys…but I didn’t really have another option. If I was going to survive that God forsaken island Slade was the lesser of two evils…and he did save my life on more than one occasion…even though he did eventually turn into a raving psychopath. In the early days though he was very normal…just as normal as Oliver and I were at the time. He thought it was hysterical that I was better than Oliver at pretty much everything survival based, considering I was just a high school kid…until I started having nightmares again and he and Oliver realized that the reason I was good at those things didn’t involve fluffy bunnies…unless you count Derek.”

Roy snorted, “If I was talking to Derek at the moment I would tell him you said that…even if it was only to watch him growl at you and threaten you again.”

“Eh, his threats wore off after the first month,” Stiles shrugged, “Lydia though…she was legit terrifying.”

“I already knew that…I dated her for the better part of two years. Why do you think we watched the Notebook so often?”

It was Stiles’ turn to laugh, “What’s she up to at the moment…I half expected her to have taken over the world by now.”

Roy pursed his lips thoughtfully, “She went to MIT after graduating…she graduated top of her class in the minimum possible time needed for her course in I don’t even know how to pronounce it but it’s about math.” Roy told him, “Then she went and did her masters at Caltech…she’s back at Beacon Hills at the moment, her mother made her take a year off, because she hadn’t stopped since the summer after they all graduated. Lydia’s mom was convinced she was heading for a breakdown. I think Lydia’s been taking the opportunity to get to know Deputy Parrish some more, if Danny’s correct.

“Who is Danny getting his info from? You said he was out of Beacon Hills.”

“Yeah, he and Ethan are living together in L.A. Danny’s working at one of the big I.T. firms there and loving it. He and Scott email fairly regularly, and Lydia emails him as well and keeps him up to date with what’s happening with the pack.”
“So…who’s in the pack these days?” Stiles asked, “Is there anyone new?”

‘No-ones had kids yet, if that’s what you’re asking,” Roy grinned at Stiles, “Although from what
Lydia tells Danny she reckons that Scott and Kira will be announcing that they’re engaged within a
year from now. Other than them, there’s Lydia, of course, and Derek, Scott’s mom, your dad,
Deputy Parrish…his name is Jordan, Chris Argent, and Scott bit a freshman not long after I
disappeared…his name is Liam. That’s it.”

“Wow…nine…and only, what, three are actual werewolves?”

“Yeah…but Scott’s a true Alpha…that’s keeping a lot of other packs away. He’s got a little bit of
fame these days.”

“And Peter’s gone?”

“He went off the deep end not long after you vanished and ended up locked up in Eichen House.
He escaped and tried to kill Scott. Chris Argent saved Scott’s life and Scott killed Peter. Derek and
Chris dismembered the body so he couldn’t be brought back.” Roy explained, wincing and shooting
an apologetic look at Stiles when he mentioned Eichen House. Stiles swallowed, but otherwise gave
no reaction, so Roy guessed that he was okay.

“Scott wouldn’t have liked that…having to kill,” Stiles finally observed. Roy nodded his head,
knowing that Stiles was right. Scott had always hated killing, and had always done all he could to
find another way when dealing with someone.

“What’s he doing these days…other than Kira?” Stiles asked with just a hint of a smirk.

Roy laughed, “He’s working with Deaton at the moment. He’s studying to be a vet part time at the
community college closest to Beacon Hills. Kira studied there too, only she was full time, and now
she’s finished. She works as a teacher at the elementary school. Isaac is still in Europe, although he
keeps in touch with Scott and Chris. He’s met a girl from Germany, and he’s been made a member
of her pack, based in the Black Forest somewhere. He sounds like he’s quite happy. Chris is still
doing his work as a legal arms dealer, although Scott mentioned in his last email that Chris was
thinking about selling the company and retiring. Derek…well…he’s Derek. Looks out for everyone
and frowns a lot. I couldn’t get over how much you dying messed him up though. He and Scott and
Lydia were convinced that because Lydia didn’t scream you were still alive. Eventually Deaton sat
them down and explained that Lydia’s still learning to use her abilities. You were simply too far
away from her when you died… and you had your mental barriers up as high as you could get them because of what had happened. It was why she didn’t scream. You’re not a wolf, so it wasn’t like you had strong pack ties with them like Derek would have had to his family, or like Scott and Derek tried to build with me, although your mental walls didn’t help that situation as well.”

“Lydia never screamed for me?” Stiles asked.

Roy shook his head, “Lydia told me all about it, before I left. The day the Queen’s Gambit sank Lydia had a dream. A boat…The Queen’s Gambit, being tossed about in a storm and then sinking… and a flash of your face. That was it. By then we all already knew that you were on the Queen’s Gambit. Detective Lance, as he was back then, called your dad the moment he found the note you left him, just in case you’d changed your mind and were heading home instead. Then they found CCTV footage of Oliver helping you and Sara on board. Your dad told the rest of the pack, but none of us could do anything…and then the Queen’s Gambit sank. Lydia thought…hoped…that the dream was just her imagination, some tenacious vision regarding how turbulent her own emotions were, and how you were her anchor, or something like that…and then your dad got a phone call from Lance. The Queen’s Gambit had sailed into a bad storm and had sent out an SOS…but when rescuers reached the scene as soon as they could after the storm had passed there was nothing left but a little bit of floating debris. It was concluded everybody on board had died.”

Roy could only watch as Stiles put his head in his hands, letting out a shuddering breath, “Lydia didn’t deserve that… none of them did,” he finally sighed, “I shouldn’t have gotten on the boat that day.”

“It’s not like you knew it was going to sink,” Roy pointed out, “and you can’t blame yourself for wanting to get away, not after what you’d been through.”

Stiles simply shrugged, and Roy felt anger wash over him. He grabbed Stiles’ shoulder, pulling on it hard so Stiles would look at him.

“Hey… if you hadn’t forgotten I was controlled too, remember? Me, with scales and claws and a tail and super paralytic spit? I know what it’s like, maybe more than anyone else either of us know. I fled to England the first chance I could to get away from it all…and I don’t remember what I did, and nobody I was close to died. I think you were entitled to wanting to get further away from Beacon Hills than Starling City. Stop blaming yourself, you were sixteen years old.”

Stiles sat in silence, his eyes fixed on Roy’s face, as Roy forced himself to taking a few breaths to calm down. He knew at one point during his tirade his control had slipped and he’d almost flashed his eyes at Stiles, before he’d regained control, but it had been a surprise. He hadn’t lost control so badly for years… even before Oliver had returned to Starling City. Even when he’d had the Mirakuru in his system he hadn’t let his control of his wolf slip so much, although Roy was fairly
sure that the drug had actually weakened his inner wolf, not strengthened it, but it wasn’t like he could ask anyone about it. No-one in Starling City knew he was a werewolf except for Stiles.

“You’re right,” Stiles finally breathed, glancing down the bed in between them.

“I think that’s the first time you’ve ever said that to me.” Roy admitted, his tone surprised.

“Don’t get used to it,” Stiles advised, and Roy smirked in response.

“So…what’s your plan now?”

“Stay in Starling City for a bit, catch up with Oliver and Sara…and maybe Sara’s family, if she thinks they’ll be okay with it. Then…when I’ve finally gotten up the courage, I might duck down to Beacon Hills. I know that it’s risky, that I might lead the league back there, but realistically I’m pretty sure Ra’s already knows my home town. I mean, he knows that I was on the Queen’s Gambit with Sara and Oliver, so it would only take a very quick Google search for him to find a newspaper article with my name and my home town in it.”

“If you want I could go back with you if you want…hold your hand and provide moral comfort.” Roy offered, belatedly asking himself why on earth he was offering to go back to Beacon Hills with Stiles Stilinski of all people.

Stiles didn’t say anything and only shrugged in response.

“At the least,” Roy reasoned, “it might give one of us a chance of surviving. Lydia can only kill one of us at a time. While she’s killing one of us the other could be running away praying that she won’t find us.”

The comment made Stiles laugh, and then yawn. Roy looked at his watch and was amazed at how late it had gotten. The hours had flown by as he and Stiles had talked, and it was now the early hours of the morning.

“Sorry,” Stiles apologized, “I’m still a little jet lagged. I was up at 5 this morning.”
“You need to get some sleep...” Roy ordered, “Now, where am I going to sleep? Not on the bed with you, that’s for sure.”

“Do you think you can fit on the couch?” Stiles asked, eyeing the flea bitten couch tucked against the wall. Roy got to his feet and walked over to it, sniffing slightly. It didn’t smell too bad, and there wasn’t anything alive living in it, despite its appearance.

“Yeah, it’ll be fine...I’ll have to keep getting up anyway to do concussion checks on you anyway.”

“I thought we’d established I wasn’t concussed,” Stiles frowned.

“Oliver ordered me to look after you, I’m not going to leave you alone just because you think you’re fine and we’ve spent hours talking,” Roy gritted his teeth.

Stiles tilted his head slightly, in a way that reminded Roy of Scott, “You really do think of Oliver as your Alpha?”

“I do,” Roy nodded, “He might not be a wolf, but he’s an alpha in every other sense of the word.”

“I can understand that,” Stiles nodded as Roy turned to go and use the bathroom. When Roy returned Stiles walked past him, a pair of shorts in hand that he was obviously going to get changed into. Roy didn’t have a change of clothes with him, but he didn’t suppose that mattered. They’d been clean on that day, and he could call into his home on his way back to the Foundry and get changed and have a shower in the morning.

Stiles had gotten out the spare blankets, although they were stained and musty smelling, as well as the spare pillow off the bed Stiles was going to be using. Roy busied himself with making up a bed while Stiles was in the bathroom, and by the time Stiles came out of the bathroom Roy had stripped down to his boxers and had lain down in his bed for the night.

“You look cozy,” Stiles observed with a small smirk.

“I’ve slept in worse,” Roy shrugged. It was true that the couch was a little short for his height, but he’d slept in worse places, namely on the streets in the glades, so he wasn’t going to complain.
Roy rolled over so he could face Stiles, and froze, catching sight of Stiles’ bare chest and arms. Stiles had just as many scars as Oliver and Sara had, scattered across his pale skin, but Roy had expected that.

What he hadn’t been anticipating was the tattoos that Stiles now carried, black marks on his skin that were a stark contrast to Stiles’ otherwise pale completion. Roy had been told a story by Scott about Stiles the day Scott had his tattoo done. The then sixteen year old Stiles had fainted, but now he had several tattoos, on his arms, his shoulders, and even Roy could see the top of two poking out the top of Stiles’ shorts.

“What?” Stiles asked, and Roy blinked, realizing that he’d been caught staring.

“Nice tats,” he settled for saying, “You never struck me as the type.”

“Yeah…but people change. Remembering who I was before everything turned to hell became more important than staying away from needles.” Stiles shrugged as he turned the lights off and climbed into bed.

“Have a good sleep, Stilinski,” Roy said, although he privately doubted it. Stiles would have thought too much about Beacon Hills today to avoid having nightmares about something. Even Roy, his own experiences of their shared home town more distant and probably less terrifying, would struggle to have a restful sleep after seeing Stiles, the memories of his past that he’d repressed for so long now coming back to light.

At least they knew each other’s past well enough to know not to question what caused them to wake up screaming during the night.
Chapter 7

Stiles jerked awake, biting his pillow to stifle the scream that had been half way up his throat, forcing himself to swallow the noise. Long years of practice meant that Stiles had learned how to avoid screaming in his sleep. Even before he and Sara had been taken in by the League he’d been perfecting the technique, cautious about aggravating Slade and triggering the older man’s short temper.

Stiles had long ago lost track of how many times he’d woken up like this after one of his nightmares...reliving the moment when he’d plunged the katana in Scott’s body, the look on his best friend’s face. Then Scott had morphed into Allison, a trickle of blood running down her chin as she slid to the ground, wide eyes looking up at him in fear.

“Why, Stiles,” she’d asked, just like she always did in his dreams. Everyone asked him the same question, “why weren’t you strong enough to beat him? To keep him out? Why did you let him in? It’s your fault Stiles.”

They all haunted his dreams, Allison and Scott, Derek, Lydia, his dad, Melissa, Aidan and Ethan, Erica and Boyd, Isaac and Kira, Danny, Deaton, the faceless men and women who had been killed during the Nogitsune’s time in Beacon Hills.

Looking across at the couch, Stiles was relieved to find that Jackson was still asleep; his mouth hanging open as he quietly snored. Once upon a time, back before his world went to hell, Stiles would have cracked a joke about how stupid Jackson looked, or he would have deliberately woken up the sleeping man, or attempted some other form of prank, but Stiles couldn’t bring himself to do it now. Jackson had, after all, stayed with him during the night, checking that Stiles was lucid by waking him up and asking him a few questions every few hours. It had been late when they’d gone to bed, and combined with the emotionally draining conversation they’d had before sleeping, and the broken night’s sleep they’d both had it was no surprise that Jackson was still asleep.

A glance at his watch told Stiles that it was not even six o’clock in the morning, and he groaned. He was still adapting to the time difference between Nanda Parbat and Starling City, although ever since he had joined the league had had become an early riser. You had to be when you weren’t very strong physically, and you hadn’t earned the respect of the other members of the league. When you were asleep you were vulnerable and Stiles had learned very early on that some of the other members of the league took special delight in inflicting early morning torture sessions on the smaller and newer recruits.

Getting up early had been the best way to avoid being targeted, especially as Stiles had discovered that he was generally faster than most of the league. No-one had gone anywhere near Stiles with the intent of causing him harm (outside of training) for years, not since he became a favorite of Ra’s, but
it had been a hard habit to break.

Still, it had been a long night, and Stiles would have preferred a few more hours of sleep before he woke up. Still…Stiles had never been very good at going back to sleep once he had woken up, so he grabbed a clean change of clothes out of his duffle bag and headed for the bathroom for a shower.

Once he was clean, dry and dressed, Stiles left the bathroom and sat on the bed, glancing at the couch where Jackson lay curiously.

He hadn’t expected to find Jackson in Starling City of all places, especially with an assumed identity, living in the glades and working alongside Oliver. It was obvious that neither Oliver, nor his team knew that Jackson was a werewolf, and yet it looked like they’d been working together for awhile, if the way Jackson regarded Oliver was anything to go by.

Oliver might not look it, or act like it, but Stiles knew how clever the older man was. Sure, maybe he wasn’t a math whiz like Lydia was, or a genius hacker like Danny, but Stiles had lived alongside Oliver to know that Oliver was highly intelligent in his own unique way. Jackson must have gotten very good at hiding his inner werewolf to keep something like that a secret from Oliver. Stiles was privately impressed of how good at covering it up Jackson was, but he’d never admit it out loud. It was Jackson after all. Stiles did have a reputation to maintain

TW/A

Oliver dropped silently down from the lowest rung on the salmon ladder, landing in a crouch on the mats beneath the apparatus. He rose out of the crouch, reaching for a towel to wipe the sweat from his hands and arms as he turned towards the staircase, smiling when he saw Diggle, Sara and Felicity coming down the stairs towards him. Thankfully it was a Saturday, and nobody needed to be at work today. Oliver honestly didn’t expect Roy and Stiles to get to the basement until later, willing to bet that they had stayed up late catching up with one another. With Stiles’ probable concussion they would have had a disturbed night sleep anyway, with Roy needing to wake Stiles up every hour or so to check how lucid the other man was. They both deserved the chance to sleep in and get away from their lives as vigilantes after all.

“How did everyone sleep last night?” Felicity asked. Diggle gave Felicity a slightly surprised look.

“You really asking that?” he asked.
Felicity blinked, and smiled weakly, “Yeah…stupid question…never mind.”

“Have any of you heard from Roy or Stiles?” Oliver asked the assembled members of the team. Diggle and Felicity shook their heads.

“I went past Stiles’ hotel room on my way here and had a peek in the window…They were both sound asleep by the looks of it.”

Diggle’s eyebrows shot up, and he looked at Sara in shock.

Sara blinked, before she rolled her eyes, “Not together. Roy was on the couch and Stiles was stretched out on the bed. I’m pretty sure Roy is straight.”

“What about Stiles?” Felicity asked. Sara and Oliver looked at one another, both of them shrugging.

“Stiles figured out he was bi when we were on the Island, although he’s never acted on it, as far as I know.” Oliver offered.

“I kind of suspected he was bi for awhile before that…probably since he was about fourteen or thereabouts,” Sara admitted with a shrug, “Laurel and I had a bet on how long it would take him to realize.”

“They’ll be fine where they are for the moment,” Oliver shrugged.

Felicity set her bag down and dropped gratefully into her chair, “I couldn’t believe that Roy hid so much of himself, I mean…it’s not like any of us share a great deal about our past…but he has this whole other identity…whole other family, that we probably would never have found out about if Stiles hadn’t called in to visit Starling City…although from what I read in the missing person’s report for Jackson Whittemore it’s noted that Jackson wasn’t very close to his adopted parents. It’s how they realized that he’d been kidnapped when Stiles kidnapped him in their Sophomore year…somebody sent the Whittemores a message off Jackson’s phone pretending to be Jackson and telling them all was fine…and they put I love you at the end. Apparently Jackson hadn’t said that since he was seven and they told him he was adopted.”

Diggle’s eyebrows rose in shock, “he hadn’t told his parents that he loved them in that long?”
“Yeah…and it sounded like things didn’t improve a great deal after the kidnapping either,” Felicity confirmed, powering up the screens and her tablet so she could bring up the reports and information.

“Several of Jackson Whittemore’s teachers, both in London and in Beacon Hills, commented that he had anger issues…he was borderline obsessed with being perfect…being number one…not academically, but on the sporting field…Lacrosse specifically…and that brings back bad ex stalker boyfriend memories…ugh.”

“Stiles used to talk about playing Lacrosse,” Oliver ventured thoughtfully, “he used to joke that his position was as benchwarmer.”

Felicity powered on her computer, plugging in her tablet and tapping at the keyboard in front of her, until three photos, obviously from the Beacon Hills High School Yearbook from Roy and Stiles’ Sophomore year, appeared on the screens in front of her. The first, largest photo, was a team photo, with the names of every team member in the photo’s caption. Immediately they all spotted both Roy and Stiles, positioned away from one another, and years younger than what they were now, but still unmistakable.

The second photo was another whole team photo, but this time the smiles seemed a little less forced. Every member of the team had a medal around their necks, and Roy and another boy were clutching a trophy between them.

The third photo was of a smaller group of only five. Roy and Stiles were both in it, and the trophy from the second photo was featured as well. Roy held onto one side of the trophy, looking pleased, but at the same time, relaxed, as if a great weight had been lifted from his shoulders. The boy on Roy’s right in the photo was holding onto the other side of the trophy, beaming happily at the camera, although Oliver could tell that it was a mask. The teenagers eyes betrayed the fact that all was not well in his life at that moment.

Stiles was on the other side of the boy, his face marked with partially healed cuts and bruises, although the smile on his face was genuine. In Stiles’ hands was another trophy, his thin, pale fingers clutching it proudly. Both Stiles and Roy had another boy beside them on the outside, and both of the boys there were the ones who looked, genuinely, the happiest. The caption gave the names of all of the boys, working from left to right…Isaac Lahey, Stiles Stilinski (MVP), Scott McCall (Co-Captain), Jackson Whittemore (Co-Captain), Danny Mahealani (Goalie).

Another click brought up the article from the yearbook, proclaiming that the Beacon Hills Cyclones had won the state championship of Lacrosse that year, the trophy being presented to the team at a special assembly instead of immediately after the game due to circumstances that weren’t specified in
the article. In the same article it was reported that Stiles Stilinski was awarded the Most Valuable Player in the final trophy at the same assembly, due to his outstanding performance in the final.

“I remember Stiles’ dad calling my dad and telling him about that game. It was the first time Stiles had actually played during a game. He was so proud about it all.” Sara told them, and Oliver swallowed, all of them knowing that it would also have been the last time Stiles…and probably Roy as well, had played Lacrosse for their high school. According to the article the Lacrosse season began in January and by the time January had rolled around again Stiles had already been on Lian Yu for weeks, and Roy had probably begun to make preparations for leaving Beacon Hills, and his whole life as Jackson Whittemore, behind.

“They look so young in those photos,” Felicity observed thoughtfully.

“They’re supposed to, they were kids back then.”

“And yet less than a year later Stiles was on the Island with me, and Roy had left everything behind to make a new life for himself, alone.” Oliver growled at the unfairness of it all.

“At least Stiles looks...healthy and happy...here.” Sara offered, “Whatever screwed him up in the head…it was after this.”

“He still looks pretty banged up though...you know what caused it?” Diggle asked

“Apparently a couple of the guys on the other team took exception to Stiles playing so well, and they kidnapped him after the game and beat him up, from what I remember Stiles’ dad telling my dad,” Sara replied, “but Stiles never said who exactly, and no-one could convince him to press charges, so nothing ever got done about it, even though his dad was the Sherriff.”

“Roy looks, I don’t know...relieved in this, but at the same time...I don’t know...off?” Ventured Felicity thoughtfully. Oliver studied the photograph again, and conceded that Felicity was right. There was something in Roy’s stance...the way he was smiling. Oliver didn’t know Roy as well as he knew Diggle, or Sara, or even Stiles, but it was obvious that something had been bothering the younger man back when the photo was taken.

“The question is…” Sara began “what we are going to do about it now.”
“Who says we need to do anything? You said yourself that Stiles wasn’t a threat to us.” Oliver reminded Sara, who rolled her eyes.

“Oliver…you know what I mean. Just because you have the emotional range of a teaspoon doesn’t mean Roy and Stiles do as well.”

“Ohh…nice pop culture reference,” Felicity congratulated Sara.

“Thank you,” Sara replied. Oliver glared at them both.

“Felicity…Sara…can we please get back on topic.” He hissed.

“Sending them off together was a good start…it might be all we need to do.” Diggle offered thoughtfully, “I don’t know much about what Stiles was like on the island, but Roy might be all it takes.”

Oliver sighed and braced his weight on the back of Felicity’s chair, his head bowed.

“I hope so,” he told the group.
“Are you done being creepy and pretending to be asleep?” Stiles finally ground out, glaring at Jackson, who opened his eyes and glared right back at him.

“How the hell did you know I was faking?”

“I might not be a werewolf like some people, but I have been trained, at least partially, by the League of Assassins. I did actually learn some things during that training. Knowing when someone is doing a shit job of fake sleeping is one of those things.

“Oh…somebody got up on the wrong side of the bed,” Jackson smirked, and Stiles bit back the retort that had been on the tip of his tongue.

“It’s nice to see that you’ve matured over time,” he offered in reply, and Jackson glared at him as he sat up.

“Likewise,” he growled out, before he strutted off to the bathroom. Stiles sat on his bed and waited for Jackson to return. He hadn’t initially planned on snapping at Jackson…these days had had a pretty tight grip on things emotionally speaking, but being around Jackson had begun to bring up memories that Stiles would rather forget.

Being around Jackson after so many years was proving to be a painful reminder about those Stiles left behind in Beacon Hills…and how much he missed them all. His dad, Scott, Lydia, Derek, Melissa…even Danny, Isaac and Kira. Over the years Stiles had tried to avoid remembering them, knowing how painful it was (although he’d never been very good at no thinking about those left behind in Beacon Hills) but now that he was with Jackson it was even worse.

Stiles was so lost in his thoughts that he startled violently when he heard Jackson opening the bathroom door, scowling when he saw Jackson’s smirk.

“Nice to see that some things never change. Still an uncoordinated spazz.”

“I had you in my sight last night,” Stiles replied, “If I had been an enemy then you would be dead.”
Jackson snapped his mouth shut as Stiles got to his feet and grabbed a clean change of clothes out of his duffle, heading to the bathroom himself, although Stiles could almost feel Jackson’s glare on the back of his head the whole time until the door closed.

Stiles showered quickly, the long years with the league teaching him to limit the time he was in such a vulnerable position, dressing in his civilian clothing, which felt strange against his skin. At Nanda Parbat he’d almost exclusively worn his training gear, or sometimes his full combat gear, ready for any sudden attack. He could get way with wearing his protective gear at nighttime in Starling City, but during the day it was too risky.

Still, the dark cargo pants and the plain t-shirt and jacket he was wearing was a far cry from the clothing he had favored back before he and Sara had been taken in by the league, and as Stiles looked in the bathroom mirror he could barely recognize himself as the awkward, nerdy kid from Beacon Hills.

Letting out a heavy sigh, Stiles braced himself against the sink and let his head drop forward, taking a moment to regroup and get a control of himself again, refusing to let Jackson, of all people, see how much being back with a member of his old pack was affecting him.

“Stilinski, you better not have passed out and hit your head or something in there,” Jackson bellowed after a few minutes passed, and Stiles exhaled shakily, a thin smile crossing his face as he straightened up and walked out of the room, chucking the shorts he’d slept in back into his duffle.

“You got plans or something, Jackson? A date to get to, maybe.”

“I would prefer not having to waste my entire Saturday waiting for your slow ass to get itself ready.” Jackson grunted, rising to his feet, “Come on, Oliver will be expecting us.”

Stiles did another quick check of the room, making sure everything that he didn’t want found was hidden, and that all of the windows were securely locked, before he followed Jackson out of the room and shut and locked the door behind him.

“So…is there a reason that you changed your opinion on Tattoos?” Jackson asked as they walked.

Stiles shrugged, “I didn’t want to forget,” he admitted, “and I wanted my body to have marks on it that weren’t scars. Marks that I chose to put there, that meant something…that represented a part of me and my history. Not everything that happened in Beacon Hills was bad.”
“Fair enough,” Jackson nodded, “Not scarring is one of the advantages of being…like me. The only issue with it is when your girlfriend doesn’t know about what you are, and sees you get stabbed, and then you have no scar.”

Stiles cringed, “When did you get stabbed?”

“Couple of years ago…and the girlfriend in question is Oliver’s sister.”

“You dated Thea? Are you nuts?” Stiles gasped as they began going down the stairs, “How are you still alive? How did Oliver not murder you?”

“To be honest, I’m still not sure,” Jackson replied, “Thea and I…we’re not together any more…but when we were together I lost track of how many lectures about looking after her I got given…not to mention there were quite a few times when Oliver was a bit enthusiastic about training…not that he ever really hurt me.”

“How did Oliver take the break up?” Stiles asked curiously.

Jackson shrugged, “she was the one who broke up with me…and it was about hiding the truth about what I was doing while helping Oliver out at night time, so he was actually really nice about it.”

“One time, on the island,” Stiles began with a smile, “before Sara came back, and Slade went crazy, Oliver wasn’t trying real hard with his archery training, and I told him, in front of Shado and Slade, to pretend that he was aiming at the dick of a guy who he had busted sleeping with Thea. He didn’t miss at all for the rest of the day. Slade thought it was hysterical. I never thought the guy that I was asking Oliver to imagine was you.”

“I actually only met Thea about six or seven months after Oliver came back,” Jackson corrected, “So if you were telling him that on the Island it definitely wasn’t me that was sleeping with Thea then.”

“Touché,” Stiles conceded as they finally reached the small, grubby hotel lobby and crossed to the main doors, letting themselves out onto the street. Stiles followed Jackson along the footpath, until they reached Jackson’s car.
“A bit of the let down from the Porsche,” Stiles commented lightly as Jackson unlocked the car and they both got in.

“Anything would be a letdown from that car. I wonder if now that Oliver knows that I was a wealthy kid he’ll let my ride his bike.”

“How’s he going to know that you were wealthy?”

“Felicity,” Jackson replied with a shrug as the car engine spluttered to life, “you can guarantee that by the time we got to the hotel last night Felicity had found out as much as she can using technology about me. She makes what Danny used to be able to do look like baby stuff, but don’t tell him I said that. He’s learned a lot of tricks over the last few years. I don’t want to end up even more broke than I am already.”

“I’ve heard rumors about the Starling City vigilante’s hacker. Nyssa was very impressed by her.”

“Felicity took a bullet for Sara once, so that would probably add to why Nyssa was so impressed.” Jackson said as he began to drive towards Verdant.

“What do you think Danny would do if he ever met her?”

“Probably freak out,” Jackson admitted with a smirk, “A couple of times in our emails I’ve hinted that I know someone who could be considered a hacker. He’s getting curious. If he found out that I knew the Starling City’ Vigilante’s hacker he’d be on the first plane out to Starling City so he could meet her. Actually, the idea of them meeting kind of intimidates the hell out of me. Imagine if Lydia ever joined them…”

“They’d take over the world,” Stiles nodded in agreement, “I’ve always thought that Lydia would be capable of doing it on her own, but if you have her working alongside Danny, and then just from the rumors I’ve heard about Felicity. They’d be unstoppable.”

Stiles surprised himself when he chuckled in amusement at the very thought. It had been such a long time since he’d thought he would ever find anything genuinely funny again. What surprised him even more was the fact that it was Jackson Whittemore that had inspired his laughter.

“When was the last time you saw Lydia. You said last night that she’d want to kill us both. What
did you do to piss her off?”

Jackson cringed visibly, “I, um, might have faked my death, and not told her about it. The only one who knows the truth is Danny.”

“You WHAT?” Stiles exclaimed, “She’s going to kill you if she ever sees you again…and Danny. What the hell did you do?”

“I told them I was going on a road trip, once things had settled down a bit after the Queen’s Gambit went down. I’d already organized new Identity papers with Danny, so I took everything with me. I headed into an area with a lot of hunter activity and ditched my car, leaving everything behind except the new identity papers. Eventually the pack came to the conclusion that I’d been taken out by hunters, that I was vulnerable and alone and they took advantage. I didn’t really have pack bonds tying me to Beacon Hills anymore, not since I went to London, so it wasn’t as though they would have had to go through breaking pack bonds.”

“If you weren’t driving I would hit you,” Stiles scowled, “Lydia had already lost Allison and Aidan, she didn’t need you being a douche and running away again with your tail between your legs.”

Stiles was expecting Jackson to defend himself, but instead the werewolf sighed sadly, “I know,” he admitted, “I…always treated Lydia badly, and I know I abandoned her when she still needed me, after losing Allison and Aidan and you, but I knew I didn’t belong in Beacon Hills. I thought that Lydia would move on better if I wasn’t there, a physical reminder of everything…before, but I knew later that was just me trying to justify what I did to her. I know I should go back and tell her that I’m alive, but I don’t want her to hate me.”

“I can’t say that she won’t, but she doesn’t deserve what you did to her. She deserves the truth.”

“I know. And it should be from me, in person. When I was dating Thea, and the press was following her around, I was worried that one of them would get a picture of me and then Lydia would see it and find out from them. I was convinced that one day she was going to walk into verdant and slap me across the face…and shoot me with a wolfsbane bullet, although I know I deserve both of those,” Jackson sighed.

“She wouldn’t kill you,” Stiles pointed out, “she’s a Banshee, I think she’s dealt with enough death over the years.”
Jackson nodded in agreement.

“Are you going to tell Oliver about werewolves?” Stiles asked after a drawn out silence.

Jackson sighed and shifted in his seat as he stopped at a red light, “I’ve been considering doing it for a while. He’s going to chuck a fit about me endangering Thea, but…but it’s only going to be a matter of time we came across some other supernatural creature and they ousted me, or I slipped up and did something that I shouldn’t be able to do. Not that long ago I got dosed with Mirakuru. He would think that that happened again.

Stiles flinched, “Nyssa told me about Slade and the Mirakuru army. How does Mirakuru go in combination with werewolf powers?”

“It weakened the wolf. If the Mirakuru hadn’t made me strong in it’s own way then I think I would’ve been back to human level strength. The only reason I knew that the Mirakuru was getting out of my system was the fact that my wolf was getting strong again and I started being more focused on being a member of a pack…Oliver’s pack.”

“Have you had many issues with hunters? Derek always used to say how omega werewolves are vulnerable and are often targeted by hunters.”

“Not too many problems. Most wolves steer clear of big cities; it can be very overwhelming on the senses and the fact that there is not much in the way of natural habitat, so hunters don’t usually go to big cities like Starling City very often unless there’s a reason, and I’ve kept a low profile. That being said I have had a few minor issues since I come to Starling City, but none of them have ended in a fatality.”

“Well, that’s something,” Stiles offered optimistically, “so, how were you going to drop the ‘I am a werewolf’ bombshell on Oliver and company.”

“I couldn’t ever settle on what to say,” Jackson admitted, ignoring Stiles’ pun, “Oliver doesn’t know about the supernatural…not that he’s let on anyway, so I don’t even know if he’d believe me.”

“You could always just blame me for everything,” Stiles shrugged as Jackson parked in the alleyway beside Verdant, “I was the one who dragged Scott out that night looking for the other half of Laura Hale’s body, and the only reason you got involved was because Scott all of a sudden was better at you at lacrosse and you couldn’t handle that.”
Jackson turned in his seat and glared at Stiles, “Yes, thank you for reminding me of that and how much of an ass I was as a teenager.”

“You’re welcome,” Stiles relied cheerfully, “but, in all seriousness, if there is a time when the supernatural comes to Starling City… give me a call, if I’m not here already. I know I’ve been out of the game as far as supernatural creatures go for awhile, but I’ve still got more experience fighting the supernatural than anyone else here that we know about.”

Jackson couldn’t help but be a little touched by Stiles’ comment. From what Stiles had said Jackson was fairly sure that this was the first time Stiles had really been free since before the nogitsune. He’d been possessed by the demonic Fox, chased across the world by his own demons and guilt, stranded on an island, and then taken in by the league of assassins, of all people, who hadn’t let him return to his homeland for years. Stiles hadn’t even returned to Beacon Hills yet, and here he was, promising to help Jackson protect Starling City from a supernatural threat. Considering that, realistically, Stiles had no actual ties to Beacon Hills, other than Oliver and the Lance family, and his own history with Jackson had been tetchy, at best, and downright hostile most of the time, Stiles’ offer was a big deal.

The pair fell into a silence as Jackson drove the rest of the way to the foundry, each of them occupied by their own thoughts. Jackson focused on thinking of ways he could tell Oliver and the others the truth about his supernatural status. He’d been content to keep it a secret for so long, but Stiles’ reappearance had made him put some more consideration and thought into the idea. It would also be easier to explain if Stiles was there to back him up for that particular conversation. Not knowing how long Stiles would linger in town before he headed south to Beacon Hills meant that if he was going to take advantage of Stiles’ presence, meant that he would have to get on with it.

Stiles, for his part, though about how much the man sitting beside him differed from the Jackson Whittemore he’d grown up alongside. If someone had asked him, a couple of days ago, what he’d though Jackson would be like these days, Stiles would probably have described Oliver as he’d been before the Queen’s Gambit went down. In many ways Roy Harper and Jackson Whittemore were two very different people, and Stiles respected that.

It didn’t take long before Jackson parked in his usual spot at the back of Verdant. Jackson and Stiles got out of the car, and Jackson made sure to double check that he locked it. Despite the Foundry being the base of operations for the Starling City Vigilante, the area around it was still a crime hotspot, and Jackson didn’t have the resources financially that he had as a teenager, when he’d driven his Porsche around.

The car secured, Jackson led Stiles to the secret back door, and let him in, closing the door behind them as they descended into the basement. Unsurprisingly, Oliver, Felicity, Sara and Diggle were all already there. Felicity was at her desk, Oliver was working on the salmon ladder, while Sara and
Diggle sparred on the mats. All eyes, however, were on the pair as they made their way downstairs.

“Well, they’re both still alive…that’s a good sign,” Felicity observed with a smile. Oliver began descending, the rhythmic clanking of the salmon ladder echoing in the large basement room.

Sara and Diggle, for their part, stopped sparring, rising to their feet and approaching the bottom of the stairs, grabbing towels along the way.

“You boys play nicely?” Sara asked with a smirk, wiping sweat from her face.

“Sara…I always play nicely,” Stiles replied with a cheeky grin. Jackson and Sara both snorted in disbelief at the comment.

“What?” Stiles asked with mock innocence, as Oliver dropped down from the salmon ladder, ignoring the appreciative look Felicity gave his bare chest before he slipped a shirt on.

“I hope you two took the chance to catch up with one another,” Oliver told them.

“Yeah, we did a bit,” Jackson nodded “Still a lot more to catch up on though.”

“I’m sure there will be plenty of time for that. How long are you going to be in town for, Stiles?” Diggle asked conversationally.

“I’m not sure, couple of days, at least,” Stiles shrugged, “I haven’t decided yet whether or not I’m going to check in back home, make sure my Dad is ok.”

“I’m sure your Dad would love to see you Stiles.” Sara offered, “It felt so good when I saw my Dad again, after so long. It’s your choice, of course, but…but I think you should go see him. Besides, you’re one of Ra’s favorites, he’s not going to do anything to endanger his relationship with you.”

“Relationship…you didn’t mention that,” Jackson teased. Stiles went red, and Jackson smirked, a sense of satisfaction washing over him at the knowledge that he could still do that, if he wanted to.
“Oh, God no, ew, Jackson, that’s disgusting. Not like that, just, yeah, no.” Stiles shouted.

“Sorry, bad choice of words on my part,” Sara apologized.

“I forgot to ask last night…what do the league call you?” Oliver asked.

Stiles blinked, “It’s kind of long winded. The league calls me Al ththaelib Aldhy yudir mae al dhdhiab.”

“The fox who runs with wolves,” Sara translated.

Jackson coughed, “seriously?” he asked in surprise, “The fox who runs with wolves? Did you pick that or...”

Stiles shrugged, “I picked the wolf part. Ra’s...he said from the start that I was a fox. He thought that the bit about wolves was funny...that I was referring to the league...that it was a statement of loyalty on my part to the league.”

“Isn’t it?” Oliver asked.

Stiles shook his head, “Kind of an inside joke...with my friends back in Beacon Hills,” he explained. Jackson nodded in agreement to back up Stiles’ story. In fact Stiles had provided a good lead in for that particular conversation...the one that Jackson had been dreading since the moment that Oliver revealed his identity as the Green Arrow. As if he could read Jackson’s thoughts, Stiles gave him an encouraging nod.

Reassured by Stiles’ gesture, Jackson took a steadying breath, “Um...the thing is...the wolf joke...and Stiles being the one who ran with wolves...there’s actually a story behind it...one that is the reason why...why we both left Beacon Hills, and what we were both involved in.” Everyone’s attention moved to Jackson, who shifted nervously under their scrupulous gaze.

“Last night, when Oliver asked if what were involved in was Gang related...he wasn’t all that wrong. We weren’t in a gang...but we were in a pack.”
“A pack...of wolves?” Diggle sarcastically observed.

Jackson rolled his shoulders slightly, “No...werewolves. The vast majority of the people that we hung out with are or were werewolves.”

“Werewolves?” Felicity choked out, “As in...turns into a wolf on a full moon and kills people?”

“Full shifts are difficult as all hell to pull off, and I have actually never done it, but in essence yes,” Jackson admitted, “and we did try and keep the fatalities to the bare minimum.”

“Did you know about this?” Oliver asked Stiles.

“Pfft,” Snorted Stiles, “I’ve known about this for longer than Jackson has.”

“How many are we talking about?” Sara asked curiously. Jackson did a mental headcount.

“At our peak I think we had seven werewolves, a banshee and two humans, but it floccculated.”

“I was one of the humans,” Stiles added.

“I’m one of the seven werewolves,” Jackson sighed. The effect was instantaneous. Felicity gasped and lifted her hand to her mouth in shock, while Diggle took an instinctive step away from Jackson, placing himself between Jackson and Felicity. Oliver and Sara didn’t move, but Jackson observed how they both visibly tensed.

“And you never saw fit to tell me about this before now?” Oliver practically growled.

“There wasn’t any danger. I have it under control...I have had it under control for years, well before I met any of you,” Jackson explained, keeping his tone calm and level.

“Is there some way you can prove it?” Sara asked, ‘It’s not that I don’t believe you, but it might make it easier for everyone.”
“Did you know about this?” Oliver asked Sara.

“Nyssa told me, years ago, that the supernatural was real, that werewolves, shape shifters, demons...druids, banshees, that they were all real. The league has a unit that deal with some supernatural threats, but I didn’t do much with them, they tended to keep to themselves.”

“Can you prove it?” Diggle asked Jackson, “I, for one, want to see some proof.”

“Fine,” Jackson shrugged, “just don’t freak out...or shoot me.”

Without saying anything more, he shifted fully into his beta form. He’d never mastered the full shift, like Derek, apparently, had (according to Danny), but Jackson had seen his beta reflection enough times to know that it did make him look a lot different.

“Oh my God...and you’re still in complete control?” Sara asked stepping forward curiously and taking Jackson’s hand in her own, inspecting his claws.

“Yes,” Jackson replied, cringing at how different his voice sounded. He rarely spoke in his beta form, and it was strange to speak with his teeth elongated.

Felicity side stepped around Diggle and approached Roy, taking in his facial features.

“Does it hurt?”

“No, not really,” Jackson replied, “and what little pain there is…it doesn’t last long.”

Jackson’s eyes fell on Oliver, and he cringed as he saw the hurt and betrayal on the older man’s face.

“I’m sorry I never told you. I didn’t think you would believe me. I thought that you would kick me out...chase me out of the city.”
“Were you always like this?” Oliver asked. Jackson shook his head, his voice faltering and failing him. Stiles, however, was able to step up.

“No...for the first sixteen years of his life he was normal. What happened...it’s really all my fault.”

“I thought he said you were human.”

“I am human,” Stiles replied, “but...the thing is...I was the one that started everything. What happened to Jackson was my fault.”

“I don’t know, I think we can trace the blame back to Gerard and Kate,” Jackson offered, “or even Peter Hale.”

Stiles shrugged, “maybe, but that’s a debate for another time. Long story short...I drag my best friend Scott out into woods to find a dead body that I’d heard about eavesdropping on my dad’s radio. Scott gets bitten by Alpha werewolf Peter Hale, who is crazy. Derek Hale, Peter’s nephew comes to town...I figure out that Scott is werewolf, Scott gets mysteriously very good at Lacrosse overnight, Jackson gets jealous of Scott’s new talent, tries to find out what’s going on, eventually Peter Hale attacks Lydia, Jackson’s on and off girlfriend, we help wound Peter, Derek kills Peter and becomes Alpha, Jackson gets bite from Derek so that he’s back to being best Lacrosse player, only it doesn’t work the way it should. Jackson becomes Kamina, which is a weird lizard snake thing with paralytic slime. Jackson is controlled by Matt, kills some people, tries to kill Derek and I, Gerard kills Matt, assumes control of Jackson, makes Jackson kill himself, Lydia and I hit Jackson with my car, Jackson comes back as blue eyed werewolf.”

A stunned silence stretched out after Stiles’ condensed account of events. Jackson knew that, at some point, Felicity would hound him for further details, but she would only get the chance to do that if Oliver didn’t kick him out.

“You...asked to be like this?” Diggle eventually asked.

Jackson shrugged, “I’m not proud of the person I was back then. My motives were...wrong.”

“I’ll say,” Stiles snorted. Jackson growled at him playfully, baring his teeth and flashing his eyes. Stiles just rolled his eyed at him and flicked Jackson on the nose. Jackson jerked back, glaring at Stiles and rubbing his nose gently, before he turned his attention to Oliver.
“Oliver, look, I’m sorry I never told you anything. I swear, I haven’t used my powers to kill anyone since I became a werewolf. I’ve kept my head down; there is no reason for anyone from the supernatural world to come after me,” Jackson explained.

“Powers?” Felicity asked curiously.

“Strength, better than human healing, the claws, all of my senses are better than normal,” Jackson explained.

“Can you guys give us a minute please?” Oliver finally spoke, rubbing a weary hand over his face. Jackson unconsciously bit his lip, his features going back to human, oblivious to the concerned looks that Stiles, Diggle, Felicity and Sara were shooting between him and Oliver.

“I think I need to go upstairs and have a drink,” Diggle suggested, and Felicity and Sara nodded, Sara grabbing Stiles by the arm and pulling him along as they left Oliver and Jackson alone in the Foundry. Jackson avoided looking in Oliver’s eyes, shifting his weight nervously as he resolutely looked around the entire room, except for the spot where the older man was standing.

“I’m sorry...” Jackson began, but he stopped when he heard Oliver step forward.

“Would you have ever told the truth to us...to Thea, if Stiles hadn’t arrived in Starling City? Would you have kept us in the dark, even if there was a risk, if you or those around you were being targeted?”

“Yes,” Jackson explained without hesitation, “And, if a time came when my powers would have come in handy, then I would have told you then.”

“Roy...have you been holding back because you’re worried about being found out.”

“When we’ve sparred, yes,” Jackson admitted, “...I didn’t want to tell you because...because I didn’t think you would believe me...that you’d think I was lying...that I was dangerous. I didn’t think you would listen.”

“How long have you been a werewolf?”
“Just over seven years,” Jackson replied, still avoiding meeting Oliver’s gaze.

When Oliver next spoke, his tone was softer and less angry, “and have you ever told anyone about it?”

“No,” Jackson admitted, “Everyone that knows either saw it happen, or figured it out for themselves.”

Jackson stiffened as he heard Oliver sigh, before startling slightly when Oliver put his hand on his shoulder.

“I’m not angry with you, Roy. I know how hard it can be to tell a secret about our past when you’ve kept it for so long. I’m sorry you felt like you couldn’t trust me with it...that I wouldn’t believe you...although...if you’d changed like you did earlier it would have been difficult to deny.”

“I...I didn’t want to get kicked out,” explained Jackson,”I don’t have anyone else. Even though you guys are all human...you’re the closest thing to pack I have.”

“Pack?” Oliver asked curiously.

Shrugging, Jackson began to explain, “Stiles probably knows more about this than I do, he did a lot of reading about Pack hierarchy and all that back...back before I left Beacon Hills. Werewolves...most werewolves live in packs. Each pack has an Alpha...a leader. Alpha have red eyes when they’re shifted, and are stronger, faster healers, and have better senses than any other sort of werewolf. Alphas are also the only ones who can turn a human into a werewolf. The larger the pack of Werewolves, the stronger the Alpha is. The Alpha leads the rest of the pack, who are all Betas. Betas either have blue or gold eyes, when shifted, and, even though they aren’t as strong...in any way, than the Alpha, they’re all stronger than Omegas. The more Betas in a pack, the stronger they are. The way the pack works together makes a difference too. If the pack is well balanced in terms of personalities and the like, they’re stronger than a pack which isn’t very balanced...which is very difficult when a pack is mostly made up of bitten teenagers who are as a group, in hindsight, pretty stupid. Then there are Omegas. Unlike Alphas or Betas, Omegas don’t have a pack, either by their own choice, their pack kicking them out, or the rest of the pack has been killed. Omegas aren’t as strong as other werewolves, and because they don’t belong in a pack, they’re vulnerable to threats. Werewolves are pack animals, they like being with other werewolves, they need to be around those they consider to be pack. Omegas don’t have that, and in a lot of cases the isolation can very easily push an omega over the edge and they’ll lose control...or they’ll go insane. That’s where the old horror movie cliché werewolf comes in. No control, just the mindless desire to kill. Once a werewolf reaches that point...it’s only a matter of time before a hunter catches on and they get...put down.”
“And what are you?” Oliver questioned.

“I used to know, now I don’t” Jackson admitted, “I was Omega at one point, for a long time I was. I...I never got to the point of losing control or hurting anybody, but there were days were...were I thought about ending it. At some point though...I started feeling more like a beta again...probably more like a beta than I ever have before...like I’d found a pack I belonged to...that I had an alpha who cared.”

“When did that happen?” Oliver asked.

Jackson looked up at Oliver’s face, fighting the urge to expose his neck to the older man, “have a guess,” he replied.

“But...but I’m not a werewolf.”

“I know that, and my inner wolf knows that, but it doesn’t change the fact that instead of being an Omega, I’m thinking more and more like a beta each day. It’s why I didn’t want you to know. I thought you would freak out and kick me out and I’d be an omega again. I...I don’t want to go back to that.”

“Who...who else do you consider...pack?” Oliver asked after a moment, faltering over the unfamiliar words.

“You, Felicity, Diggle, Thea, Sara, Sin, maybe Laurel, Danny, my hacker friend back in Beacon Hills, Lydia, who probably hates me...and surprisingly after all this time. Stiles...which is weird on many levels.”

“Weird...Jackson, we’re talking about werewolves...this whole conversation is weird, no offence”

Jackson leaned against one of the salmon ladder poles, “I haven’t seen Stiles in just under seven years, not since I left Beacon Hills the first time...and yet, last night, when I saw him, my wolf went nuts in my head wanting to get near him and be near him because he was a pack mate.”

“I thought you liked girls?” Oliver frowned in confusion. Jackson violently recoiled.
“What, no, not like that, Stilinski? Ew, no, never. Pack mate, not actual mate. Big difference.”

“Sorry,” Oliver offered, although Jackson could tell that the older man was amused by his reaction.

“Besides, “I think Sara would kill me if I went near Stiles,” Jackson added with a grin.

“You might be right there,” Oliver chuckled, before a thoughtful frown crossed his face, “Do you know the truth about what happened to Stiles before he came to Starling city...before the Gambit?”

Jackson hesitated, “Only what I’ve been told,” he replied honestly, “I was in England when all that went down. I only came back to the states when the news broke about how Stiles was on the Gambit. I know you’re kind of my Alpha, but I...I can’t tell you, it’s his history.”

“I wasn’t going to ask you to,” Oliver replied immediately, “I was actually going to ask if there was anything that you, or I, could do to help.”

Jackson sighed, flicking his gaze up to the door that Stiles and the others had disappeared to, “No,” he admitted. “I think the ones that could help him the best are thousands of miles away...and I can’t figure out if he wants to go there or not.”

Oliver didn’t say anything in reply, but Jackson knew that Oliver knew where, and who, he was referring to.

“If he did decide to go back...would you go with him?” Oliver eventually asked. Jackson thought about it. When he’d left (run away, realistically, if he was being honest with himself) the second time he’d promised himself that he wouldn’t ever go back unless Danny told him the pack were desperate for aid, and that Jackson’s presence would be useful. Times had changed, and Jackson felt that he had grown as a person. He and Stiles had a lot in common, in terms of their history. They both knew about the supernatural, they’d both been controlled, he by Matt and Gerard when he was a kanima, Stiles by the Nogitsune. They both then eventually went on to adopt vigilante lifestyles, with the sort of training and personal issues that brings. Although Jackson hadn’t had much to do with the league, he was close to Sara, and he knew Nyssa, so he understood some of what Stiles had experienced while he was with the league.

It was kind of brutally ironic to realise that of anyone else on the planet, the person he had the most in common with was Stiles Stilinski, the boy who he had bullied and terrorised in his childhood and
teenaged years. Even though they’d only just recently met up once again after a long separation, Jackson felt a sort of connection to the other teenager...a pack tie.

“If Stiles wanted me to, then I would go with him,” he eventually told Oliver, “I...I made a mistake when I left...ran away...the last time. I need to go and apologise and...and fix some things.”

A proud smile crossed Oliver’s face, and he reached out, resting his hand on Jackson’s shoulder, “If you want I’ll go with you. I know facing your past can be...difficult.”

“Thanks, but I think Stiles and I will be able to handle it, if we go. Besides...I don’t think that the rest of the Beacon Hills pack will be able to handle the entire gang arriving in town. I don’t think Beacon Hills could handle that.”

Oliver chuckled to himself, “Whatever you say...Now...do you want to give me a few more details about the story of how you came to be a werewolf.”

Jackson nodded, and sat down in one of the chairs near the computers, mindful not to sit in Felicity’s, grateful when Oliver followed his lead. It was going to take awhile.
Sara slapped her hand down on the counter of the bar at Verdant, turning to face Stiles, “I haven’t told you the news yet, have I?”

“What news?” Stiles asked in confusion, turning to face one of his oldest friends.

“Your dad got married.”

“I...I already know,” Stiles nodded, “Jackson told me last night. He said that he married Melissa McCall.”

“Back in February 2012,” Sara confirmed.

“Scott and I used to try and push them together,” Stiles admitted, “before everything went to hell. We wanted to be brothers for real...”

Felicity felt pity wash over her at the young man looked up at Sara with saddened eyes. She might have only just met Stiles, and she hadn’t lived in Starling City yet when the Queen’s Gambit had sunk, but it had been big news when it had first happened. Felicity had always felt empathy for the youngest person to have lost his life on the boat, even before she’d met Oliver. His age at the time of the yacht’s sinking, the fact that his life had been so drastically cut short, had been saddening. It had been the main reason for Felicity putting a little more effort into her own relationship with her mother.

At the time of the yacht’s sinking she’d often thought about Stiles’ family and friends. In the news articles and reports it was made public knowledge that Stiles’ mother had passed away, and that he lived with his father. It was also widely known that shortly after the sinking Moira Queen herself went to Beacon Hills to see Stiles’ father. It was speculated in the media that she had paid him money to compensate for the loss of his son...for how Oliver and Sara had led Stiles to his death, even if it had been just an accident. Even at the time the claims had seemed far fetched to Felicity, and she’d never seen any evidence of it, even when she’d been investigating the Queen’s Gambit for Walter Steele.

Although he wasn’t much younger than her, Felicity was struck by how young Stiles looked sitting at the bar, the shock of learning that his father had married during his absence still lingering on his face. Felicity could see, painfully clearly, how much Stiles missed his father at that precise moment.
“I’m sorry, that you weren’t there for it. My dad and Laurel were there.” Sara offered apologetically, obviously having read Stiles’ expression, just as Felicity had.

“Is he happy, with Melissa?” he asked. Sara reached out and rested her hand on Stiles’ shoulder, while Felicity could only smile reassuringly, not knowing Stiles well enough to offer any other comfort, nor having the knowledge he sought.

Sara, however, could do both, “He misses you,” she told him, “Laurel said that it was probably the saddest wedding she’d ever been to. He loves Melissa…but he’s never stopped missing you.”

“I know I should go back there,” Stiles sighed, resting his chin on his arm, “but at the same time I’m scared that Ra’s will send someone after me, and that will just put them all at risk. I know he knows where they live, where I came from, but…but for such a long time I’ve tried to tell myself that if I stayed away they would be safe…safe from all this crap anyway. I miss them…every day. My dad, and Scott, and Lydia, and Melissa, and Derek, and the rest of the pack. The thought of them was one of the things that kept me sane when I was training.”

“You should go to them,” Sara offered, “Ra’s won’t betray you…he wants you to like him, remember, he thinks you’re the one in the prophesy.”

“Do we even know what this prophesy states?” Diggle asked curiously. Sara and Stiles both shrugged.

“Probably nothing good,” grumbled Stiles, his mood dark.

“It could be nothing,” Felicity, “Maybe…maybe it’s already happened or something like that.”

“Nothing you can do about it at the moment anyway,” Diggle agreed helpfully. Stiles sighed and nodded, sitting back upright and resting his hands on the table in front of him.

“You’re right. I…I just miss them.”

“I can’t imagine how hard I would be to have gone through what you have,” Felicity commented.
Stiles couldn’t help but snort, “Trust me, sometimes the league…the island…it felt like a holiday compared to back home.”

“Werewolves making life difficult?” Diggle queried curiously.

“Werewolves actually weren’t the ones that gave me the most trouble,” Stiles admitted, his gaze becoming distant as he remembered the times when he was the most scared…when he was certain that he wasn’t going to get home to his dad…being abducted by Gerard, the alpha pack, Ms. Blake, Peter Hale, Jackson as a kanima…the Nogitsune. Stiles visibly shuddered at that particular set of memories.

“There are worse things out there than werewolves,” he told the others, sounding far older than his years, “a lot of them are humans. You should have met the asshole who was my Chemistry teacher in high school. I would rather take on a pack of werewolves than sit through another of his classes.”

Sara laughed, “Only you would say something like that,” she smiled, and Stiles felt his own mood improving. Over the years he’d found ways to manage the memories leftover from Beacon Hills, as well as the crap that had happened to him since then. The passing of time had helped sooth and heal the wounds leftover from everything that had happened to him, but by no means was he completely healed, and his exposure to Jackson after so many years was making it obvious.

From the way Sara was looking at him, Stiles knew that she knew in part what he was thinking about. He’d never told her the truth about anything that had happened in Starling City, but Sara knew him well enough to know that being back in the same country as his father, and being reunited with someone with whom he shared so much history, would be bringing back a lot of memories, not all of them good ones

“It’s your choice, Stiles, whether or not you go back to Beacon Hills or not,” Sara told him as Diggle and Felicity headed back towards the basement, no trace of humor in her voice, “And whatever you choose I’ll support you as much as you want me to…and I know Oliver will as well.”

“Thanks, Sara,” Stiles nodded in thanks, “I appreciate it.”

TW/A

“Do you mind if I ask you a question?” Felicity asked as Stiles wiped his sweat dampened hair back
from his face, a plain towel wrapped around his bare shoulders as the pair watched Oliver and Roy training.

“You just did,” Stiles replied with a smirk. Felicity sighed and narrowed her eyes slightly at him, giving him a look that worked very well at getting Oliver to do what she wanted.

Stiles chuckled, wiping his face with the towel, “Sorry, I couldn’t resist. Nobody at the league has a sense of humor, and if I’d tried that on one of them I would get my arse kicked. What’s up?”

“Do your tattoos represent anything? You don’t have to answer if you don’t want to…I was just curious.”

“They all do,” Stiles nodded, “yeah, some of them have more…depth to them, but yeah, they all mean something. These ones,” Stiles lifted his right hand to indicate the two dark rings encircling his left bicep, “Are to represent that I once was a member of the McCall pack of Beacon Hills. The triskellion on my right shoulder blade represents my belonging, at one point, the Hale pack of Beacon Hills…that’s the same pack that Roy was in, back in the day.”

“How come you don’t have a tattoo?” Felicity asked Roy, who shuddered.

“I don’t particularly want to be held down while being blowtorched,” Roy replied. The comment made Oliver miss time a step, and Roy managed to get the older male down on his back.

“A blow torch…are you serious?”

“I’m a werewolf,” Roy reminded, his breath coming in short pants, “super healing, remember. Normal tattoos just heal straight over.”

“One reason I am very glad I am human,” Stiles noted from where he sat.

Felicity swallowed, “what about the one at the bottom of your back.”

“Ah…that one represents my name within the league…the fox who runs with wolves…although it also represents a few of my personal…demons,” Stiles offered, his tone more subdued and serious,
“It’s on my back because they belong in the past…although they never stay there in real life. There’s always something bringing things back up.”

“Depressingly enough, he’s right,” Roy nodded from the mats, where he and Oliver had commenced sparring once again. Felicity couldn’t help but notice that, despite the fact that Oliver and Roy had been quite comfortable when they’d all come back to the basement, Roy seemed to be fighting with a bit more intensity than he did normally. She wasn’t sure if it was because he no longer had to hide his full strength, or if it was because of some unresolved issue between the two that was causing tension. She hoped it was the former, for the sake of the team.

“What about that one”, she asked; pointing to a tattoo she could see on Stiles’ right hip, ignoring the way that Oliver and Roy were trying to hide the fact they were eavesdropping on their conversation.

A smile spread across Stiles’ face as he looked fondly down at the dark mark on his otherwise pale skin, moving so it was more visible to Felicity, “that’s for my dad.”

“His Sherriff’s badge?’ Felicity asked, taking in the seven pointed star. Stiles simply nodded in reply.

“When I was a kid,” he began, “I always wanted to work with him…maybe one day become Sherriff myself,” he let out a huff of laughter, “Never thought that I’d be more on the other side of the law, or a vigilante.”

“What about when you were older. Did you have plans about which college you were going to try and get into?”

Stiles shrugged, “UC Berkley would have been good. Up until…up until things got really hard I was kind of thinking doing a mythology criminology double major. I would have been useful, regardless of what happened then. Things didn’t quite work out that way though.”

Felicity gently reached out and placed a gentle, reassuring hand on Stiles’ shoulder, and he gave her a grateful smile, before he dropped his gaze back towards his lap. Felicity took her chance, and looked across to where Oliver and Roy were, both of them having given up pretending that they weren’t eavesdropping on the conversation.

“I’m sure your dad would still be proud of you,” Felicity reassured gently, “Regardless of what happens.”
“Yeah,” Stiles sighed, “I hope you’re right.”
Chapter 10

Stiles shifted in his clothes uncertainly as he followed Sara down the corridor that lead towards her sister Laurel’s apartment. After seven long years it felt strange to be wearing civilian clothing and not combat gear, and Stiles couldn’t help but tug slightly at the material.

The jeans and shirt he was wearing were both a little too big for him, having been loaned to him by Jackson, and the hoodie he wore over the top was even bigger. Stiles had checked his reflection before he and Sara had left, and in his opinion he looked ridiculous, the overly large clothes making him look younger and scrawny than he actually was. Still, considering who he was going to be meeting that night, looking young and scrawny possibly was going to be a good thing.

“Are you ready for this?” Sara asked as she stopped outside Laurel’s apartment door. Stiles swallowed thickly.

“No,” he admitted.

“Hey…they were happy to see me again…eventually, and it’s not like you betrayed them like I betrayed Laurel with Oliver.”

“I still ran away though,” Stiles pointed out, “Your mom and dad were supposed to look after me, and I skipped town…skipped the country on them. At least you were an adult.”

Sara snorted and knocked on the door, both of them able to hear the sound of movement within the apartment, before the door was unlocked from the inside, and pulled open as far as the security chain would allow. Stiles positioned himself so he was out of Laurel’s line of sight, although he heard her undoing the chain and knew that the door would soon be fully open.

Laurel Lance hadn’t changed much in the seven years that had passed. Sure, she looked a little older, and a little more care worn than Stiles remembered, but not so much that he didn’t recognize her the moment he laid eyes on her. Laurel, however, was occupied with greeting Sara, so she didn’t notice Stiles, giving him a chance to glance into the room beyond the door. Laurel’s apartment was bright and clean looking, and Stiles noted that she seemed to be doing very well for herself.

“Sara, who is your friend?” Laurel asked politely, offering Stiles her hand to shake. Stiles couldn’t help but smile as he shook his head, allowing the hood to drop from his head, revealing his identity. Yes, it was overly dramatic, but he hadn’t been able to help himself.
“Hi Laurel,” he greeted with a shy smile, “um, Sara invited me to your family dinner…I hope that’s ok?”

“OK?” Laurel choked out, looking from Stiles, to Sara, and back at Stiles in shock, “Oh my God, Stiles come here,” Laurel gripped Stiles’ hand and pulled him forward, closer to her, before she embraced him in a tight hug. Stiles stiffened at the initial contact, before he relaxed into it. Laurel had always mothered him, ever since he could remember, and there was something oddly reassuring about being hugged by her…Something akin to how he used to feel when his mother used to hug him.

It didn’t take long for Stiles’ chest to start to feel tight, his anxiety beginning to build again as his body and mind both struggled to get used to being so close to someone. Within the league Stiles had been very careful about who he let close to him…he’d learned from his first few weeks with the assassins when a number of the older members had sought to take advantage of him. They hadn’t, but that was more because of the intervention of Ra’s or Nyssa than anything on Stiles’ behalf. The memories of being held down though, his assailants hot breath against his bare skin, sent a shudder up Stiles’ spine, and he pulled back, away from Laurel’s arms. Laurel immediately released her hold, perhaps knowing enough about what both Oliver and Sara had been through since boarding the Queen’s Gambit to guess that Stiles would have been through his fair share of bad situations.

“I can’t believe you’re here…does your dad know you’re here?”

“Starling City is his first stop,” Sara supplied helpfully when Stiles swallowed and ducked his gaze, avoiding looking up at Laurel, the ball of guilt in his stomach growing a little at the thought of his dad and how Stiles hadn’t gone to him first and eased his dad’s grief at least.

“Does our dad know?”

“No, he’ll find out tonight…where is he anyway? I thought we were running late.” Sara replied, crossing the threshold into Laurel’s apartment. Laurel and Stiles followed her inside, and Laurel closed the front door, locking it securely.

“He called…he got held up at the police headquarters…he should be on his way now though. Do you guys want anything to drink?”

“I’ll just have a glass of water,” Sara decided, and Stiles nodded in agreement, the older woman having warned him of Laurel’s past drinking problems. It had brought up painful memories of his
dad in the months and years following his mother’s death, and of Stiles’ fears that his dad would regress because of Stiles’ assumed fate. Still, Stiles had been a little surprised to hear about Laurel having those sorts of issues. When he’d been growing up she’d always seemed to be the responsible one, the one who would never put a toe out of line and did what she was asked. Still, people and circumstances changed, and even knowing only the little bit of the story he did, Stiles didn’t blame her for losing herself in the bottom of a bottle.

While Laurel was getting his and Sara’s drinks, Stiles looked around Laurel’s apartment.

“I like your apartment, it’s nice. Sara tells me that you work in the DA’s office?” he asked once Laurel returned from the kitchen.

“Yeah…it isn’t what I set out to do, why I studied law in the first place…but I’m really enjoying it.”

“That’s good,” Stiles nodded, glad that Laurel, at least, had gotten the chance to live a normal life. He, Oliver and Sara had had that option taken from them when the Queen’s gambit went down. It was good to see that Laurel had made a name for herself, and seemed to be doing quite well. She looked happy too, and healthy.

“I can’t believe you’re alive,” Laurel exclaimed softly as she, Sara and Stiles sat in Laurel’s living area, Stiles and Laurel on the couch, with Sara sitting in a chair.

“I’m kind or surprised I made it this long too, don’t worry, you’re not the only one,” Stiles offered with a wry smile and a shrug.

“Where have you been, though? Why didn’t anyone say anything?”

Both Stiles and Sara knew that by ‘anyone,’ Laurel meant Oliver and Sara, but it was Stiles who spoke up, “In his defense, Oliver didn’t know I was alive until I rocked up back in town. Yeah, I originally ended up on the island with him, but one day we got separated and I…ended up with Sara.”

“The league,” Laurel whispered, her eyes round with horror.

Stiles nodded, “As for Sara not saying anything…you can’t blame her. I’m not a kid anymore. I haven’t been for a long time…since before I even got on that damned boat. I don’t need to be
protected. I can look after myself.”

Laurel opened her mouth to say something in reply, but before she could make a sound there was a knocking on the door. Sara, Laurel and Stiles all froze.

“That’ll be dad,” Laurel told them.

Stiles fidgeted slightly, “I don’t know if I’m ready for this, I might just go out the…” Stiles was already moving to towards the window, but Sara beat him to it, blocking his path.

“Stiles…you’ve got to stop running from this. He gets it, he does,” Sara reasoned as Laurel watched on, torn between watching Sara and Laurel, and going to answer the door for her father.

Stiles shook his head, “I’m not running because of what happened to us,”

“Then why are you running?” Sara asked, noting that Stiles could have denied running at all, but he hadn’t.

“Because I don’t know if I can face my dad, and if I see your dad, spend the evening with him, then it will be a lot harder to continue keeping my dad in the dark about me being alive,” Stiles replied, his tone sharp.

“And why would your dad knowing the truth be a bad thing. When Sara came back we were so happy. Yes, it was hard at times, but I’m so glad that Sara chose to come back,” Laurel interjected.

Stiles shook his head, “You guys don’t get it. Maybe my dad…my friends…maybe they’re better off thinking I’m dead. They have their own things to deal with, they don’t need me bringing back more crap, risking exposing them to the League.”

“Stiles…you’ve always been a good judge of character. If…If they were any sort of good friend, like the friend’s I’m sure you would have, then they wouldn’t care. They would be happy to know that you’re alive.” Laurel told him as she walked towards the door. Stiles sighed and slumped back onto Laurel’s couch, and Sara followed her sister towards the door, standing a few feet behind her as Laurel unlocked the door and let her father into the apartment.
“Everything ok?” he asked his daughters. Laurel smiled, and hugged him, making Lance’s eyes widen in surprise.

“Ok, what was that for?’ he asked, “We saw each other earlier today.

“We’ve got a guest tonight,” Sara replied, glancing towards the couch, Stiles peered over the back of the couch that the man who, in some ways, had become like his second dad when he’d been younger. The moment Lance’s eyes fell on Stiles, he let out a soft gasp.

“Did any of you actually die on that damned boat?” He asked as Laurel pulled away from him, freeing him up to go to Stiles. Sara and Laurel both watched as their father approached Stiles, in some ways the son he’d never had. They both noticed how Stiles moved back slightly, and Lance immediately slowed down. It was obvious that he’d been planning to hug stiles tightly, but Lance had seen Stiles move back a little, cautiously, and had changed his mind, instead clasping Stiles’ shoulder firmly.

“Good to see you alive kid, you had a lot of us very sad when the news broke. Does your dad know you’re alive?”

“No Mr. Lance,” Stiles replied ducking his head guiltily, “I…wanted to scope things out a bit before I took the risk of heading down to Beacon Hills.”

Stiles could feel the penetrating look Quentin Lance gave him, before the man in question turned his gaze on Sara. Stiles could almost feel the older man mentally putting the pieces together, matching up Stiles’ return, less than a year after Sara returned in a similar manner.

“He…he was with you…he’s part of…”

“The league, yeah, I am,” Stiles admitted, “Don’t be angry at Sara for not telling you about me. It wasn’t her story to tell. I…I don’t think I was ready to come back until now.”

Lance sighed and rubbed his hand wearily over his face, “When Sara came back I should have known that something like this would happen.”

“Have you told my dad about Sara being alive?” Stiles asked.
Lance shook his head, “no…I haven’t spoken to your old man in awhile…not since just after the wedding. Loosing you…it hit him hard…harder than even your mom’s death. When Sara came back I couldn’t tell him that my kid had made it back when his hadn’t. Seeing Oliver Queen’s face spread on the front of every newspaper in the country would have been bad enough for him to see.”

Stiles nodded in acceptance, “Thank you,” he told Quentin, “For…for keeping him out of this. I… I’ve already put him through too much. It’s better that he think that I died when the Queen’s Gambit went down.”

“Yeah, well, trust me when I say that, as a father, and particularly one who has been in this situation I think that you’re wrong about that. I spent a long time grieving Sara, only to find out that she was still alive,” Quentin smiled as he looked lovingly over at Sara, “and that was one of the best days of my life. You’re old enough to make your own choice, Stiles, and I’m not going to force you into doing anything…it’s your choice, but believe me…I think your dad deserves to know the truth.”

“I…I’ll think about it,” Stiles acknowledged. As much as he was arguing the point, it was getting harder and harder to maintain his viewpoint. With every passing hour his resolve to stay away from Beacon Hills was waverering, his desire to see his father and the pack once again growing with time. He couldn’t deny that he missed everyone he had left behind in Beacon Hills, even after so many years away. Stiles knew that there was the risk of the League following him back to Beacon Hills, but Stiles wasn’t sure how much longer he could fight his desire to go back to the town where he’d been born and grown up.

As far as he knew the league had never really shown any interest in the supernatural. Yes, Nyssa had had some minor dealings with supernatural creatures in the past, and Ra’s and the other senior members probably had too, but no-one within the league was a supernatural creature, as far as Stiles had been able to tell, and Stiles was fairly certain Ra’s would have said something to him if he’d any intention of doing something about the pack.

Stiles knew that Ra’s was aware of his past involving the supernatural, the name he’d been given within the league told him that much, although how much exactly the leader of the league knew remained a mystery. He knew that Stiles had once been affiliated with werewolves, and that Stiles had once been possessed by a Nogitsune, and that Stiles may well be the only person to have ever done so and lived to tell the tale…Stiles knew that simply because of the prophecy that Ra’s believed was about him, but how much past that the league was aware of Stiles wasn’t exactly certain of.

Considering the fact that Ra’s wanted Stiles as an ally, for whatever reason, Stiles doubted that Ra’s would go after anyone Stiles was close to in Beacon Hills, although he, realistically, knew that his own desire to return to his home town was making him biased towards thinking that way. Nobody knew the plans of the leader of the League of Assassins other than the man in charge himself, and to
try and guess his thought process was a foolish and risky endeavor. Stiles was well aware of this fact...he’d seen others within the league with aspirations of becoming it’s leader being outwitted by Ra’s time and time again in the few short years he’d stayed with them.

“Stiles…you with us?” Sara’s voice cut through Stiles’ thoughts, and he blinked, mentally dragging himself back into the present, forcing thoughts about returning to Beacon Hills and the potential repercussions of that to the back of his mind.

“Yep,” Stiles replied, smiling reassuringly at Sara, although it was obvious that Quentin Lance wasn’t convinced, his eyes still filled with concern as he watched as Stiles followed Sara and Laurel to the dining table.

“I’m sorry.” Quentin apologized as he joined his daughters and Stiles at the table, “For pushing. I can’t even begin to imagine what kind of hell you’ve been through, and…and the league are scary as hell, I’ve seen them in action. I get it if you don’t want them anywhere near your dad and your friends. You just do...do what you think is right.”

“Thanks, Mr. Lance,” Stiles nodded in appreciation, “You’ve given me something to think about.”

Quentin smiled and reached out, telecasting his moves carefully so not to catch Stiles unaware. Stiles was ready for it when the older man ruffled his hair affectionately.

“Your hair is a lot longer than it used to be.” Quentin observed with a chuckle, and Laurel and Sara both laughed.

Stiles nodded in agreement, “Trust me, it’s shorter than it was when I first joined up with the league,” he told them, and Sara giggled at the memory of Stiles after over a year on the island. As strange as it had been to see Oliver with long hair, it hadn’t suited Stiles at all.

Stiles too was reflecting on the ‘washed up on a not so deserted island’ look he, Oliver and Slade had carried, although Slade had managed to pull it off far better than Oliver and Stiles. Cutting his long hair and shaving the facial hair he’d managed to spout, had been one of the best parts about getting off the island.

The four of them ate their meal, with Stiles being surprised at how easy it was to fall into conversation with the Lances. He listened as Laurel told him about what her mother had been up to since the Queen’s Gambit went down, and while Quentin talked about what Laurel and Himself had
been up to over the last few years, and about some of his less sensitive police stories, knowing that, before everything had gone to hell, Stiles had once hoped to study criminology and join law enforcement in some regard.

It had been interesting to learn what they had been up to, although it hurt that both Laurel and her father had suffered so much, first with Sara’s disappearance, and then with the breakup of Quentin and Dinah’s marriage, and then, years later, Oliver’s reappearance and the death of Tommy, Laurel’s boyfriend, in the Glades earthquake.

Although Stiles knew, realistically, that things would have still been happening in Beacon Hills and Starling City while he was on the island and, later, at Nanda Parbat, the thought of nothing bad happening to those he’d left behind had been one of the few things that had kept him sane over the last few years. He was glad that he knew that his dad was alive, and happily married to Melissa, but his stomach clenched at the idea of what might have happened to the rest of the pack since he left town. He wasn’t sure what he would do if he learned that something bad had happened to Scott, Lydia, Derek or one of the others.

Okay…it was probably foolish to think that nothing bad had happened, Stiles reasoned with himself…it was Beacon Hills after all…but, maybe, he could narrow it down. If the rest of the pack had endured the last years without anyone dying, any serious or long lasting injuries, loosing of loved ones, or mental trauma, Stiles would be happy…inwardly surprised, but happy. If any of those things had happened…Stiles wasn’t so sure he’d ever be able to forgive himself. He would probably live out the rest of his life blaming himself for what happened…for not being there to help prevent it himself, and for Allison, Aidan, and the other people who had died because of the nogitsune not being there to help either. Who knew what any of those people would have gone on to do if they hadn’t been killed because of Stiles and his weakness? Stiles could be responsible for the death of someone who would go on to find the cure for cancer, or something like that.

“Stiles…you ok?” Laurel’s soft voice cut through his thoughts, and Stiles blinked, realizing he had spaced out, and now had Sara, Quentin and Laurel all staring at him in concern.

“Er, yeah, I’m fine,” he told them, although he knew that it wasn’t a very convincing lie. He didn’t look up at the Lances though, knowing what their faces would look like at that precise moment, the pity and concern, the fear and the sadness. All three of the Lance family present knew Stiles well…since he was a baby. In Stiles’ baby album there were even photos of Laurel and Sara holding him.

Stiles knew that he wasn’t the same kid that they had known. Yes, Sara knew what he’d been through…she’d gone through much the same ordeal, but Stiles knew that, over the course of the evening, he’d made it clear how deeply he’d been impacted by what he’d been through since the last time he’d seen Quentin and Laurel. He hated how weak it made him look, especially considering Sara was relatively normal in comparison.
“Look, I probably should go. You guys had a nice family dinner planned, and I gate crashed it. It’s been nice seeing you all again…I’ve really enjoyed it, but I’ve gotta go now.” Stiles excused himself, rising to his feet.

“Stiles, It’s ok,” Laurel offered. Stiles forced himself to look at Laurel in the eye, before he looked over at Quentin.

“No…it’s really not. I’ll…I’ll think about what you’ve said about going to see my dad…about going back to Beacon Hills, but…But I need some time to think.”

Stiles backed away before he turned and all but ran from Laurel’s apartment. He heard Sara, Quentin and Laurel trying to call him back, but he ignored their voices, and none of them pursued him, although Stiles was fairly certain that Sara had told her father and sister not to try and chase him down.

Stiles had spoken the truth when he’d said he needed time to think…and he’d found that over the years, the best way to do that was for him to be alone…just like he had been for such a long time.
“You wouldn’t guess, just by looking at him, how muscular he is,” Felicity observed in a hushed voice, as she, Roy and Diggle watched as Stiles climbed the salmon ladder, his tattooed chest exposed and his muscles flexing powerfully as he worked his way through the arduous exercise.

“I wouldn’t go saying something like that to Oliver,” Diggle suggested, although Felicity and Roy both heard the respect in Diggle’s tone.

Felicity quirked her eyebrow playfully at Roy, “What about you, now that your little furry werewolf secret is out are you going to show off how strong you really are?”

“Nah…wouldn’t want to shatter Oliver’s Alpha male ego,” Roy replied with a smirk. Diggle snorted in amusement at the joke at Oliver’s expense.

“That reminds me…I want to get a sample of your DNA so I can run some tests on it..” Felicity smiled cheerfully, turning her attention to her computers and Stiles began his descent.

“Er, you do realize that my being a werewolf hasn’t changed in the last year. I’ve been a werewolf since well before I met any of you…except for Stiles, obviously.”

“I know that, but I didn’t know that there was the possibility for your blood being weird. I mean, when you still had the Mirakuru in your system we were looking for it, but now that the mirakuru is all gone I want to have another look and see if there is anything…strange.”

Roy shrugged and rolled up his sleeve helpfully, “are you sure you’re not actually a vampire?” he asked teasingly as Stiles dropped safely to the ground, brushing excess chalk off his hands, “You seem very into taking blood samples.”

“Ha ha,” Felicity rolled her eyes, propelling her roller chair over to the drawers where the medical supplies were kept and pulling out a syringe and some vials, "just out of curiosity though...are vampires real?"

Roy simply smirked in response and Felicity glared at him when she realized he was teasing her, pulling out what equipment she needed with a little more force than was neccessary, before she walked back over to Roy and slapped him in the arm.
“Seriously?” Stiles moaned as he caught sight of what Felicity was doing, his already pale skin losing a little more color.

“Not a big fan of needles?” Diggle asked

“Not particularly,” Stiles replied.

“Even after getting the tattoos?” Felicity asked, cleaning a patch of Roy’s skin before inserting the needle and withdrawing her sample of blood.

Stiles swallowed and nodded, “Yeah,” he admitted, looking more than a little sick.

“I heard that you were the one that fainted when Scott got his,” Roy teased with a smirk.

“Yeah, well, I also had to hold Scott down while Derek did it with a blowtorch…later that very same day, so it’s not like I escaped the situation without a certain degree of mental trauma.”

“A blowtorch?” Diggle exclaimed in horror.

“A disadvantage to the healing powers,” Roy offered, “Even if you want the mark to remain it doesn’t unless it was something major that gave it to you in the first place…Why do you think I don’t have any tattoos?”

“To be honest I just thought you were too much of a pretty boy to mark yourself like that,” Felicity offered bluntly, before her cheeks reddened.

“Please just forget that I even said that,” she added.

TW/A

“I’m pretty sure Scott and Derek would have both gone into shock if they saw you doing the salmon
ladder earlier,” Jackson told Stiles as they sat on the floor in the Arrow cave, both of them holding cartons of Chinese food that they were leisurely eating while Oliver and Sara trained. Diggle was working out nearby, while Felicity was fiddling with the inner workings of one of her computers.

Stiles snorted, “Yeah…I think there would be a lot of things about both of us that would put them in shock,” he agreed, “even if it is just the fact that we’re both, well, alive.”

“True,” Jackson conceded, “I mean, they night suspect that I might have made it, but you…I don’t think they doubt the fact that you’re dead these days.”

“Do you wanna be there when I prove them wrong?” Stiles asked. Jackson blinked, needing a few seconds to understand what Stiles had just said.

“Prove them wrong? You’re going back?”

“Yes… I am. I’ll probably regret it, but yeah…I think I’m going to leave tomorrow morning, before I chicken out and talk myself out of it.”

“Does this have anything to do with what happened at Laurel’s last night?” Jackson asked, having been told what had happened by Sara. Stiles’ back stiffened slightly, before he rolled his neck and forced his shoulders to relax.

“Maybe,” he admitted. Last night I realized… I realized how much I was still being affected by… everything that’s happened, and I know that I need to stop running from it. For me it all started in Beacon Hills. That’s where…that’s where everything turned to crap for me. I need to go back and face what happened with the Nogitsune. Seeing Quentin and Laurel again…it showed me how much us… Sara, Oliver and I being dead impacted them. I…I can’t let my dad keep living like that…grieving. I’ve been a selfish ass, and I need to fix it.”

“I’ll go with you,” Jackson offered, “It’s past time that I came clean about everything too. Besides, with both of us coming back at the same time Lydia might hopefully only kill one of us. It’ll give the other one a chance to escape.

“If Lydia wanted us both to be dead then we’d both be dead,” Stiles pointed out. Jackson nodded, letting out a sigh of agreement.
“Yeah…I guess you’re right.”

A/TW

“Are you sure you don’t want one of us coming with you?” Oliver asked as he stood in the alleyway out the back of Verdant, leaning against the front of Roy’s car, while Felicity and Sara were hugging Roy and Stiles goodbye. Roy rolled his eyes over Felicity’s shoulder.

“Oliver, we’ll be fine,” Stiles shrugged, “I mean, Jackson is a werewolf, and I’m a trained assassin. We’re just going on a road trip back to Beacon Hills for a bit. We’ll be back soon. The real question here is: are you going to be ok keeping Starling City in one piece until we get back old man?”

Oliver bristled at Stiles’ teasing, but he ignored the playful jest. If he was honest he was glad that Stiles was poking fun. It was a trait that the younger man only rarely showed, even before he was taken in by the League, although Sara and Laurel had both told him that, in his youth, Stiles had been well known for his wisecracks and joking nature.

“Yeah, Dad,” Roy added with a smirk, “Chill a bit, would you. Between us I’m pretty sure that Stiles and I can look after ourselves for a few days.”

“I know that,” Oliver rolled his eyes, “I’m sure that you two can look after yourselves…it’s your ability to not try to kill each other that has me more than a little concerned.”

“We’ll restrain ourselves,” Stiles promised, pulling away from Sara and shaking hands with Diggle. Roy shook hands with Oliver himself, before he got into the driver’s seat of his car, while Stiles scampered around to the passenger’s seat.

“Make sure you share the driving a bit,” Oliver cautioned. It was a long drive to Beacon Hills from Starling City, and he didn’t want to hear that Roy had gotten tired and crashed into a tree or something.

“Do I have to?” Roy protested.

“Aw, come on, Dude, you let me drive your Porsche,” Stiles protested loudly.
“Once...and only because you knew the road out Hale’s house better than me, and you stole my car keys. Besides…my parents paid for that car…I paid for this one,” Jackson argued, “and it’s already been through enough without you getting behind the wheel.”

“Have a nice trip,” Oliver chuckled, shaking his head at the younger pair and their arguing. It would be good for both of them to get away for a bit and just be normal guys their age, even if it was only for a few days. Oliver knew that sometimes he forgot how young both Roy and Stiles were, and with what he’d recently learned, combined with what he knew already, it was painfully obvious that both of them had been forced to grow up far too quickly.

Stepping away from the car and putting his arm gently around Felicity’s shoulder, Oliver watched as Roy started the car and accelerated down the alleyway, before turning out onto the main street and disappearing from sight.

“It’s going to be weird with Roy not around,” Sara observed thoughtfully. Oliver shrugged and turned to head back into the basement.

“We’ll manage,” he told them, “They’ve both earned a break.”

“Something tells me that, somehow, their trip back home isn’t going to be as restful as you think it’s going to be,” Diggle offered. Oliver had to concede that Diggle had a valid point. Who knew what was going on in Beacon Hills at that precise point of time? They might have just sent Roy and Stiles into a storm far bigger than anything that might have happened in Starling City.

“I’ll keep an eye on them, don’t worry,” Felicity offered, and Oliver smiled at her thankfully.

“Felicity…you are remarkable,” he told her playfully.

Felicity shifted slightly and blushed, “Thank-you for remarking on it.”
“Is it just me, or does it feel strange to be heading back to Beacon Hills after all this time?” Stiles asked as he gazed out the window, watching the passing scenery. Jackson shifted in the driver’s seat, and Stiles guessed that Jackson was fighting with himself, weighing up the merits of replying truthfully or sarcastically.

In the past there was no way Jackson would have ever thought about it, probably going with something along the lines of ‘well, you’ve always been strange’ or something like that. Now though Jackson seemed to have put a lot of effort into transforming himself into a better person and Stiles couldn’t help but be impressed by the maturity his former nemesis displayed.

“It does feel weird to be heading back,” Jackson eventually commented, “When I left there I was convinced that I would never go back, that I was done with that town.”

“And then I put a hole in that plan,” Stiles added with a smirk.

Jackson chuckled, “of course you would be the one to ruin it,” he agreed, although Stiles knew that Jackson was only joking, there was no heat or malice behind the words, only humor and gentle teasing.

“Who would have thought that the day would come when we would be voluntarily spending time together…joking with each other and everything.”

“I know,” Jackson nodded, “Nobody will ever believe it. They’ll think that we’re shape shifters pretending to be the real Jackson and Stiles…or that something’s possessed both our bodies and… shit, sorry.”

Stiles blinked, before he let out a sigh, “Considering our past life experience us being…possessed isn’t beyond the realms of possibility. We’ve both been controlled like puppets before, it’s not unheard of for it to happen twice, and well, you’re right, and someone could be controlling our corpses, although I would like to think that I don’t look like I’ve been dead for seven years. I know I’m not the best looking guy around, but still…it’s generally accepted that I drowned…that doesn’t do nice things to you once you’ve been under for awhile. I want to think that I don’t look like that.”

“Relax, you don’t look like a corpse that’s been fish food for seven years. You also have a pulse and you are obviously breathing. They’ll figure it out soon enough, and to be honest, I think that they’ll
be too hyped about you being back to worry about potential risks.”

“You do have a valid point. It’s still Scott,” Stiles smiled at the thought of his former best friend, “I wonder how much they’ve changed.”

“Everyone changes,” Jackson pointed out, “hell, look how much we’ve changed over the last seven years. I’m on my way to becoming a decent human being, and you’re a badass whose trained with the League of Assassins. That doesn’t mean that Scott isn’t going to be all over you like a god damned rash the minute he lays eyes on you and gets a good whiff of your smell.”

“My smell? Has that changed much?”

Jackson took a delicate sniff, “You’ve lost that slight chemically smell that you used to have…Derek once said that it was your ADHD medication, when Isaac asked about it. You do smell a little bit more…I don’t know…dangerous, that you used to, and there is a very subtle smell of gunpowder on you…less than what hunters have, or Diggle, or Sara, or Captain Lance, but it’s there, faintly. Other than that you still smell the same, pretty much.”

“I didn’t know you guys paid so much attention to my scent before,” Stiles commented, more than a little confused, and slightly embarrassed, “and what do you mean by pretty much?”

“Derek made Isaac and I learn how to recognize scents before I left for London. Yours was one of the ones we had to recognize…Scott’s too, and Lydia. Derek said it was because odds were you or Scott were going to get into trouble, and we’d have to rescue you, and with Lydia it was because he thought she might be in danger because of her involvement with me. As for how your scent has changed…well, you don’t smell so much like a hormonal teenager who thinks of sex fifty million times a day and jerks himself off more times than he brushes his teeth.”

“You could smell that?” Stiles yelped, burying his face in his hands, “Oh my God, no wonder Derek hated me.”

“Scott was worse, he stank so badly whenever he was within 100 yards of Allison…or if he was within 100 yards of anyone mentioning Allison.”

“He was a bit pathetic back then, wasn’t he,” Stiles wryly offered with a small grin.
“Yes, he was,” Jackson nodded, “but that’s not the only thing about how your scent has changed. You don’t smell so scared anymore.”

“The anxiety?” Stiles questioned, remembering Scott and Derek talking about how his anxiety had impacted his smell.

“Just after the Queen’s Gambit went down, when I was back in Beacon Hills, I went into your room with Lydia. She wanted to, I don’t know, sit in there for a bit, and she didn’t want to do it alone. Your smell in there, and the traces of your smell that were still lingering in town…Derek explained to me about how your anxiety had influenced your scent. It’s not so bad now. I mean, sometimes it’s there, a tiny bit, but compared to what it was, and assuming that how much the anxiety is impacting your scent is a indication how your mental state…I’d say that you’re in a better condition than you give yourself credit for.”

Stiles gave a dark chuckle, “Trust me, I’m pretty sure it’s going to be getting a lot worse when we get closer to Beacon Hills.”

“Ah well, I can always roll down a window if it gets too much,” Jackson shrugged, before Stiles swatted him in the arm.

TW/A

“So…how do we want to do this?” Stiles asked as he lay on his back on the motel bed in the room that he and Jackson had hired for the night. It was a three day drive from Starling City to Beacon Hills, and this was going to be the last night before they arrived in town, barring any unforeseen delays.

Jackson had estimated that they would arrive in town mid afternoon, or thereabout. It was summer time, and according to Danny, who Jackson had informed of their arrival, the entire pack was in town. Danny himself had arrived in Beacon Hills that day, accompanied by Ethan, as he’d wanted to be there to witness the pack’s reaction to Jackson and Stiles. The rest of the pack, however, thought that Danny had only come home to visit his parents.

“Assuming Scott isn’t a complete idiot, which, you know, not the safest assumption to make, he’s going to know that there’s a trespassing werewolf in his territory before we actually get into town. Even if Scott doesn’t pick up on it Derek probably would.”

“Which means he’d confront you,” Stiles nodded, “No element of surprise then,”
“Not so much,” Jackson agreed, “Hopefully he’ll still be the kind of guy who asks questions first, you know, and won’t tell Chris Argent or your dad to just blow the strange werewolf’s head off without checking who it is first.”

“Hopefully Danny will be able to talk him out of anything too rash, if it does come to that. I don’t think it will though. Scott has always been against using violence...even if it would’ve made life a lot easier.”

“Sounds like he and Oliver would get along then,” Jackson commented and Stiles laughed.

“Yeah…although that does bring up an issue I hadn’t considered.”

“What’s that?”

“I’m an assassin…You said yourself that I small a bit like a hunter. I already have blood on my hands. What if he takes one look at me and realizes what I’ve been doing in the past seven years. Yes, I’m not an active member of the league, I don’t get sent out with a name and kill the person. But I have still killed people, and yes, I’m not counting people whose deaths were connected to the Nogitsune. What if he doesn’t want anything to do with me?”

“Then he’s an asshole.” Jackson replied simply, “I’ve killed people too, so we’d both be out of the pack on that method of thinking. Also, if we discount known murderers, he’d have kicked out Derek and Chris Argent as well, and yet they’re still in the pack.”

“That’s different and you know it,” Stiles replied heavily.

“So? Stiles…it’s Scott for fucks sake. Scott would never turn you away. He’s just going to be glad that you’re actually alive. You two are brothers, probably even more now than you were back before this happened, with your parents being married and everything. He’s not going to care about what you’ve done, all he’ll care about is that you’re alive and safe,” Jackson retorted, “Just the thought of how sappy the reunion between the two of you is going to be is giving me diabetes”

Stiles rolled his eyes, “I’m sure it’s not going to be that sappy,”

“Wanna bet?” Jackson smirked.
“So, we never actually decided on a plan,” Jackson offered, breaking the silence within the car. They were on the last stretch of the journey now, and Stiles’ prediction about his anxiety getting worse as they got closer to Beacon Hills was proving to be very accurate. The smell of anxiety in the car was growing with every mile, and Jackson had hoped that appealing to Stiles’ talent for strategy would be an effective way to get Stiles’ mind focused on more positive things, rather than dwelling on memories, or on worst case scenarios.

“You’re right,” Stiles sighed, nodding wearily and rubbing his hands over his face. Neither of them had gotten much sleep the previous night, both of them too preoccupied with the thought of being back in Beacon Hills after seven long years of absence.

“So…what do you think. You know Scott way better than I do.”

“Ok…” Stiles nodded thoughtfully, “He’s not going to know that it’s us. Even if he catches our scent there is no certainty that he’d recognize it…especially yours. With that in mind…we probably should stay away from areas that he wouldn’t want rogue wolves.”

“Meaning?” Jackson prompted

“Not near where anyone lives or works. Not Deaton’s clinic, the hospital, the sheriff’s office, and definitely not anywhere near where my dad and his mom live, or near where Kira lives.

“Ok, that’s good,” Jackson nodded, “although…we don’t know where your dad and Scott’s mom live, or where Scott lives, or where Kira or anyone else live. Danny’s parents still live in the same spot, but some people might have moved.”

“You’re right,” Stiles nodded, “What we want is open ground…familiar territory for us, and for them too…how old is the youngest member of the pack?”

“He was a freshman when he got bitten, and that was not long after you ‘died’, so…about 21, give or take.”

“Right…and its summer, that works in our favor. I know where we need to go,” Stiles told him, his
voice full of confidence.

“Where?”

“The Lacrosse field at Beacon Hills High School.”

Jackson thought about Stiles’ choice. It made sense. It was a place that connected both him and Stiles to the rest of the pack, and yet it was a public area that wasn’t going to cause tension with the pack from being too close to somewhere that the pack wouldn’t want strangers.

“Makes sense”, he nodded in agreement, ‘it would be interesting to see if much has changed.”

“It’s Beacon Hills,” Stiles pointed out with a wry smirk, “I don’t think much will have changed.”

Jackson laughed, and he had to admit that Stiles had a valid point. It took a long time for anything to change in a small town like Beacon Hills.

It was then that they drove past a sign telling them that Beacon Hills was only 15 miles away, and both of them fell silent, their thoughts lingering on memories, both good and bad, of the town that they’d both grown up in.

Stiles gazed out the window, watching the trees on the side of the road, wondering if one of the werewolves of the pack was out there. They would have to be getting close to the border of the pack territory now. Stiles couldn’t remember where exactly the border had been when he’d been living in Beacon Hills, but he couldn’t imagine that it would have changed that much.

He was correct. Only a few minutes after they passed the sign declaring they were 15 miles out Jackson shuddered and slowed the car down.

“‘We’re about to cross into Scott’s territory,” he told Stiles, “I can recognize his scent.”

Stiles checked to make sure that his window was the whole way up, while Jackson did the same, neither of them wanting to give away their identities until the right moment.
“Ok, we’re in McCall pack land now,” Jackson confirmed thirty seconds later, accelerating once again, “It won’t be long that Scott realizes that I’m here.”

“We’ll have time to get to the Lacrosse field, won’t we?” Stiles clarified.

“We should,” Jackson nodded, “It’s not that far.”

“Good…I don’t think Scott would do anything until he knew we’d stopped anyway…we might have just been passing through. It’s not like this is the first werewolf territory we’ve gone through on the way here.”

Jackson nodded in agreement. Scott had never been very aggressive in the past, and Stiles was correct, they had passed through other werewolf territories on their way to Beacon Hills, although they had been careful to stick to main highways and to not stop when they were passing through another pack’s territory. It wasn’t something that Jackson had really been concerned with when he’d been living in Starling City, being the only long term werewolf occupant of the city (that he was aware of), although sometimes he’d catch the scent of another werewolf or two passing through the city. Derek had told him of the correct etiquette for passing through another pack’s territory when he’d left Beacon Hills the last time, when he’d left under the guise of going on a road trip, and he’d followed Derek’s instructions closely, not really wanting to get involved in some sort of pack warfare when he planned on disappearing and faking his own death…not actually dying.

Derek’s advice had served Jackson well during this journey too, as they hadn’t been bothered at all by any other werewolves during the three day journey. Packs that lived on highways, such as the ones that Jackson and Stiles had stuck to for the most part, were well used to other werewolves and other supernatural creatures passing peacefully through their territory along the highways after all.

Jackson and Stiles fell into another drawn out silence as they approached Beacon Hills, the scenery becoming familiar as they begun passing landmarks that they remembered from their youth. Neither of them said anything, not even when they passed the turn off that lead towards Derek Hale’s old family home…the same turn off that Stiles had steered Jackson’s Porsche up the night of the winter formal.

In fact, neither of them spoke until Jackson pulled into the car park of the high school, parking in his old favorite car park because, well, he could.

“Never thought I’d be back here again,” Jackson commented heavily, looking up at the building in
Stiles nodded, but didn’t say anything. Jackson didn’t push for details. If Stilinski wasn’t going to talk then he sure as hell wasn’t going to try and force him.

“Pity I didn’t bring my Lacrosse gear…I could have practiced a bit while I waited,” he instead commented, getting out of his car and stretching his back, legs, and shoulders, all of which were feeling a little cramped up after spending so long sitting in the car. Stiles didn’t reply, but he too got out of the car, stretching and looking around.

“I don’t think anyone’s here,” Jackson observed, “I can’t hear any heartbeats or anything like that. What do you think we should do?”

Stiles shrugged, and Jackson locked his car, before he and Stiles walked over to the Lacrosse field. A gentle breeze blew across the field, and Jackson took a moment to inhale the scent of the woods and the grass. Deep down he felt his inner wolf shift, remembering the scent of the woods that it first learned how to track and hunt within.

“I’ll let Oliver know that we got here without killing each other,” Jackson offered, pulling out his phone from his pocket and sending a quick message to Oliver, before he did the same with Felicity. Felicity replied with a smiley face that made Jackson smile, before he put his phone back away.

“They’ll probably come from the trees,” Stiles observed, breaking his silence, “although that’s where the wind is coming from. I think you should be out in the open, ready to face them.”

“Ok, but what about you?”

Stiles turned, so his back was to the forest, and pointed, “I’ll hide under the bleachers. The wind will be blowing my scent, and hopefully the sound of my heart beat, away from them, and then I can jump out and surprise them,” Stiles smirked and Jackson was visibly reminded of the sarcastic, joking teenager Stiles had once been.

“Don’t wait too long before you spring the surprise, I probably have picked up your scent after three days of being stuck in a car with you. They might get a tad suspicious if they realize I smell a bit like you. They might think I actually ate you or something.”
“Of course.” Stiles rolled his eyes, before he began to cross the field heading back towards the bleachers. Jackson watched until Stiles was safely beneath them, hidden from sight. Stiles was right, from where he stood he couldn’t smell Stiles, and he could only hear the other man’s heartbeat faintly, and that was only because he knew to listen for it.

With nothing better to do, Jackson sat down on the grass and focused on relaxing every part of his body. It was a meditative technique that Oliver had taught him as a way to keep control when he’d had the Miracuru in his system, but Roy had actually found it helpful as a strategy to use when his inner wolf was being particularly restless.

Taking everything into consideration Jackson’s inner wolf was actually being relatively calm. He knew that it recognized Beacon Hills as the town where it had come into being, and it had registered that it was probably where Derek, the Alpha who had bitten him in the first place, still lived (although Jackson hadn’t caught any trace of Derek’s scent on their way into town).

Still, sitting on the grass was relaxing, and Jackson focused on inhaling the scent of the woods, the sweet smell of the grass. Overhead the sun was shining, and Jackson welcomed the warmth as it spread throughout his body. Even in the depths of summer Starling City had always felt kind of cold to him…and he’d missed the warmth that California offered.

Still, despite the warmth of the sun beating down on him, and the comforting, natural smell of the trees, dirt and grass, Jackson was fully alert. His eyes were constantly scanning the tree line, as well as the other directions as well, his keen hearing on full alert, since Jackson was fairly certain that he would hear the pack approaching long before he saw or smelt them.

Being alert like this was something that Jackson had become very good at. Derek had taught him the basics, the summer before Jackson had left for England, and the pack that he’d joined for the six months or so that he spent living in England had built a little on that knowledge. When he was living on his own though, without the protection of a pack, Jackson had really worked on honing the skills, unable to trust anyone but himself and his own senses, to protect him from harm. And then Oliver had come along, human, but with experience that Jackson couldn’t come close to matching. Even without known about Jackson’s supernatural senses Oliver had managed to find things to teach Jackson, new knowledge that Jackson had added to what he had already learnt.

It had all added up, and Jackson was quietly confident of his ability to keep watch. He used the skills every night these days, while he was out on the streets helping Oliver try and get the crime and corruption out of Starling City, so it wasn’t as if he was out of practice, even without many supernatural threats passing through Starling City.

Another thing that Oliver had taught Jackson, to a certain extent, was patience. As the minutes trickled by Jackson forced himself to wait, to stay quiet and still, to wait for the pack to find them.
Patience had never been one of Jackson’s strengths, he wasn’t afraid to admit that. It was one of his faults from his teenage years that he hadn’t lost over the years. Thankfully Oliver, and Diggle, to a certain extent, had helped show him ways to maintain his patience, as it was important when they had to wait until the right time to do things. It had been especially difficult back when he’d had the miracuru in his system, but now that that ordeal was, mercifully, over, all he had to deal with his own impatience, and of course, the fact that his inner wolf was more often than not, even more impatient than he was.

Luckily, for the moment, Jackson’s inner wolf seemed content to remain quiet, perhaps understanding the importance of waiting for the pack to come to them, rather than confronting the pack head on.

What surprised Jackson, however, was how quiet Stiles was being. Other than the occasional sound of Stiles shifting position slightly, the other former resident of Beacon Hills remained still and quiet… words that Jackson hadn’t thought it was possible to use in relation to Stiles Stilinski.

And yet, here they were, both of them being quiet and waiting patiently to be found by the pack.
Chapter 13

Stiles chewed on his fingernail nervously where he crouched beneath the bleachers, trying to fight the temptation to rock nervously on the balls of his feet, scenarios flying through his mind, most of them ones where things turned out badly. Stiles had brought his weaponry, and although he used weapons in Starling City, Jackson didn’t really need his weapons, thanks to his werewolf powers.

Oliver had wanted Jackson to bring his things along, concealed with Stiles’ weaponry beneath the false bottom of the trunk in Jacksons’s car (probably installed by Oliver himself) but Jackson had refused. It made sense; it would be very strange for the Arrow’s red hooded accomplice mysteriously showed up in Beacon Hills at the exact same time that Jackson Whittemore, who had been living in Starling City, came visiting.

Especially when Stiles himself would be with him, and everyone knew that Stiles had been on the same boat that Oliver Queen had been on…and that the Arrow himself had appeared not long after Oliver Queen’s return to Starling City.

As it was Stiles was going to leave the vast majority of his weapons where they were unless he needed them for whatever reason, and even then he would try and get around it. As much as he would prefer to carry and use his own weapons, if he had to, it would raise just too many questions…questions that Stiles wasn’t sure he wanted to answer. As it was Stiles was armed with a single knife, strapped to his right leg, hidden beneath the pants he was wearing, only there because, after so many years training with the league, Stiles wasn’t comfortable not carrying a weapon.

At least Chris Argent being in town would be helpful in terms of having a different source of weapons that wouldn’t give away Stiles’ involvement in the League. Hopefully, if things went south, then Chris would offer Stiles some form of weaponry. Sure, it would mean that Stiles would probably have to prove that he’d had weapons training and wouldn’t accidentally shoot his own foot or something like that, but having weapons training was much more conspicuous than having a full array of weapons like Stiles had brought with him.

It was only in the worst case scenarios that Stiles’ brain could conjure, where the pack and his father knowing about his involvement in the league of Assassins was the least of his problems, that Stiles could imagine himself needing the weapons he’d brought with him, and he really hoped that things didn’t come to that.

Still, that wasn’t a problem for the moment. First they had to meet with the pack. Stiles found himself wondering what would have changed. Thanks to Jackson’s emails from Danny, and what he’d been told since arriving in Beacon Hills, he knew a little, but he wondered what had been left out. Had Scott cut his hair? Did Lydia still devour books as readily as he’d devoured curly fries? Had the pack as a whole managed to give Derek grey hair yet?
What about his dad? Was Melissa making him keep a healthy diet? Was he drinking? It wasn’t that Stiles doubted Melissa’s ability to manage his dad’s health, but in the period of time in between his mother’s hospitalization and Scott being bitten, managing his father’s health had been Stiles’ primary obsession, and now that he was so close Stiles just wanted to see his dad with his own eyes.

As he crouched beneath the bleachers, Stiles wondered how on earth he could have even considered not coming back.

TW/A

It was just over an hour after they arrived at the lacrosse field before Jackson heard the heartbeats of an approaching group of people. He rose to his feet, sniffing slightly, trying to catch the scent of those that were approaching. He swallowed nervously when he detected Lydia’s scent, although he wasn’t sure why exactly Lydia was with the rest of the pack, considering they weren’t supposed to know who it was they were confronting.

Still, it wasn’t his place to question the pack’s reasoning. It had been seven years since he last saw Lydia, and she was a banshee after all. It was highly likely that she’d picked up some fighting skills since the last time they’d met. It had only taken Oliver less than five to become a master archer after all.

Unsurprisingly, Jackson recognized Derek’s scent too, and Scott’s scent too. The last time he’d returned to Beacon Hills he’d been surprised how much becoming a True Alpha had changed Scott’s scent, but this time around Jackson was prepared for the difference.

Lydia, Scott and Derek’s scents were the only ones that Jackson recognized, although there were another two individuals with the pack whose scent he couldn’t place. One of them was possibly Scott’s girlfriend, Kira, but Jackson wasn’t familiar enough with her scent in the first place to be certain. The last pack member, Jackson guessed, was the beta that Scott had bitten not long after Jackson had left. It was definitely a werewolf, so it obviously wasn’t Chris Argent, Scott’s mom or Stiles’ dad, if the information Danny had been giving him was up to date.

The pack was approaching quickly, and Jackson forced himself to take a few deep, calming breaths, resisting the temptation to shift his fingernails into claws. Normally he didn’t have an issue with keeping control, but the smell of other werewolves, even though they were former pack mates and allies, had his wolf a little on edge.
Then they broke through the tree line that marked the boundary to the school grounds, and Jackson stuck his ground, keeping his gaze fixed on the approaching pack. Predictably Scott had the centre lead position, flanked on either side by Derek and Kira. Lydia was on Derek’s other side, and a younger man, who Jackson didn’t recognize, but was presumably Scott’s young beta, was on Kira’s other side.

The moment Scott and Derek recognized him they stopped, surprise and shock on their faces. Without the advantage of werewolf eyesight Lydia took a few more steps closer before she stopped.

“Jackson?” Scott questioned, his surprise evident in his voice.

“Obviously,” Jackson replied. “Yes it is me McCall, you don’t need to sound so surprised.”

“I think I have a couple of reasons why I would be surprised to see you back here. Seven years, dude…that’s one hellishly long road trip.”

Jackson had the grace to cringe apologetically, “Yeah…The truth was I wasn’t actually going on a road trip…Yes, that was a dick move on my behalf, I am fully aware of that,…yes, I am an asshole…but realistically, given my track record, what did you expect? I thought everyone knew that I was a jerk. That’s old information.”

“Well…at least he’s being honest,” Scott said to Derek, while Lydia left the pack, storming towards Jackson.

If it was anyone but Lydia Jackson would deny the way he retreated from the enraged red-head, but it was Lydia, so there was no point denying it. She was very scary when she was angry, and right now she was livid…and had every right to be.

Jackson actually fell over from the force of the punch she delivered to the side of the face, his cheek throbbing before his werewolf healing took care of the injury. Of course that didn’t help the fact that he was on his hands and knees in front of Lydia, who followed the punch up with driving her pointed boot into Jackson’s family Jewels.

Jackson let out a loud yelp, clasping his hands protectively over his dick and balls.

“I…I know I deserved that,” he gasped, “but…ow…who taught you to fight like that? Because,
wow, kudos to them, and to you…brilliant student, as always. Top of the ass-kicking class, hands down.”

“Good,” Lydia scoffed, “and have you learned your lesson?”

“Never fake my death again without telling you guys what I’m doing first…got it,” Jackson nodded.

Lydia smiled, and then engulfed Jackson in a hug, “You’re back,” she told him, her eyes betraying how happy she was, ‘you’re ok…you’re not dead.”

“Yeah…I’m sorry I did that to you. It wasn’t the right thing to do.”

“I always knew you were alive out there, somewhere. I would have felt something; I was so sure of it.”

Jackson flicked his gaze towards where Scott, Derek and the others were watching, drawing closer until they were only a few feet from Jackson and Lydia. Jackson rose to his feet, with Lydia coming up with him, letting go of him and stepping back so she was in between Derek and Scott.

Jackson rolled his shoulders slightly, tilting his head back and exposing his neck submissively to Scott.

“Alpha McCall I ask your permission to stay on your pack lands while I catch up with my friends and former pack,” he requested, following the etiquette that was required of wolves seeking permission to stay within another pack’s territory.

“Permission granted,” Scott nodded, accepting Jackson’s request easily. Jackson stopped exposing his neck, although he avoided looking at Scott in the eye. Part of it was a respect thing, considering Scott was the Alpha, and Jackson was only a beta, as far as werewolves were concerned. The other reason was that he wasn’t sure he could look Scott in the face and keep his composure, knowing that Stiles was watching, not very far away.

Standing in front of Scott was making Jackson’s inner wolf anxious and it made Jackson painfully aware how long it had been since he’d actually been near another werewolf, especially an Alpha.
“Where have you been?” Scott asked curiously, “Derek reached out to all his families’ old connections, and Chris did too, but nobody knew anything.”

“Starling City, for the most part. A big city, but with little to no supernatural activity. I think I was the only werewolf in the entire area, at least that was a permanent resident. There were a couple of wolves that passed through over the years, but, for the most part I was the only werewolf in the city.”

“A city with a big population like Starling City…werewolves would tend to avoid something like that. It doesn’t offer much in the way of territory for roaming on full moon nights,” Derek observed.

“If I was restless there was an abandoned factory I used to go to on the full moon nights the first year or so I spent in Starling City. Cops wouldn’t go anywhere near it because it was a bad neighborhood, and even the gangs and druggies steered clear. I’ve got it under control now though, which is kind of lucky because the factory I used got leveled in the Glades earthquake.”

“Have you got anywhere to stay organized for while you’re in town.” Lydia asked

“No, to be honest. I…didn’t know what the reception was going to be like.” Jackson shrugged.

“You can stay with me, if you want,” Derek offered.

“Derek, you don’t have to do that,” Scott shook his head.

“Yeah, I can afford to get a motel or something, it’s no big deal.” Jackson nodded in agreement, not wanting to put his former Alpha out.

“No…It'll be better this way.” Derek shook his head. Jackson shifted and let out a slight cough.

“Um…to be honest…I didn’t come on my own.”

“Do you have a new girlfriend? Are you brining her back to meet your pack?” Lydia asked.

“No, well, Yes I kind of…actually, the girlfriend thing is complicated, and it’s not her that I brought
with me.”

Jackson threw a glance over his shoulder, his eyes meeting Stiles’, who had taken advantage of the pack being distracted by Jackson to climb out from under the bleachers and perched himself on the lacrosse bench, watching them all, just like he had for almost every game he had been on the team for.

Everything around them went dead quiet as the pack followed Jackson’s line of sight. Stiles was smiling, although Jackson could see the tears shining in the other man’s eyes. Scott, Derek and Lydia all looked equally stunned.

“I would ask you all ‘did you miss me?’” Stiles offered, rising to his feet and taking a few steps towards them, “but that’s probably a bit cliché, don’t you think? A bit too BBC Sherlock, yeah?”

When none of the others responded, Jackson couldn’t help himself but smirk, “I think you broke them,” he told Stiles, before he gave Scott a not so gentle poke in the side.

“Stiles?” Scott choked out, his voice thick with unshed emotions. When Scott had first said Jackson’s name, back when he’d first seen Jackson on the Lacrosse pitch, it had been with curiosity, suspicion and mistrust. Now, with Stiles, it was all genuine grief, barely contained hope, disbelief and shock.

At the sound of Scott’s voice Stiles smiled, a couple of tears rolling down his face, “Please tell me that you’ve finally got your ass in gear and seen Star Wars, because if you haven’t I’m leaving town right now, and you’re explaining why I came back and then left again without seeing him, to my dad.”

“STILES!!!” Scott’s exclamation, filled with excitement and unrestrained joy felt like it echoed in Jackson’s head as Scott bolted towards Stiles, practically tackling him as they embraced. Stiles, despite his training, fell with the impact, landing on the soft grass and latching onto Scott hard. Jackson could smell the tears of both of his former classmates from where he stood, watching as they hugged one another, both of the crying and clinging to one another.

Jackson and the other members of Scott’s pack watched the reunion of the two former best friends. Scott’s beta shifted on his feet slightly but Derek caught his eye and shook his head. Jackson understood. Of the group only he, Lydia and Derek really understood what was going on in front of them. Kira might have met Stiles, but at that point he was already being impacted by the Nogitsune drama, and, from what Jackson had heard, even at that early stage, he’d been far from himself.
“You brought him back,” Lydia said softly, touching Jackson’s arm gently.

Jackson nodded, “To be fair it was his idea. I just told him that if he wanted to come and visit I would go with him.”

“He’s been in Starling City this whole time, just like you?” Derek asked.

Jackson shook his head, “No, but I won’t go any further than that. It’s his story to tell, not mine, and he might not tell you any of it, or he’ll leave bits out, and you guys have got to respect that.”

“Has he told you everything?” Derek asked. It was a fair question. Going only from their past encounters in Beacon Hills Jackson was the last person Stiles would have spilled his guts too.

“No, but I know enough.” Jackson shrugged, “You’re probably better off not knowing but, like I said…It’s not my call.”

Jackson and the others stood like that for a few more minutes, watching as Scott discretely tried to scent Stiles, and then gave up on discretion when Stiles laughed at him and told him, “stop mucking around and trying to hide what you’re doing. I’ve seen you try to pretend that you’re not scent marking people before, remember, and no, I am not wearing Armani, so just get it over and done with.”

Scott laughed at Stiles’ comment, and Jackson watched as Scott finished scenting Stiles, never letting go of his former best friend. Stiles too seemed to have no objection to Scott hugging him like that, as he was holding onto Scott just as tightly.

Her eyes filled with tears that rolled freely down her own cheeks, Lydia was the first one to walk across to the pair on the ground, crouching beside them. Stiles looked up at her and have a hesitant smile.

“Hey Lydia, you look as beautiful as always.”

“Right now I think you’re one of the best things I have ever seen,” she replied.
“Wow, and I was half expecting to get kicked in the nuts too,” Stiles grinned and Scott got off him and got to his feet, offering Stiles a hand. Stiles took it, letting Scott pull him to his feet.

Lydia’s response, of course, was to slap him across the face, leaving Stiles’ eyes watering and his cheek stinging.

“That was for getting on that stupid boat, you idiot,” Lydia told him sternly, before she pulled him into a tight hug. Jackson snorted at the look of surprise on Stiles’ face at Lydia’s actions.

Focused on Stiles’ reunion with Scott and Lydia, Jackson wasn’t prepared for Derek’s hand when it touched his shoulder, and he instinctively moved away defensively, turning and facing the threat, ready to fight, if he had to, his eyes flashing blue. He stopped when he saw Derek’s hand drop back to his side, a hint of concern crossing the former Alpha’s features.

“Sorry...” Jackson apologized, forcing himself to relax.

“It’s ok…being alone can be difficult,” Derek replied, “I shouldn’t have tried to touch you while you were distracted. Thank you...for bringing him back. I know that you two didn’t get along before.”

“Like I said, it was his choice,” Jackson shrugged, “and, well, I was sort of planning on coming back at some point in the near future anyway...even before I met up with Stiles. In hindsight I should have come back years ago to apologize for leaving like I did.”

“What made you start thinking about coming back?” Derek asked.

“A change in perspective,” Jackson admitted, “combined with a couple of near death experiences, and...and having a pack again. They...they’re not wolves...they didn’t even know the supernatural was a thing until I told them a few days ago, but it’s still a pack. There’s an alpha, and the rest of us are his betas and it...it feels right.”

“Do you trust him?” Derek asked sternly.

“Yes” Jackson replied without any hesitation.
Derek nodded in acceptance of the answer, before he asked another question, “And would they protect you?”

Jackson nodded confidently, “Yes.”

“Then I’m glad that you have them,” Derek replied, reaching out once again and put his arm around Jackson’s shoulder in a semi hug…probably as close to a hug that they were ever share.

“Yeah…I’m glad I have them too,” Jackson admitted.
Chapter 14

Felicity was furiously typing on her computer keyboard, working on tracking the movements of the gang leader Oliver was currently pursuing on his motorcycle when one of her machines pinged loudly. She quickly glanced up, checking which machine it was. Recognizing it as the one she was using to run the DNA sample that Roy had given her, she dismissed the noise and focused back on what she was doing. Her interests in Roy’s blood were purely academic, and were, therefore, not pressing, unlike the chase that Oliver was now engaged in.

Oliver needed her to do her job at that point of time…Roy’s DNA sample could wait.

It was an hour later, with the gang leader Oliver had been pursuing safely handed over to Lance and arrested, before Felicity glanced at the machine that had been running Roy’s DNA again. Oliver was working out, because, apparently, the fight with the gang leader hadn’t used up enough of Oliver’s energy. Sara was watching Oliver, a bottle of beer clasped closely in one hand as she relaxed before she headed home. Diggle had gone home already, although none of them blamed him. Lyla was getting close to her due date now, and Diggle had planned a romantic night at home for them both to enjoy before the baby arrived.

It was getting on in the afternoon, the chase with the Gang leader being one of the few times that the Arrow had been involved in something occurring in daylight. Luckily it was the weekend, so that none of them had been needed at their day jobs, but it had still been unusual. Felicity briefly wondered if she’d be able to go back home at a reasonable time of night. She felt like watching a couple of episodes of Game of Thrones, and spending the night chilled out at home with a tub of ice cream, a glass of red wine, and her favorite TV show sounded like a nice way to spend her Saturday night.

All thoughts of her plans, however, vanished as she looked at the screen in front of her, displaying the results of the DNA test.

It wasn’t the first test that Felicity had run on the sample, but when none of the more specific tests she’d wanted to run had shown any difference in the makeup of Roy’s DNA compared with any other human.

This time around she’d used a more broad approach to the test, using a sample from Oliver, as he’d been the only one around to give a sample at the time she’d started this test.

During the previous tests she’d used Ray Palmer as her control, mainly because she hoped that he wouldn’t question it, thanks to his curious mind and own interest in science. It had also helped
Oliver was busy at the time she’d wanted to gather the sample, and she’d wanted the tests to involve another Caucasian male, like Roy.

Now, however, her throat tightening and her heart pounding in her chest, Felicity wished she’d just waited for Oliver in the first place.

“Oh my God,” she choked out, half rising out of her chair, her hands braced on the desk in front of her, as if being closer to the screen would change the information on display.

“Oliver…you really need to see this,” she called over her shoulder.

“What is it?” Oliver replied, stopping his workout and approaching her casually, his bare chest more than a little sweaty. Felicity forced herself to ignore Oliver’s state of dress, and instead pointed at the screen.

“I’ve been running the sample of DNA Roy gave me against the sample you gave me…and this is what it found.

“I thought you were checking to see if Roy being a werewolf impacted on his DNA?” Sara asked, rising from where she’d been sitting on the ground, “I’m pretty sure we’d know already if Oliver was a werewolf.”

“It’s not that,” Felicity shook her head as Oliver reached her, rubbing her shoulder reassuringly, before he bent down a little and looked at the screen himself. Sara, for her part, kept her distance, not sure if this was something that she needed to know about.

“How…How certain is this?” Oliver asked a few minutes of silence later.

“Over 98 percent,” Felicity offered promptly in response, ‘I would run it again, but I’ve only got one sample of Roy’s DNA, so it’s not like it would change anything at his end.”

“Is there any way to confirm for sure, with what you do have?”

“I can run the test again,” Felicity offered, “Just to make sure I do get the same result. Even with the technology at PalmerTec the best I could get would be a 99.98 percent. There always is a margin of error…but…Oliver, how would this be possible?”
“Is everything OK? Is there something wrong with Roy?” Sara asked. Although she hadn’t known him for very long Sara liked the younger man, and she didn’t want anything to happen to him, especially now that she knew he was a friend of Stiles’.

“According to this,’ Oliver gestured towards the machine as Felicity went through the process of repeating the test, “there is a 98 percent chance that Roy and I share a parent.”

“What?” Sara exclaimed, “But, hang on…would that make Roy and Thea brother and sister?”

“It’s on the paternal side, so, no, Thea and Roy aren’t related,” Felicity interjected as Oliver sunk to the ground, “besides, Thea is five months older than Roy, so physically not possible for Moira to be the mom of both of them, unless Roy was very, very premature, or someone, at some point harvested one of Moira’s eggs, and it was fertilized, then carried by a surrogate.”

“I always knew that my dad had affairs…he sucked at hiding it. When I was younger I couldn’t believe that the press never caught wind of it. When we were teenagers Tommy and I used to joke about how many illegitimate kids our dads had probably fathered over the years. I never thought that I would actually meet one of them though…not like this.” Oliver softly told them, his gaze fixed on the ground between his shoes.

“But…Didn’t you say that Roy’s dad died in the car crash that Roy’s mom was in, the day before Roy was born,” Sara asked Felicity, who nodded, bringing up the information on her computer. Felicity and Sara both read through the information once again, although it hadn’t changed.

“Oliver maybe this is a good thing,” Sara said once she’d finished reading. Felicity knelt on the concrete beside Oliver, resting her hand on his shoulder reassuringly.

“Sara’s right,” she told him, “From what we know Roy hasn’t had many older male role models that he can trust before he met you. He trusts you…possibly more than he trusts anyone, except maybe Thea.”

“I…I need to go and check on something. I won’t be back…not tonight. I’ll see you tomorrow.” Oliver shook his head and abruptly rose to his feet. He left the underground basement without another word, leaving Sara and Felicity standing in the silence left in his wake.

“Is he ok? Should we go after him?” Felicity asked Sara nervously. Sara shook her head sadly.
“He’s had a shock,” Sara pointed out, “I think he just needs some space. Besides, it sounded like he knew where he was going.”

Felicity nodded, and rose back to her feet, glancing at her computers, at the information that had changed the lives of two of the men she was closest to. As much as she’d planned on watching some Game of Thrones when she’d gotten home, she hadn’t wanted to have a plot twist like this crop up in real life. It was something like out of her favorite books series turned TV show, only Felicity hoped that it turned out better for Oliver and Roy than it was bound to turn out for any of the characters from Westeros.

“I wish there was somebody that could confirm this, but everyone that might know the truth is dead…Roy’s mom and the guy she was married to, Oliver’s parents, Robert Queen might have told Malcolm Merlyn, they were friends after all. Do you think Walter Steele would know?”

“Maybe…Moira Queen might have told him. Next time you see Oliver you should ask him if he wants to ask him.”

“Yeah,” Felicity nodded, “I guess I will.”
Chapter 15

Oliver was silent as he let himself into his abandoned former home, the mansion that he had grown up in, the one he had spent the majority of his teenage years sneaking out of. Now though he found himself sneaking in, although there was technically nothing stopping him from entering the building. It was still, technically, his and Thea’s house, although neither of them had been inside for months.

Due to the house’s abandoned state Oliver had made the decision to cut off the electricity connection for the house, which made him grateful for the flashlight he’d brought along. He didn’t need it as he worked through the house, the sun not yet having completely set beneath the horizon, but he clicked it on when he reached his mother’s office, still pretty much untouched, except for the Queen Consolidated paperwork that Oliver had gotten rid of when he’d sold the company to Ray Palmer.

What Oliver was looking for, however, was far more personal. When his mother had first died Oliver had found large envelopes addressed for both he and Thea with Moira’s will. Neither he nor Thea had looked at the contents of the envelopes yet. Thea had told him to keep her envelope away from her until she had begun to come to terms with the reality behind the bombshell that Robert Queen wasn’t her biological father. Oliver had understood, Thea was still angry at her mother about the secret, and didn’t want to do something to the envelope that she would probably regret later on. Oliver had decided to do the same, but now the possibility of the envelope addressed to him containing some hint about Roy’s paternity made him want to see what his mother had to say.

It took him a few minutes to locate the envelopes, tucked away securely where they couldn’t be found by looters or those who wanted to dig up more Queen family secrets. Oliver carefully put Thea’s back away, ready for the time when Thea would be prepared to read what her mother had to say, and retreated out of his mother’s office, leaving it just as he found it, save for the envelope he clutched tightly in his hand.

Making his way upstairs, Oliver made his way to his old bedroom, retrieving the Swiss army knife that his father had given him when he’d turned 13 from the bedside drawers, before he sat on the rug that covered his bedroom floor, the torch sitting on the floor next to him as he used the Swiss Army knife to slit the envelope open.

The envelope was so packed with stuff that it took Oliver a little bit of effort to carefully wiggle the contents of the envelope free and out onto his bedroom floor. He picked up the torch and held it so it illuminated the contents of the stack of paper in front of him.

Oliver began skimming through the documents. The more recent pieces of paper seemed to be on the top of the while, all of them dating from before the Queen’s Gambit went down. There were four letters to him from his mother that were dated from after he’d returned to Starling City, one of the only a week before his mother’s death, as if she’d known that she wasn’t going to survive much
longer, as well as a couple that had been written after Oliver had supposedly died on the Queen’s Gambit, but before he’d returned to life in Starling City. After skimming over them Oliver set them aside for reading more in depth at a later time. They didn’t hold any of the information he was after, although Oliver was deeply moved by a few of the letters his mother had written him after his supposed death on the Queen’s Gambit. Stiles was even mentioned in one of them.

As he got further into the pile of letters and other bits and pieces, there were more things written and contributed by his father, as well as by his mother. Both of them contributed a letter each year on his birthday, and there were other letters that were dated at other, more random times.

It was the letter, written by his father on Oliver’s 18\textsuperscript{th} birthday that Oliver paused at. There was another envelope paper clipped to it, smaller than the larger envelope that had held everything, and Oliver bit his lip as he pulled the envelope free of the paperclip, reading his name in his father’s handwriting on the front of the envelope, before he turned it over and, again using the Swiss army knife, slit the envelop open, pulling free the contents.

It was immediately apparent that the envelope hadn’t been sealed when its contents had first been written, judging from the fact that, in addition to a second letter written to Oliver on his 18\textsuperscript{th} birthday by his father, there was another one written by his mother that was dated only a few weeks before she died. What captured Oliver’s attention, however, was the newspaper clipping that had been in the envelope too. It only took one glance for Oliver to confirm that this was probably what he was looking for, as the clipping was of an article that was about the accident that claimed the lives of Jackson’s mother and her husband.

Despite the fact that his father’s letter had been written earlier, Oliver turned his full attention to his mother’s letter first, trusting that it would provide more detail than a letter written with 18 year old Oliver in mind.

\textit{‘Dear Oliver’} his mother had written in her elegant handwriting,

\textit{‘At the risk of sounding cliché, if you are reading this than I am dead. I am sorry that I have left you and Thea in this cold, uncertain world, and I wish, with all my heart, that you have, or will soon, find happiness.}

\textit{At the time of my writing this you and Thea have just recently discovered the truth regarding the identity of Thea’s father. Please keep in mind that I kept this secret in order to protect you both from the truth. I know how manipulative Malcolm could be and I didn’t want him to be able to use his identity as Thea’s father against either of you, nor did I want either of you to be exposed to the ridicule from the press that any open declaration of Thea’s parentage would bring.}
I am not sure if you have read your father’s letter that is enclosed with this one, but in the case that you haven’t I will go through the details here. I am not sure how in depth your father went, as the letter he wrote for you was intended for your eyes only and I respect him enough to let what is written be solely between you and him, but at the time you were only 18 years old, legally of age, but still very much a child in many ways (as I am sure the man you are now would agree). He may have skipped over details, and although I will tell you as much as I know, I am only reporting what I was told at the time.

As I am sure you remember, your father had affairs in your youth, probably right up until his death. One of his mistresses was a woman by the name of Margaret Miller, the wife of a business associate of ours named Gordon Miller. In early December 1989, when I was about eight months pregnant with Thea, Margaret Miller came to Robert and told him that she was pregnant…and that he was the father. Gordon Miller was infertile, he and Margaret had both been tested previously as they had wanted a child of their own and they hadn’t conceived, so there was no reason to suspect that she was lying. Your father never denied that he and Margaret had an affair.

Despite the baby his wife was carrying not being his Gordon was very good about it. He promised to be an involved father…the only father the baby would ever need, the same way that Robert had done for Thea, although he knew that she wasn’t his. Gordon and Margaret decided to leave Starling City, and they headed back south to northern California, closer to where Margaret had grown up, although she had no family left. Robert and I both felt that we couldn’t stand by and do nothing, and said as much to Margaret and Gordon. We set up a large life insurance policy in the names of both Margaret and Gordon, should something happen to them, so that Robert’s child would at least have something.

By that point Thea had been born, and your father doted on her. Sometimes I saw him whispering to her about how much he loved her, just like he loved you, and he loved the child that he had fathered out of wedlock. He was saddened by the fact that he would never get to meet the child that he fathered, that he wouldn’t see the baby grow up like he would go on to see both you and Thea grow up. It had been the Miller’s idea that Robert should stay away, and I, perhaps selfishly, agreed with them. I think, deep down, I didn’t want Robert to fuss over another woman’s child like he fusses over mine, despite the fact that Thea wasn’t biologically his, and Margaret’s child was. In hindsight it sounds selfish and stupid, but it is the truth.

On the 14th of June, 1990 at about ten thirty in the evening Gordon and Margaret Miller were in a car accident with another vehicle. Gordon Miller died on impact, Margaret was rushed to the local hospital, but she was seriously injured. It was a miracle that she lasted long enough to get to the hospital. It was obvious to the doctors that she wouldn’t make it, but there was hope for her unborn child…Robert’s baby.

At about twelve fifteen in the morning on the 15th of June the doctors delivered Margaret Miller’s baby…a boy, your little half brother, by caesarian. At his time of birth Margaret was already
clinically dead.

The minute Robert heard the news, that very morning, he wanted to go to Beacon Hills hospital, but I stopped him. Both Gordon and Margaret had told us that they didn’t want the baby to grow up with his or her every move followed by the media, like you and Thea would…and if Robert took in the baby he would be under the spotlight even more than you and Thea would be…even if it was just put out there that Robert and I adopted him, and that he wasn’t biologically Robert’s son. He had the life insurance payout, which he would receive in its entirety, plus interest, when he turned 18. Let him have his private, normal childhood. If Robert still wanted to get involved once the baby was 18, well, that was his call.

At least, that’s what I told Robert. Reluctantly, Robert agreed, although I don’t think our marriage ever fully recovered. There were too many lies and secrets and betrayals between us.

The baby was adopted by another family, who named him Jackson Whittemore. David and Louise Whittemore is the name of the couple who adopted Jackson. David is a lawyer, with a good reputation, while his wife engaged in mostly charity work. They had no children of their own, and Jackson would be their only child. I know that Robert kept an eye on them, and Jackson, for the rest of his life.

I know that Robert never forgot about Jackson. Sometimes he told me that he wished that things were different. He wondered what Jackson was like, what sort a person he was. I believe that there were times when your father regretted going along with my requests to leave Jackson be, that he wished he had brought Jackson back to Starling City with him. I do not doubt, for even a second, even after all these years, the fact that Robert loved Jackson, just like he loved you and Thea, and that he loved all three of you equally right up until the moment of his death.

A few months before Robert’s death the Whittemore family moved to England, and after the news broke of the Queen’s Gambit sinking, and of the death of everyone on board Jackson returned to Beacon Hills. In a twist of irony Jackson had grown up alongside Stiles Stilinski, whose name you have never mentioned since your return, but who died alongside Robert in the sinking. I often found myself wondering if Robert made the connection between the boy who stowed away, and the town where his biological son had grown up.

A week or so after the sinking I went to Beacon Hills to meet with Stiles’ father, and while there I glimpsed Jackson Whittemore, then 17 years old. I didn’t spend much time with him however, my focus was on Stiles’ father, a widower who had just lost his only child, but I couldn’t help but notice that in some ways he reminded me of both you, at that age, and of Robert. He got most of his looks from his mother, though if you wanted an idea of what your brother looked like he did look a lot like Thea’s boyfriend Roy. I was often privately amused by the fact that my daughter foundcompanionship with a boy that resembled, quite strongly, in hindsight, Robert’s son.
At this point I must plead with you not to get your hopes up about ever meeting Jackson. Less than a month after I visited Beacon Hills a missing person’s report was filed by David Whittemore. According to his friends Jackson set out on a road trip, alone, not long after my visit. A few weeks later Jackson’s car was found, abandoned, on the side of a remote road in rural Wisconsin. The keys were still in the ignition, his belongings were left untouched. Nobody has seen or heard from him since. He is assumed to be dead, having met with foul play, although they’ve never found a body.

He never lived to inherit the life insurance fund that Robert set up for him, nor would he live to see you return from the grave. I am sorry that we kept this information from you for so long. Initially we planned to tell you and Thea when Jackson turned 18 (unless we were both dead by then), but by the time Jackson’s 18th birthday arrived Robert was dead and you were gone, and afterwards, once you had returned, with Jackson’s disappearance and assumed death, I thought it would be too painful for you to face after your ordeal during the years of your absence from Starling City.

As far as I know David and Louise Whittemore never knew the truth about who the father of Jackson was, there was certainly nothing on his birth certificate that indicated Robert’s involvement. If you want to you may reach out and get in contact with them, maybe learn something about Jackson. The only other person who knows the truth is Walter, as Robert revealed the truth to him some years before his death.

You may do what you like with this information. Thea knows nothing of it, as both your father and I felt that this would be best coming from you…especially now, with how the news about Malcolm came out.

I wish you the very best, and I am sorry that I did not have the courage to tell you this information myself.

Your loving mother,

Moira Queen

Oliver lowered the letter, his stomach churning as he processed what he had just read. It was real…Roy was his brother…his baby half brother. Everything fitted together, although Oliver had to admit that he was a bit surprised that his mother, who was no idiot, didn’t put things together regarding Jackson and Roy being the same person. It wasn’t as if Roy had done a lot to alter his looks after coming to Starling City.
Oliver shifted his weight and looked over his father’s letter, although there wasn’t much in the way of new information there, although in numerous places Robert reinforced the fact that although he’d had affairs with other women, and fathered a child with one of them, it didn’t mean that he loved Oliver or Thea any less. At no point in the letter did Oliver’s father mention the fact the Thea wasn’t biologically his daughter, as though he had intended for Oliver to not know this bit of information.

What hurt the most, however, was the final paragraph, where Oliver’s father had described how hopeful he was about meeting Jackson when he turned 18, and of the possibility of Jackson, Oliver and Thea meeting one another. It hurt because it would never happen, that because of Malcolm Merlyn Oliver’s father had never had the chance to meet Jackson, the son that he’d always seemed to care about and love, even if it was from a distance. He would never see his children interacting with one another.

Oliver winced as he remembered the last few moments of his father’s life. He’d been sitting beside his father in the life boat, Stiles sitting across from them. Oliver wondered what thoughts had gone through his father’s mind as he’d leveled the gun at Stiles, the sole surviving crew member already dead thanks to the gun Robert held. Oliver had felt sick, even back then, as Stiles had calmly told Oliver’s father to kill him, to end it so that Robert and Oliver would have a better chance of surviving. At that moment, Oliver wondered if his father was imagining another boy that grew up in Beacon Hills in Stiles’ place, and if it was the thought of killing a boy that had possibly been friends with his son, who had been at the same school as him, was what made Robert Queen decide to shoot himself instead of Stiles.

Closing his eyes, Oliver remembered those last few moments, as he’d looked at shock as his father had pointed the gun at Stiles, and Stiles had wearily looked at the gun, before he’d looked up at Robert’s face, meeting the older man’s gaze without flinching.

“Go ahead,” Stiles had choked out, his voice hoarse from lack of water and lack of use, “shoot me. You guys deserve the chance at surviving this way more than I do. I should have died weeks ago…I deserved to die weeks ago, so don’t feel guilty about doing it. You would be doing me a favor.”

Stiles had closed his eyes, visibly bracing himself for the impact of getting shot, completely accepting the fact that he was about to be killed. Oliver had been in shock, not knowing what to say, he’d looked at Stiles in horror, unable to believe that a sixteen year old kid would do something like that, before he’d turned his eyes to his father. He saw the conflict in his father’s eyes, moments before it hardened into resolve.

“You’re right, kid; only two people on this boat deserve to survive. There are some choices we make in life that we can’t ever forgive ourselves for.”

With that Robert Queen had lifted the gun to his own head and fired.
And, in his childhood bedroom, surrounded by letters and documents left for him by his mother and father, Oliver Queen broke down and cried.
“How... how’s my dad?” Stiles asked Scott as the pack began walking back towards the car park. Danny had joined them, although Ethan had chosen to stay away, as he and Danny hadn’t been sure how well Stiles would handle being around Ethan after what had happened to Aidan. Danny had been upfront about the reasoning, which Stiles had found very refreshing. The thing about spending so much time with the League of assassins was that keeping secrets and lying was normal, rather than the exception.

It was probably one of the only things about it that he was truly comfortable with.

“He’s good, my mom makes sure he eats healthy, he’s about as healthy now as he was before you... went away.” Scott replied, “he, um...”

“Relax, I know about the whole... us being step brothers now thing,” Stiles smiled.

Scott visibly relaxed, “Ok, good, I wasn’t sure how you were going to take that. Hang on, how did you know?”

Stiles shrugged, “Jackson told me,”

“And how did you know?” Scott asked Jackson.

“Danny told me,” Jackson smirked in reply.

“And you told me yourself, so there is no need to get cranky about that one,” Danny interjected before Scott could even speak.

“Besides,” Stiles offered, “Jackson wasn’t the only one who told me. I’ve met up with the Lances since I’ve been back, and they mentioned it as well. Laurel and Mr. Lance were there at the wedding.”

The rest of the pack nodded in acceptance of this.
“So…you guys know them better than I do these days…when is the best time for me to go visit my dad?”

“Err, now,’ Scott replied certainly, as if the answer had been obvious.

“Now?” Stiles asked, more than a little hesitant.

“Yeah, your timing is really good. We were actually planning on having pack dinner night at their house tonight anyway, and tomorrow is his day off, so you can spend the day catching up and reconnecting at all that. Besides, I don’t think I could go through the whole night being with your dad and my mom without giving away the whole…you’re alive, thing. You know how bad I am at lying, especially to your dad.” Scott enthusiastically told Stiles, not noticing the way Stiles shifted his weight nervously.

“Ok,” Stiles nodded slowly.

“Are you sure you’re okay about the ‘us being step brothers’ thing?’ Scott asked, finally noticing that something was bothering Stiles.

Stiles snorted and rolled his eyes, “Dude, if I wasn’t concussed when I found out I would have skipped around the room screaming like a little kid on Christmas morning,”

“Aha,” Jackson exclaimed loudly, “so you admit you were concussed that night.”

“Seriously, you try being human and having your head kicked into a air conditioning unit and then walk away without feeling it for a bit afterwards. Trust me, on the grand scale of concussions that one barely registered a blip.”

“Your head was kicked into an air-conditioning unit?” Scott exclaimed protectively.

“Long story, I’m fine.” Stiles brushed away the alpha’s concern, “now, what’s the plan. If we’re going to this dinner thing we better head off…I’m hungry.”
As Jackson parked at the front of the house his father now lived in with Scott’s mom, Stiles’ gut was churning, and he didn’t need the looks of concern both Jackson and Scott were giving him to tell him that his scent was probably flooded with anxiety. He had been nervous before he’d been reunited with the pack…but this was worse. This was his dad…the one that Stiles had missed the most in his years of absence, both on the island and with the league.

Stiles wondered what his father would say if he knew what Stiles had trained for when he’d been in the league…what he’d done on the island. He’d be shocked…horrified at what Stiles had done, and what he had been trained to do. While Stiles could truthfully say that he’d never been sent out with orders to kill anyone by the League, his hands certainly had blood on them. On the island there had been numerous times when he’d had to kill in self defense, and Stiles had forced himself to learn to deal with it.

Death had become a part of his life, something he walked in the shadow of each day. It was a part of him now, unavoidable, given his lifestyle. Even if he could get out of it…get away from the league and have the chance at a normal life, he was fairly sure that he wouldn’t be able to handle it…and that was the truth.

Stiles knew his father wouldn’t understand the person Stiles had become. Stiles had been through too much that his father couldn’t know about, and even if he did, it was so far beyond anything he had gone through that he wouldn’t ever be able to understand where Stiles was coming from.

“You okay, Stiles?” Scott's voice cut through Stiles’ thoughts.

Stiles swallowed and nodded, “Just imagining how many different ways this could end badly.”

“Dude…it’s your dad…he’s just going to be glad to see you.”

“Yeah…I know that, it’s just…I’ve found that planning for worst case scenario tends to be a good way to go for me.”

Jackson couldn’t help but snort at the comment, reminded forcibly of Oliver. Stiles reached out and smacked Jackson on the arm.
“Shut up.”

“Sorry,” Jackson apologized; although everyone in the car knew that he wasn’t sorry at all. Stiles sighed and shook his head at Jackson’s behavior. Sometimes it was obvious how much his former teammate had changed, and at others it wasn’t apparent at all.

Still, Stiles got out of the car, noticing how Danny had parked in the street and those that were in that car were standing beside it, waiting. Stiles looked back over his shoulder at Scott, who gave him a reassuring smile and a nod, before Stiles approached the house, the rest of the pack, Jackson and Danny included, following a respectful distance behind.

Not trusting himself to say anything, Stiles stepped up the steps leading up to the front porch of the house and up to the front door, shifting his weight nervously on the doormat, before he gingerly raised his fist and knocked on the door, before he took a step back. He didn’t even realize he was holding his breath until he began to feel light headed, and he forced himself to exhale, using the breathing exercises he’d been given as a child when his panic attacks had first appeared to regulate his breathing.

Within the house Stiles could hear muffled voices. He recognized his dad’s voice straight away, and Melissa’s. There were others, though, that were too faint for Stiles to hear, although Stiles figured that they were the members of the pack that hadn’t come to intercept Jackson…Chris Argent and Jordan Parrish.

Stiles heard the footsteps approaching the door and felt his entire body tense up, as if he was about to begin sparring with Nyssa or Ra’s himself. If someone were to ask him, at that moment, which was more frightening, the idea of fighting Ra’s Al Ghul, or of facing his father after so many years, Stiles would say his own father, every single time.

It was too late to back out now, though, as somebody inside the house was opening the front door. Stiles knew straight away that it was his father, although his father wasn’t looking at him.

“Scott, how many times do we tell you that you don’t need to knock?” Noah Stilinski said, before he looked at Stiles…

And froze.

Stiles, for his part, wasn’t doing much better. He bit his lip, taking in the sight of his father after so
many years. His hair was greyer than it ever had been, and Noah’s face had more lines on it, but otherwise he looked very much the same as he had, albeit it seven years older with the additional strain a highly demanding job.

Eventually, though, Stiles forced a tentative smile on his face, “Um…please tell me you’re not about to have a heart attack, Dad,” Stiles gently asked, using a gentle, teasing tone, although he knew his dad would be able to see right through it. Stiles watched as his father blinked, his eyes drifting over Stiles’ shoulder, towards where Scott was standing. Stiles glanced over his shoulder, seeing the slight, barely there, but at the same time, encouraging, nod Scott gave Stiles’ dad.

“Stiles?”

“Hey dad, um…I’m not dead.”

“Obviously,” Noah choked out, before he reached out and pulled Stiles into a tight hug. Stiles, however, was ready for it, closing his eyes and just relaxing into it, burying his face into his father’s jacket, relieved to find that he still smelled the same, just the same as when he’d used to hold Stiles close when he was a child and he’d fallen over and scraped his knee, just like he had the night that Stiles’ mom had died, just like he had the night that Stiles had been abducted from the lacrosse field by Gerard Argent, just like he had the first time they’d seen each other when Stiles was free of the nogitsune.

“I’m sorry,” Stiles whispered as tears rolled down his face, “I’m so sorry, Dad, I’m sorry I’m sorry.”

“Shhh, it’s ok, it’s ok, you didn’t do anything, you’re ok, and you’re back.” Stiles’ dad told him, holding him tightly across his back with one hand while combing his fingers through Stiles’ hair with the other, his voice just as thick with emotion as Stiles’ own was.

Stiles lost track of time, safely wrapped up in his dad’s arms, more comfortable than he had been in years. An hour or more could have passed and he wouldn’t know about it. Realistically he knew that it hadn’t been that long, but it still felt as though it had been awhile when a voice broke through his thoughts and his focus on his dad and how it felt to be in his father’s arms.

“Stiles?” Scott’s mom shrieked happily from within the house, having obviously come to check what was taking so long. Stiles felt his father pull away, and was momentarily disappointed, up until he felt Melissa’s arms wrap around him in a bone crushing hug, although he still felt his dad’s arm on his back, not gone completely.
“You’re back, Oh my gosh, you look so thin, and you’ve grown up so much, you’re so tall now,” Melissa babbled happily, Pulling away and cupping Stiles’ face between her hands as she looked him up and down. Stiles wondered what she would say if she could see through his clothes, at the scars that decorated his body. She’d probably wrap him up in a blanket and never let him out of her sight again.

Stiles faltered slightly as he realized something. He didn’t know what to call Melissa. Obviously Ms. McCall wasn’t a valid option these days, and yet Mrs. Stilinski just sounded wrong in Stiles’ head, and he just wasn’t ready to call her mom, not when he wasn’t doped up on sedative. Even calling her Melissa, while ok in his head, seemed wrong, despite the fact that he was older now than what she had been when she’d had Scott.

“Since when have you babbled?” He asked with a smirk, “that was always my thing.”

“Somebody had to fill in the silence,” Melissa replied gently, before she’d kissed him on the cheek. Stiles blinked and a tear rolled down his face, which Melissa gently wiped away with the pad of her thumb.


“How?” Stiles’ dad asked, although he was visibly relieved. Stiles could imagine that his father wasn’t looking forward to that particular conversation.

“Various sources,” Stiles shrugged, “I’m happy for you, really.”

“Thank you, Stiles.”

“Mom,” Scott offered, finally stepping up onto the front porch. Melissa lightly slapped her son’s shoulder.

“Is this what you meant by that cryptic little text? A little more warning might have been nice,” she scolded, although there was no heat in it.

Stiles coughed, “my bad, Scott didn’t know I was coming until, literally, like an hour ago.”
“Dude, I didn’t know you were still alive until like an hour ago,” Scott replied, “let alone coming for dinner.

“Even more my bad…sorry,” Stiles coughed awkwardly, before he was trapped back in his father’s embrace. Stiles let his father lead him over the threshold and into the house, aware of the pack following them, now that the initial reunion between Stiles and his father, and new step-mother had taken place.

“I’ll go set the table for another three places,” Melissa offered.

“It’s ok, I’m not staying,” Danny offered, “I’ve got to head back to L.A. tomorrow afternoon, and my mom would kill me if I missed dinner tonight.”

“Are you going to be ok to catch up tomorrow morning?” Jackson asked.

“Obviously. I’ll forward the video to you later.”

“You filmed me meeting up with my family and friends?” Stiles asked, pulling away from his dad and facing Jackson, who shrugged unapologetically.

“I was asked to.”

Stiles nodded in understanding. Of course Oliver would want to know that his reunion with his family went ok. Oliver had become rather protective of Stiles during their time on the island, and it made sense that, after thinking Stiles had been killed with Sara by Slade on the Amazo, he would continue to be a tad protective of him.

“Big brother is always watching,” he joked. Jackson snorted and nodded in agreement.

“It’s good to see you again, Jackson. Stiles…I’m glad you’re not dead.” Danny waved, before he headed back to his car. Scott waited until Danny was safely in his car and driving away, before he closed the door, while his mother bustled away to add another two seats to the table, Kira and Liam going with her to help. Stiles could hear Melissa talking to someone, and when that someone replied Stiles recognized the sound of Chris Argent. He felt his stomach clench uncomfortably. The last time he’d seen Chris had been a couple of days after Allison’s funeral, and Chris had visited the Stilinski home. He’d told Stiles that he didn’t blame him for Allison’s death, but that hadn’t
prevented the full blown panic attack Stiles had gone into, nor the nightmares about Allison’s death. Chris had kept his distance after that, although Stiles remembered overhearing his father talking to Chris one night when he was pretending to sleep.

Stiles really hadn’t thought about the possibility of having to face Allison’s father so soon after returning to Beacon Hills, although he wasn’t particularly sure why. He already knew that Chris was a member of the pack, so he being at a pack dinner wasn’t a surprise…it was just something that Stiles hadn’t taken into consideration.

So much for seven years of planning for every possible worst case scenario.

“Stiles, you ok?” Scott asked, breaking through Stiles’ thoughts. Stiles nodded

“Yeah, I’m fine,” Stiles replied, forcing his heart beat not to jump. It was something he had put a lot of time and effort into practicing, and he hadn’t had many opportunities to put his training to the test. Scott, however, seemed convinced.

It was good that Scott had broken Stiles free of his own thoughts, because Chris Argent and Jordan Parrish had appeared, emerging from the kitchen. Chris took a few steps forward before stopping, and a strange silence seemed to fill the room.

“Stiles?” Chris asked after a few moments.

“Yeah,” Stiles nodded, although he avoided looking at Chris in the face. Perhaps it was a cowardly move, but he couldn’t bring himself to look at Allison’s father in the eye.

“You…you’re alive? How?”

“It’s a very, very, long story, most of which I can’t tell you, but I am still human, and as far as I know I haven’t been possessed.” Stiles shrugged.

Chris blinked at Stiles’ response, “That’s…ok, good. You look…very grown up. Jackson, you do to… I’m glad neither of you are dead.”
“I think we all are,” Derek agreed.

“And Stiles, for what it’s worth…I don’t blame you for what happened to Allison, Ok…and I never have.”

“Thank you for that, Chris,” Stiles nodded, surprised that hearing Chris say it lessened the weight that seemed to have hung from his shoulders. Stiles still blamed himself, he probably always would, but it had helped to hear Chris Argent, Allison’s father of all people, tell him that it wasn’t his fault, eased the tension coiled in Stiles’ spine.

Stiles was confident that Chris wasn’t lying, he’d gotten very good at telling when people weren’t being truthful over the years, and knowing that Chris had forgiven him had helped him relax a little, knowing that Chris, at least, wasn’t about to launch across the table and try to kill him during dinner.

Lydia crossed across to where Parrish and Chris were standing, putting her arms around Parrish’s shoulders as he gently pulled her into a hug, and Stiles noticed the quick, sideways glances that both Scott and Derek sent towards Jackson…as if they wanted to see what his reaction to the display of affection from Lydia towards another male would be. Jackson, for his part, didn’t react in the slightest, and Stiles couldn’t help but inwardly smile at the way Scott and Derek both visibly relaxed.

Jackson, for his part, rolled his eyes, “Ok seriously? Come on, it’s been seven years. Did you really think that I would freak out if I saw Lydia with another guy? It’s been almost eight years since Lydia and I have been together. Do you really think that, if I was still in love with Lydia like I was in high school, I would have stayed away for that long? I’m not like Stiles…I had the option of coming back whenever I wanted to.”

Scott had the decency to look ashamed, while Derek just looked away.

“So, Jackson, how have you been anyway, you look well.” Stiles’ dad offered politely, moving out of arm’s reach of Stiles for the first time, and shaking Jackson’s hand. Jackson nodded politely.

“I’ve been fine, thank you sir. It wasn’t always easy, but I managed.”

“That’s good to hear,” Noah Stilinski replied, and Stiles noted how his father seemed impressed with the maturity Jackson was displaying. It wasn’t surprising, in Stiles’ youth he’d ranted about Jackson and his bullying behavior to his dad on more than one occasion.
“I’ve gotta say, I was surprised when you two showed up together…is there a conversation that I need to…”

“Oh my God, no dad, just…no,” Stiles exclaimed in horror. Jackson too looked similarly mortified, although Scott and, surprisingly, Chris, both let out loud snorts of laughter.

“Jackson has a girlfriend, well, on and off anyway,” Stiles pointed out to his father, “I am so not his type.”

“And what about you?” Derek asked curiously, “You meet anyone when you were away.”

“Well…I did almost get married at one point…” Stiles shrugged, just to see what the reaction was. It was worth it. His father paled dramatically, and Scott choked.

“Married?” Stiles’ father exclaimed, “Stiles, that’s a big deal.”

“I said almost. We didn’t go through with it, thankfully.”

“Why?” Derek asked.

“Well, A, I wasn’t her type, and B, she told the one organizing it that if he did make us go through with it she would slit my throat while I slept. He decided it wasn’t worth the bloodshed, luckily for everyone involved.”

“Sounds like it was a good call,” Chris offered, although Noah had retreated back to Stiles’ side and pulled him into another tight hug.

“What are your plans now that you’re back?” Scott asked as Stiles dad, with his arm draped protectively over Stiles’ shoulder, led the group towards the kitchen, where it sounded as though dinner was ready.

“Um…that’s the thing…I’m not staying in Beacon Hills.”
When Felicity arrived at Verdant’s basement the morning after she’d dropped the bombshell on Oliver regarding the identity of Roy’s father she wasn’t surprised to find Oliver there already, engaged in an exhausting looking workout. One glance at the sweat on Oliver’s back, shoulders, arms, chest and face told Felicity that he’d been at it for awhile, and it was likely that Oliver hadn’t slept at all that night.

“Oliver,” Felicity called out, knowing not to go too close to Oliver when he was engrossed in his training. Both Oliver and Diggle had warned her to stay away, just in case one of them accidently lashed out at her.

Oliver blinked, and turned his attention towards her, his eyes clouded with lingering frustration, before it faded away and Oliver gave her a relived look.

“Felicity,” he greeted, “Did you have a good night?’

“Better than yours by the looks of it,” Felicity observed, dropping her handbag under her desk before she turned and watched Oliver as he pulled on a t-shirt, the material clining to his sweaty skin, “did you sleep at all?”

“No,” he admitted honestly, looking rather sheepish at the admission, “I…I went back up to the mansion and looked up some stuff.”

“And then you decided that it was time for a workout,” Felicity nodded, having known Oliver for long enough to know the man’s usual coping methods.

“Something like that,” Oliver shrugged. Felicity frowned and approached Oliver, resting her hand on his shoulder reassuringly.

“What did you find?” She asked.

Oliver, however, evaded the question, “Did you run the DNA analysis again?”
“Yeah, straight after you left,” Felicity nodded, “I got the same result.”

Oliver nodded and sighed, avoiding meeting Felicity’s gaze. It was obvious that something was bothering him.

“Oliver?” Felicity asked.

“It’s true. I found some stuff that my parents had left for Thea and I, but we’d never looked at it… until I looked through it last night. Both my dad and my mom wrote me a letter about it. Roy… Jackson Whittemore…is my half brother.”

“And how do you feel about that?” Felicity asked.

Oliver shrugged, “I don’t even know,” he admitted, “When I first read the letters…it brought a lot of memories back…memories that I thought I’d put behind me. Memories of when I was younger, when I knew that my dad was cheating on my mother, and then of…of those last few days after the Queen’s Gambit sank, before my dad died. Sometimes I would see him watching Stiles, and I used to wonder why. Now I know. He knew that Stiles grew up in the same town as Jackson… they’re close enough in age that they were probably in the same class at school, so they probably knew one another. I think that is why he couldn’t bring himself to kill Stiles…because he didn’t want to kill the classmate of the son he never got to meet.”

“It’s ok, Oliver. I’m sure your dad is proud of Roy, and of how you’ve looked after him, even without you knowing the truth.” Felicity offered, “and I’m sure that once he gets over the shock Roy will be happy to have you as a big brother. At least it will give him and Thea something to bond over.”

Oliver couldn’t help but snort in amusement, “I can’t believe that my sister and my brother have dated. It’s almost as bad as when Tommy used to comment on how Thea had gotten hot.”

“Well…at least Roy and Thea aren’t actually related.” Felicity nodded with a small smile.
After so many years of being tormented by his past Stiles had grown accustomed to jolting to awareness following some form of nightmare, his chest heaving, heart pounding, drenched with sweat and often with a scream dying in his throat. His hands shaking, Stiles lifted them as he undid the improvised gag he’d secured around his head before he’d gone to sleep. He was pretty sure it had worked…no-one had burst into his room to check on him, yet, even though there was a werewolf in the house with him.

The werewolf in question, however, was Jackson, who had just spent two nights sharing motel rooms with Stiles, knew more about what Stiles had been though than anyone else in Beacon Hills, or even the entire world, other than Stiles himself, and was very aware of how prone to nightmares Stiles was. Jackson also wasn’t prone to coddling people, even after the growth that he’d experienced since he’d left Beacon Hills, so it was unlikely that even if he had heard Stiles he wouldn’t come to investigate unless Stiles had continued to suffer in his dreams.

Letting his improvised gag fall into his lap, Stiles sat upright in the bed, glancing at the alarm clock positioned on the bedside table. It was four thirty in the morning, actually a little later than Stiles had expected, but they had admittedly all stayed up late talking and catching up, and it had taken Stiles a little while to drift off in the unfamiliar bed. After so many years either sleeping on the ground, or in the cot in his room at Nada Parbat everything felt strange to sleep on…too soft and suffocating.

Despite the early hour Stiles slipped out of the bed on silent feet, not wanting to wake anyone up, but yet at the same time knowing that, once he’d had a nightmare, it was virtually impossible for him to get back to sleep.

Stiles’ days had always started early when he was with the league; he found it helped with his restless energy, caused by his un-medicated ADHD, and it was a habit he hadn’t gotten rid of once he’d left. He got changed into some workout gear, and crept, his feet bare, through the house, letting himself into the backyard, the first hint of dawn bringing the slightest touch of color to the sky.

He began by standing still, taking deep breaths of the cool morning air, focusing on putting the nightmare behind him and relaxing every muscle in his body, before he began practicing the katas he had learnt during his time at the league, slowly working his way through the movements, keeping his breathing steady and his movements fluid.

Stiles lost track of time as he worked through the exercises, before he went into a mediation exercise, focusing on calming his turbulent mind and thoughts brought to the surface by his return to Beacon Hills. When he came out of it a glance at his watch told him at was nearing six o’clock. Rising to his feet, Stiles made his way back inside, heading for the kitchen, and beginning the process of making himself a cup of coffee.
He was half way through the cup when Jackson appeared, fully dressed and ready for the day, although Stiles knew from the last few days that Jackson didn’t really wake up until he had a cup or two of coffee in his system.

“Morning,” Stiles greeted. Jackson grunted and made his own cup of coffee, sitting down beside Stiles and taking a mouthful.

“Morning,” Jackson returned the greeting, “how long have you been up?”

“Hour and a half, or thereabouts.” Stiles replied with a shrug, “Woke up and the bed was too soft to go back to sleep.”

Jackson nodded, “I didn’t hear you wake up.”

“I gagged myself, didn’t want to freak anyone out,” Stiles responded easily.

“That’s…inventive,” Jackson acknowledged, “I wouldn’t go telling anyone else that though. I don’t think they’ll understand.”

“Trust me, I don’t plan on it,” Stiles smiled as they heard footsteps coming down the stairs. Stiles’ father stumbled into sight, freezing when he laid eyes on the pair of younger men.

“Morning dad,” Stiles greeted cheerfully.

The Sherriff blinked, “I would have thought you boys would have still been in bed…at least now I know that last night wasn’t some kind of dream.”

“I never sleep well in strange buildings,” Jackson shrugged, “it’s a…self preservation thing.”

“That’s understandable. Derek’s told me about how difficult it can be for lone wolves, without a pack. It’s why so many of them go feral. You’ve done well to survive so long without a pack.”
“Thanks,” Jackson replied, his cheeks tingeing red at the compliment from Stiles’ dad.

The Sherriff turned his attention to Stiles who shrugged and didn’t offer a response, knowing that his father would see through any lie he told. The Sherriff’s eyes narrowed minutely, but he didn’t say anything in response, instead getting his own cup of coffee ready.

“What do you boys have planned for today?” he asked curiously.

Jackson shrugged, but Stiles shifted slightly in his seat, “I..I thought I might go see mom,” he eventually admitted.

The Sherriff nodded in understanding, “Do you want me to come with you?”

“No, it’s ok, thanks for offering…but…but I think I need to do this on my own.”

“Make sure you don’t get spotted, you are still, technically, legally dead,” Jackson reminded Stiles, who rolled his eyes.

“Yes, Jackson, I am aware of my dead status, thank you very much.”

“But…you aren’t dead, shouldn’t you make it obvious, go to a court and get it reversed, like Oliver Queen did?” the Sherriff asked.

“Then I’d have to go through the process of explaining how I got back into the country, and probably be arrested for illegally entering the country,” Stiles pointed out.

His father blinked, “ah, crap, I hadn’t thought of that. How the hell did you get in anyway?”

“The same way I left, on a boat,” Stiles replied, “Pay off the right people, and you’re fine.”

“I did not need to hear that. Next time I ask you a question about that, just don’t reply ok?” the Sherriff replied with a serious look. Stiles smiled to himself and nodded, imagining what his father would do if he learned how much illegal activity he had done over the past seven years.
“Sure thing dad. I should get going anyway.”

“What? Now? Stiles, it’s barely 6 in the morning. You haven’t even had breakfast.”

“Jackson’s right…I can’t be seen. It’s 6 oclock on a Sunday morning. No-one’s going to see me. Besides, I’m supposed to be dead…Cemeteries are where dead people live.”

“Do you want to take the car?” Jackson offered, fishing the keys out of the pocket. Stiles thought about it for a moment, but shook his head. The long few days cooped up in the car driving to Beacon Hills had left him full of restless energy that his morning exercise hadn’t done enough to fix.

“I need the run; I’ll be back in a bit.”

Stiles left his father and Jackson and headed upstairs, getting changed out of his workout gear and into something a little more casual, throwing a hoody on to over the top to ward of the slight chill of the morning, and strapping a knife to his lower leg before he put on socks and shoes, and headed back downstairs.

“Do you want some breakfast?” his father called, obviously trying to coax him back into the kitchen. Stiles rested is hand on the doorknob.

“I’ll have something when I come back, I won’t be long. Love you dad.”

“I…I love you too Stiles,” the Sherriff replied, his voice catching on the phrase. Stiles ducked his head sadly as he walked out of the house, closing the door behind him.

He didn’t doubt that his father loved him…but it was all too apparent that his father had never expected to see Stiles again after the Queen’s Gambit…had never thought that it would be possible to tell his son that he loved him ever again to his face.

Stiles had decided that, every time he left his father, he would tell him that he loved him…just in case the worst happened. Stiles was fully aware that his life expectancy, already short thanks to his involvement in the supernatural, had been cut even shorter by his involvement with the league. Even here in Beacon Hills his safety wasn’t guaranteed…and Stiles wasn’t going to take the risk that the
last thing his father heard him say to him wasn’t going to be I love you.

After seven long years of suffering and thinking that Stiles was dead it was the least Stiles could do for his dad.

Cutting along a path towards the woods, Stiles began to run, picking up a steady pace that would eat away at the distance between him and the cemetery where his mother lay, hoping that nobody else was planning on an early Sunday morning visit to the cemetery.

It didn’t take long for Stiles to reach the cemetery, and he slowly wove through the graves, following the path, still etched into his memory after all these years, towards his mother’s grave.

Stiles was silent as he approached the grave, his hands resting at his side as he read the familiar letting, dropping down to his knees, just like he used to when he was a child and used to visit. He’d used to think that, somehow, if he was on the ground, he’d be closer to her…that it would lessen the pain…but it never seemed to help, and the gesture had become a habit.

“Hey Mom,” Stiles greeted, brushing his fingers through the grass that covered his mother’s grave. It was longer than he remembered, and he idly plucked out a few long blades of grass that were close to his mother’s headstone, and had grown to a height that hampered his view of the lettering, although what was written there had been permanently etched into his memory by the time he was ten, carved into his brain, just like it had been written on the granite headstone.

“I…I’m sorry it’s been awhile,” Stiles began, “I’ve been…I’ve been away. If any of that stuff they used to tell me about you watching over me is real then…then you know what I’ve been doing…what I did. I’m sorry, Mom. I’m sorry I got on that boat and left Dad behind for so long. I didn’t know it was going to go down…that it would be seven years before I got to come home again. I’m sorry I left Dad alone. I…I promised you that I was going to look after him when you were sick…and I broke that promise.”

Stiles sniffed, wiping away the tear that rolled down his face, “I…I’ve done bad things, mom…horrible things. You…you used to say that I was a monster…that I was trying to kill you. Sometimes I feel like I am that monster that you used to think I was…even more now than I was when I was being possessed,” he confessed, “I killed people, mom…people that were just following orders from whoever was in command. They probably had families…people that loved them, and I killed them just because they were trying to kill my friends and I.”

Memories washed over Stiles. He remembered the first man he had killed (excluding those that had died while he was being possessed by the Nogitsune).
It had been during the first incursion he participated in, attacking Fryers’ camp on Lian Yu. He’d attacked one of Fryer’s men, a tall man, at least twice the size of Stiles, with muscles that would leave even Derek Hale’s look scrappy in comparison. He’d attacked Stiles with a knife first, with Stiles managing (Somehow) to dodge most of the blows, receiving only a cut on his right shoulder. Stiles had hit his attacker in the head with a bit of metal piping, before he’d tried to run away. The man, however, had recovered quickly, chasing Stiles through the camp. As a last resort, Stiles had thrown himself at the bottom of a watchtower and begun to climb the scaffolding that supported the watchtower. His assailant had pursued him as Stiles climbed, grabbing onto Stiles’ foot and trying to pull him back down. Stiles had looked up and seen a loose screw, and he’d reached up, frantically pulling it free.

The tower above Stiles had started collapsing, metal beams and supports falling down around him from above Stiles’ head, and the hand that had been gripped tightly around Stiles’ foot had suddenly let go. Stiles had stayed where he was until the scaffolding had finished falling, pressing himself against the railings he was clinging to to avoid the worse of it. As it was one of the pieces had struck his injured shoulder, almost causing Stiles to fall as pain shot through his arm.

It was only when Stiles was on the ground himself that he looked over and realized why his attacker had let go of his foot. The piece of metal that had impaled the man’s chest stuck up from the man’s chest at a ninety degree angle. Stiles had carefully risen to his feet, his injured arm cradled by his free one, approaching his attacker’s body, the patch on the man’s chest reading ‘Donovan’ soaked with the man’s blood. He’d checked to see if Donovan had somehow survived the injury, but Donovan skin had already begun to cool, and the blank, unseeing eyes of death seemed to look up at Stiles as he pulled his hand away from Donovan’s neck, having checked for a pulse, and found nothing.

In that moment Stiles had thought of his father, wondering what he would say if he knew that Stiles had just become a murderer. What would Scott say? Or the rest of the pack?

The panic attack Stiles had experienced right there, beside Donovan’s body, had been one of the worst he’d experienced since arriving on the island. Later Slade had jokingly commented that it was a good thing that Stiles had passed out from hyperventilating because any of Fryers’ men that were passing by would have thought that he was dead and had left him alone.

Stiles wasn’t exactly sure how long he had lain, unconscious, beside Donovan’s body, but he’d woken up with Oliver anxiously crouched over him, checking his head for any injuries. Stiles hadn’t told anyone the truth about what had happened between him and Donovan, although he was fairly sure that Shado, Slade and Oliver had figured it out. It wouldn’t have taken an IQ like Lydia’s to put the pieces together after all.
Stiles remembered how the cut to his shoulder, which Slade at stitched closed, had ached persistently as it had healed, the scar left behind a permanent reminder of that night. Even as Stiles thought about the wound he felt a soft weight on his right shoulder, right over where the scar left by the cut lay. Stiles blinked, startling himself out of the memories and ducked away from whoever had their hand resting on his shoulder, tucking into a roll and then jumping upright, the knife that he had been carrying strapped to his leg now in his hand as he adopted a ready pose, his body tensed and ready to either attack or defend at a moment’s notice.

Derek Hale held up his hands and took a couple of steps away from Stiles, eyeing Stiles’ knife wearily as he retreated away from Stiles.

“Sorry, I didn’t mean to startle you,” the former Alpha apologized, “I called your name, but you were zoned out and didn’t hear me I guess.”

Stiles exhaled, letting out the breath that he hadn’t even realized he’d been holding as he forced his body to relax. He slid his knife back into its sheath and rose back to his full height,

“What are you doing here?”

“After…after what happened yesterday I couldn’t sleep so I decided to go for a run. I was going to go and visit my family, but then I heard you,” Derek explained, “I can go, if you want.”

“No, it’s ok,” Stiles sighed, dropping his gaze back to his mother’s grave, “Do you still visit your family sometimes.”

“Yeah, every couple of weeks,” Derek replied, “It helps, sometimes, when you need to talk about what’s been happening. Sometimes…sometimes I used to go and talk to your memorial too…tell you what had been going on…how much Scott was annoying me…apologizing for how I hadn’t been able to help you enough after the nogitsune…how what happened to Allison and Aidan and everything else wasn’t your fault and nobody blamed you for it…how I wished you hadn’t gone to Starling City…yelling at how stupid you’d been to get on that damn boat…how much I missed you.”

Stiles blinked in surprise at how open Derek was being. The Derek he remembered would never have spoken this much in one hit before, and Stiles hadn’t been expecting it.

“I missed you too,” Stiles confessed, “I missed you so much, Derek.”
Stiles felt his breathing hitch, and looked away, so Derek couldn’t see the tears building in his eyes. The salty scent of the tears, however, must have given him away, as Stiles felt Derek approach him and wrap his arms around him in a hug. Stiles stiffened initially, his training over the last few years making him wary, but he quickly calmed down, leaning against Derek’s chest and relaxed into the embrace, inhaling the smell of Derek’s leather jacket, and the slight scent of the woods that Stiles could smell even without being a werewolf.

“It’s alright,” Derek offered gently as he rubbed Stiles’ back, “You’re back now, you’re alive…and that’s all that matters.”

“I’m sorry I didn’t come back sooner,” Stiles apologized, looking up at Derek’s face “I’m sorry that the Queen’s Gambit went down…that I got on that boat…”

“It wasn’t your fault, Stiles,” Derek reassured him “You didn’t know that the boat was going to sink, and you’d just gone through hell, literally. Nobody blames you for wanting to get away. I’m sorry that we weren’t able to help you more.”

“Wasn’t your fault that I’m screwed in the head,” Stiles scoffed, closing his eyes in bemusement as Derek’s hand drifted up and down his back, along Stiles’ spine.

“None of that matters now,” Derek eventually whispered softly, “you’re back…that’s all that matters.”

“I…I almost didn’t come back,” Stiles confessed guiltily, “I thought that…if I stayed away, I’d keep you guys safer.”

“Safer? Are you in trouble?” Derek’s tone gave away his slight alarm.

“Dude, it’s me,” Stiles sighed, “I’ve been gone for years…like I was going to stay out of trouble. I am incapable of staying out of trouble.”

“Well, when you put it that way,” Derek rolled his eyes.

“Honestly…I’ve gotten involved in something…something big…and I…I think I might be in over my head this time, Derek…and I don’t know what to do.”
“You’ve done the right thing by coming back here for a start. You have friends…family…Pack here, you always will. Even though it’s been awhile and things were…mess…when you left…you’ll always have a place here.”

“Thanks Derek,” Stiles sighed, “I’m glad I came back here. I…I know that there’s a risk it might come back and bite me on the ass…but I feel better than I have in months…years even…since before the Nogitsune.”

“I’m glad,” Derek smiled, and Stiles blinked in surprise.

“Was that a smile? I didn’t even know you even knew how to smile.”

Derek rolled his eyes, his eyebrows betraying his amusement at Stiles’ playful teasing, “Actually, I’ve changed my mind,”

“Ha, can’t take back the fact you missed me, even mom heard it.” Stiles grinned, turning to look towards his mother’s grave. The smile, however, slipped from his face.

“She’d be proud of you.” Derek offered gently, “She’d be proud that you came back…that you kept fighting…that you didn’t give up, that you came back to your dad…even if it is only for a visit.”

“How do you know that?”

“Your dad…After you…went missing…I moved in with him to keep an eye on him. There was a couple of nights when he started talking about you and your mom.”

“Was he drunk?” Stiles asked with a sigh. He’d always known that his father’s coping mechanism when it came to grief was the bottom of a bottle, Stiles had seen it in the years following his mother’s death. It was one of his biggest concerns about his father…scared that his father would drink himself into an early grave.

“Not always, sometimes, yes, he’d had a couple of drinks, but not all the time when we spoke. Between and Melissa and I we kept a close eye on how much he drank, and what he was eating,” Derek admitted honestly, “Anyway, he told me a lot about your mom, and you, when you were
younger. He told me about how much she loved you, right up to her final moments. He told me about how she seemed to understand you more than anyone else did. I think she would have wanted you to do whatever it was you had to do in order to survive.”

“You think so?” Stiles asked curiously.

Derek nodded, “she sounded like she was a wonderful woman…I’m sure that she’s watching over you... happy that you made it back to your dad’s side. He missed you.”

“I know. He said this morning that, when he woke up, he thought it was all a dream. Last night… when I saw him…I felt so stupid and selfish for thinking about not coming back.”

“You’ve been through a lot, Stiles, nobody would blame you for not wanting to come back, even without knowing where you’ve been. And you’ve never been stupid.”

“You didn’t use to think that,” Stiles commented with a small smile, still leaning against Derek’s chest, inhaling the scent of Derek’s leather jacket, the faint scent of trees that Stiles could smell even without werewolf powers.

“No, I always thought you were smart. Scott was the dumb one,” Derek corrected.

Stiles snorted, “He wasn’t too bad…it was just that you met him at the start of the …the Allison phase. He was pretty much focused on using his downstairs brain while that was going on. Before he met Allison, and after they broke up he actually used his brain most of the time. When we were kids he was the one that always used to tell me when my plans were stupid and would end up with us either in trouble, or in hospital.”

“Did you listen?”

“Sometimes,” Stiles admitted with a shrug, “although in my defense he wasn’t always right about all of my plans.”

Derek shook his head, obviously struggling to think about the idea of Scott and Stiles before the supernatural turned their world upside down.
“I should go,” Stiles sighed after a lengthy, but comfortable, pause, “I ran here, and if it gets much later I might get spotted by someone on my way back home. I’m still technically dead, so one of the neighbors seeing me walking down the street probably would cause alarm.

“What about in the future?” Derek asked, as Stiles rose to his feet, “are you going to be on the run for the rest of your life.”

Stiles sighed, looking down at his mother’s grave, before he shrugged, “I want to come back, legally,” he admitted, “but I don’t know if it’s going to be possible, with, you know…that thing that I mentioned getting involved in.”

“How bad is it, Stiles?” Derek asked, rising to his feet, noticing that the height difference between them wasn’t as much as it used to be back when Stiles had been in high school.

“I don’t know, how are you measuring badness?” Stiles asked, his voice distant, although his gaze remained fixed on his mother’s grave.

“Are you going to die?”

“Probably,“

“Probably?”

“The odds are not in my favor…and the longer I spend in Beacon Hills the more likely it is that the trouble will follow me here, putting you all in danger…My Dad, Scott, Melissa, you, Lydia, Jackson…everyone.”

“The pack is strong, stronger than it was when you left. Scott is a good Alpha…the pack are experienced and know more about what they can do. We can protect you, and this town.”

“No…I don’t think you understand, Derek. It…I’ve seen it happen. They don’t care who gets hurt in the crossfire. They want me. The only reason I’m here in the first place because they let me go for a bit, to see what I did when I got a bit of freedom, but it would be stupid and naïve to think that they weren’t keeping tabs of me…hell. I’m telling them where I am just so I don’t have a tail put on me.”
“Have you been threatened?” Derek frowned.

Stiles snorted, “Threatened? Dude, if threatening was all they did, I would not be this concerned.”

“Stiles?” the concern in Derek’s voice was undeniable, and Stiles turned to look sadly at Derek, suddenly seeming older than any 23 year old ever should.

“Stay away from me Derek,” Stiles advised in a sad voice, “I’ll be gone soon, and you probably won’t see me again. It’s better if you don’t get too close. That way you won’t get hurt.”

Stiles turned and began walking away, not trusting himself to look back over his shoulder towards Derek. Tears ran freely down his cheeks, but Stiles didn’t wipe them away.

Being with Derek at the cemetery had been a painful reminder that as much as Stiles wanted to remain in Beacon Hills, he couldn’t. He would have to return to the League at some point, and he’d have to leave everyone behind yet again, knowing that he might never see them again.

The moment Stiles passed through the cemetery gate, he began running, tears still pouring down his face as it really began to sink into his brain that he would never get to have a life with his family and friends, that the league would be like a cloud hovering over his head, ready to strike down anyone that they thought he cared too much about, or he was getting too close to.

Stiles didn’t want to be a member of the League of Assassins. He was done being responsible for the deaths of others, he didn’t want to spend the rest of his life, however long it might be, ending the lives of others. He wanted to spend it here, where he belonged, in Beacon Hills. He wanted to spend it with Derek, his dad, Scott, the rest of the pack, Oliver and Sara…even Jackson.

Sliding to a stop Stiles leaned against a tree, his breath coming in gasps as he tilted his head back against the rough bark of the tree, closing his eyes against his tears. Being back in Beacon Hills hurt so much more than he thought it would now that he knew that the League were unlikely to let him stay there, and that he would probably never be able to return…not without an even greater risk of bringing the league back with him, endangering everyone in Beacon Hills.

It was a risk that Stiles knew that he’d never be able to take. Exhaling shakily, Stiles slid down the tree trunk, sitting on the ground at the base of the tree, his legs drawn up to his chest, his arms wrapped tightly around his shins as he thought about what he would do when it came time to leave.
Beacon Hills again. Saying goodbye to everyone was going to hurt…his father, Scott, Melissa and Lydia, but Stiles hadn’t been prepared for how he was feeling about leaving Derek. Even the mere thought left his chest feeling tight, as if he was on the verge of a panic attack.

When Stiles had been in high school, before he’d been claimed by the Nogitsune, he’d had a crush of Derek. He’d never acted on it, and Derek hadn’t ever shown any sign of reciprocating Stiles’ affections. Why would he? Derek hadn’t ever given the slightest indication that he was gay, or even bi-sexual. In fact, his tastes seemed to run towards psychotic women who were older than him, even if it was only by a few years. Stiles knew that he wasn’t handsome, and he certainly hadn’t been back when he’d been a teenager. Granted he’d filled out a little, thanks to his training with the league, but he still didn’t look like much compared to Derek, Jackson, or even Oliver.

Still, when he’d been at the cemetery, when Derek had been comforting him, Stiles had felt the attraction he had felt long ago flicker into life again. He only hoped that Derek hadn’t noticed it through his scent, although he didn’t like his chances. Derek’s senses were keen, and he’d been honing them for his entire life.

It had been a long time since Stile could remember feeling lie this about anyone. Actually, he could…and it had been Derek before the Nogitsune. Ever since then he’d been too busy drowning in guilty, struggling to survive, or trying to avoid being noticed by everyone around him who would take the slightest hint of interest on Stiles’ part as an excuse to either kill him, or rape him and claim him as their own.

Stiles lost track of time as he sat in the woods, alone with his own turbulent thoughts. Eventually, though, he had the presence of mind to rise to his feet and continue on his run through the trees back towards the house his father and Melissa now shared.

A glance at his watch as he slipped through the door told Stiles that he hadn’t been gone for as long as he had thought, although the sun was higher in the sky than he had anticipated. Still, he hadn’t seen anyone other than Derek, and the few times he’d been running near a road he’d put his hood up to conceal his identity, so Stiles’ doubted that he had been seen, although he’d learned during his time with the league that there were all sorts of different ways people could be spied upon.

He couldn’t see Jackson, or his dad, but Melissa was in the kitchen, sitting at the table drinking a cup of coffee, as Stiles walked through the front door. She looked up as Stiles entered, and Stiles blinked.

“Um…sorry for not knocking,” he apologized, “I didn’t know if anyone would be here, and I didn’t really want to risk being seen standing at the front porch by someone who might recognize me, because I’m, you know, supposed to be dead.”
“Stiles, you don’t need to knock. This is your home, just as much as it is Scott’s.” Melissa shook her head with a smile, “now come and get some breakfast, your dad said you hadn’t eaten anything yet.”

Stiles smiled and approached Melissa, sniffing appreciatively as he recognized the scent of Melissa’s famous choc chip pancakes…Stiles’ favorite from childhood.

“Stiles, is everything ok?” Melissa asked, frowning in concern as she got a better look at Stiles. Stiles blinked and wiped at his face. His tears had stopped, finally, during his run home, and he thought he’d dried his face, erasing all evidence of his breakdown in the woods. Obviously it hadn’t been enough to fool Melissa, the closest thing he’d had to a mother since his own mother had died. Melissa watched him carefully as she removed a plate with a stack of choc chip pancakes from the oven, where they had been kept warm, carrying it over to the table.

“Yeah, everything’s fine,” Stiles lied, getting himself a glass of water and carrying it to the table, sitting down in the chair beside Melissa’s, in front of the stack of pancakes, “why wouldn’t it be? Where’s dad? Did something happen?”

“Your father is busy with something, and Jackson’s having a shower, and don’t change the question, Stiles. Remember, I’ve known you since you were four years old…I know how to tell when you’re lying, even without werewolf hearing. Your eyes are all red, and I know they do that when you’ve been crying, so tell me what’s going on.”

“Nothing’s going on…I just…got a bit…emotional when I went and saw mom,” Stiles evaded. It was the truth, after all, just not all of it.

“Derek called, Stiles,” Melissa offered, “he said that he saw you up there, and that he was worried about you.”

Stiles rolled his eyes, “Since when has Derek cared about me?” he asked, picking up his knife and fork and beginning to eat the pancakes.

“Since you went missing for seven years, presumed dead,” Melissa replied, “Since you were tearing yourself to pieces with guilt about something you had no control over…since you saved his sister’s life…since you were kidnapped and beaten, and yet didn’t give away any information, since you held him up in a swimming pool for two hours when he was paralyzed…since you lied to your father and gave up your first chance to actually play for the lacrosse team in order to help him. Derek’s cared about you for a damn long time, Stiles.”
Stiles hung his head, hearing the scolding tone that Melissa was using. It was the same one that she used when Scott and Stiles had done something stupid when they were younger, and it brought back memories of simpler times, before werewolves and the league and deserted islands that hadn’t been very deserted.

“I’m sorry,” Stiles apologized, “I just…it was easier to think he didn’t care.”

“Because you were in love with him?” Melissa commented. Stiles choked on the piece of pancake he was eating.

“What?” he exclaimed once he’d managed to clear his airway.

“It was fairly obvious, Stiles.” Melissa admitted, “I don’t think your dad knew, and Scott didn’t either, but most other people who knew you well picked it out. Isaac and Lydia both knew.”

“Oh God…Jackson knows now too,” Stiles moaned looking up at the ceiling. He was never going to hear the end of this for the rest of his time in Jackson’s company.

“Derek doesn’t know, does he?” he asked hopefully.

Melissa only smiled apologetically, “Sorry, sweetie. I don’t think he knew originally, but I kind of…told him about it a couple of years ago. He told me at the time that he could tell that you were aroused, but he dismissed it as you just being a hormonal teenager. I don’t think he was really ready to know that you had a thing for him when you were underage.”

“Because of Kate?” Stiles sighed. Melissa nodded sadly, and she lifted her hand and rubbed Stiles’ back gently.

“Do you want to tell me what’s really going on in that head of yours?”

Stiles hesitated, weighing up the options. Thinking about it…it would be easier to tell Melissa than to tell his dad. Even though Melissa had been a surrogate mother to him since he was young, she still wasn’t his mom, not in the same way as his dad.
“I can’t come back to Beacon Hills again,” Stiles sighed, “When I leave here I’ll probably never see any of you again…in fact, I really hope that I don’t, because if I do it will mean that you’ve been dragged into the crap that I’ve been involved in, and I don’t think I can deal with that.”

Melissa’s hand froze where it rested on Stiles’ back, and Stiles tensed, ready for her to pull away, or to slap him. What he wasn’t prepared for was for Melissa to wrap her arms around him and pull him into a hug. He stiffened at the initial touch, before he relaxed into it, allowing his body to let go, just for a moment.

“What have you gotten yourself into this time buddy?”

Stiles found himself shaking his head, his lips pursed together, unable to say who he’d found himself affiliated with. Melissa would hate him…the entire pack would.

“Oh, Stiles,” Melissa sighed, her grip on Stiles tightening slightly, “You’ve gotten in over your head, haven’t you?”

Stiles nodded, tucking his face against Melissa’s neck, “I don’t want to leave,” he told her, “but I don’t have a choice. That’s why they let me come here after so long…to show me that I’m going to be looking over my shoulder, waiting for them to come after me again, if I leave. That, if I do the wrong thing, they would have no problem coming here and killing everyone I care about. You guys are all in danger just because you know me. That’s why I have to leave and never come back…
that’s why…that’s why they have to think that I don’t care about you guys…but I do care…and I
don’t want to leave you and dad, and the rest of the pack.”

“I’m sure we’ll think of something,” Melissa reassured gently, “you’re not on your own, Stiles, not
anymore.”
Chapter 18

Oliver was silent as he flicked through the file of things Felicity had put together regarding Roy’s life back when he was Jackson Whittemore, trying to learn more about his younger half-brother. By Roy’s own admission Jackson Whittemore had been an arrogant, selfish, jealous boy, with a desire to be number one on the lacrosse field that boarded on the obsessive. Jackson’s jealousy and his desire to be the best player on the team were the reasons he’d asked to be a werewolf, ignoring the dangers that it would involve, not only to Jackson himself, but those around him as well.

There was a part of Oliver that was glad that he hadn’t known about Roy back then, and that his father had kept his distance. It would have hurt to see the younger man tear himself up in his jealousy, only for his plan to backfire on him badly when he became a Kanima.

Oliver remembered the night that Sara had reunited Stiles with Laurel and Detective Lance. Diggle had been spending some time with Lyla, and Felicity had gone home early, planning on catching up on Game of Thrones with a glass of red wine and a large bowl of ice cream, leaving Oliver and Roy alone in the lair.

Oliver had taken the opportunity to watch the younger man, trying to notice anything that would have given away the fact that Roy wasn’t as human as Oliver had thought.

“Would you stop staring, it’s starting to freak me out,” Roy had complained after a short time, stopping his assault on a punching bag and turning to face Oliver.

“I’m not staring,” Oliver protested, although it was far from his most convincing.

Roy snorted, “Even without using my werewolf powers I know you were lying.”

“How do werewolf powers relate to telling if people are lying?” Oliver asked, confused by Roy’s comment. The younger man rolled his eyes.

“My hearing,” Roy explained, “I can hear your heat beat…track it. Your heart beat jumps when you lie…just like it does for most people…you should hear Stiles’ when he get going. It’s like I’m a walking lie detector.”

“And you couldn’t have mentioned this earlier?’ Oliver sighed, although he couldn’t blame Roy for
“Would you have believed me?” Roy replied, and Oliver knew he had a valid point. Roy had, in the past, said that he thought someone was lying, but Oliver hadn’t put much thought into it, assuming that Roy was judging simply off his gut feeling and a lifetime’s experience living in the Glades. Now that he knew the truth about Roy being a werewolf Oliver knew the error in his ways.

“Not without knowing that you were a werewolf and that you could hear people’s heartbeats.” Oliver had admitted guiltily, conceding that Roy was right.

Roy had nodded, obviously pleased to have made his point, before he turned back to the punching bag and taking a couple of swings at it.

“Has it been hard…to hide what you really were?” Oliver asked. Roy landed one last hit, the punching bag swinging wildly from the impact, before he turned back around to face Oliver.

“It wasn’t hard,” Roy admitted, “Up until I joined you guys. Even after Thea and I got together it wasn’t too bad. I really wasn’t doing anything that involved me using my powers. The only time I almost blew it was when she saw me get stabbed. By the time she got me to the clinic it had almost completely healed over again. Luckily she went to deal with some paperwork and I was able to open it up again with one of my claws before anyone noticed.”

Oliver had choked at the comment, the carefree way Roy had shrugged his shoulders, as if using his own claws to cut himself open wasn’t a big deal.

“You cut yourself open with your own claws, just to cover up the fact that you were healing too quickly after being stabbed?” Oliver had asked. Roy had shrugged, and Oliver had seen the dark look crossing the younger man’s face.

“Trust me, it’s not the worst thing I’ve done to myself. Beacon Hills has nothing on Starling City when it comes to sick mind games…and If you don’t believe me, just ask Stiles, he probably knows the most about that kind of thing than anyone. What I went through has nothing on what he got to experience.”

Roy hadn’t given Oliver any further details, which in itself told Oliver how lucky he was to have met Roy at all, as if it hadn’t always been certain that Roy would have lived to see the news about the Queen’s Gambit going down. The thought alone had send a shudder down Oliver’s spine, even
before he’d learned that Roy was his half-brother.

“I’m sorry that felt as though you had to keep this hidden,” Oliver had apologised after a lengthy pause. Roy had blinked up at him in surprise, although he hadn’t said anything.

“Look…I know that you being a werewolf…it’s not something I would have expected, but I should have done more to make you feel comfortable about coming to me about it, or any other issues you were having. Even though you’ve been surrounded by people in the Glades you’ve been on your own for a long time…I know a bit about what that feels like. You don’t have to be alone anymore, Roy.”

“I haven’t been alone,” Roy had shaken his head, “Not since you saved my life in that subway train. You and Thea, Felicity, Sara and Diggle, you became like my pack, even though you’re all human.”

It wasn’t the first time Oliver had heard Roy say that He and the rest of their group had become Roy’s ‘pseudo pack’, but there was something about the way that Roy said it that made Oliver feel extra protective of the younger man.

Oliver wasn’t sure why he’d done it, but at that moment, with just the two of them in his lair, he’d slung his arm over Roy’s shoulder. Roy had tensed briefly, before Oliver had felt the muscles in Roy’s shoulders and back relax, and the younger man had leant against Oliver’s side. Oliver wasn’t sure how long they’d stayed like that before he felt Roy rubbing his cheek on Oliver’s side, and the soft noise of Roy sniffing. For a moment Oliver had thought that Roy was crying, but then he’d remembered the first night, when Stiles and Roy had been reunited, and Stiles had hugged Roy, and Roy had tried to sniff Stiles without anyone else noticing.

Thinking back on the nature documentaries that he’d sometimes watched with Thea when she was smaller, Oliver realised what Roy was doing. He wasn’t crying, he was scenting, getting his scent on Oliver, and getting Oliver’s scent on him.

For a moment after realisation dawned on him Oliver had stiffened up, his mind struggling to deal with what it had just realised. It was only for a moment, before Oliver stopped thinking about it. It was what Roy needed, and Oliver would ignore every part of him that found the behaviour unusual just so he could offer some comfort to Roy, who seemed to have spent the past seven years ignoring a part of himself.

As if he could sense Oliver’s acceptance Roy had visibly relaxed even more into Oliver’s embrace, “Thank you,” he had murmured, his fingers curling slightly around the material of Oliver’s t-shirt.
Looking back on that moment as he sat in the basement, surrounded by Felicity’s information about Jackson Whittemore, Oliver came to the realisation that he shouldn’t have been so shocked to learn that Roy was his little brother. He’d already regarded the younger man as if he was his brother. Felicity’s findings had just added the fact that they were brothers by blood, not just in every other way.

Silently Oliver vowed that he would do anything he could to protect Roy, both in the vigilante life that Oliver had started that Roy had willingly jumped into, but the supernatural world that Roy had become entangled in as a misguided teenager too.

TW/A

“Hey, Stiles,” Sherriff Stilinski greeted as he entered the room. Stiles looked up from the newspaper he was reading at the sound of his father’s voice.

“Hey Dad,” he replied, “Melissa went to the shops to pick up some things, she asked me to tell you where she was.”

“Thanks,” the Sherriff nodded, “how was your…walk this morning?”

Stiles blinked. Talking about his mother was always a touchy subject with his father. Once Stiles had turned fourteen they had barely ever visited the cemetery together, with the notable exception of Claudia’s birthday, when they did go together, or at least, they had up until Stiles had left Beacon Hills and not come back for seven years.

“I told her about some of the stuff I saw…things I did when I was away,” Stiles eventually admitted, his throat more than a little tight as he avoided his father’s gaze. Telling his mother’s grave, or even talking to Derek about it was one thing. His dad was a completely different scenario.

Stiles missed the sympathetic look his father gave him, “Derek called, said that he’d seen you up there, talking to your mother. He said that the two of you had spoken…that you left upset.”

“Melissa told me,” nodded Stiles, “Coming back home…it’s made me realise a few things.”
Stiles’ father said nothing in response, instead reaching out and resting his hand gently on Stiles’ shoulder, gripping it reassuringly. Stiles stiffened briefly at the contact, before his body relaxed, his mind resisting the instincts that the league and life on Lian Yu, had literally beaten into him.

“Come on, I’ve got something to show you…get your mind off whatever it is that has you so bothered.”

“Ok,” Stiles shrugged, rising to his feet and following his father out the back door, walking around the back of the house until the came to a door leading into the garage.

Wordlessly, Stiles watched as his father pushed the door open, leading the way into the garage, flicking on some lights as he went, before Stiles followed him into the garage, his senses tensing in the unfamiliar setting, his eyes rapidly adjusting to the dim light,

The Sheriff pulled on a tarp that Stiles realised was covering something large, and he automatically reached out to help…although is arm dropped to his side as he realised what it was that his father was uncovering.

“Roscoe?” he choked out, taking in the sight of the blue Jeep…his mother’s car, and then his the moment he turned 16 and got his licence. The car that had carried him into, and safely back out of, so much danger and so many battles, despite her age and her failing mechanics.

“She’s been waiting here for you,” the Sherriff offered, “I always hoped that, one day, you would come back, and be able to drive her again. Derek’s helped me out with her, fixed her up…she runs better now than she did when your mom got her, and the pack all make sure that she stays nice and clean and that she gets driven around every now and then, just to keep her going.”

Stiles sniffed, his eyes feeling with tears as he reached out a trembling hand and touched the bonnet of the car, his fingers tracing the familiar smooth metal, feeling the curves of the hood of the car.

“I won’t ever be able to drive her again though, not here.” Stiles sobbed, “I’m dead, Dad…legally. I shouldn’t even be back in the states,

“Stiles…can’t you, I don’t know, go to a government office and get it reversed?”

“Dad…they’re going to want to know how I got back into the country…which wasn’t exactly
through legal channels,” Stiles pointed out with a hushed voice, glancing around as if there was a federal agent hiding in the garage to arrest him.

“But Queen came back, you can too.”

Stiles took his time responding, walking a couple of steps along the Jeep, running his fingers along the side of it, until he could peer through the drives side window and see the interior of the car, just as spotless as the outside was. He caught sight of his own reflection in the side mirror, and sighed, taking in how much he’d changed physically since the last time he’d driven the car. It was a minor miracle that anyone had recognized him.

“It’s different Dad,” Stiles eventually sighed, “maybe one day I can come back properly…but not yet.”

TW/A

Stiles was sitting in the backyard of the house his father and Melissa shared, his legs brought up to his chest, his forearms crossed over his knees on top, with his chin resting on his arms, lost in his own thoughts, although he kept his senses alert, unable to let himself truly relax.

The soft sound of footsteps approaching reached Stiles ears, but Stiles didn’t move, recognizing the steps as those belonging to his father, and although the footsteps had been quiet, he was prepared for the sound of his father’s voice.

“Hey Stiles?”

“Yeah Dad,”

“Melissa and I are going to the pack meeting at Derek’s loft. You sure you don’t want to come?”

“No, it’s alright.” Stiles shook his head, looking over his shoulder at his dad, “I’m just going to relax here for a bit, take a moment to chill out. I might watch some TV later.”

“OK then,” the Sherriff frowned, the concern visible in his eyes before he turned away from Stiles,
“You know our numbers in case something happens. I don’t know how late we’re going to be, don’t stay up and wait.”

“Dad, I’m 23 years old, I’ll be ok on my own,” Stiles pointed out with a wry smile. The Sherriff sighed and nodded, heading back into the house with a wave in Stiles’ direction. Stiles watched him go, listening as he heard the sounds of his dad and Melissa getting into Melissa’s car and leaving the house.

Letting out a heavy sigh, Stiles went back to looking out at the backyard, enjoying the pleasant summer evening air. For one of the first times since he’d returned to Beacon Hills he was alone, and he took a moment the savour the solitude. His father and the pack had meant well. Stiles understood, but their near constant presence at his side had been surprisingly draining. Stiles was fairly sure it was because he was feeling indulged. Ever since he’d joined the league, or even before then, he’d been pretty much looking after himself. Yes, he had slept at Oliver’s side when they were on the island together, and Sara, Slade, Shado and Yao Fei had helped make sure that Stiles hadn’t died of hunger, but other than that Stiles had been in charge of making sure that he didn’t end up dead.

Now that he was back in Beacon Hills, however, Stiles felt as though everyone was treating him like he was going to shatter into a thousand pieces, a concept that Stiles knew he hadn’t really helped dissolve. He felt guilty for how emotional he had been ever since coming back to Beacon Hills, but that didn’t stop the constant presence of concerned pack members from quickly becoming suffocating.

Even Jackson had chosen to go to the pack meeting. He’d said something about going for a run in the woods afterwards with the other wolves and Kira. It was still another week until the full moon, but Jackson hadn’t run with other wolves since the full moon after Stiles boarded the Queen’s Gambit, so nobody was blaming Jackson for wanting to take advantage of being close to other werewolves for the first time in years. Derek and Scott had practically insisted on Jackson joining them. Scott and Kira had already picked Jackson up so that they could relax up at the loft for a bit before the meeting, although Stiles’ father and Melissa hadn’t been able to leave earlier due to the Sherriff only just getting home from work.

On the other side of the fence Stiles heard a tree creak gently in the wind, and Stiles let out a sigh, letting his body relax, enjoying the quiet stillness of the evening. Using meditation techniques that he’d learned in the league, Stiles focused on relaxing each part of his body, as much as he could anyway. Stiles wasn’t even sure that he would ever be able to be completely relaxed ever again, not after everything he’d been through. Even before the Queen’s Gambit, or even the Nogitsune, Stiles had known he had been struggling mentally, that his constant feeling that something bad was going to happen. He’d once admitted that it had felt like he was drowning.

The feeling had never gone away, not completely, despite the fact that so many years had passed. It felt like there were brief moments in time when he’d been able to fight his way to the surface and
suck in a few hurried breaths, but then he’d always been dragged back down by something.

Not for the first time, Stiles wondered if it would have been better if he had gone down with the Queen’s Gambit. Up until he’d returned to Beacon Hills the pack had been reasonably secure in their knowledge that he was dead, and they had gone on with their lives. Even his dad had shown that, with the support of Melissa and the pack, he’d coped without Stiles in his life.

Stiles forcibly pushed back his darker thoughts. He’d survived the Queen’s Gambit going down, and everything his life had thrown at him since then. He wasn’t going to let himself dwell on what ifs and speculation. At least it was a relief for Stiles to know that, when he left Beacon Hills again, this time probably for good, he wouldn’t have to worry as much about the pack than he had done the first time he’d left. They could survive without him…they didn’t need him.

And they would be far safer once he was gone.
Chapter 19

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

The ringing of his phone was what dragged Stiles from sleep. He emerged from beneath his covers, eyes bleary from sleep as he fumbled for the switch of the lamp on the bedside table. Normally he would leave his phone on the bedside table itself, but he’d been tired when he’d gone to bed, having decided to watch a movie once he’d gone back into his father’s home, and he’d left his phone in his pants pocket.

Finally finding the switch, Stiles flicked it on, before he got up, crossing over the room to where he had left his pants. His phone continued to ring shrilly as Stiles pulled it from his pockets, frowning as he realised the time that was being displayed on the device. A glance at his watch told him that his phone was displaying the accurate time.

“Hello?” he sleepily mumbled, rubbing his hand through his hair wearily as he answered the phone.

“Stiles,” Nyssa’s voice came sharply from the phone’s speaker, and Stiles was instantly fully alert. He was briefly tempted to make a remark about the obvious time difference, as it was almost four thirty in the morning, but there was something about Nyssa’s voice that stopped him. This wasn’t a social call (although Nyssa wasn’t prone to making those). Something was wrong.

“Nyssa,” Stiles greeted wearily, “What is it?”

“Stiles, I rang as soon as I heard. Father has given orders for the Alssayadin Ghamidat Alnnukhba, along with two of the seven to be sent to Beacon Hills.”

“What!” Stiles exclaimed, clasping his hand over his mouth as he remembered that his father and Melissa would be trying to sleep close by. Stiles didn’t expect Jackson to return to the house tonight, not with him planning on running with the wolves, but His father and Melissa had told him they were going to be returning to the home after the meeting had finished. In fact, Stiles was rather surprised he hadn’t woken up when they’d returned. If he had slept through their return it was a sure sign that he’d either been more tired than he’d thought, or that his training was slipping. Either way it wouldn’t be something he would be confessing to anyone.

“When are they supposed to leave?” Stiles asked, already wondering how he could lure the league away from Beacon Hills.
“They’re already gone. I had a mission in Shanghai and I’ve only just returned. They left two days ago Stiles.”

Stiles felt his heart freeze in his chest. Two days…that was plenty of time for the league to get from Nanda Parbat to Beacon Hills.

“Stiles, he’s sent the Alsayadin Ghamidat Alnnukhba, and two of the Seven.” Nyssa repeated.

“The..the seven?” Stiles choked out, knowing what Nyssa was referring to. The Seven Men of Death, the seven most deadly assassins within the league, answering only to Ra's al Ghul, and serving as his personal squad when it came to things that he became weary of. Stiles had seen them training while he’d still been new to the league, and they had left their impression on him. He’d had no desire to go anywhere near them since then.

“And the Alsayadin Ghamidat Alnnukhba,” Nyssa confirmed.

Stiles frowned as he began throwing on clothes. He needed to do something…now.

“What’s that? The Elite Mysterious hunters?” Stiles mentally translated. He’d never heard the term used during his time at the league.

“It’s what Ra’s calls one of his elite teams,” Nyssa explained, “Stiles…it’s the team he uses to hunt supernatural creatures…”

Stiles didn’t need a mirror to know that his face had just lost all colour. He yanked on his pants letting himself out of the room as he fastened his belt, running towards the room that his dad and Melissa shared. He didn’t hesitate before throwing himself against the door, not caring what he might accidentally walk in on. He threw his hand on the light switch, illuminating the darkened room, almost blinding himself with the sudden light. He blinked rapidly, trying to get his eyes to adjust faster, before he felt his heart skip a beat.

The bed was still made, the covers still in place, obviously having not been slept in. Shaking his head, Stiles backed out of the room, running towards the front of the house and looking out a window. The only car in the driveway was his dad’s Sherriff’s cruiser. The Jeep was still in the garage, so it wasn’t as if Stiles had expected to see it, but the absence of Melissa’s car told him that she and his dad hadn’t come home.
“My…my dad.” Stiles choked out, his breath hitching dangerously, his throat closing as he tried to fight off the looming panic attack.

“Stiles? What is it?” Nyssa asked.

“I…I…I think they’ve got my dad.”

A/TW

Oliver counted softly under his breath, waiting for the boom of thunder to follow the flash of lightning that had slashed through the dark sky of Starling City, the wind howling as it swept between the towering buildings of Starling City.

The storm had been building off the coast for days, and it had finally hit, although it promised to be a long storm. On the TV Oliver could hear the early morning news broadcasters advising everyone that many streets within the CBD were closed, parts of the Glades had flooded, and many businesses had declared their intention to be shut until the storm had passed. Even Starling City airport had been shut by the authorities. It wasn’t very often that Starling City was hit with a storm as bad as this…almost a hurricane in strength. Starling City was too far north for it to be a regular occurrence, but occasionally a big storm hit, and the city felt the repercussions hard. Starling City hadn’t been built with these sorts of storms in mind, and when such storms did hit it always made a mess.

Felicity had all but forced Oliver to stay with her in her apartment, and Oliver found himself looking stonily out the window, woken by the crashing of thunder and the roaring of the wind as rain lashed the windows. He remembered watching out the windows of the mansion the last time a big storm had hit Starling City. Thea had been a little toddler then, no more than two years old. She’d cried for hours, terrified of the storm’s ferocity.

Diggle was safe at his home with Lyla, Thea was at her apartment, Sara was spending the night with Laurel, while Quentin Lance was at Police Headquarters, and Roy was safely in Beacon Hills, hundreds of miles away from the storm. There was no way Oliver would have let Roy stay at home if he’d still been in Starling City when the storm had hit, even before he’d learned that the younger man was his half-brother. He doubted that the little building that Roy lived in would be able to withstand the force of the winds and the rain. Roy himself had called Felicity the day before yesterday, sheepishly asking if she could go to his house and get his most valuable possessions, just in case something happened to his house. Oliver had tagged along with Felicity, getting everything that Roy had described, plus a few extra things that their younger teammate might have forgotten about, or that had looked important or significant.
Oliver remembered how, during the drive back to Felicity’s, he had looked over his shoulder at the pile of belongings in the back seat of Felicity’s car, and how it had felt like he’d been punched in the gut. This was all that Roy had in his life that he really cared about. Oliver wasn’t a materialistic person, not by a long way, not anymore, but even to him it looked like nothing. Even taking into account the things that Roy had taken with him to Beacon Hills the little pile of things in the back seat had looked pitiful. It would all have fitted comfortably in a single backpack, if it had to. Oliver gritted his teeth at the mere memory.

As if she’d sensed Oliver’s mood getting worse, Felicity chose that moment to walk into the room, a robe thrown around her shoulders.

“Oliver?” she questioned

“It’s getting worse out there,” Oliver offered, although he didn’t take his eyes off the window.

“There’s nothing you can do about it, Oliver,” Felicity pointed out, “It’s a storm, not a crime wave. Threatening to shoot the clouds full of arrows isn’t going to do anything, and the wind would probably blow your arrows way off course anyway.

“I know,” Oliver nodded in agreement, finally turning away from the window. His eyes fell on the little box Felicity had put Roy’s things in when they’d gotten back to her apartment. Felicity followed his line of sight with her own eyes.

“Hard to believe that’s everything he has that he cares about,” she commented sadly.

“I know he chose to leave everything behind and start over,” Oliver sighed, “but I would have thought that there would have been…more after all these years.”

“Yeah…” Felicity nodded, “it’s kind of sad. When…when he was telling us how he had no-one before he met Thea, how he used to be alone, I didn’t really think about what he meant…but now I think I’m beginning to understand.”

“He’s got us now, and when he comes back I’ll tell him about how he’s my little brother. He won’t have to worry about being alone or me turning my back on him ever again.”
“You wouldn’t have turned your back on him even before you found out you were his brother,” Felicity pointed out.

Oliver nodded, “I wouldn’t have,” he agreed, “but I don’t think I made that clear enough to Roy. He was convinced I was going to kick him out when I found out he…wasn’t quite as human as we thought. I thought he would have trusted me more than that.”

“I think he does trust you, Oliver.” Felicity replied, “he said that he viewed you as his alpha, even though you’re not a werewolf. I think that he would need to respect you a lot before he viewed you as an alpha. I’ve been doing some research, and although I doubt the accuracy of a lot of what I’ve read, one thing that was pretty much universal over everything I’ve read about werewolves was that the Alpha’s are the leaders of the pack. It’s their job to protect every member of the pack, make sure they’re included and kept safe. The alpha is the leader, in times of conflict, and peace. The alpha is a nurturer, a teacher, a caregiver, a protector. If an alpha isn’t doing a good enough job then the other wolves will leave it behind and go somewhere else, or they’ll kill the alpha and a new alpha will rise, apparently the one who killed the old alpha gets the alpha werewolf powers. My point is that Roy wouldn’t have thought of you as his alpha and stuck around if he thought you were doing a bad job looking after him.”

Oliver blinked and looked across at Felicity, “You researched werewolves?” he asked, although he honestly wasn’t surmised.

Felicity nodded, “Stiles gave me some pointers on where to start before they left for Beacon Hills.”

Oliver nodded and turned his attention back out the window, while Felicity yawned.

“What is it.” Oliver greeted, “Are you going to stand there and glare at the storm all night or are you going to get some actual sleep?” she asked.

“Depends…” Oliver began, before he was interrupted by the ringing of his phone. He frowned and shot a sideways look at Felicity. Why would he be getting a phone call at this time of night?

A glance at the screen told him it was Sara that was calling him, and he immediately answered it.

“Sara,” Oliver greeted, “What is it.”
‘I’m sorry, did I interrupt you and Felicity doing something naughty?’ Sara replied shortly. Oliver blinked.

“No,” he replied quickly, glad that Felicity couldn’t hear what Sara had said.

“Seriously? This is, like, the opportune moment for you, Oliver. Make a move.”

“Sara…I’m sure you didn’t call me at… Four thirty in the morning, to give me…advice.”

“Nyssa called me.”

Oliver straightened his back. Although he was wary of Nyssa, he could see how Ra’s’ daughter cared for Sara, and was willing to continue to have a tentative alliance with the assassin.

“What did Nyssa say?”

Sara inhaled, and Oliver heard the way her breathing caught, as if she was fighting back tears.

“Sara,” Oliver probed gently, fear building up his spine. Something had obviously happened… something big, for it to have affected Sara in such a way.

“Ra’s has moved to attack Stiles. He’s sent his unit that are specialised with dealing with the supernatural to Beacon Hills, along with some of his best men. They left Nanda Parbat two days ago, they’re probably in Beacon Hills already.

“Roy and Stiles?” Oliver gasped softly. Felicity’s head whipped around towards him at the tone of his voice.

“Nyssa said she’d already called Stiles and told him…apparently Stiles’ dad is missing.”

Oliver felt his heart sink to his stomach. When they’d been on the island it had been painfully obvious how close Stiles had been to his father…his only living parent. If Stiles’ father died at the hands of the league Stiles would never recover.
“What about Roy?”

“I don’t know, I called you the minute I got off the phone with Nyssa. Stiles didn’t mention him to her”

“Ok, we need a plan. We need to get to Beacon Hills, now.”

“How, Oliver?” Sara questioned, “The airport is shut down, and the roads in and out of Starling City are closed because of flooding. There is no way we can get out of town, for the moment at least.”

Oliver’s heart clenched as he realised that Sara was telling the truth. Starling City was completely cut off from the rest of the world. There was no way that He would be able to get to Beacon Hills, not until the storm passed and the floodwaters receded.

For the moment Roy and Stiles were on their own, pitted against the League of Assassins until Oliver was able to get to them and help.

Oliver closed his eyes and prayed to a God that he wasn’t sure he still believed in, hoping that the two younger men would be able to survive until Oliver was able to reach their side.

He’d only just learned Roy was his brother after all...he couldn’t lose him now.

Chapter End Notes

Hi there. Deepest apologies to anyone offended by my attempted Arabic being inaccurate, offensive or otherwise upsetting. Google translate is probably not the most accurate method to use when trying to translate a phrase. In the case of this chapter, and all chapters to follow, Alnnukhbat Alssayadin min Khariq means Elite hunters of the Supernatural...a name which I made up for the league's specialized Supernatural response team.

If anyone who possesses more knowledge of the Arabic language can offer a more accurate translation of a name for this group I am more than happy to hear it.

Thank you for all of your wonderful feedback and kudos.

R.W.
Chapter 20

Panic surged through Stiles’ body as he looked back at the bed in the room his father and Melissa shared. They hadn’t come back. The league were coming for him, and his father and Melissa hadn’t come back from the pack meeting.

Turning on his heel, Stiles raced back out of the room, heading for the bedroom that Jackson had been staying in. He pushed the door open, not even bothering to knock. Even if he did walk in on something he’d rather not see Stiles couldn’t care, Nyssa’s words echoing in his head.

Jackson’s room was just as deserted as the Sherriff and Melissa’s room, although Stiles wasn’t completely surprised. Jackson would probably have woken up when he’d heard Stiles running around the house and would have gotten up to investigate what was wrong, or to insult Stiles for disturbing his rest.

Stiles pulled out his phone again, trying to ignore how his fingers shook as he flicked through the contacts he had gathered until he found the entry for his dad. He hit the dial button and lifted the phone to his ear. Maybe something had come up, and they’d stayed later…or maybe they’d fallen asleep and thought that Stiles would already be asleep.

Maybe this was somebody’s idea for revenge for all the times Stiles had stayed out late and worried his dad before the Sherriff found out the truth about the supernatural.

His father’s phone, however went straight to voicemail, and so did Melissa’s. Scott’s phone just rang out. Stiles tried calling everyone in Beacon Hills whose phone number had had….Derek, Jackson, Lydia, Kira, Liam, Parrish, and even Chris Argent

Nobody answered.

As he tried contacting his friends, Stiles was already getting ready. He threw on some clothes, securing his knife back against his leg. There was a part of him that was screaming at him to go into this more heavily armed, but Stiles wanted to be cautious. He didn’t want to blow his cover just in case this was all some twisted idea of a practical joke…although he couldn’t really imagine Jackson going along with it if it was some sort of prank. Stiles knew that he and Jackson hadn’t always gotten along with each other, but Jackson knew, or at least had some idea of what Stiles had been through with the league, and his former classmate knew how the league were not something to joke about.
The other reason Stiles decided to only carry his knife was the fact that all of the rest of his things were still safely concealed in the back of Jackson’s car, which he had taken with him to Derek’s house for the pack meeting. They’d agreed that it was too dangerous to risk bringing the weapons into the house, especially with Stiles’ father being law enforcement. There were some things that Stiles’ father would ignore, but a small arsenal of weaponry from an unknown place of origin in his son’s possession. Yeah, that was going to raise some questions. Questions Stiles would rather not having to answer.

Stiles was in the kitchen before he knew it, heading towards the front door, before he stopped, looking at the hallway table, the bowl of keys sitting innocently on it. Melissa and Jackson had both taken their cars, and even with his level of training it would take a long time for Stiles to run to Derek’s house.

His hands shaking, Stiles reached into the bowl, bypassing the keys to his father’s cruiser, before his fingers closed around the shape of the keys to his Jeep, still familiar after so many years away from his beloved car. Heaving a sigh, Stiles scribbled a short note on a scrap of paper and left it on the kitchen bench, just like he and his dad had used to do back in their old house, before everything had turned to hell.

Dad,

Gone to Derek’s looking for you. Call me if you find this. Do not leave the house. Be alert.

Stiles

Stiles dropped the pen beside the scrap of paper and ran back towards the front door, letting himself out into the crisp early morning air. He locked the door behind him, and then ran to the side of the house, using the remote on the Jeep’s keys to open the garage door. The door creaked as it slowly opened, and Stiles fidgeted, mentally trying to will the door to open faster.

Finally the garage door shuddered to a halt and Stiles strode into the garage, beside the Jeep. He easily slid the key into the lock and jiggled it just the right way to unlock it. If the situation hadn’t been so serious Stiles would have laughed. He still remembered all of Roscoe’s little idiosyncrasies.

Still, as Stiles opened the car door and climbed into the driver’s seat, he felt as if he was sixteen years old again...young, inexperienced, scared as hell, his anxiety causing his heart to race within his chest. Stiles gripped the steering wheel with one hand, while he reached to slide the key into the Jeep’s ignition.
Roscoe purred into life, with none of the stuttering that Stiles was used to. Stiles blinked, remembering how his father had said how Derek had done a lot of work on the car, having the time and the money to do everything the Jeep needed to run in peak condition.

Stiles made a mental note that, if he ever saw Derek alive again, he would thank him profusely, in as many different ways that Stiles could think of. It wasn’t the time for that, however. Stiles turned on the headlights and lightly revved the engine before accelerating driving out of the garage and heading out into the night.

Despite how many years had passed it was easy for Stiles to navigate his way through the streets of Beacon Hills, even thought it was pitch black outside. He’d lost track of how many hours he’d spent driving around the town at night with Scott or someone else from the pack, following some lead, or heading to check out a crime scene.

Unable to stop himself, Stiles glanced over at the empty seat beside him, feeling loneliness wash over him. Even if nothing had happened to the pack, and Stiles had overreacted about the situation, he was still an outsider as far as the pack was concerned...having gone through things...done things...that Scott and the others wouldn’t ever come close to imagining.

He was an outsider as far as Oliver and his friends were concerned. None of them knew what Stiles did about the supernatural. They hadn’t run with a pack, they hadn’t been held back and made to feel weak and inferior just because they were human.

The one who had experienced the closest life experiences to Stiles was Jackson. They’d both been possessed, Jackson by the Kanima, Stiles himself by the Nogitsune. They’d both had their free will and autonomy taken away from them. They’d both hidden their past from those around them, training in the use of weapons to a level that would probably rival Allison’s, although the pack remained oblivious to the fact.

With the league in town, who knew how long that cover would last? Not long, in Stiles’ opinion.

Stiles was dragged from his thoughts by the ringing of his phone, and he immediately pulled over, pulling the device from his pocket and answering it without even looking at the screen, hoping that it was his dad or Scott, or even Jackson.

“Hello?”
“Stiles, it’s Oliver. Sara called me and said what was going on. Are you ok?”

“Oliver…I’m fine. I’m going looking for my dad and Jackson and the rest.”

“Be careful, don’t go into something you’re not ready for,” Oliver pointed out, “It’s the league, you know, even more than I do, what they’re capable of.”

“Oliver,” Stiles began, but his voice caught in his throat, fully aware of how hopeless the situation was shaping up to be. Stiles knew that he wasn’t the best of fighters. Yes, he was good, but the teams that Ra’s had sent to Beacon Hills were all made up of members of the league who were both older and far better and more experienced fighters. These were men and women who had trained for this since early childhood.

Stiles knew his chances of managing to defeat them, on his own, were slim to none, but then he thought of the pack, of his father, all of them so relieved to have him back at home, to have him back from the dead.

He wasn’t going to give up on them, no matter what.

“Stiles, the minute the storm clears I’ll be on my way. It’s a four hour flight from here to the air strip just outside Beacon Hills. Just hang on and I’ll get there with Sara and Diggle and we can help you.”

“Thanks Oliver,” Stiles replied, although he had a gut feeling that the storm over Starling City wouldn’t break in time.

“I want you to keep me up to date, Stiles,” Oliver ordered sternly, and Stiles nodded, exhaling as he drove through the streets of Beacon Hills.

“I’ll let you know if anything new comes up,” Stiles promised.

“I mean it.” Oliver replied, and the minute I can I’ll start heading towards you and Roy. I’m going to do everything I can to make sure you stay safe.”
“Oliver…it’s the league…let’s be realistic…Jackson…my family and friends…they’re probably already either dead or being horribly tortured, and I’m about to walk into a massacre.”

‘No,” Oliver snapped down the phone, “Ra’s wouldn’t have kept you alive for all these years without a reason. You haven’t done anything to warrant everyone you know being killed. He’s not about to risk losing what loyalty you have towards him just because you went home. Did you ever get told you weren’t to go back to Beacon Hills?”

“No,” Stiles admitted.

“See, it’s probably some test. Besides, Sara likes Roy, and Nyssa loves Sara, and Ra’s would be stupid to think that hurting Roy…Jackson would make him and Nyssa closer.”

Stiles swallowed and nodded, although he knew that Oliver couldn’t see him.

“Bye Oliver, I’ll speak to you as soon as I know more.”

“OK,” Oliver replied, “Bye Stiles.”

Oliver hung up and Stiles dropped his phone back down on the passenger’s front seat, paying attention to the road in front of him.

Since his arrival in Beacon Hills he’d learned that, when his father and Melissa had moved in together, Derek had moved back into his loft, and it was there that Stiles was going. He was grateful, at least, that the loft was closer than Derek’s family’s house in the woods, so it didn’t take as long for Stiles to reach his destination.

Stiles parked his Jeep outside the building, immediately spotting Melissa’s car, along with Scott’s and a few others that might have belonged to Lydia, Liam, Chris or Parish.

The pack were still here, that much was obvious, or they had gone somewhere else on foot, for some reason. Stiles’ eyes narrowed and he drew his knife, holding it tightly in his right hand as he crept into the building, constantly scanning his surroundings for any sign of danger as he climbed the stairs towards Derek’s loft.
Finally he reached the last landing and he stopped, eyeing the door to Derek’s apartment wearily. The door was wide open, although he could see that there were some lights on inside. Stiles tightened his grip on the knife and inched forward, his footsteps silent on the floor as he approached the doorway.

Stiles stepped into the room, his knife raised, his senses fully alert as the scanned the room, the stairs…all of it.

There was nobody there, and the room was in a mess. The couch had been flipped and Stiles could see the tears in the leather from a set of claws. The coffee table was crushed, as if something heavy, like a body, had been dropped on it, and some of the panes of glass in the large window had been broken. Stiles stepped forward, and startled when he felt his foot nudge something. He looked down, immediately spotting the shotgun bullet casing on the floor beside the toes of his shoes.

It could be one of Chris’, Stiles forced himself to think as he crouched down and picked up the casing, sniffing it gingerly. He could smell a decidedly woodsy smell, like being out in the trees after rain, with a faint flowery scent added. Stiles recognized the combined smell instantly from his days studying poisons within the league.

Wolfsbane.

Stiles put the shell casing down, trying to slow down his breathing. It could still have been Chris, although it was unlikely that Chris would bring a shotgun loaded with wolfsbane bullets to an ordinary pack meeting. While it was true that Stiles knew that wolfsbane bullets were not a common weapon within the league, Nyssa had told him that Alnnukhabat Alssayadin min Khariq were coming after him too, and being the branch of the league that specialised in dealing with the supernatural, it was highly likely that they would use wolfsbane bullets.

“Dad?” Stiles called out softly as he walked a little further into the apartment, taking in the destruction. He felt his gut clench as he walked around the couch and saw a puddle of dark blood on the ground. It wasn’t a life threatening amount of blood, which was something, but it a sign that somebody had been injured, and Stiles was willing to bet, just from the colour of the blood, that it had been a werewolf that was dosed with wolfsbane.

“Derek?” Stiles called, looking around a bit more, trying not to think about the blood and how, chances were Scott, Derek, Jackson, or Liam were injured. Instead Stiles continued to search the loft, finding no signs of any of the pack, just more signs of violence…overturned furniture, broken glass, bullet casings and splashes of blood, both human and werewolf.
Swallowing nervously, feeling his breathing hitch slightly, as if he was edging closer and close to a panic attack, Stiles walked back to Derek kitchen and braced himself against the bench, feeling the cool stone beneath his fingertips. He bowed his head and focused on his breathing, fighting his urge to panic. He could fix this, he had years of training, all he had to do was stay calm.

It took longer than Stiles would like to admit, but finally he managed to get his breathing back under control, and he straightened his back, his eyes immediately falling on the knife that had been driven into the wood of Derek’s overhead cupboards, pinning an envelope into place.

Frowning Stiles reached up and yanked the knife free, tossing it back onto the bench with a loud clatter with one hand, while he snatched the envelope as it started to fall. His eyes immediately recognized the Arabic letters that spelled out his name within the league, scrawled across the face of the envelope, although realistically who else would the message contained within be meant for.

If Stiles had still been his younger, impetuous teenaged self, he would have just ripped the envelope open then and there, but he was older now, wiser, to an extent. He’d learned how many different ways he could kill someone with only a paperclip (the answer was surprising) and just how many ways ripping open an envelope that was, in all likelihood, from someone who wished Stiles harm, with no form of protective gear on, could end badly for him. The envelope could contain anything… a poisonous insect, sulfuric acid, any range of different toxins or poisons. He would have to proceed with extreme caution.

Gingerly holding the envelope between his fingers, as if it might explode any moment (although in this case Stiles knew that an exploding letter wasn’t the stupidest of ideas), Stiles left the loft, sliding the door shut as he left. The last thing he needed was some concerned citizen calling the police and the situation getting even more screwed up. Luckily Derek’s loft was in a isolated part of town, and it was highly unlikely that anyone would be in the area.

At least, that’s what Stiles hoped.
Stiles glanced nervously at his watch as he picked the lock of the chemistry classroom at Beacon Hills High School. Already the sky was just starting to lighten with the promise of a new day, and Stiles wanted to be out of the school before anyone noticed that the school wasn’t as abandoned as it should be. At least Summer school wasn’t on, thanks to it being the weekend, so he didn’t have to worry about some teacher walking in on him.

The classroom door clicked and Stiles turned the handle and let himself into the room, memories of the long hours he’d spent in this very room washing over him like an icy cold bucket of water. Stiles shivered as he remembered all those torturous hours he’d spend listening to Harris drone on and on in his monotone voice.

Stiles forced the memories back. It wasn’t the time for a walk down memory lane, Stiles was there for a reason.

Still gingerly holding onto the envelope, Stiles set it on the teacher’s desk, before he went looking for what he needed. Thanks to his prior experience breaking into the school, and this classroom in particular, it didn’t take him long to find the protective gear he needed. It wouldn’t do much if the envelope did contain explosives, or one of the Leagues more aggressive biological weapons, but it would help against pretty much everything else.

Stiles carefully eased his gloved thumb beneath the flap of the envelope, tearing it open cautiously, before he peered inside. The envelope contained a single piece of paper, along with some powder that looks suspiciously like dried wolfsbane. Stiles pulled out the piece of paper, shaking it gently to get rid of any of the powder, before he prepared a slide with the powder, sliding it under a microscope he’d grabbed when he’d been searching for the protective clothing.

Peering into the microscope, Stiles looked at the powder he’d collected. During his time with the league he’d studied poisons, in all their forms. It was an area that had interested him, and he’d learned how to recognize all of the poisons the league commonly used, as well as some that were less common. Maybe it was because of his past with werewolves, but Stiles had paid particular attention when learning to identify and differentiate between different sorts of wolfsbane.

By looking through the microscope Stiles was pretty sure he knew what sort of wolfsbane it was, and he was glad he took the precaution of putting protective gear on. It was a particularly potent variety, extremely rare and difficult to grow, although Stiles knew that the League managed to have a couple of plants growing, as it was especially harmful towards humans. Stiles had no idea how effective it was against werewolves, but he was willing to bet that it would be no walk in the park for any of his friends if they’d been dosed.
Now that he knew what he was dealing with, Stiles turned his attention to the letter, unfolding it carefully, just in case there were any more surprises is. There didn’t seem to be any, although he held the letter up towards the desk lamp he’d turned on, just in case there was something hidden.

It all appeared normal, so Stiles focused on the words written on the paper. Stiles breathed a sigh of relief when he saw that the letter was written in English. He could read Arabic, but he didn’t trust himself to mess up the translation in his head and miss something. This was far too important to risk a mistake like that.

‘You have lingered in this town for too long, Stiles Stilinski. We have your friends. They are your weakness, and now we have them. What are you going to do, little fox?’ the letter taunted, “We took them by surprise. You cannot hope to defeat us, you know what the league does to our weaknesses. Their powers will not save them…Long have we dealt with those of their kind.

Ra’s thinks highly of you, or rather he did… The only reason we have not slain any of your friends. If you come quietly and return to Nanda Parbat they will be released, on the condition that you never return to Beacon Hills again. You will never see any of them again…your father…the werewolves…the kitsune…the Banshee…not even Oliver Queen’s little friend. If you do seek them out they will be killed in front of you, and it shall be your fault. The blood of the entire pack will be on your hands.

Could you live with the guilt, Stiles? Could you live out your life with their blood on your hands?

You have until midnight to come to us to be escorted back to the league. You will be punished further there for you disloyalty. Should you not re-join us we will kill them all, and then we will hunt you down and kill you in a pool of their blood.

There will be no escaping punishment for your disloyalty’

Stiles’ eyes skimmed over his words, and he swallowed, feeling more than a little sick as he read. It wasn’t the most strongly worded of letters, but it got the point across. Stiles needed to give himself up, or the pack would be killed. If he ever returned to Beacon Hills, or interacted with the pack again, they would be killed.

Stiles looked out the window of the classroom, the early morning light beginning to brighten, and he frowned.
This would be his last day of freedom for him. He couldn’t let the league destroy his family, he was already responsible for the deaths of Allison and Aidan and who knew how many other people in Beacon Hills. He couldn’t damn his family…his pack to death.

The league wanted him back, to punish him for seeming like he had deserted them. Stiles would go back, regardless of whatever his punishment might be.

He couldn’t face putting his family through more pain that what they had already experienced…not after everything they’d already gone through because of him.

A/TW

“Have you heard from them?” Felicity asked as she paced her living room, her arms crossed over her chest. Oliver shook his head in reply, glancing at the clock on the wall before rubbing his hands over his face, feeling trapped and confined while the storm raged outside.

A couple of hours had passed since Oliver had spoken to Stiles. The early summer sun was rising over the city, although it made little difference in bringing any light to the metropolis, the storm clouds and the driving rain keeping everything dark and gloomy. Oliver couldn’t help but take a moment to appreciate the irony of how the weather reflected his mood.

He was powerless in this situation, completely unable to do anything to help Stiles and Roy, or any of their friends. Roy, his little half-brother, and Stiles, the kid on the island that Oliver had come to regard as a little brother, were both in danger, and Oliver wasn’t able to help them, to rescue them, and it was slowly driving Oliver insane…and it only had been a few hours.

Oliver wondered what would happen if one or both of the younger men died at the hands of the league. Thea would be devastated by Roy’s death, even more so once she learned about the connection between Roy and Robert Queen. While it was true that Roy and Thea were in an ‘off stage’ of their on and off relationship Oliver knew that Thea cared for Roy. As for Sara, Laurel, and their father, it would definitely hurt them if Stiles was killed, especially since both Laurel and her father hadn’t known that Stiles had survived the Queen’s Gambit. He was supposed to be safe back in Beacon Hills, and yet the league had followed him back to his home town, and who knew what had happened.

For all Oliver knew Stiles could already be dead. The league could have attacked wherever it was Roy and the others had been, killing them all, before lying in wait for Stiles to realise that something
was wrong and wander in.

Anxiously, Oliver glanced at his phone in his hand, just in case he had somehow missed it ringing, only to confirm that there was no new messages in his voicemail, no missed calls…not even a short text.

“The storm’s probably not helping phone reception,” Felicity sighed heavily, sinking into one of her living room chairs, ringing her hands together anxiously, “I’m sure that Stiles and Roy will ring as soon as they can,” she offered consolingly.

“If they can,” Oliver grimly replied. Felicity blinked, but said nothing, her lips pursing just likely, her eyes revealing her pain and grief. Oliver held Felicity’s gaze, the two of them united in their grief for their friends, both of them knowing that both Roy and Stiles were probably dead by now.

The long look was broken only when Oliver’s phone began to ring loudly, breaking the silence within the apartment. Felicity startled, but Oliver glanced at his screen, relieved that he’d taken the time to put Stiles’ phone number in his list of contacts. Stiles’ name flashed on the screen, and Oliver immediately swiped the phone’s screen to answer it.

“Stiles?” he growled into the phone.

“Oliver,” Stiles’ broken voice replied. Oliver could tell, just from the way the younger man’s voice hitched, that Stiles had been crying. He sounded like he had during those first few weeks…months…on Lian Yu…broken by whatever the hell had happened back in Beacon Hills

“Stiles…what happened? Stiles, where are you? Are you safe?”

Stiles made a noise that sounded like a positive answer, although Oliver wasn’t sure, before Stiles spoke, “I’m…I’m back at my dad and Melissa’s house.”

“What…what about Roy and your dad and the others?”

“The…the league has them, they’re going to kill them Oliver.” Stiles’ breathing hitched again, and Oliver frowned at the sound, listening to Stiles’ breathing on the phone. It sounded far too fast and rapid, as if Stiles was hyperventilating.
“Stiles, are you having a panic attack?”

“Oliver… I… I can’t… they’re gonna die,” Stiles gasped down the phone, “I can’t lose them.”

“Shit,” Oliver swore quietly to himself, imagining Stiles, huddled in a dark corner, rocking slightly as he tried to inhale, only for his lungs to fail him. He’d seen more than one of Stiles’ panic attacks during their time together on Lian Yu, and Oliver had learned how the best way to deal with them were.

Of course, doing it over the phone was a completely different matter.

“Stiles… Stiles, listen to me. Focus on the sound of my voice,” Oliver ordered in a voice that gave no room for arguing, “We will figure this out, ok. The minute the storm passes we will come to help you, and we will do everything we can to get them back, but for the moment you need to stay calm.”

“Oliver,” Stiles sobbed down the phone, and Oliver blinked, tears gathering in his own eyes.

“Listen to me, Stiles, listen to the sound of my breathing, and follow it, ok?”

Oliver exaggerated his breathing so Stiles would be able to hear it and use it to guide and steady his own haggard breaths. Oliver kept doing it until he was satisfied that Stiles wasn’t about to have another panic attack.

“They… they want me back,” Stiles stuttered, “the league. They said that if I give myself up they’ll let the others go, but I can’t come back… ever. Oliver… I don’t want to go back to the league, and what if they go back on their word and kill them all anyway.”

“Stiles, slow down,” Oliver coaxed, “I hate to tell you this, but the storms not letting up, and the forecast was that it’ll last for at least another six to twelve hours. I’ll come to Beacon Hills as soon as I can, but you have to stay calm, alright.”

“Yeah, Ok,” Stiles exhaled down the phone. Oliver, however, was fighting his own panic. There was no guarantee that the league would keep it’s word and let go of Stiles’ friends and family if Stiles gave himself up, and if Stiles gave himself up there was no certainty that the league would let
him live. In fact, Oliver was pretty sure that Stiles would end up dead, regardless of who he was associated with.

“I’m going to have to do it…give myself up, I mean,” Stiles sighed down the phone, “I can’t just…do nothing and let the league kill them. They’re my family and friends, Oliver. Other than you, Sara, Laurel, and your other allies in Starling City they have everyone I’ve ever given a damn about. I have to save them.”

“I know Stiles, but you’ve got to think about this. Plan…try and predict what the league would do, but be flexible. They know that you’ve had training, they’ll expect you to know what they’d do, and they’ll do something different to throw you off. You’ve got to think outside the box…Sara tells me you’re good at that.”

“I was…before,” Stiles agreed, “Lydia once said that I was the one who figured everything out.”

“Any you still are. Stiles, you survived on the island better than I did at first, you’ve got through all those years being with the league, training. You’re strong, and smart, and resourceful. You will find a way thought this. You have the home advantage.”

Stiles exhaled shakily, “Thanks Oliver. I’ll let you go, I want to talk to Nyssa.”

“Alright. I’ll call you the minute I know that I can start heading to Beacon Hills. Let me know if anything happens.”

“Ok…thanks again Oliver.”

“Don’t worry about it Stiles.” Oliver replied, before he hung up and slumped down against the window.

“Oliver?” Felicity questioned nervously.

“The league is going to kill Roy and the others if Stiles doesn’t hand himself over. The thing is, there is nothing that would stop them from killing them all anyway if Stiles does, and they’ll probably kill him too.”
“Do you think he will hand himself over?”

“In a heartbeat,” Oliver replied without hesitation, “the only reason he probably hasn’t yet is because he hasn’t had a chance to figure out where it is they’re hiding and holding Roy and the others.”

Felicity’s eyes widened as she realised the implications of what Oliver said, and she sat down on the floor beside him, slinging her arm over his broad shoulder and leaning a little closer to him, trying to offer what comfort she could. Oliver glared out the window at the raging storm that was preventing him from rushing to Stiles’ side…and from saving Roy from danger.
Stiles sat on the floor of the kitchen of the home his father and Melissa shared, leaning against the cupboards, tears silently rolling down his cheeks as he fiddled anxiously with his phone, trying to muster the courage to contact Nyssa to see if she had any fresh information from Nanda Parbat. Screwing up his courage, he tapped on her contact number on his phone and lifted the device to his ear. It only rang a couple of times before Nyssa replied.

“Stiles,” she greeted.

“Nyssa…do you have any good news for me?” Stiles asked hopefully.

The lengthy pause before Nyssa replied answered Stiles’ question for him, “There has been a… development,” Nyssa replied eventually.

“Why do I not like the sound of where this is going?” Stiles asked aloud, although he didn’t expect Nyssa to reply.

“Ra’s himself has departed Nada Parbat, heading towards Beacon Hills. It is rumoured that you are to be executed.”

“Crap,” Stiles sighed, banging the back of his head against the cupboard behind him, “What the hell did I do to deserve this? Even when Merlyn went nuts and tried to flatten the Glades they react like this.”

“That was because, initially, they thought Oliver had killed him,” Nyssa replied, “as for your crime…several high ranking members of the league have decided that the fact you returned home to Beacon Hills, when it is known you have connections with the supernatural, was a sign that you were planning to leave the league.”

“What?” Stiles yelled, “But I’m not the first person to go home. Sara pretty much lives in Starling City these days, and the actual league helped her deal with Slade.”

“There were still those who were sent to bring her back though, remember Stiles?” Nyssa prompted, her tone chastising, “And at the time the league didn’t see anyone else in Starling City as a viable threat. You, on the other hand, have werewolves, a banshee, a hellhound and a kitsune on your
side. You also didn’t make many friends while you were staying here at Nanda Parbat.”

Stiles sighed. He knew he hadn’t been popular amongst Ra’s’ advisors and second in commands, as well as the ones who had been takes with instructing him. Many of them had resented how Stiles had seemed to be favours by Ra’s, and had taken their jealousy and resentment out on Stiles. It had reminded him of Mr. Harris back when he’d still attended high school, after his father had investigated Harris regarding his involvement in the Hale house fire.

“Plus the fact that I am Al ththaelib Aldhy yudir mae al dhdiab. The fox,” he added, although he was fairly sure there were few within the league who knew the full meaning behind the title, how Stiles had once been possessed by a Nogitsune.

“That too,” Nyssa replied, “There has been talk of a member of the league who helped organise the attack.”

“Who was it? It would have to be someone who knew about the pack…more than just the fact that they were werewolves.”

“She is a high ranking member of Alnnukhbat Alssayadin min Khariq. They call her Al Nnamr Al Marqat,” Nyssa replied.

“Jaguar,” Stiles translated.

“Yes,” Nyssa confirmed, “and she is said to be as strong and fierce as her namesake. She is part of a line of her family that have become members of the league. Her father was a member of the league. We called him Rajul Alfidd, although I believe he passed away some years ago.

“Silver man…was that just because he was old and had grey hair, or was there something more behind the name?” Stiles questioned, a growing suspicion knowing in his gut. It shouldn’t be possible, she was supposed to be dead…but then. So was he.

“No, it was a family name, used by males of that family, passed down from father to son. I believe it had some connection to their family’s surname.”

“Like…Argent?” Stiles asked, “The old man…he was named Gerard Argent, wasn’t he?”
“Yes…I believe I did hear my father refer to him as such on one occasion. I rarely had anything to do with him, and I wasn’t sure if it was his true name, or simply an alias. Do you know him?”

“Yeah…and if the Jaguar is his daughter then I know her too…although she was supposed to have died seven years ago, as far as I knew. Her name is Kate Argent…she’s just as psychotic as her dad ever was, perhaps even more so. You know, I really shouldn’t be surprised that they were tangled up with the league, psychopaths like that would fit right in…no offense.”

"It takes a lot more than backhanded insult from you to offend me, Stiles Stilinski,” Nyssa answered, and Stiles could imagine her rolling her eyes at him.

“If it is Kate that’s organising the whole thing I think I might know why she’s doing it,” Stiles admitted, thinking about how Kate had, sometimes, seemed to care about Allison, and Allison had spoken fondly of her memories of her Aunt, up until she’d learned the truth about what Kate had done in her life. Of anyone Stiles still was the one most responsible for Allison’s death, despite the fact that he and the Nogitsune had physically separated at that point. It had still been wearing Stiles’ face, and it had been the one controlling the Oni.

In fact, Kate’s plan would ensure that she got revenge not just on Stiles for Allison’s death, but it would easily lead to the death of the entire pack, something that she would certainly be aiming at.

“I…I need to go,” Stiles told Nyssa, “I…I’ve got to think about some things…figure out where the others are being held.”

“Alright…just…be careful Stiles. Sara thinks highly of you, and she would be devastated by your death if something where to happen to you.”

Stiles weakly smiled knowing that Nyssa’s words were as close to fondness as he was ever going to get.

“Ok Nyssa. Thanks for the information.”

“Goodbye, Stiles.”

“Bye Nyssa,” Stiles hung up the phone and swallowed rising to his feet and sliding his phone as he strode to the bathroom. Despite the fact he was alone in the house, and all the doors and windows
were securely locked Stiles shut the door behind him and braced himself at the sink, breathing deeply as he focused on the drain and the smooth white porcelain. He shifted his weight, turning the cold tap on and cupping his hands beneath the stream of water, before he splashed it onto his face. He repeated the gesture three times before he shut off the water and looked up at the mirror, taking in his reflection.

Water dripping down his face like tears, the front of his hair damp from the moisture, his skin pale and his eyes wide, he looked almost like his sixteen year old self, anxious and unsure of his place in the world. For a moment Stiles was reminded of how he had looked when he was being possessed by the Nogitsune, but then he blinked at the memory was gone. Stiles watched a drop of water run from his hair, down his forehead, before going around his eye and down the side of his face, before it dripped down into the sink.

“I’m not going to let her win,” Stiles told his reflection, a hint or resolve seeping into his voice, ‘I’m going to save them…every last one of them. Dad, Scott, Derek and Melissa…Jackson and Lydia, Parrish, Kira, Liam, Chris all of them. I’m not going to let her hurt them…any of them…not again. She’s not going to destroy the werewolf pack of Beacon Hills, not for a second time.”

Turning on his heel Stiles strode out of the bathroom, heading towards the room his father had claimed as an office. Without a single hesitation Stiles confidently strode into the room, relief flickering across his face as he saw the case board, blank and ready to use, against one wall.

Stiles marched over to it, glancing at the box of whiteboard markers, sticky notes, pens, and coloured string kept beside the board, ready for use.

“Alright, Stilinski,” Stiles told himself, picking up one of the whiteboard markers and pulling the lid off, “just like old times. Let’s do this.”

Letting out a breath, Stiles began to write.

TW/A

The most obvious place for Kate to have stashed the pack, assuming that it was Kate that was working with the league, was the underground catacombs beneath the Hale house. The burned out remains of Derek’s childhood home had long since been dismantled and cleared away, but Stiles knew that the underground cellars were still there. Scott had told him that at some point, and they’d even gone for a walk in the woods one afternoon after Scott had finished his shift at Deaton’s…just the two of them. It had almost been like old times.
Still, a quick (and cautious, just in case anyone saw him) trip up to the Hale house confirmed that the underground catacombs hadn’t been touched by Kate and the league. On his way back home Stiles had stopped at Derek’s building and double checked Derek’s loft for clues, as well as searching the rest of the building for signs of the pack being held there, but he’d come up with nothing.

Stiles wasn’t allowing himself the freedom of panicking just yet, though. There were still, after all, many places that the pack could have been hidden within beacon Hills…and Judging from the note he’d been left it was unlikely the pack had been taken out of Beacon Hills itself.

A couple of anonymous calls to Beacon Hills police station had led to the police checking a few of the less likely hiding places for him. Stiles was grateful that his father had kept Stiles’ old police scanner, allowing him to listen to the reports of his father and Parrish’s colleagues, confirming that despite Stiles’ calls there hadn’t been anything suspicious about the locations that they had been contacted about.

Stiles left the police scanner on as background noise. It brought back memories of how he’d spent his teenaged years, having the scanner on as he watched TV or did his homework, allowing him to listen to the sound of his father’s voice…or even to just know that his father was safe. It had become a vital part of Stiles’ coping strategy after his mother’s death, and it was something that had become habit right up until Stiles left Beacon Hills.

Stiles’ father hadn’t been rostered onto work that day, and neither had Parrish, so their absence hadn’t drawn the suspicion of their colleagues, something for which Stiles was grateful. The situation was messy enough without the local police force being involved. Stiles already felt guilty about using the local police to narrow down where the League were holding the pack, and he shuddered to imagine what the league might have done to a unsuspecting police officer who wandered into their temporary lair.

With his trips out to the Hale house, and then to Derek’s, it was getting close to sundown when Stiles finally set the cap of his whiteboard marker down and stepped back from the case board, his eyes skimming over it, checking to see if he had missed anything. The board was covered in his writing, sticky notes, sketches, and coloured strings to make the connections… green for solved, yellow was to be determined, blue just because it was pretty, and red for unsolved. There was rather more red on the board than Stiles would like, but there was nothing really he could do about it.

He had narrowed down the places that the league could be hiding the pack to three possible locations. The first two were warehouses right on the outskirts of town, isolated from civilization and prime pickings form anyone who didn’t want to get noticed. The third option was the same train depot that Derek had hidden out with Isaac, Erica and Boyd in his first few months of being an alpha…and because Derek had used it as a hideout…and it was possible that Kate knew that
particular fact, Stiles was reasonably sure that would be where Kate would have chosen to hide out.

Moving his gaze across the board, Stiles’ gaze lingered on where he’d written about who he was going against. Everything he knew about the Alnnukhat Alssayadin min Khariq was written on the board, which was really the little information that Nyssa had given him. He had also written about the seven, knowing that two of the most elite of Ra’s’ men had accompanied the Alnnukhat Alssayadin min Khariq to Beacon Hills.

He also wrote about what he knew about the combat skills of Ra's Al Ghul himself. He’d been told stories and legends about the leader of the league while he was training there, but he was not sure about how accurate the stories were.

Even taking into account how unreliable the stories about Ra’s were, the dangers of the situation were undeniable. If the storm over Starling City didn’t break soon there was no way Oliver and his allies would be able to help Stiles, leaving Stiles alone to face the league and save his family and friends.

Stiles looked at his phone, lying innocently on his father’s desk, charging quietly. Stiles hadn’t heard from anyone in a few hours, not since Oliver had called in the late afternoon to update him on how things were going in Starling City. Apparently the storm had almost been past the city, but there was considerable damage done, with widespread flooding that had effectively cut off the city from the outside world. Even once the storm passed it was likely that it would be some hours before Oliver and his friends could get away from the city and get to the airport and make their way south to Beacon Hills.

Looking out the window Stiles watched the sun sink beneath the horizon, his heart heavy as the sky steadily darkened. Oliver couldn’t come and help him…nobody could help him.

He was going to have to do this on his own.

Stiles wandered into the kitchen and half-heartedly made himself a salad for dinner, picking at it with little interest as he carried it with him back into his father’s study, looking at where he’d written the list of people of the league had taken, reading each name with care.

_Sheriff Noah Stilinski_

_Melissa Stilinski_
Over half of the people still alive today that Stiles cared about were on that list, he found himself thinking as he managed to force himself to swallow a few more mouthfuls of his salad before he set it aside, leaving it on his father’s desk, his appetite gone, although in all honesty it hadn’t really been there to begin with.

Leaning back on his father’s desk, the room illuminated by the desk lamp, Stiles looked at the board, trying to think of a way to diffuse the situation that wouldn’t involve the pack’s blood being spilled.

Stiles’ gaze hardened as he looked the board, his anger at the situation building, until he shook his head.

“Screw it,” he announced to the room, although he was the only one there, before he picked up his phone, turned his back on the case board and strode out of the room.
Chapter 23

Smoothly and without hesitation Stiles marched out of his father’s study and towards the front door, pausing only to pick up the keys to Jackson’s car. He pulled his hood up over his head and walked out the front door, leaving it wide open as he crossed over the front lawn and unlocked Jackson’s trunk, lifting up the false bottom to reveal Stiles’ weapons and combat gear, kept hidden in the car to prevent any questions about it. Stiles picked it all up, locking the car back up again, before he carried the weapons back into the house, his expression filled with his steely resolve as he walked up the stairs to his bedroom, closing the door before exhaled, looking once at his reflection in the mirror before he changed out of his civilian clothing and into his combat gear, strapping his weapons to his body as he went… countless knives, two handguns with additional ammo, a short sword, and, of course, his bow and quiver of arrows. Stiles checked each of his arrows carefully, satisfied that they would all fly straight, and that his quiver was as full as it possibly could be.

Stiles looked at the mirror again once he had finished changing…and he felt a shock go through him at the change. Despite the resolve on his face, he had looked like a scared teenager…much like he had when Gerard had kidnapped him.

Now…now he looked like a predator…a weapon. It was almost like he was the nogitsune again…only there was one crucial difference this time.

“I’m in control this time,” Stiles told himself, the words sending assurance through his body… steadying his nerves and strengthening his resolve. Exhaling, Stiles picked up his domino mask, putting it over his face, before he flicked his hood up, completing his transition into the trained killer that he had become since leaving Beacon Hills.

Picking up the few weapons he hadn’t chosen to put on, mainly because wearing his quiver and bow slung over his back would make driving next to impossible, or at the least very uncomfortable, Stiles walked out of his room and down the stairs again, taking a moment to examine the photographs hanging from the walls…Scott’s graduation picture, his dad and Melissa’s wedding photos…photos of him and his mother…photos of the pack taken at various points of time, both before and after he left.

Stiles committed them all to memory, keeping the pictures…and his memories of the people featured within them, at the front of his mind.

Ever since Scott had been bitten Stiles had developed a keen awareness of the importance of anchors. He’d helped Scott find his, and he’d tried to help coach Isaac with his as well (although Isaac had pretty much figured it out for himself after his first couple of full moons. Now Stiles used his memories of the ones he loved…the ones he was trying to save, to anchor himself, refusing to loose himself in his anger.
Stiles knew that he wasn’t Scott…if he had to, he would kill one of the league, or more, but he wasn’t planning on going to meet with the league and killing them…mainly because he was significantly outnumbered and it would end with he and his pack all dying.

Stiles’ end goal was to get the pack out of the league’s clutches, giving them a fighting chance at surviving. He knew that it was highly unlikely that he would survive, but as long as the pack were okay, Stiles couldn’t bring himself to care. He knew he should have died back when the Queen’s Gambit went down, or even before that when the nogitsune was defeated. He’d lived seven years longer than he thought he would. He’d been able to see his pack again, get some closure with everyone now that the pain of Allison’s death wasn’t so fresh…it was more than he’d ever expected to get.

Reaching the bottom of the stairs, Stiles turned and walked back towards his father’s study, letting himself back into the room. His gaze lingered briefly on the information he’d arranged on the board, before he crossed over to his father’s desk, pulling open the top drawer. From what Nyssa had told him Alnnukhat Alssayadin min Khariq were a specialised team for the supernatural…and it was likely more than one member was a supernatural creature.

For that reason, Stiles knew that he was probably going to need something a little stronger than he would normally use. Arrows were not very useful for causing lasting damage, and Stiles’ knives, and even his short sword, would also be not very effective against a werewolf or something similar, like a wendigo, a kitsune, or some other supernatural creature.

Wolfsbane bullets, however, were pretty effective universally across supernatural creatures, and Stiles smiled grimly as he spotted a couple of gun magazines in the drawer, and pulled them out, inspecting them closely. The magazines were meant for his father’s Glock…the same type of gun that Stiles had always carried since joining the league, seeking some sort of connection to his father. Stiles quickly opened up the magazine, and removed a bullet, setting the magazine down and drawing his strongest heaviest knife from it’s sheath. He cut to top off the bullet, smiling grimly as he tipped the bullet up and powdered wolfsbane poured out.

“Thank you Chris Argent,” Stiles muttered to himself, knowing that Allison’s father would have taken steps to ensure that Stiles’ father and Jordan Parrish both had easy access to Wolfsbane bullets. Stiles’ father had possessed wolfsbane bullets even before Stiles had left for Starling City, and he’d really hoped that he’d upheld the practise. Obviously he had. Stiles drew his two guns, both of which were Glock 22s, the same model his father had carried for Stiles’ entire life…and also guns that were combatable with the magazines his father had kept in the drawer. Stiles examined the magazines, before he took out the magazines of his guns, sliding them into his pockets with his other spare ammo, before he replaced the magazines with two of the ones from his father’s top drawer, loaded with wolfsbane bullets.
Shuffling through the drawer, Stiles pulled out a lighter, and he quickly put that in his pocket as well. He already knew that one of the werewolves had been shot with a wolfsbane bullet, and the sooner they got it treated the better. He doubted that the type of wolfsbane that was in his father’s bullets would precisely match the plant that the league used…and he knew that unless it was the same variety of wolfsbane then it would almost certainly do more harm than good. Stiles seriously doubted, however, that the league would have used up their supply of wolfsbane packed ammunition, so Stiles would be able to use one of their spare bullets to heal the werewolves that had been shot, if he got the chance.

Hesitating, Stiles reached into his father’s top drawer and grabbed another pair of magazines, putting them in a different pocket of his combat pants, so he wouldn’t accidentally get them confused with his magazines of normal bullets. Satisfied, he pushed the drawer closed and walked back out of his father’s study, pulling the door closed as he went, before he walked back towards the front door, keeping his head bowed, guilt over what he’d just done preoccupying his mind. He looked up at the wall of photographs, and his guilt fled. He’d done it to help his pack. If it meant saving their lives and protecting them he would do it one hundred times over.

As he reached the front door, Stiles stopped and looked over his shoulder at the home his father and Melissa had created together.

Stiles’ mind flashed back to the day he had left Beacon Hills, in the aftermath of his possession by the Nogitsune. Scott and his dad had practically held him up as they’d guided him out of the house he and his father had shared to the car. Stiles remembered looking back at the home where he’d grown up, where his mother had loved him, before she’d forgotten he’d ever existed…where he’d looked after his dad and tried to make sure that the Sheriff didn’t end up in an early grave…the house where he and Scott played, and he had talked, at length, about his feelings for Lydia. It had also been the place that Stiles had realized that he had feelings for Derek, although he’d never spoken about those to anyone, too embarrassed and ashamed, knowing that there was no way in hell a specimen like Derek would ever had felt anything more than frustration and annoyance towards a skinny hyperactive teenager like Stiles.

Stiles remembered the gut feeling he’d had as his dad and Scott had gently led him away from the house…a feeling that he wasn’t going to come back. It had proven correct…Stiles hadn’t gone back to the old house during his return to Beacon Hills.

Stiles wondered if he would ever return to his father’s house again. Over the week he’d stayed there it had proven a place that Stiles might, one day, in different circumstances, have called home. Stiles, however, hadn’t ever felt confident enough to do it, not with the League hovering over his head.

Shaking his head, Stiles pulled the door closed, locking it carefully, before he hid the house key beneath a rock in the front garden, right where his father would know to look for it.
Hesitating, Stiles looked towards Jackson’s car, knowing that Jackson wouldn’t mind Stiles borrowing it to come to the rescue, before he shook his head, heading instead for the closed garage door, the keys to Roscoe…his beloved Jeep, held tightly in his hand. Driving to the pack’s rescue in his beloved Jeep…Stiles couldn’t help but smile at the imagery as he opened the garage door and approached the driver’s side door, pulling it open, and depositing his additional weaponry on the passenger’s seat, before he got in himself.

“Just like old times, huh,” he told the Jeep, patting the steering wheel lovingly, before he turned the key in the ignition and the car roared to life. He pressed his foot down on the accelerator and backed out of the driveway, leaving the Jeep running as he got out to close the roller door again, before driving down the street, the steering wheel gripped tightly in his hands.

Unable to stop himself, Stiles drove down the street where he’d used to live, slowing down as he passed his old house. The windows were brightly lit, the garden looking better maintained than it had since before Stiles’ mother had fallen ill, and he could see a young girl’s bike, the handlebars decorated with pink streamers, propped up beside the house. Stiles grimly smiled, hoping that the new family living in his old home had a happier life than what he’d experienced. He hoped that the little girl that probably slept in his old bedroom never felt the pain of losing a parent (or if she did it was well into her adulthood) and that her parents would never know what it felt like to lose their other half. He hoped that their lives were untouched by the supernatural, and that they lived out their long lives in blissful ignorance of the terrors Stiles and his friends had endured since the fateful night when Stiles had dragged Scott out looking for Laura Hale’s dead body in the woods.

Stiles continued on driving, stopping at intersection to give way to a couple of cars, ducking his head a little to prevent being seen before a sudden thought came to him. If he continued on his current route, going straight ahead, it would take him out to the warehouses where the pack might be held…but if he turned right, it would take him towards Deaton’s practice.

Stiles hadn’t seen Deaton since his return to Beacon Hills, although he’d been told by both Scott and Melissa that Deaton was still on excellent terms with the pack, and Scott still worked with him. Scott had told him that Deaton knew of Stiles’ return, but nothing more on the subject had really been brought up. Stiles guessed that Deaton was just giving them all a bit of a chance to connect. It wasn’t as if Deaton and Stiles had ever been particularly close after all.

Still, Stiles quickly shook his head, flicking on his indicator and turning his Jeep to the right, accelerating down the road towards the vet. Relief washed over him as he saw the lights still on within the building, and he swung into the car park, passing a car he assumed was Deaton’s, before he parked at the back of the building, where the Jeep would be hidden from sight from any passing vehicles, just in case anyone drove past and recognized it…although when Stiles thought about it, the Jeep being spotted wouldn’t be a big deal. Anyone who knew it would just assume that Scott had car issues and was borrowing it, or the Sheriff had taken it out for a drive.
Stiles shut off the engine and got out of the car, locking the doors carefully before he approached the rear door to Deaton’s clinic, taking off his mask and shoving it into his pocket, before he lifted his wrist and rapped his knuckles against the door loudly, scanning his surroundings cautiously as he did. It didn’t take long for the door to open, revealing Alan Deaton, looking just like Stiles remembered, him…although maybe with a few more grey hairs.

Deaton blinked in surprise, “Stiles?” he offered, stepping out of the way so Stiles could enter the building. Stiles silently crossed over the threshold and waited for the vet to close the door. The moment the door was closed, however, he started to speak.

“Scott told me that he told you I was back.”

“Yes…although he didn’t give me many details,” Deaton nodded.

“That’s because I never gave him much in the way of details,” Stiles replied, scanning the room they were in, assessing the risks, spotting escape routes, and choke points, his senses tingling to the point of being hyperactive.

“What brings you here at this time of night?” Deaton asked, the unspoken ‘and why are you dressed like that?’ hanging in the air between them.

“I…I screwed up when I came back here. When I was…gone…I got caught up with some people…the wrong sort of people. They’ve followed me back here, and now they’ve got the pack…Scott, Dad…Melissa, Derek…Jackson…everyone.”

“What?” Deaton exclaimed softly, leaning against the metal table in the middle of the room. Stiles pulled the letter he’d been left and handed it over to Deaton. There was no point in trying to hide what he’d been involved in when he’d been away from Beacon Hills…not at this point. Deaton’s eyes widened as he read the letter, before he rested his eyes back on Stiles.

“What…what are you going to do?”

Stiles shrugged, “If I give myself up like they want me to there is no guarantee that they won’t turn around and kill the pack anyway…and they would…some of these guys make Gerard Argent look like a cute fluffy bunny…I’ve even heard rumors that Gerard Argent was once one of them…and that Kate followed in Daddy’s footsteps.
“So you’re going to try and fight them?” Deaton asked, taking in the weaponry Stiles was carrying.

‘If I have to,’ Stiles replied, heavily, ‘I’m hoping I can talk my way out of it.

Deaton blinked, ‘How likely is that?’ he queried. Stiles could read the skepticism that was written across the veterinarian’s face and, yeah…it was probably there for a good reason. Stiles had never been an optimist…that had always been Scott’s job.

“Not very,” Stiles acknowledged, “hopefully though it will be enough though, and they won’t kill the pack.”

“Stiles…” Deaton began, but Stiles shook his head, cutting the older man off.

“I don’t expect you to come with me…in fact, I don’t want you to. I…I need you to be here ready if someone in the pack needs help. The league know that they’re dealing with werewolves, and they’re using wolfsbane. I’m pretty sure somebody has already been hit with it when they were captured…there was black blood at Derek’s loft. It’s been 24 hours, give or take. If they haven’t already been treated, and they’re still alive, then they’re not going to be well.”

Deaton nodded, “I keep a supply of various species of wolfsbane, just in case hunters come into town. Do you know what species they’re using?”

Stiles nodded and told him, and the other man sighed and moved towards his storeroom.

‘I have some…it’s not fresh but dried. It will most certainly work though. Chris gave me some when he returned from one of his trips abroad.”

“It’s native to isolated areas of France,’ Stiles agreed, “Don’t ask me how the league manages to grow it in the Middle East. I can’t think of anywhere that could be more climatically different from France…except maybe Antarctica.

Deaton chuckled, before his expression turned serious, “You said that you hoped you could convince the league to let the pack go…I can’t help but notice that you never said anything about yourself.”
Stiles felt his back stiffen, and he rolled his shoulders, avoiding Deaton’s penetrating gaze, forcibly reminded of Deaton’s sister, Ms. Morell…the high School Councillor and later an employee of Eichen house.

“It’s because of me that they were taken…to punish me. If I get out that will be awesome but…but if I don’t, well…I was supposed to die seven years ago, either when the Gambit went down, or when I was possessed, or…any of the numerous other times I’ve almost died. Everything that’s happened since then has just been a bonus, really.

“You’re just going to give yourself up?” Deaton exclaimed. Stiles shook his head.

“No…but if that’s what it takes to get the pack out safely, then yes, I will. If I can I’ll get a message to Scott telling him to head to you.

Deaton nodded, and Stiles shifted his feet, biting his lip, almost nervously.

“Can…can I have a piece of paper and a pen?” he asked. Deaton went and picked up the items, passing them over to Stiles, who leaned over a table, tapping the pen against the paper thoughtfully for a moment, before he began to write.

‘Hi Guys,

If you’re reading this then I didn’t make it (sorry, I couldn’t help but be cliché). Don’t blame yourselves for what happened to me. It was my own fault that you guys got dragged into this whole thing. I’m so sorry for everything they did to you. I never meant for any of you to get hurt because of me.

I want you all to know how much I love you all, and how much being back for this past week has meant to me. When I was away it was the thought of you guys that kept me sane…that stopped me from killing myself or letting go of who I really am. You guys were my anchor through it all, and I will always appreciate that.

Dad, I want you to know that I love you more than words can express. I’m so proud of you and how you’ve gotten through the past seven years. Now you just need to do it again. Stay away from alcohol, fast food and overworking yourself. Listen to Melissa and do as she says. She is a good woman, who loves you, and I am so happy that you guys got together. I think mom would be too.
She wouldn’t want you to be alone…and I don’t want you to be alone either.

Melissa, look after my Dad. I know that you would have already done that without me saying so, but I just needed to write it down. Thank you for accepting me into your home. I know that you didn’t always approve of my friendship with Scott…but after mom died you were the closest thing to a mom I had left, and I love you so much for stepping into that role and how much you took care of me back then, and again now. Thank you for looking after my dad when I haven’t been around to do it…I know that he’ll be okay with you there to support him.

Scotty…I guess this is it. I didn’t get to say Goodbye last time…but I don’t want to not say Goodbye again. You’re going to be fine, dude. You’ve got a great pack, who follow and support you. They’ve got your back. Thanks for accepting me back into town, even though you don’t know what I’ve been doing…which you’ve probably figured by now has been not so nice. You’re a great Alpha, Scott, one of the best people I’ve ever had the privilege of knowing. Having you as a best friend…a brother, has been one of the highlights of my life.

Lydia, When I was younger I could have written essays about how I felt about you…in fact I’m pretty sure I did one summer. You are one of the best friends I’ve ever had. You supported me through one of the hardest stages of my life, and I will always appreciate that. I am so proud of the person you’ve become, and I want you to know that I think that nothing will ever hold you back. So don’t ever let that happen. Always Keep Fighting, no matter what stands in your way. You are far too smart and strong to do anything different.

Jackson…I bet you didn’t think you’d get mentioned in this. I want you to know how much I appreciate what you’ve been doing in Starling City…being there for Oliver and Sara. They’ve become like my family, and I want you to tell them thanks for everything they did for me on Lian Yu, and with the League. I will always be grateful and appreciate all of it. As for you…try to stay out of too much trouble. Look after Oliver and Sara for me, and try and stop them from doing things that are stupid. Good Luck.

Derek…I wanted to write to you earlier but I kept procrastinating. I want to say thank you for everything you told me the day after I came back to Beacon Hills. It means so much to me. I misses you so much when I was gone. Every night, when the moon came up, I’d look at it and think of you….wonder what it was you were doing…if you missed me as much as I missed you…whether it made your chest ache to think about you like mine did when I thought about you. Don’t blame yourself for me not making it, Derek. I knew that my chances weren’t great going into this. By me dying it should give you and the pack a chance to survive. Before I go I want you to know how much I cared about you…even back when you used to slam me into walls. There will always be people around you who care about you, Derek, regardless of what happens, but I’m beginning to understand what I felt for you went a bit beyond that. I’m sorry that I never got to tell you face to face.
One last thing, guys, before I go. Don’t do something stupid like try and avenge my death. The league has proven that they can take every single one of you…do not tempt their ire by trying to get back at them. I’ve accepted my fate. I should have died seven years ago…every second since then has just been a bonus. I go to death with my head held high, knowing that, although I did a lot of bad things when I was alive, at least my death will be for a cause I believe in with all my heart.

Goodbye, for real this time.

Stiles Stilinski.’

“If…if I don’t make it back can you give this to the pack?” Stiles asked, sniffing slightly and wiping tears from his eyes with one hand, while he folded the letter with his free hand, passing it over to Deaton, who accepted it solemnly.

“I hope I won’t need to.”

“So do I,” Stiles sighed, “but I didn’t want to risk dying without saying goodbye again.”

Deaton nodded, tucking the letter into his pocket, “I will look after it for you.”

“Good. I need to get going,” Stiles glanced at his watch, before he turned and headed for the exit door. Deaton followed him closely.

“Good luck, Stiles.” Deaton offered. Stiles hesitated before he gave a final nod, keeping going towards his jeep before his resolve broke further. He pulled himself into the driver’s seat and wiped his face, checking for any stray tears. Some of the salty liquid had fallen on his letter, but he’d managed to hold his emotions at bay.

Starting the Jeep’s engine Stiles drove out of the car park and headed out of town, pushing his emotions out of the way. Now wasn’t the time for feelings. If he was going to stand a chance he was going to have to focus and use all of the training the league had ever given him.
Chapter 24

Oliver glanced across at the driver’s seat of the car, watching Diggle as he concentrated on the road ahead of them.

The storm had finally passed Starling City, and Oliver, Sara and Diggle were on their way to the airport, where a chartered flight would carry them directly to Beacon Hills. It had been a treacherous journey from the centre of the city out to the airport and Oliver was glad that they hadn’t taken Felicity up on her offer of driving them to the airport, mainly because he wasn’t comfortable with her driving alone all of the way back into the city of the badly water damaged roads.

As they approached the airport Oliver pulled his phone out of his pocket, and tapped on Stiles’ contact. He hadn’t called Stiles yet to alert him they were on their way yet, wanting to make sure they got to the airport before calling, just in case the damage from the storm prevented them from getting there or caused a significant delay.

Lifting the phone to his ear Oliver listened to it ringing, before he heard Stiles’ voice answer.

“Oliver…where are you?”

“We’ve just got to the airport. We’ve chartered a flight directly from Starling City to Beacon Hills, so the minute we’re aboard we can take off. We’re about three hours away…we should land around midnight.

“Ok,” Stiles replied, “I’m heading out to where the league is hiding…I’ll send you co-ordinates when I get there.”

“Who are you with?”

“no-one,” Stiles replied. Oliver could image Stiles shrugging his shoulders carelessly as he spoke.

“Stiles…be careful. Just…hang off for a few more hours, and then we’ll be able to help.”

“They don’t have a few more hours, Oliver,” Stiles snapped down the phone, “I need to get them
out…Now. Hell, as it is somebody might be dead. I know that at least one person has already been shot with wolfsbane. Wolfsbane bullets are not something you play around with when it comes to shooting werewolves.”

“Is there any way to confirm who it was?” Oliver asked, unable to keep his fear from his voice. The mere thought of losing Roy, just days after learning that the younger man was actually his half-brother sending a chill through his entire body. Oliver wasn’t sure what he would do if Roy had been killed by the league as some retaliation against Stiles. Roy didn’t even know about the relationship between him and Oliver yet…Oliver had wanted to tell him in person.

“No, I know it was one of the wolves…or maybe Kira…I’m not sure what wolfsbane bullets do to kitsunes. I need to go, Oliver, I’m getting close, and I don’t want to accidently tip the league off.”

Oliver forced himself to calm down. Stiles was competent…from what he’d heard from Sara, and he was resourceful. He also had as much of a home ground advantage he was going to get. He knew Beacon Hills and it’s surroundings like the back of his hand. Nobody within the league would have that kind of knowledge…not unless they’d had someone posted there over a long period of time.

“We’ll be there as soon as possible.” Oliver promised Stiles, “Try to make sure you’re still alive by then.”

“You know I can’t make any promises, but I’ll try,” Stiles replied, trying to sound casual and flippant about it. Oliver, however, could see right through the act, without even needing to see Stiles.

“If…if things go badly, and you get to the co-ordinates and nobody is there…head to Beacon Hills Veterinary clinic. There’s a man there…Alan Deaton…he knows about things, not the vigilante things, or about the league, but about werewolves and stuff…he’ll be able to help you.”

“Stiles…just…be careful. Don’t do something stupid.”

“Isn’t that the pot calling the kettle black?” Stiles quipped in reply.

Oliver sighed, “I’ll see you soon, ok Stiles??”

“Yeah…hopefully. Bye Oliver.”
Stiles hung up and Oliver slowly lowered his phone from his ear. Keeping his head down and studiously avoiding meeting the gaze of Diggle and Sara.

“Is he ok?” Sara asked.

Oliver hesitated before responding, “I don’t think so. We need to get to Beacon Hills…now.”

Sara glanced across at Oliver anxiously, her eyes filled with worry about Stiles. Oliver felt his stomach churn as Diggle drove into the carpark. Stiles’ life was in considerable danger, and so was Roy’s. As much as Roy was Oliver’s brother by blood, Stiles had become like a brother to Oliver as well during their months together on Lian Yu.

If either of the two younger men died Oliver wasn’t sure if he’d ever truly move on from the loss…from how much potential the two younger men had, and how would have been snuffed out.

“Stiles has a good head on his shoulders, he knows what he’s doing,” Diggle offered reassuringly to Oliver and Sara. Sara swallowed and nodded, while Oliver running his hand over his face. Diggle was right…Stiles wasn’t an idiot…he knew what he was going into…perhaps more than anyone else.

Oliver just had to trust that Stiles would use his knowledge to gain the upper hand.

TW/A

Stiles dropped his phone onto the passenger’s seat and concentrated on the winding track that he knew would take him close to Derek’s old hideout at the old train depot. There was another track that went right past it, but Stiles knew that, if he used that road, he was going to get seen, losing the element of surprise.

Unsurprisingly, the first two possible locations he’d decided on had been busts. The buildings looked as though nobody had been anywhere near them the whole time Stiles had been away from Beacon Hills, so now he found himself driving towards the old rail yard.

Derek had chosen the railyard as his hideout for numerous reasons. It was isolated, miles from the
nearest building, meaning that nobody would be likely to hear the noises made by three newly turned werewolves, along with their Alpha. Nobody would see Derek’s car unless they happened to be driving along the track that led up to the railyard, which was unlikely because the railyard was deserted and nobody ever went there.

Just as much as the building had met Derek’s needs, it would now be well suited to the needs of the league...especially if Kate was involved and knew about Derek’s connection with the place. He imagined that it would appeal to her morbid and slightly sadistic taste for irony (judging solely from her keeping Derek captive in the basement of his burnt out house.)

Stiles pulled his car over to the side of the road and turned off the engine, pulling the keys out of the ignition and getting everything he would need out of the car. He slung his bow and quiver across his shoulder, before checking the rest of his arsenal of weaponry were in their designated sheaths and holders on his body. He checked, one last time, that his guns were loaded, and he had spare ammo in the pockets of his cargo pants, both wolfsbane filled bullets, and normal as well.

Satisfied that he was ready, Stiles pulled his domino mask back over his features, locking the car doors and hiding his car keys behind the wheel on the front passenger side, right where his dad and Scott would know to look for it.

Rising to his full height, Stiles patted the bonnet of the Jeep lovingly one last time, before he turned and began to hike through the trees, his footfalls light and nearly soundless, his keen eyes helping him navigate around trees and tripping hazards with a sort of grace and stealth that Stiles knew his teenaged self would never have been able to achieve. It had taken hours upon hours of practise, on the island, and later with the league, for Stiles to get the hang of being able to move so quietly, and Stiles felt a thrill go through him as he realised how grateful he was for that training in that particular moment...and how he was finally getting to put it to use saving his pack.

Stiles moved silently through the trees, his senses pushed as high as they would go. The rustling of the slight breeze through the leaves...the distant sound of nocturnal birds chirping quietly...Stiles heard all of it, his eyes constantly scanning his surroundings for any sign of the league.

“Constant Vigilance,” Stiles whispered to himself, remembering how Slade, and later on his teachers at the league berating him for his inability to focus and pay attention to his surroundings. It seemed the lectures, and sometimes punishments involved in his training, had finally paid off, as Stiles kept his focus the whole, three mile journey from where he parked the Jeep, to the railyard where Derek had used to hide out and train Erica, Boyd and Isaac.

Stiles stopped as he crested a hill, still safely within the tree line, and crouched to the ground, his eyes narrowing as he scanned the clearing the disused railyard was in. There were seven vehicles parked in the clearing, black vans and SUVs that Stiles knew that the League used to transport prisoners.
From where he was crouching, he could see there were lights on within the main building, judging from the lights shining through cracks in the boarded up widows of the ground floor of the building. Stiles let out a breath of relief and pulled out his phone, sending off a text message to Oliver of the co-ordinates for the railway yard, so that Oliver would be able to find them if they weren’t at Deaton’s or at Stiles’ father’s house when Oliver, Sara and Diggle arrived in Beacon Hills.

The message sent, Stiles double checked that his phone was on silent, and the vibrate was off, not wanting to lose the element of surprise by his phone giving him away…or to get distracted at a key moment during the fight by his phone ringing.

His phone safely back in his pocket, just in case he did need it, Stiles exhaled as he studied the building, formulating a plan in his head of how he was going to get into the building. Satisfied that he knew what he was doing, Stiles rose to his feet and began to slowly inch towards the building, scanning for any perimeter guards or men left on watch.

“Right,” Stiles breathed as he reached the tree line, only a few scant feet from the wire fence that encircled the property, “time to kill some evil sons of bitches and raise a little bit of hell.”
Stiles rolled his shoulders slightly as he crouched on a thick branch of a tree that had managed to survive the years of neglect since the rail yard had been abandoned, growing up tall at the back of the main building. The branches held solid beneath Stiles’ weight, but Stiles didn’t plan on lingering long on his perch. He knew he was too exposed where he was standing…any moment a member of the League could walk around the corner and see him. He had some coverage, thanks to the leaves and branches of the tree, but Stiles still didn’t want to push his luck.

Gritting his teeth, Stiles jumped forwards, almost flying through the air, before he landed in a crouched position, wincing at the noise, however soft, his feet made as they landed on the roof of the building. Realistically, he was pretty sure nobody would have heard the noise, and he hoped that, if they had, they had assumed it was the branch only a few feet from Stiles which was banging against the roof as the tree swayed in the gently breeze. He’d tried to time his jump in time with the tree’s swaying, so that he made impact at the same time as the branch, and he was reasonably sure that he had succeeded in his plan.

Still, he needed to keep moving. He moved across the roof, trying to spot the screws holding the sheets of metal in place and using that to judge where the supports holding the roof up were. He didn’t particular want to fall through an unsupported patch of roofing.

Moving along, Stiles eventually stopped, laying down on the roof with his head and upper body hanging over the edge, looking over the eaves of the building at the wall below, and rather, the upper story window that had been broken at some point, possibly by an irate werewolf, and never repaired.

Stiles smiled grimly as he remembered hanging off Scott’s roof the night he’d convinced Scott to go out into the woods searching for the unfound half of a body…the night where he’d unknowingly destroyed the lives of not only Scott, but many others, setting in motion events that nobody could ever have predicted.

Losing track of time as he got lost in the moment, Stiles blinked when he spotted the light of a flashlight rounding the corner of the building. He quickly pulled himself back onto the roof trusting the cover of darkness to conceal him. He peered over the edge of the roof cautiously, watching as a back clad figure slowly walked along the rear of the building, the beam of his flashlight searching the grounds, the side of the building…everywhere. Stiles as forced to quickly duck out of sight on three separate occasions as the figure passed below him. He forced himself to wait until the figure had rounded the far corner of the building, knowing that the league trained people on sentry duty to look behind him. Stiles could help but smirk as he watched the guard turn around and scan behind him, as well as doubling back a few minutes after he rounded the corner. Apparently satisfied, the figure had then, however, moved on, and Stiles was free to put his plan into the next phase, although he pointedly avoided looking at his watch, not sure of how much he’d been delayed by the patrol.
Moving back into his position, Stiles reached out and gripped the window frame of the broken window, before he shifted his weight forward and used gravity and his own momentum to smoothly flip off the roof and through the window, landing in the darkened room beyond in a crouch, his eyes scanning his surroundings, his heart pounding loudly in his ears.

The room was deserted, obviously an office of some kind, judging from the faded and aged map still pinned to the wall, and the desk in the centre of the room.

Cautiously Stiles rose to his feet, getting his bow ready and notching an arrow to his bowstring, and holding it in a ready position as he crept through the office, pausing just to the side of the doorway and pressing his ear to the wall. He could hear distant voices, but they didn’t sound as though they were getting any closer.

Stiles stepped through the doorway, relieved that someone (Stiles was going to bet Erica, Boyd or Isaac, although it possibly could have been Derek) had ripped the door clean off the hinges, leaving claw marks in the paintwork, wood and plaster of the doorframe and wall. Judging from the spider webs and dust clinging to the slashes, it had happened before Stiles had gotten on the Queen’s Gambit, and wasn’t an sign that the room had been used to hold a werewolf (although with a missing window pane the office would have been a useless prison cell, especially for the werewolves, who could have jumped to the ground from the second story window without fear of injury.

Bow held ready, although he didn’t pull it back the full way, Stiles stepped cautiously out into the corridor, scanning both ways for signs of movement. He was towards the end of a corridor, which opened up at the far end so that there was only a railing between the corridor and the main area of the building below.

Treading carefully, testing his weight on each floorboard he moved his weight to, Stiles moved towards the railing, keeping his ears focused on the voices he could hear that were getting louder with every step he took.

“You’ve underestimated the little worm, Argent,” a gruff voice Stiles didn’t recognize was saying, “the ferrets gone and scampered under a rock. Selfish little shit he is. He betrayed us, and then he betrays his supposed family.”

“Oh, he’s still coming. He’s not one to back down from a fight, especially when it involves his beloved puppies.”
Stiles blinked as he recognized that taunting voice of Kate Argent. He’d only met Allison’s aunt on a couple of occasions, but Stiles had instantly not trusted her in the slightest, and for very good reason it turned out. Of course, Stiles knew that Kate Argent was supposed to have died before he got on the Queen’s Gambit, but Peter had come back…Stiles himself had come back from the dead (from a certain point of view)...hell, the league had the means to do it themselves using the Lazarus Pit. Obviously Kate had somehow managed to return to the living, and now she was back chasing after the werewolf pack of Beacon Hills.

Didn’t she ever get tired of that, Stiles found himself wondering, before he pushed the thought to the back of mind, inching closer to the railing as the voices continued.

“It’s almost midnight, we’ve waited long enough.” A third, more nasally voice commented, “Get one of the prisoners out, let’s have some fun.”

“Fine,” Kate replied.

Stiles froze as he heard a rattling noise, before metal ground on metal. He hurried the last few steps, before he dropped to the ground, pressing himself against the wall that the railing was attached to, before he carefully peered around the edge of the wall, between the rusted rails of the railing.

He was looking down on the main room of the building, brightly lit by temporary lighting that had been set up. At the far end of the room was a metal cage with thick bars. The door was slid open, and Stiles guessed that the door sliding open was the grinding noise he’d heard. It reminded him of a less well-oiled and greased version of Derek’s loft door.

The pack were trapped in the cage. The werewolves, Kira and Parrish were all handcuffed to the ceiling, and even from the distance he was at Stiles could see the wiring around the handcuffs, and snaking beneath bandages to know that they were being continuously electrocuted, just like Erica and Boyd had been when Gerard had captured them the night of the lacrosse final.

Stiles’ dad and Chris Argent were both handcuffed to the cage as well, and Stiles noticed that Chris looked a little bloodied up, although he was reasonably sure that the older hunter was still conscious. Lydia, however, was obviously out of it, slumped and hanging limply by her wrists, a thick gag in her mouth, obviously to prevent her from using her skills as a Banshee.

Stiles’ heart leapt into his chest, however, as he watched the League assassin who had opened the cage open Melissa’s bindings and hauled her roughly from the cage, slamming the cage door shut as he went. He dragged Melissa away from the pack, towards Stiles, as another assassin reattached the thick chain that was holding the door shut, locking it in place with a large padlock.
Within the cage, Stiles could see Scott and his father struggling, Scott’s eyes flashing red as he tried to break free, while Stiles’ dad yelled out, his voice hoarse.

“No…No, Don’t take her! Melissa! Melissa…Melissa!!”

The Assassin dragged Melissa over to where Kate was standing, almost in the centre of the room, along with a small group of six other members of the league. Scattered around the rest of the room where another eleven assassins, all looking well-armed and alert.

“Ah…Mrs Stilinski, so nice of you to join us,” Kate smirked, her eyes glinting dangerously. Obviously her resurrection had done little to heal her psychotic tendencies, Stiles found himself thinking as he tensed, his grip on his bowstring tightening.

“What do you think, boys, how are we going to have some fun?” The Assassin who was holding Melissa, his voice identifying him as the gruff voiced one Stiles had heard speaking earlier, gave her a rough shake, before he backhanded her across her cheek. Stiles surged to his feet and stepped out of his hiding place, the arrow he had been holding knocked flying through the air before he really had a chance to think about what he was doing. The Assassin who had struck Melissa screamed and let go of his captive, who dropped quickly to the ground, instead clutching at the hand he had used to hit her…now pierced the whole way through with Stiles’ arrow.

“How about you start by never touching her again?” Stiles offered

“Stiles?” Melissa gasped, whipping around and looking up at Stiles with wide eyes. Stiles met her gaze and gave her a weak smile before he focused back on the members of the league assembled around Kate, along with keeping a careful watch on the rest of the league standing around the room. Every eye in the building was fixed on him, and Stiles felt perspiration trickle down his neck.

“Ah…the young fox decides to at last grace us with his presence,” Kate simpered with a wicked smile on her face.

“I mean it, Kate, the next one to touch any of my pack are going to get an arrow in the eyeball…and it won’t be pretty.”

“You were beginning to worry me, you know, Stiles. I wondered if you were just going to run back to your little canary friend and let her go crying to her girlfriend…It wouldn’t the first time you’ve
hid behind their skirts.

“I’d watch who you’re talking about, Kate. Nyssa is still Ra’s’ daughter…and you’re surrounded by his best supporters,” Stiles smirked, trying to ignore the numerous guns being aimed in his direction.

“We’ll do whatever the hell we want,” the man Stiles had shot in the hand growled, reaching down with his uninjured hand and gripping it around Melissa’s throat, dragging her back upright. Stiles didn’t hesitate, letting go of his second arrow, not allowing himself to flinch as the arrow impacted, right where Stiles had threatened to shoot it.

The man keeled over obviously dead, the arrow embedded deep in his head, having pierced his eye and entered his brain. Melissa dropped to the ground again, although she quickly scammed away from the group of assassins, pressing herself against the wall of the building. None of the league reacted to her retreat, all eyes fixed on the felled member of the league, or on Stiles.

“I did warn him,” Stiles casually pointed out, defending his actions not only to the league, but to the pack. He was studiously avoiding looking towards the cage the pack were trapped, knowing that the looks of shock and horror on their faces as they realised the person he had become…one willing to take a life if it meant protecting someone he cared about.

Kate looked from her fallen associate and back up at Stiles, who notched another arrow to his bow. He watched as Kate’s eyes narrowed angrily.

“You dare use that weapon…the weapon that Allison used. You’re the one who killed her”

“I don’t think that Allison would have wanted Melissa to get killed,” Stiles replied, trying to ignore the sting of Kate’s words, “I don’t think she would have wanted you to try and get revenge using her friends. Your fight is with me, let the pack go.”

“Kill him.” Kate growled, “Bring me back his pathetic broken body.”

Stiles ducked back behind the wall mere moments before bullets started flying through the air towards him, missing him by scant inches. He retreated a little, although from where he was crouched he could see Assassins running towards the stairs leading up to where Stiles was positioned. Stiles quickly slung his bow over his shoulder and dropped the arrow he had drawn back into his quiver, ready to face the assailants that were racing up the stairs towards him.
Rising to his full height, Stiles rested his hand on the handle of one of his knives, hoping that he wouldn’t need to use it. He could hear the pack yelling his name…his father, Scott and Derek being the loudest voices Stiles could hear. A fleeting smile crossed Stiles’ face at the sound of familiar, friendly voices, before it slipped away as the first assassin charged towards him, wielding a scimitar above his head. Stiles dived sideways to avoid the man’s first attack, before he leapt to his feet again and pulling his thickest, strongest knife from its sheath.

When the scimitar came swinging down again, Stiles blocked it’s path using the knife, before he swung and punched the assassin wielding the curved sword in the face. Pain coursed through Stiles’ hand, and he reflexively tested his fingers, clenching his fist and relaxing it to check that he hadn’t broken anything in his hand. The pain eased and Stiles let himself relax and watch as the man he’d punched stumbled into the thick concrete wall and fell to the ground, obviously dazed.

Stiles couldn’t relax for long, however…the members of the league continuing to come charging towards him. He dodged out of the way of another bullet, before he began fighting the next member of the league to come close enough.

It felt like he was training…that this was no different from the hours upon hours he’d spent sparring and practising against other members of the league during his years at Nanda Parbat. It was a familiar rhythm of blocking strikes, before retaliating with blows and strikes of his own, until his opponent fell, and the next one approached.

With the exception of the assassin who had been manhandling Melissa, Stiles had been careful not to kill the attackers, although they seemed to have no such restraint about killing him. He winced as a bullet narrowly missed his head, ducking behind the woman he was currently fighting, blocking the man responsible from shooting him, although Stiles jumped in surprise when he felt a bullet graze his shoulder, having passed through the chest of woman he was hand to hand fighting against. He looked up at the woman’s face…at the look of shock on her face beneath the mask she wore, as a trickle of blood ran from the corner of her mouth and she slumped to the ground. Stiles looked sharply at the assassin who had fired the shot, looking even more shocked than his unintended victim, looking with fear glazed eyes at his trembling hand.

Stiles spared a moment to feel sorry for the man…who honestly looked younger than Stiles did, before he took advantage of the man’s hesitation, striding forward towards the assassin before he gripped the top rail of the railing and cleanly vaulted over it, dropping down onto the roof of one of the train carriages that were haphazardly scattered around the edge of the bottom level of the building, before he rolled off it backwards, landing in a crouch.

Stiles glanced around, finding himself in an alleyway between two train carriages, about six feet wide, or perhaps a little more, and although he could hear running feet, there was nobody visible nearby. He took a moment to take a steadying breath, having a quick glance at the bullet graze on his arm. It was bleeding, but not badly enough to really worry Stiles. He’d had far worse injuries over the years.
Stiles drew his short sword from his sheath, gripping it’s hilt tightly as he ventured forward, waiting for the next attacker to come forward, his eyes filled with resolve beneath his mask as a man charged towards Stiles, spinning his double ended sword in front of him, sending sparks flying into the air where his weapons connected with the train carriages they were between. Stiles immediately thought of Darth Maul from episode one of Star Wars.

Yelling wildly, the man charged towards Stiles, who immediately went on the defensive, using his sword, as well as his knife, to deflect the two blades, using the small space to his advantage as much as he could. Eventually, however, he saw his opening and brought his short sword down on his opponents head, striking with the flat edge of his sword. The assassin dropped to the ground, unconscious, his weapon falling from his limp fingers.

Stiles kicked the weapon beneath one of the railway carriages, not wanting the other man, or another member of the league, to be able to find it and pick it up to use against Stiles at a later point in the fight.

Flexing his fingers, and ignoring the pain in his shoulder from the bullet graze, Stiles continued on, his eyes searching his surroundings for whichever member of the league would attack him next.

He wasn’t completely unprepared when he heard footsteps running at him from behind. Stiles turned, ducking the first blow, although he wasn’t prepared for the solid, thick arms wrapping around him from behind, trapping his arms to his sides as he was attacked by a second man. Stiles kicked his foot up as high as it would go, connecting with the first attackers chin, snapping his jaw back and propelling his head into the side of one of the railway carriages.

The man slumped to the ground, dazed from the impact, and nursing what Stiles suspected was a broken jaw and a nasty concussion. Still, Stiles was still trapped, and as the man holding him struggled forward, trying to force Stiles to move, Stiles leaned back against his attacker, putting his feet against the side of the same railway carriage he’d kicked the other man into, before he pushed back hard, forcing the man holding him to stagger back, hitting his head hard against the second railway carriage. Stiles dropped to the ground as the man let him go, turning and felling the man with a single punch to the head.

Picking up his sword, which he’d dropped during the tussle, Stiles crept the full length of the railway carriage, peering around the corner cautiously.
Oliver huffed as he glanced down at his watch, knowing that, chances were, Stiles would be fighting for his life at that very moment, trying to protect his friends…and Roy, from execution at the hands of the league.

Surrounding him, on board the private plane that Oliver had chartered, were Diggle and Sara. Sara was looking out the plane window, her gaze distant, while Diggle was watching Oliver sympathetically.

“You guys ok?” he asked gently. Oliver and Sara both looked at Diggle. Sara lifted her eyebrows. ‘Seriously…Stiles might already be dead, Roy too, and you’re asking us if we’re ok?”

“They might be fine. It might already be all over, they might have one,” Diggle replied, although Oliver couldn’t help but note that Diggle wasn’t overly convincing.

“Ra’s sent an entire team, plus two of his most elite soldiers, and is probably already in Beacon Hills already himself,” Sara scoffed, “and who knows how many of his personal guard he’s brought along. Stiles is alone against at least twelve, probably more, of the league. Stiles, who although he’s good in training hasn’t been in a real combat situation since he and I got taken in by the league.”

“Sara’s right,” Oliver sighed, as much as it hurt to admit it, “Chances are he’s already dead…we just have to hope that maybe Ra’s will be lenient and let the others go…and maybe Roy will have survived.”

Diggle looked from Oliver to Sara sadly, and Oliver decided to keep talking, as much as he would rather stayed silent, “But at the same time…I’m not giving up on him. Stiles had surprised us before…surprised me before. He’s resourceful, a quick thinker, and he’s stubborn. He’ll keep fighting until there is no hope left, and even then he’ll keep going until his last breath. He didn’t survive whatever hell he went through before he got on the Queen’s Gambit, and then life on the island, and then training with the league just to give up in a fight because the odd weren’t in his favour. When we first washed up on Lian Yu I was convinced that I was going to have to bury Stiles…that he wouldn’t last…but he handled the island better than I did. Yeah, he had his demons…he had nightmares that left him screaming, but he never gave up. He could have gotten out of it in so many different ways, but he never did. He kept fighting…and we’ve got to think that
Sara blinked, her eyes shining with her tears, “Oliver’s right,” she agreed, “The league went after the thing that Stiles cares the most about…his family, and his friends back in Beacon Hills. He never forgot about them…he wouldn’t let himself…he got the tattoos to make sure of it. He’s not going to let anything happen to them, not while his heart is still beating. The league…I think that they’re going to be surprised by what Stiles is capable of when those he cares the most about are threatened.”

Nodding, John gripped his hands together, his general body language becoming more positive as Oliver and Sara’s words increased his confidence that they would find Stiles and Roy, as well as their friends, alive.

TW/A

Stiles quickly disarmed his opponent by bringing the flat edge of his sword down on the man’s unprotected hand, wincing at the sound of bones breaking as the man screamed, before he punched the man in the face, sending him sprawling down to the ground, unconscious. Stiles glanced around and ducked behind a stack of large crates as bullets flew through the air towards him, sliding his sword back in its sheath and grabbing his bow from its holder across his back, notching an arrow to his bowstring.

Rising from his hiding place Stiles fired off an arrow, before dropping back down safely. A loud yell of pain told him that is arrow had found it’s mark, and he drew another arrow, taking a steadying breath before repeating the action.

When he ducked out to fire, he could see Kate and her little group of cronies. Stiles could see the anger in her eyes, and it reminded him of the night of the lacrosse final…of the anger in Gerard Argent’s eyes when Stiles refused to reveal Derek’s hiding place, the look of derangement in the old man’s eyes as he’d beaten Stiles in front of Erica and Boyd, trying to get Stiles to talk.

Stiles’ hadn’t said a word to betray his friends that night, and despite what he was up against, he wasn’t going to let anything happen to them tonight either.

“Hey, assholes…where did you learn to shoot? The storm trooper training academy? That would explain why you can’t hit anything.”
Stiles ducked as the amount of gunfire aimed at him increased, although it had achieved what he wanted it to achieve. The league’s attention was solely on him…not on the pack, locked within the cage, or Melissa, edging her way along the wall towards the cage, ignored by the league, dismissed as not a threat.

Not compared to Stiles.

Still, there was still too many members of the league left for Stiles to fight off, especially now that they knew that Stiles wasn’t giving up without a fight. They certainly wouldn’t be holding back, although Stiles doubted that any of the league members would be holding back at all. It was time to be a little more ruthless, and speed was going to be essential.

Stiles slung his bow over his shoulder, he was running low on arrows anyway, drawing his guns and checking them, before he exhaled, ducking out from behind his cover, firing rapidly with both weapons, before he ducked behind a thick, concrete support, moving a little closer to Kate.

“Kill him,” Kate roared over the sound of the guns going off. Stiles heard a growl, and whirled around, staggering back a step when he saw one of the members of the league shift into a werewolf, although it looked like something gone wrong…like Peter had back when he’d bitten Scott, and begin to run towards him, leaping over a stack of crates in a single bound. Stiles fired three times, and the wolf fell to the ground at his feet, the three shots to his head killing him instantaneously, before Stiles whirled around and shot another assassin who had been charging towards his exposed back, sword raised over his head, in the abdomen.

“Hey Katie,” Stiles goaded, “Why don’t you face me yourself, or are you too scared of the pathetic little human? I’m the one who is responsible for Allison’s death, don’t you want to kill me yourself?”

“Enough!” Kate screeched, “Shut up, you pathetic little shit.”

“Ah, you see, I’ve never been very good at shutting up, anyone will tell you that. Why don’t you come and make me.” Stiles retorted with a smirk. He heard Melissa groan and glanced towards her in alarm, only to see her roll her eyes and bury her face in her hands in exasperation at his taunting. Stiles would have laughed, had the situation not been so serious.

“Come on, Katie…you too scared? Scared that I’m going to beat you in front of all of your friends. I wonder, do they know what you did…how you killed the Hales…how they were innocent…that you killed children? And I know the Hale pack were not the only ones you did it to…you and your old man. The way I see it, you two aren’t much better than Malcolm Merlyn. Hell, your combined
kill count with daddy dearest is probably pushing Merlyn’s by now.”

There were murmured voices amongst the members of the League. Stiles knew how those high up in the organization had been uneasy about Malcolm Merlyn’s actions in Starling City, the attack on the Glades being openly condemned by those with power within the League. The killing of innocents, especially children, was widely frowned upon.

“Don’t you dare lecture me on kill counts, boy,” Kate spat, “You’re the reason Allison is dead.”

“I don’t deny it,” Stiles replied, “but, cone on, are you seriously going to let one of these assholes kill me as part of your revenge…let one of them rob you of the glory of avenging Allison.”

Kate scoffed loudly, “everybody get back…if anyone tires to get involved I’ll kill them myself. The boy is mine.”

Stiles exhaled and let his head fall backwards into the concrete column he was using as shelter as he let out a shaky exhale. This is what he wanted, for Kate to want a one on one fight with him, but now that Stiles had goaded Kate into challenging him one on one, he was more than a little nervous about facing Kate. A look sideways, towards the cage the pack had been trapped within, however, was enough to strengthen Stiles’ nerves, and he slipped his guns back in his holsters, and drew his short sword, his breath misting over the blade as he held it close to his face, before he moved out from the column he had been sheltering behind.

The members of the league still standing had all retreated against the walls, their weapons all stowed away, although Stiles knew at the slightest provocation they all would be ready to kill him within seconds. Kate stood in the same place she had been when Stiles had first arrived, the body of the man who had attacked Melissa still lying at her feet.

“Aww, look at you, Stiles…all grown up,” Kate sneered, “You know, I was really quite worried we would never get this opportunity. I was so disappointed to hear that you were dead, drowned somewhere in the South China Sea. They say that drowning is one of the worst ways to die, but I had so much more planned for you. I was so happy when I was told about how you had been found and brought to the league…how you were going to be trained. I was so, so tempted to get involved then, organise some tragic training accident, but no, that would be too good for you. I wanted to make you suffer, and I knew the best way to make you suffer was to drag your pathetic little pack into things. And so I waited, watching from a distance as you and your little friend the Canary endeared yourselves to Ras’ daughter, gaining her protection. When Ra’s named you the Fox I laughed at the irony, while at the same time I plotted my revenge.”
Kate paused, and looked towards the cage thoughtfully, before she reached into the pocket of her jacket and pulled out a remote. She pressed some buttons, and Stiles heard the faint sound of electricity humming, just as the werewolves in the cage cried out. Stiles inhaled sharply as he spotted the wires coiled around the chains holding the werewolves’ arms above their heads. He was taken back to the night in the Argent’s basement. When he’d been kidnapped and found Boyd and Erica trussed up in exactly the same position, being electrocuted to limit their ability to escape. Now Kate was doing the same to the surviving werewolf members of the pack, although from muffled noises Stiles could hear the pack making, he would guess that Kate had upped the voltage, and the wolves were now in considerable pain.

“You’re going to be responsible for the death of everyone you’ve ever cared about,” Kate told him, calmly putting the remote back away, as if she wasn’t torturing multiple people at once.

“How are you even still alive” Stiles questioned, tearing his gaze from the pack, trying to focus on Kate, “I thought Peter killed you.”

“He did,” Kate nodded, “and let me tell you, I was very disappointed when I came back and learned that he was already dead. I would have enjoyed taking my revenge on him too.”

“So…how did you come back?”

“My father. As I’m sure you’ve figured out, we Argents have a long history with the League, at least one of use has been a member of the league for over 300 years. After my death, my father knew that Chris would never be able to continue the family tradition of being a member of the league, and Allison wasn’t ready, although he was planning to lead her down that path. He buried an empty casket, and sent my body back to Nanda Parbat…”

“And they used a Lazarus Pit,” Stiles filled in.

Kate smiled and nodded, “Such a smart boy,” she cooed, “but yes, I was returned to life using a Lazarus Pit. It is a pity that Chris was unaware of my resurrection, and of our families involvement with the league, I am sure that Allison would have been given the same honour, when her time came. Sadly, it was not to be, although I must confess, I am tempted to pick her up before we leave, just to see how she turns out. They say it’s not a good idea to try and bring back people so long after their death, but I’m willing to risk it.”

Stiles stared in shock at Kate. He knew about the Lazarus pit, and Nyssa had told he and Sara about how much it hurt…about how it changed people. Stiles wanted Allison back from the dead, but after all these years, would it really still be Allison?
“Ah, but you got me performing my Monologue,” Kate laughed, “I guess that makes you James Bond, and myself the super villain?”

Stiles shrugged, “you said it, not me. The pit is dangerous though, it would be careless not to heed the words of others who know more about it.”

Kate nodded, and removed her leather jacket, tossing it to aside carelessly, “You don’t have to warn me of the dangers of the pit, boy,” she told him, “I know, more than most, what it does. I know how much it hurts…but what surprised me the most was how it changed me. I don’t know if it was how I died that made the change happen, and for a time I hated it…but now…now I like it.”

Kate shifted her shoulders and shifted, and Stiles startled as Kate’s skin changed color, darkening to a dusky shade of purple, with darker splotches. Her eyes changed to a bright green, and her teeth changed and elongated into curved fangs. Stiles glanced at Kate’s hand, and spotted the sharp claws she had grown instead of her human fingernails. Kate’s fangs and claws were different from those of Scott and the other werewolves, more cat like than anything. Stiles frowned as he remembered Kate’s code name within the league.

“The Jaguar.”

“It was a name I already went by,” Kate moved into a crouch, “but it's funny how our names reflect who we inside, isn’t it, little fox.”

With that, Kate lunged forward. Stiles dodged sideways, rolling and rising to his feet in a single motion that would have brought Coach Finstock to tears of happiness. Kate snarled and Stiles brought up his sword defensively. Kate drew her own weapons, a pair of Chinese ring daggers, much like those that Allison had once favoured. For a moment Stiles wondered if it had been Kate who had taught Allison how to use them, before Kate was moving towards him, slashing with the knives. Stiles blocked the blows with his sword, immediately noticing how much harder it was fighting against Kate, compared to the other League assassins he had battled, both tonight, and during his training. It made sense, however, considering that Kate was now a supernatural creature, a were-Jaguar. Of course she would be stronger and faster than a normal human.

Still, it meant it was going to be a lot harder to defeat her than Stiles had initially thought.

Stiles continued to block Kate’s blows, and occasionally trying an offensive move with his sword, rather than simply defending. Kate’s claws seemed to hamper, rather than help, her use the finger
daggers, which Stiles tried to capitalise on, and he felt a thrill of excitement go through him when he managed to knock one of them off her finger, and he kicked it across the floor, leaving Kate with only one blade.

Along with her claws, and those teeth.

Back and forward they traded blows. Sweat trickled down Stiles’ back, and blood still sluggishly trickled down Stiles’ arm from the bullet graze, as Stiles kept blocking Kate’s attempts to kill him. They moved around the main floor space of the factory, with the remaining League members keeping their distance, not wanting to get involved in the deadly dance going on between the pair.

Stiles cursed as he misjudged a step and fell, and Kate, smiling delightedly, kicked him in the ribs before he could move to protect himself. Swinging his sword to force her backwards, Stiles scrambled to his feet again, and the fight continued.

It didn’t take long, however, for Stiles’ sword to be swiped from his hand and sent flying across the floor, landing with a noisy clatter by a particular quick move from Kate. Stiles backed up, doing a mental catalogue of his remaining weapons. He still had both guns, although he doubted his knives would do much good against Kate.

Kate smirked as she advanced towards Stiles, tossing her remaining knife away, “I’m going to do this with my own bare hands,” she proclaimed, her words garbled by her fangs. The malice behind them, however, was unmistakable.

Sties threw himself sideways, but not quickly enough to avoid Kate’s claws as he felt them tear into his right side, sending pain shooting through his body as blood immediately flowed from the five cuts in his skin. Stiles pressed his hand to the injury as he shakily got back to his feet, glancing down and noting how quickly his hand became soaked with blood. It wasn’t a fatal injury, but left untreated it was going to cause issues…notably to do with blood loss and a high risk of infection…who knew where Kate’s claws had been after all.

“Stiles!” Melissa shouted fearfully, and Stiles turned and ran, climbing up onto some wooden crates and running across the top, Kate close at his heels. Looking ahead, Stiles could see a chain hanging from the ceiling, and gritting his teeth against the pain, he threw himself into the air, leaping off the crates, and snagging the chain on the way down. The chain swung from the impact of his body, and Stiles held on tightly, not wanting to fall, ignoring the pain his body was feeling.

Stiles looked back over his shoulder as Kate stood at the edge of the crates, watching him with a wry smirk, before she calmly jumped down to the ground, walking across the floor until she was directly
beneath him. Then she jumped into the air, catching the bottom of the chain and beginning to climb up. Stiles swallowed and began to climb further up himself, although as he looked up, he realised that there was nowhere for him to go one he reached the top of the chain. He was trapped.

Feeling something grip onto his ankle, Stiles looked down and saw Kate had grabbed onto his leg, a victorious smile on her face as she looked up at him, the chain still swinging gently from the movements. Stiles

“It’s time to give up, Fox,” she spat.

Stiles shook his head, “I won’t, not until I know my pack are safe from the likes of you.”

Kate’s fingers tightened around Stiles’ ankle as she pulled on him, her long claws digging into his skin, cutting him and drawing blood, which trickled over her hand and down her arm.

“In so many ways, Stiles, you’re just like me,” Kate crooned with a smile. Stiles swallowed, vividly reminded of a similar situation…the day that he’d killed the man…Donovan…on Lian Yu. It was an eerily similar scenario, with Stiles trapped and higher than someone who wanted him dead.

“You’re wrong, Kate,” Stiles replied, looking down at Kate, holding onto the chain tightly with his right hand, his various injuries screaming in pain at the position, and reaching for his holster with his left hand, glad that he’d decided to load the weapon with wolfsbane bullets.

“If I could, I would go back in time and save Allison, and Aidan, and everyone else the Nogitsune killed, even if it meant killing myself. I would gladly give my life for any of my family…my pack. I am nothing without them, and I don’t pretend to be. I would have left the league in a heartbeat if it meant I could have safely gone back to Beacon Hills, hugged my dad, joked around with Scott, argued with Derek, been told off by Melissa…run in the woods. I would have given up on the training in less than a heartbeat. I don’t kill unless it’s to protect those I care about. I follow Allison’s code. Not like you. You’re the monster, not those you hunt. Not the Hales, and not for Scott’s pack. We protect those who cannot protect themselves.”

“Is that so?” Kate growled dangerously, her grip on Stiles’ ankle tightening. Stiles fought the urge to flinch at the pain.

“Yeah, that’s right,” Stiles’ fingers closed around the grip of his gun and he pulled it free of its holster just as Kate pulled on his leg, trying to pull him from the chain. Stiles leveled his gun at Kate,
knowing that there was no way Kate would ever let him go…that she would never leave the Pack to live peacefully.

“I’m sorry, Allison,” Stiles whispered, before he pulled the trigger.

Chapter End Notes

I'm sorry this chapter took so long to be posted. It's been half written for ages (and I mean, like...years) but i got VERY stuck on the whole bit with Kate and Stiles, and I am not very good at writing fight scenes, so it was this massive struggle. Hope you all enjoyed it, I promise it won't take nearly so long to post next chapter (it might even be in the next few days). :)


Chapter 27

The echoes of the gunshots echoed through the air, cutting through Stiles’ thoughts like a knife as he watched the life fade from Kate Argent’s eyes and she slumped to the ground. Stiles’ chest heaved with every breath he took as he dangled from the chain hanging from the abandoned factory’s ceiling. After a few moments though, Stiles gave into the screaming of his muscles, and dropped down to the floor, careful not to land on Kate, and stepped away from her corpse, picking up his sword from where it lay on the ground, knowing that, although Kate might be dead, the pack, and Stiles himself, were still in danger. Kate wasn’t the last of the assassins standing, and a couple of the fighters that Stiles had knocked out early on in the fight had started to recover.

The sound of the main door to the rail shed bursting open caused Stiles to startle, although he wasn’t the only one, as many of the other assassins whipped around towards the source of the sound, their weapons raised. They all lowered their weapons, however, as they caught sight of the men who had walked through the door. Stiles felt his shoulders slump and he dropped his chin to his heaving chest, his stomach burning in pain where Kate’s claws had cut through his skin, blood trickling from those injuries, in addition to the bullet graze to his shoulder.

“Of course,” he muttered to himself, before he looked back up, taking in the sight of Ra’s al Ghul himself, flanked by five men, whom Stiles recognized as the remaining members of the Seven Men of Death, Ra’s most elite fighters.

“Ra’s al Ghul,” one of the Assassins that had been standing with Kate greeted, stepping forward and dropping to one knee, “we are honoured by your presence here tonight.”

Ra’s simply lifted his hand and the man fell silent, his head bowed respectfully. Stiles shoved his gun back into its holster, double checking the safety as he went.

“Ah…my young fox. I am glad to see you still alive. I was a tad worried that my Jaguar would have skinned you alive by now. I see that she, like so many before, underestimated you.”

Stiles’ glance dropped down briefly to Kate’s body, before he looked back towards Ra’s, his eyes narrowed suspiciously.

“What do you want with me? I thought you’d figured out that I wasn’t the one in the prophecy. You know that Nyssa and I would never have worked out.”
“I know,” Ra’s nodded, stepping forward smoothly. Stiles glanced briefly over his shoulder at the pack, checking that they were ok. Melissa was standing beside the cage, holding onto the bars, her eyes wide and shining with tears. Stiles shook his head, warning her to stay back, that her getting involved would only put her, and Stiles, in more danger. She nodded in response, taking a step backwards.

Stiles looked back towards Ra’s, who was smirking, “never before has a more appropriate name been chosen by a member of our order than you,” he offered in a soft, quiet, but dangerous voice. Stiles’ gaze flickered around the room, taking in how many members of the league were upright. A couple of the league laughed, as if Ra’s had made some great joke.

“The fox who runs with wolves. You had us all fooled, little fox. For years and years we thought that you were the cunning fox that would run with us, the wolves of the desert, the League of Assassins. Now I see that we were wrong. We were never your wolves, were we, Stiles? We were never your pack.”

Stiles hesitated before he nodded. Ra’s was right. If he had a choice between the pack and league Stiles would choose the pack every single time, without hesitation, regardless of what danger it would put himself in, what threats he would have to face.

The Pack came first, it always had and it always would, right up until Stiles drew his last breath.

“Even after all these years…after everything that happened to you in this town…that they put you through…they still come first.”

Stiles met Ra’s’ gaze with his own, his eyes hardening with resolve, “Every time,” he replied in agreement. Ra’s nodded, approaching Stiles, his five followers spreading out behind him. Stiles straightened his back, ignoring the sound of his father’s voice calling his name, of Derek and Scott trying desperately to break free, of Jackson, yelling for him to run. He blocked it all out, focusing solely on Ra’s in front of him, knowing that it was likely to be the final moments of his life. Ra’s was going to kill him for his disloyalty, and there was nothing Stiles could do to prevent it.

Eventually Ra’s stopped when he was only a few short feet from Stiles. If he drew his sword and swung it through the air he could easily cut off Stiles’ head, or cut through his abdomen, just like Kate had done to Laura Hale, severing his body if he wanted to.

“I value loyalty, Stiles. It has always been a trait of yours that I admired. When you were first brought to us, despite the condition you were in, you were loyal to Sara…ready to protect her. Perhaps that is why Nyssa chose to spare you as well as Sara.”
“Sara viewed me as a little brother, she has since I was born. She would never have gone with Nyssa if Nyssa had killed me…not at that point anyway. Nyssa isn’t stupid. She knew that if she wanted to get in Sara’s pants she was going to have to play nice with me,” Stiles pointed out.

Ra’s laughed, “yes, I do suppose you’re right. I will miss your wit. You truly are much smarter than those I encounter…and your kind of intelligence in addition to your strength and your loyalty…it is a rare, and special combination.”

Stiles said nothing in response to the praise Ra’s was heaping onto him, although he was getting a little confused. He’d seen Ra’s execute people before…and he didn’t tend to go on about it this much. He’d interrogate them on why they had been brought to him for execution, and once he was satisfied with the answer he would cut off their head, or stab them, depending on how quickly and painlessly he wanted them to die.

Sometimes he would bring them back using the Lazarus Pit and execute them again, if he felt their death had been lacking in some regard. Stiles really hoped that he didn’t get that particular fate.

“Do you know why I am here tonight Stiles Stilinski?” Ra’s questioned.
Chapter 28

A hushed silence met Ra’s question, and Stiles licked his lips nervously, although he didn’t blink, nor look away from Ra’s penetrating stare. This was it, this was his final interrogation.

“Because I killed Allison Argent. I wasn’t the one who took her life, but I was the one who was weak enough to be possessed by the Nogitsune, and he was the one who organised it. You’re all here tonight because Kate Argent thought I’d gone unpunished for her niece’s death. You’re all here tonight because I couldn’t let go of the pack I left here in Beacon Hills…because this is where my loyalty lies, and not with the League of Assassins. You’re here tonight because Kate whispered in the ears of your lieutenants who already didn’t like me, and convinced them that I was being unfairly favoured by you, especially when it is known that I am not the one foretold in the prophecy.”

Stiles broke off, his gaze flickering down to Kate’s body, before he returned his gaze up towards Ra’s face.

“I am guilty of Allison Argent’s murder, and the deaths of many others during my time being controlled by the Nogitsune. I grieve each and every one of their deaths, and the guilt I feel over my actions during those dark times to this day cannot be expressed by words. I am also guilty of the crime of favouring my own personal connections…my family and friends, above the league. The loyalty I feel towards them…it isn’t going to go away…they’re always going to come first. Kate’s hatred of me was deserved, but I feel no remorse for her death. The things I know she has done to others who I love…those crimes can never be forgiven. In fact…I’m actually surprised that you guys never took her out for what she did to Derek’s family, let alone the rest of the stuff she’s pulled over the years, and that’s just the stuff that I know about.”

Stiles pursed his lips shut, unable to believe that he’d actually just started running his mouth. He hadn’t babbled like that, especially around Ra’s, in years.

Ra’s, for his part, was giving Stiles and appraising look, as if he was weighing up his options and making up his mind about what he was going to do to Stiles. Stiles sent a silent prayer up to whoever was listening for a quick death.

A smile crossed Ra’s face, and Stiles felt fear spark through his body as he mentally prepared himself to die. He didn’t close his eyes though, facing death, accepting his fate as Ra’s reached over his shoulder and drew his long sabre. Stiles could hear the pack screaming his name, although ironically he couldn’t hear Lydia’s voice over the din. Even with her unconscious and with a gag in her mouth he would have thought he would have heard Lydia finally banshee scream, announcing his imminent death to the world, so many years after she thought she was supposed to have done it.
Ra’s raised his sword over his head, and Stiles felt relief was over him. It looked like Ra’s was going to either behead him, or cleave his body in two. It was the wrong kind of movement for a stabbing injury to Stiles’ body that would leave him slowly bleeding out over a drawn out period of time.

The sword swung down, and Stiles kept his face resolutely fixed on Ra’s as the sword came swinging down…right past Stiles’ face, and missing his body altogether, and instead slicing Kate’s body clean in half…almost identically to how Kate had cut Laura’s body in half, all those years before.

Stiles blinked…”what?” he stammered in shock, looking down at Kate’s severed body, before he looked back up at Ra’s. In the background Stiles could hear the sobbing and the calling of the pack, and the murmuring of the members of the League

“Stiles Stilinski…Al ththaelib Aldhy yudir mae al dhdiab…The fox who runs with Wolves…I, Ra’s Al Ghul, release you from the League of Assassains. May you have freedom to the end of your days…and peace. May you live out your days with your pack…your loyalty to whom has never wavered. I am honoured to have met a man who is as loyal to your friends as you are. I feel that if there were more men like you in the world, it would be a far better place, and the League would not be needed to dole out Justice for the sake of humanity.”

Silence met the pronouncement. Stiles’ mouth fell open, “that…that’s it? I’m done?”

“You’re done, my young friend. You were a boy when you came to us, but you leave the league a man…one that I am sure your father over there is very proud of. I myself am proud of the person you have become. If you ever have need of our aid you know how to contact us.”

Ra’s reached out his hand, and Stiles only hesitated for a moment before he took it, shaking hands with Ra’s al Ghul…as an equal.

“I…I have some requests,” Stiles began, “A gun loaded with wolfsbane bullets that are the same type as the ones used to shot my pack so I can heal their injuries and any of the people I…I killed tonight. If you can bring them back…do it,” Stiles requested, “except for Kate Argent…she stays dead. By my thinking she’s already had her second life. The others were only following her orders.”

Ra’s chuckled, and looked down at Kate’s body, “her body will never rest together again, you have my word. To borrow a phrase…heads or tails?”
“Heads,” Stiles replied confidently, and Ra’s nodded, gesturing to one of his men to come forward. The man offered Stiles his semi-automatic rifle, and Stiles quickly checked that the bullets matched the same casings that he’d found at Derek’s loft, before he nodded his satisfaction to the man, and to Ra’s. Stiles cringed when the man grabbed Kate’s feet and began dragging her lower body away, leaving a thick blood trail, while the rest of the league gathered their other fallen comrades.

“We will take our leave. I wish you the best of luck,” Ra’s offered. Stiles incline his head in a respectful bow, and Ra’s nodded, before he turned and walked out, followed by the rest of the members of the league, who all ignored Stiles, making for the exit. Stiles watched every last one of them go, still holding the gun in his hands as he watched and waited until they’d all left, passing through the same door that Ra’s had entered through. Stiles listened, and he could hear the sounds of the league members getting into their cars and driving away. He stayed still until everything fell quiet outside the railyard.

A soft hand on his arm made him jump, startled, and he whirled around to face Melissa, her eyes filled with tears as she looked at him, having approached him while he was preoccupied.

“Stiles,” she began, but Stiles shook his head and took a step back.

“This isn’t over,” he told her, “we’ve got to get out of here, now. I don’t trust them enough that they haven’t rigged this place to blow up once they’re clear.”

Stiles strode around Melissa and towards the cage, Melissa hurrying along behind him.

“Stiles…you’re hurt.”

“It’s nothing,” Stiles shrugged, “here, hold this for me.”

Stiles passed the rifle over to Melissa, who took it gingerly from him, holding it carefully, as if it was a bomb about to go off. Stiles gritted his teeth and used a wooden crate to vault up on top of the cage, treading carefully across the bars until he reached the electrical wiring that was ensuring that the werewolves and Kira were kept powerless.

Now that he was closer Stiles could see the black blood trickling from Derek’s nose, and the black blood that soaked a makeshift bandage around Jackson’s leg, as well as the worryingly pale complexion Kira had. Scott was trying to avoid putting pressure on one of his legs, the black blood still dripping from it onto the concrete floor of the cell a sign that he too had been shot. Stiles just
prayed that he had enough bullets with him to counteract the poison.

Stiles, drew his knife and began working through the wiring, remembering back to the night where he’d tried to free Erica and Boyd from the Argent’s basement. It soon became apparent that it was going to be too risky for Stiles to cut through the wires…not without electrocuting himself…which wouldn’t really achieve anything.

“Alright…plan B. block your ears guys,” he told the pack, who immediately obeyed, blocking their ears as Stiles drew his own gun, aimed and fired it, severing the wire that was leading into the wiring, obviously the original source of the electricity. Immediately the wires stopped humming from the electricity flowing through them, and Stiles heard Jackson and Liam sigh in relief.

“Man that sucked,” Jackson groaned as Stiles cut through the wires that fed down to each supernatural member of the pack, before he dropped back down to floor level, reaching into one of his numerous pockets and pulling out his lock picking equipment, crouching down at the cage door and beginning to work on his padlock.

“What took so long, Stilinski?” quipped Jackson.

“I had to figure out where you were, and figure out a plan of attack, and then I had to wait for it to get dark so no-one saw me driving around town. I had it under control,” Stiles defended as the padlock clicked and fell open in Stiles’ hands. Stiles removed it from the cage door and then swung the door open. Melissa rushed through the door, embracing first Scott, and the Stiles’ father in embraces. Stiles moved over to Chris, who was the closest, and began picking the handcuffs holding him in place.

“I’m sorry you had to see that,” Stiles apologised as Chris’s wrists fell free, but before he could say any more Chris’s arms encircled him in an embrace. Stiles stiffened in surprise, freezing up in Chris’s arms as the older hunter hugged him tightly.

“You did good, Stiles…Allison would be so proud of you.”

“Thanks Chris,” Stiles smiled, and Chris let him go. Stiles stepped back and moved over to Lydia, who had woken up and was groggily standing upright, leaning against the wall of the cage. She smiled at him cheerfully as Chris gingerly stretched out his legs, before beginning to help free the rest of the pack.
“I knew you’d come…You have no idea how close I was to screaming all day. You put me through hell, I was convinced you were going to end up dead.”

“You weren’t the only one,” Stiles agreed as Lydia’s cuffs clicked open and she practically fell into his arms.

‘Are you ok?’ Stiles asked. Lydia nodded against his neck, pressing her lips to his cheek.

“Thanks to you.”

Stiles gave Lydia a grim smile, before she moved over to Parish, obviously planning on helping Chris free the deputy, while Stiles, hesitating only briefly, moved over to his father.

“I bet you’re glad now that I picked up how to pick locks,” Stiles jokingly offered, ignoring the tears shining in his father’s eyes.

“After what I’ve just seen you do I’m pretty sure you would have picked up lock picking at some point.” His father replied with a wry smile of his own. Although Stiles could tell his father didn’t mean it, Stiles’ gaze inadvertently slid over to where the top half of Kate’s body was sprawled on the ground, surrounded by a pool of blood.

Stiles said nothing to neither his father, nor Melissa as he picked the handcuffs holding his father in place, until they finally fell open and the Sherriff dropped his arms with a sigh of relief, rotating his shoulders with a wince. He lowered his gaze, stepping back and beginning to move away, heading towards Jackson. Chris had already freed Kira, and they were working together to free Scott, while Lydia was carefully detaching the wires from Parrish’s exposed chest.

“Stiles,” the Sherriff’s voice offered quietly, and Stiles turned back towards his father, the older man cupping Stiles’ face between his hands, “You did what you had to do. They wouldn’t have let you get out of here alive, and they were going to kill us. You didn’t do anything wrong. It was all self-defence”

“Now you know though,” Stiles replied, still not meeting his father’s eyes, “now you know what I became when I was gone. How I trained in ways to kill people…I…I…” Stiles choked on his words, his breath stuttering as he felt tears building in his eyes.
‘Hey…hey, Stiles, it’s okay, you’re okay. We don’t need to talk about it until you’re ready, okay?’ The Sherriff interrupted, tilting Stiles’ chin up with his finger so that their eyes were meeting, “You did a good job in getting us out tonight. We’ll talk about what happened after we’ve all had a rest.”

Stiles nodded, forcing himself to calm down and take a few deep breaths. His father enveloped him in a hug, and Stiles clutched at his father’s shirt, fisting his fingers in the material.

“I’ve got you, it’s ok, we’re ok, you’re ok,” The Sherriff soothed gently.

“Stiles, we need to get out of here,” Chris gently broke the moment between Stiles and his father, and Stiles sniffed, pulling away from his father and wiping his hand over his face, wiping away the tears.

“Ok, Melissa, pass me the gun,” Stiles ordered. Melissa wordlessly handed it over and Stiles removed the magazine, before passing it back to her. He carefully removed the bullets from the magazine, passing the bullets, his strongest knife, and his lighter over to Chris, who nodded, knowing what needed to be done.

“Are any of you guys hurt,” Stiles asked, directing the question towards his father, Melissa, Lydia and Chris Argent. They all shook their heads, and Stiles nodded in visible relief.

“I parked three miles away so they wouldn’t hear me coming,” Stiles told them as Chris began cutting the tops off bullets and pouring the wolfsbane out onto the floor, preparing to burn it and use it to treat the werewolves’ bullet injuries. Stiles met Scott’s gaze, and Stiles could tell that they were both thinking of the night when they’d helped Derek when he’d been shot by Kate. Stiles’ gaze flickered over to Derek as he remembered how Derek had writhed on the ground as the treatment worked, although obviously it had caused him a lot of pain.

“Good plan,” the Sherriff nodded encouragingly.

“Yeah,” Stiles nodded, “except for the fact that I only brought Roscoe up here, and there is no way we’re all going to fit.”

“We can run back, Stiles…it’s ok,” Scott nodded, “It won’t take us long, once we’ve healed.”

“What if they left a car here?” Kira asked hopefully, “maybe we can use that.”
“I doubt it. Kate’s the only one they left behind, they took the rest of their wounded,” Stiles shook his head, “and I really wouldn’t trust a car they’d left behind. They would have rigged it to blow up or cut the brake lines or something like that.”

Parrish nodded in agreement, and Stiles remembered how Parrish had served in the military before he’d become a deputy. It was good to know that, Parrish agreed with him, having gone through a similar training process.

Chris used Stiles’ lighter to ignite the wolfsbane that he’d poured out of the bullets, and the werewolves, all stepped forward. Stiles bit his lip sympathetically as the wolves began applying the wolfsbane ash to their respective bullet wounds, trying unsuccessfully to ignore their screams and howls of pain as the toxins and poisons were leeched from their bodies.

“I’m going to scout the perimeter, get one of them to howl if you need me,” Stiles told Chris, and his father, who both nodded. Stiles pulled out both of his guns and handed them over to the two older men with a grim smile, before he turned and walked out of the cage, walking towards the same door that Ra’s and his men had used to enter the building.

As he walked Stiles picked up his bow from the ground where he’d dropped it at some point during his fight with Kate, as well as the few remaining arrows, all of which had fallen out of his quiver during the battle. Stiles slid all but one of the arrows into his quiver, notching the last to his bowstring as he ducked out the door and began to walk around the perimeter, just like the guard had been doing when Stiles was on the roof of the abandoned building.

Stiles took advantage of the solitude, breathing in deeply the cool night air. He could hear the sounds of the leaves rustling in the trees, and the soft creaking of the trees as they swayed gently in the breeze. There was no sign of the league. The cars that Stiles had observed when he was approaching the building, were all gone, save for an rusted out old truck that Stiles remembered being there when Derek, Isaac, Erica and Boyd had used the railyard and the attached building as a training ground. One look at it told Stiles that none of the pack would be able to get the old truck working again without access to mechanic’s tools, so Stiles disregarded the truck. It would have been useful to have another mode of transportation…there was no way all eleven of them were going to fit in Roscoe. Scott had offered for the werewolves (and presumably Kira) to run back, but Stiles still felt guilty about the fact that the werewolves, all of whom had been shot with wolfsbane, would have to run the distance. Even after the bullet wounds and the poisoning resulting from them the wolves would still feel the effects of being shot for a few more hours at least.

Although he knew that Oliver, Sara and Diggle were on their way, Stiles knew that he didn’t really want to wait at the railyard for the others to arrive. It would at least be another hour before their plane landed, possibly closer to one and a half hours, and Stiles wanted to get back to the relative
safety of suburbia and his father and Melissa’s house as soon as he could.

Stiles completed his walk around the perimeter of the building, relieved to find no sign of anything suspicious left lying around by the league. He stopped, leaning against the wall, checking his own injuries. His bullet wound to his shoulder had mostly stopped bleeding, although it still hurt to move his shoulder too much. Drawing his bowstring back had sent fire shooting down his arm, and up into his chest, so Stiles was very relieved he hadn’t needed to try it since he’d re picked up his bow and arrows.

The slash wounds made by Kate’s claws were still bleeding, although Stiles was relieved to see that the black material of his combat gear had hidden the injury, and the blood that he’d lost from it. Stiles knew that he was going to need stitches, and he cringed. He hated having stitches, he always had, and it wasn’t something that had gone away during the years following the Queen’s Gambit going down.

Letting out a heavy sigh, Stiles re-entered the building, relieved to find that the pack were all upright and out of the cage. Chris was looking down at Kate’s body, and Stiles swallowed nervously.

Derek and Scott both looked up at the same time, and Scott crossed over to him and engulfed him in embrace.

“Thank you,” the Alpha werewolf choked out, “You saved us. I don’t know how we stayed alive while you were gone.”

Stiles rolled his eyes, “er…you probably weren’t being targeted by the League of Assassins. This was my bad, Scott. I was just fixing it.” Stiles looked away, his gaze falling, again, towards Kate’s body, “It was all because of me anyway.”

“Dude, it’s ok. Everyone’s ok…it’s going to be fine.”

“Scott’s right. Chris and Parrish are going to come back out here after some sleep and bury her somewhere in the preserve…after they burn her body, so she can’t come back,” Derek added, his eyes narrowing towards Kate. Stiles could practically feel the hatred the werewolf felt towards the deceased hunter. He didn’t blame him.

“Are you guys ok?” Stiles asked, deciding that a change of subject was in order. They both nodded in reply.
“Good thinking with getting one of them to leave their gun behind with the bullets,” Derek nodded encouragingly, “We might have been in trouble if you hadn’t done that.”

“It was a rare variety,” Stiles replied, “I found a bullet at your place and had a look at it. I was pretty sure it was a different species to what Chris uses. It wasn’t worth the risk.”

“Hey son,” the Sherriff acknowledged, walking up to Stiles, Derek and Scott, “How does it look out there?”

“All clear,” Stiles replied promptly and confidently, “they’ve left the immediate area. We should get a move on though. We can move together until we get to Roscoe, then we’re going to have to split up. Roscoe can carry five, but anything more than that is going to be squishy…and I really don’t want to get pulled over.”

Stiles’ father and Scott both snorted.

“Derek, Parrish, Liam, Kira, Jackson and I will run back,” Scott replied, “You can take your dad, mom, Lydia and Chris back. Where are we meeting?

“I’ll get Deaton to meet us back at Dad and Melissa’s house?” Stiles offered. Scott, Derek, and the Sherriff all nodded in agreement to this.

“I, um, I had some back up coming as well. They got a bit delayed by bad weather…is it OK if I tell them to go straight to the house when they land?” Stiles asked his father, who nodded.

“Yeah, of course…I’m assuming that they’re safe to be around?”

“Yeah…probably one of the reasons I’m still alive today. Jackson knows them as well…he probably trusts them more than he trusts me.”

“Well that’s not difficult” Jackson interjected from where he was standing with Melissa, Parrish and Lydia, obviously having been eavesdropping on the conversation.
Stiles rolled his eyes at the werewolf, “See…they’re fine, we’ll be good.”

“Alright then.” The Sherriff nodded. Scott looked around, and by some unspoken signal, everyone knew it was time to go.

Leading the way, Stiles walked back out of the building, leading the pack out into the cold night air…and freedom.
Stiles quietly closed the door to his bedroom and leaned his forehead warily against it for a moment, before he turned and faced the room, pulling the bottle of whisky he’d borrowed from his father’s liqueur cabinet from where he’d hidden it beneath his jacket and setting it on the dressing table, before he moved to his duffle bag and began searching through it until he found the first aid kit he’d put together. Most members of the league carried a first aid kit with them, although how complex the first aid kit was varied greatly. Stiles’ was a little more extensive than most, but Stiles liked to be prepared for all situations…and he knew realistically that he’d always been accident prone, and the league’s training had quite ironed that particular personality trait out of him.

Setting the first aid kit on the dressing table, beside the whisky bottle Stiles began the process of removing his weaponry, setting it all carefully on the bed to be cleaned and checked for damage after he’d gotten some sleep. He then grabbed a clean pair of sweatpants and ducked across the corridor to the bathroom, stepping into the shower and washing away the dried blood, sweat and dirt that had accumulated on his skin. He kept his shower short, though, not wanting to waste his time. He knew that he needed to be finished before the werewolves arrived back at the house.

Gently patting himself dry, Stiles wrapped his upper half in a towel and put on the clean sweatpants, gathering his dirty clothes and walking back to his bedroom, closing the door behind him once again. He could hear Alan Deaton’s muffled voice coming from downstairs, obviously having arrived at the house while Stiles was in the shower, although Stiles’ couldn’t hear any of the werewolves yet. He wasn’t surprised though, he was fairly sure the werewolves wouldn’t have been in any rush. Even after treating their wolfsbane poisoning Stiles doubted that any of the werewolves would have been in the best of conditions…and he wasn’t even sure what Parrish’s abilities as a Hellhound were, compared with the werewolves and Kira.

Stiles dropped his combat gear on the floor and crossed over the room to the dresser, removing his towel, and beginning to inspect his injuries in the mirror. In the light of the room Stiles was surprised by how pale he looked, realising that he’d lost more blood than he’d thought he would. The bullet graze to his shoulder had stung when he was in the shower, and it was still hurting, although it wasn’t bleeding anymore. The claw marks Kate had left him with in his side, and his leg were still sluggishly bleeding, although Stiles wasn’t certain whether or not it was bleeding again just because he’d had a shower and washed away the dried blood that had sealed the wound, or if it had never stopped bleeding.

Bruises were already forming across Stiles’ chest and abdomen, and he knew that come dawn he was going to ache all over from the bruising. The pain was worse in a couple of places along his ribcage, but Stiles was relatively certain that he had escaped the fight without any broken ribs, although he conceded that there might be a couple of cracked ones.

Still, for the moment, Stiles’ ribs were not his concern. His hands trembling just slightly, Stiles
opened up the first aid kit and the bottle of whisky, thoroughly wetting a piece of gauze with the
alcohol, before gingerly applying it to the wounds to his side. He bit his lip against the pain,
reaching with his free hand for the improvised gag he had been using to prevent himself from crying
out during his nightmares. Stiles shoved the gag into his mouth and bit down on it, relieved that it
stifled his groans and whimpers of pain.

Breathing heavily through his nose, Stiles poured a little more whisky directly onto the claw marks,
using the gauze to prevent the whisky dribbling past the injury and making a mess. He removed his
gag, taking a few generous swigs of the alcohol, distracting himself from the burning pain in his side
from Kate’s claw marks with the burn of the whisky as it went down his throat.

Stiles set the whisky back down on the dresser, and looked at the wound again in the mirror,
nodding. Between his shower, and then the whisky, the claw marks looked nice and clean. Now he
just had to stitch them injury back up, and then he could tend to the bullet graze and then he would
be all set for when the werewolves came back.

Stiles grabbed him mini suture kit from his first aid supplies, carefully threading a needle with some
suture thread, before readying himself, using one hand to pinch the edges of the deepest claw mark
together, before he began the work of sewing the edges of the wound together. The familiar feeling
of the needle and thread passing through his skin, accompanied with the gently tugging made Stiles
swallow nauseously, and he was glad he’d shoved his gag back into his mouth to stifle his little
whimpers of pain as he went.

It took eighteen stiches for Stiles to adequately close the worst of the gashes. Stiles carefully tied off
the thread, examining his work in the mirror. If someone else was doing it he was sure that the
stiches would probably look neater, and even for him they weren’t his best work, but Stiles was
relatively sure that it would hold.

Letting out a shaking breath, Stiles began work on the top row of claw marks, trying to breathe
through the pain, slowly doing stich after stich, his whisky coloured eyes focused intently on what he
was doing, although they watered from the pain, and his body was starting to feel the effects of not
enough sleep, combined with blood loss.

In hindsight, Stiles would blame his body’s ailing condition for his failure to hear the front door to
the house opening and closing, nor the muffled noise of Scott, Derek, Jackson, Kira, Liam and
Parrish’s voices as they greeted Stiles’ dad, Melissa, Chris and Deaton. He definitely didn’t hear the
sound of footsteps coming up the stirs towards his room, so he hadn’t expected the sound of soft
knocking on the door.

“Stiles, sweetie, are you ok?” Melissa gently asked. Stiles froze, looking wide –eyed at the door,
before down at his side. He spat out the gag, letting it fall to the floor.
“Um, yeah, I’m fine,” Stiles replied, before he quickly started making another stitch. Unfortunately he didn’t quite get the angle right, and sharp pain shot though the affected area, causing Stiles to let out a soft yelp.

“Ow,” he hissed to himself, quickly altering the angle of the needle and smoothly completing the stitch.

“Stiles?” Melissa asked, turning the handle and poking her head in the door.

“No, don’t come in,” Stiles began, half turning around towards the door, his gaze locking onto hers. Stiles could only watch as Melissa’s eyes dropped to his hands, the needle he held in one hand, the other handed, bloodied, holding the uppermost slash mark closed.

“Stiles Stilinski…what the hell are you doing?” Melissa asked, and Stiles was taken back to his childhood and the many times Melissa had found him and Scott doing something stupid that would probably end up with one of them getting hurt. It was the voice of an angry parent…but one that cared, and was angry because they were concerned. It was a voice that Stiles associated only with Melissa. His father had never mastered it, and Stiles’ mother was, really, more the sort of parent who would get involved in any mischief than to tell Stiles off for it.

“Um,” Stiles stammered, “it’s really not what it looks like.”

“Really? It looks like you’re stitching up your own injuries when there is a qualified medical practitioner as well as a vet who knows how to do stitches just down stairs. I don’t know if I should be worried or insulted.”

“It wasn’t to insult you,” Stiles replied quickly, “or Deaton…it was more of a…habit kind of thing.”

“Really…Stitching yourself up after being clawed by a were jaguar or whatever the hell Kate Argent was, has become habit?”

“Well…the being clawed by a were jaguar thing is kind of new,” Stiles shrugged, “but, well, what better way to get over a fear of needles then having to do your own stitches?”
“Alright, we’re coming in for landing,” Diggle reported as the seat belt light illuminated. Sara rubbed her hand over her face.

“Finally…that felt like the longest four hours ever.” Sara moaned, stretching her arms. Oliver pursed his lips, gazing out the window at the darkness of night. Almost 24 hours had passed since Sara had called, alerting him to the danger that Stiles and Roy were in, and Oliver hadn’t heard from Stiles since he’d received a text message with a set of co-ordinates, obviously the location of the building where Roy and Stiles’ friends and family were being held by the league, and that had been back before they’d taken off.

Realistically Oliver didn’t need Felicity to tell him that, with his phone in flight mode, he wasn’t going to be getting any messages or anything from Stiles, but Oliver was still worried. More than anything he wanted to be safely on the ground so he could check his phone for updates from Stiles.

The trio sat and waited until finally the aircraft touched down on the tarmac, taxiing around towards the small building. On the way out to the airport at Starling City Oliver had discretely arranged for a hire car to be there waiting for them, knowing that there was no was that there was going to be any sort of hire car service already in Beacon Hills.

Oliver, Diggle and Sara gathered their belongings and exited the plane, nodding in thanks to the pilot of the small charter plane Oliver had hired. Oliver led the way away from the plane, passing through a small building before reaching the outside, where Oliver’s hire car was waiting. Oliver took the car keys from the driver and got in, with Diggle beside him in the front passenger’s seat, while Sara slid into the back, while the driver got into another car which accelerated away.

Oliver, Diggle, and Sara weren’t paying attention to the car driving away, however. They all had their phones out, taking them off aircraft mode. Immediately their phones started receiving text messages that they had received while they were in the air.

Oliver looked down the list at his messages. Several from Felicity, one from Thea, and one from Stiles, which he quickly tapped on. He let out the breath of air he’d been holding in as he read the message, and heard let out a groan of relief at the same time, obviously having received a similar message from Stiles to him.

‘All clear. No casualties or serious injuries at our end. Disregard last two messages regarding rendezvous location.’ Stiles then gave an address and told Oliver to meet him there.
“Stiles gave the all clear,” he told Diggle. “Everyone’s ok.”

“Oh Thank God,” Sara choked out from the back seat, “I…I didn’t know how I would have broken it to Laurel and our dad if something had happened to Stiles…and his dad as well.”

“How?” Diggle asked, “he’s still a kid. How could he have defeated a team of trained assassins?”

“We’ll find out soon, I guess. Can you let Felicity know Dig?” Oliver responded, having checked his other messages. Felicity’s first message was a request that she be notified when they had safely landed, and then a little bit of information about the location that Stiles had sent them…an old rail yard apparently. Thea’s message was simply an invitation to lunch in a couple of days’ time that Oliver quickly replied to, before he reopened the most recent message from Stiles and copied the address into the GPS on his phone so he could get directions.

Diggle nodded and began calling Felicity, as Oliver started the car and started driving down the street, his heart lighter and his mind more hopeful than it had been in almost twenty four hours.
“Aw, come on, Melissa, they’re not even that bad,” Stiles pouted as Melissa dabbed antiseptic over
the claw marks Kate had left in his side, before she began stitching the few cuts that remained.

“Really, and when did you get a medical degree, Stiles?” Melissa asked, obviously still angry with
him. Stiles sighed and flopped his head back against the couch in the living room.

“Trust me, these are not the worst injuries I’ve had to fix up myself. I was fine.”

“If being clawed doesn’t make the cut, no pun intended, what was the worst injury?” Stiles’ father
asked. Stiles paused thoughtfully, before he shrugged.

“Hard to say. Digging a bullet out of my own guts wasn’t a pleasant experience, so that would have
to be fairly high on the list, but it’s hard to nail down one particular example.”

“You got shot?” Noah Stilinski choked out, looking rather ill, “and had to…dig it out yourself.”

“Excuse me,” Scott softly uttered, his skin looking decidedly green as he dashed towards the
bathroom, his hand pressed over his mouth. Stiles didn’t need werewolf powers to hear Scott
throwing up violently. Kira followed her boyfriend, obviously going to comfort him.

Stiles shifted his sweatpants a little so that the others could see the scar left behind when he’d been
shot on the Amazo.

“And that was before I’d even met the league,” Stiles offered with a smile on his face.

“When…when did that happen?

“Um…Mid 2008…ish,” Stiles replied, furrowing his brow in thought, “Bit hard to say without, you
know, access to a calendar though.”

“Crap,” the Sheriff cursed, “you did that when you only seventeen years old. You shouldn’t have
had to go through that.”
Stiles shrugged, “I don’t really think they cared about how old I was.”

“Stiles, don’t move,” Melissa ordered, and Stiles stilled beneath her hands as she continued to work on the stitches.

“Sorry” he replied as he looked around at the rest of the pack. Chris Argent and Parrish had gone to Derek’s to pick up Chris’s car, and then had gone on back out to the railyard to deal with Kate’s body and any evidence of the fight, Kira and Scott were still in the bathroom, Liam was having a shower in the upstairs bathroom, and Jackson was getting changed in his room after having a shower, leaving Deaton, Lydia and Derek in the living room with Stiles, Melissa and the Sherriff.

“All right, you can get up now…just…try to take it easy. You need rest…we all do,” Melissa told Stiles as she finally finished putting some stitches in his bullet grazed shoulder and began bandaging it. Stiles waited for her to finish before he hauled himself back upright, looking at the clean, white bandaging she’d applied over his various injuries.

“Thanks, Melissa,” Stiles sheepishly smiled, taking the clean t-shirt that his father offered him and pulling it over his head. Melissa affectionately ruffled his hair, before resting her hand on his uninjured shoulder, squeezing gently.

“You don’t need to thank me, Stiles. You saved my life, you saved the pack…I should be the one thanking you.”

Stiles ducked his eyes, looking down at his hands, more than a little battered and bruised from the fight, although he could still feel his cheeks colouring as he blushed at the praise.

Relief washed over Stiles when the other people in the room were distracted by the sound of an unfamiliar car pulled up outside the house, and then by Jackson clattering down the stairs loudly.

“I’ll get it,” he offered, heading for the front door. Stiles couldn’t help but smirk in amusement at the confused way Derek’s eyebrow quirked upwards.

“The backup I organised,” Stiles explained as Jackson waited by the door, obviously listening and waiting for Oliver, Sara and Diggle to step up onto the porch.
As Jackson waited, shifting his feet in a move that reminded Stiles of a puppy dancing around waiting for it’s owner to come home, Scott and Kira re-emerged from the bathroom…Scott still looking a little paler than normal, although his skin didn’t have the same green tinge as earlier.

“Feeling better honey?” Melissa asked, crossing over to her son and running her fingers lovingly though his hair.

“Yeah, thanks Mom…You ok, Stiles?”

Stiles nodded, “I’m good, all patched up, ready to go another round.”

‘You certainly will not,” Melissa replied.

Stiles smiled teasingly at Melissa, “Sorry…I couldn’t help it.”

“Oh, God I missed you Stiles,” Melissa shook her head as Scott and Stiles’ dad both laughed. Stiles felt his father wrap his arm around Stiles’ shoulders, and Stiles leant into the embrace, resting his head against his dad’s chest.

“We all did,” the Sherriff agreed to Melissa’s statement, pressing a kiss to the top of Stiles’ head.

Jackson chose that moment to throw the door open, before Oliver even had a chance to ring the doorbell.

“Hey guys,” he greeted, stepping aside and letting Oliver, Diggle and Sara into the house. Stiles’ eyes widened when he realised that the trio were in their vigilante get up. That was something he hadn’t thought of.

Oliver, for his part, didn’t give Stiles anything more than a cursory look and a nod of acknowledgement while Jackson was closing the door before he turned and engulfed Jackson in a bear hug. Jackson flailed, trying to escape, but even with his werewolf strength he couldn’t get out of Oliver’s grip…although Stiles was pretty sure that Jackson wasn’t as against the embrace as he might normally be if it was anyone other than Oliver, his pseudo Alpha.
“Um…what’s the story there?’ Scott asked curiously, his head tilted to the side in confusion.

“Long story, kid,” Diggle relied with an eye roll.

“He’s being going crazy ever since I called him to tell him you two were in trouble,” Sara added, glancing at Stiles. Stiles moved away from his father and approached Sara, giving her a hug, before he shook Diggle’s hand.

“Thanks for coming to help us out…sorry that it was a bit of a wasted trip.”

“I don’t know…it seems like a good outcome. Could have been a lot worse,” Sara observed, looking around the room. Stiles looked over and saw the look of shock on his father’s face.

“S…” His father began to say, and Stiles quickly interrupted before his father could accidentally unmask Sara by saying her name, having obviously recognized her.

“Sandwiches…yes, sandwiches, good idea dad,” Stiles loudly interjected, “You guys probably didn’t get anything to eat while you were being held captive, or if you did it probably wasn’t much…trust me, I know what the food is like with the league…sometimes it’s better to go and catch a scorpion or something in the desert. The first thing I ate when I got back to the States was a large order of curly fries…holy Hell they tasted good…but it’s late, and I seriously cannot be bothered cooking, so…sandwiches…um who wants to give me a hand, and dad, no, you are not allowed to have bacon in yours, so don’t even ask.”

A/TW

Oliver felt relief wash over him as he saw Roy standing in the doorway, obviously freshly showered and wearing clean clothes, and without any obvious sign of injury or harm following his ordeal. Stiles too was on his feet, looking a little pale, but otherwise ok, although Oliver could see the edge of a bandage poking out of the sleeve of Stiles’ t-shirt, and first aid supplies were in arranged neatly on the coffee table.

Having confirmed visually that Stiles was ok, Oliver directed his attention to Roy. It was the first time he’d seen his half-brother since he’d found out about their hidden shared blood, and Oliver couldn’t resist the urge to engulf the younger man in a hug. Roy stiffened against the embrace, struggling a little before he went limp, resting his head against Oliver’s shoulder and burying his face in Oliver’s neck, breathing deeply. A little voice in Oliver’s head, which sounded strangely like
Felicity, told Oliver that Roy was scenting him. Before Stiles’ return, and Roy revealing his secret, it would have been weird, but now Oliver didn’t care. His brother was alive and safe in his arms. After almost a day fearing the worst Oliver would be ok with Roy doing pretty much anything.

“You’re ok, you’re safe. Thank God you’re ok,” Oliver murmured softly in Roy’s ear, and Roy nodded against Oliver’s neck.

“Thought I was gonna die without seeing you guys again…that I was going to get killed by the league,” Roy replied. Oliver could hear the others talking softly in the background, but in that moment Oliver was focused completely on Roy.

Oliver simply tightened his grip on his younger brother, “I need to tell you something. I should have called you and told you the minute I found out.”

Roy shook his head, “Later, when there’s less wolves around,” he reminded Oliver, and Oliver remembered that Roy and his supernatural friends had super hearing…every werewolf that was in the house, and who knew how many of the people in the room were actually werewolves, and could probably hear every word he said.

“Alright,” Oliver nodded, pulling back from Roy, although he still kept a casual arm around Roy’s shoulder as Stiles started babbling about sandwiches to shut up his dad. Oliver caught the way Diggle rolled his eyes, and Roy actually groaned.

“I have no idea how Stilinski ever made it to be in the league,” Roy shook his head at Oliver, “the dude does not shut up. Mind you…I’m pretty sure he talked his way out of being executed tonight, so, I’m kind of impressed.”

“And then he pulls a line about sandwiches?” Diggle asked in bemusement.

“Even I have limitations to my brilliance,” Stiles called from the kitchen.
Chapter 31

Once the pack had consumed the sandwiches, Roy had introduced the vigilantes (using their code names) to the pack and Stiles had finished laughing at the look of shock on Oliver and Diggle’s face at how much the pack ate, and Chris Argent and Alan Deaton had both returned from dealing with cleaning up the warehouse, then gone back to their separate homes, Stiles retreated to the backyard, and Oliver followed him out.

“You did well out there, Stiles,” Oliver offered, “Roy told me while you were in the bathroom that Ra’s himself was there, and you faced him down.”

Stiles sighed, “In hindsight I don’t think Ra’s was ever actually going to hurt me…but at the same time I was glad when he left. It feels like it was all some kind of sick test, and I still don’t know if I passed or failed.”

“I think that, in this situation, whether you passed or failed is a matter of perspective. There are probably some within the league that will say you failed, because you let your personal feelings and attachments get in the way of your loyalty to the league, while others, myself included, not that I’m in the league, would say that you succeeded in your goal, which was saving your family and friends…sorry, pack.”

“You sound like Obi-wan Kenobi,” Stiles rolled his eyes at Oliver, who snorted.

“Do, or do not, there is no try,” Oliver quoted with a smirk. Stiles slapped his palm to his forehead.

“Oh my God, I know you did that deliberately. That’s Yoda, not Obi-wan.”

Oliver couldn’t help but laugh, which felt strange given he was dressed in his Green Arrow garb. When his chuckles died out, he looked back over his shoulder towards the house.

“Your dad recognized Sara.” He observed.

“You forget, I went to the Lance family to begin with because my dad and Captain Lance were Police Academy buddies. Dad’s known Sara since she was born. Hell, Laurel was the flower girl at my parent’s wedding. Sara would have been one too, except she wasn’t really old enough to walk down the aisle at that point. I think she was only about eight months old back then. I mean, my dad
knew you were alive, and now he knows I’m alive…it wasn’t a big jump to make, especially when
he does know Sara reasonably well. I wouldn’t be surprised if he picks you out as well, just going
from, you know, the me being a badass, Sara being a badass, the Green Arrow appearing, and the
you coming back timing…he is the Sherriff after all. He’s not stupid, I had to get my brilliance from
somewhere.”

“I seriously need to stop making friends with people whose dads are cops,” Oliver sighed.

Stiles laughed, “At least you’re off the hook there with Jackson. His dad is too busy being some
bigshot Lawyer in London. Speaking of Jackson…what was with the hug? I thought you were in
love with Felicity?”

“Who told you that?” Oliver hissed.

Stiles held up his hands in surrender, “My own eyes…and you just confirmed it with your reaction.
Dude, remember, we were island hobos together, I saw you do heart eyes over Laurel’s picture…and
Shado…and occasionally Sara, so…yeah, I know what you look like when you’re in love.
Therefore…what was with the Jackson hug fest?”

“I…I found out some stuff after you two left…but I want to talk to him about it first.”

“Ok, fair enough,” Stiles nodded in acceptance, although Oliver could still see the curiosity burning
in the younger man’s eyes, “Are you guys gonna stay the night?”

“I don’t know if there’s going to be room. None of the others are showing signs of leaving.”

“Yeah…but they’ll probably all sack out in the living room. Scott and Derek were starting to get it
ready when I came out here.”

“All of them?” Oliver asked in bemusement.

“Well, Dad and Melissa probably won’t, and Parrish I’m not sure of…and Lydia, but everyone else
will probably.
“What about you?”

Stiles hesitated, and Oliver got the idea that he’d touched on a sensitive subject, especially when he saw the discrete way Stiles was tapping his thumb against his fingers, as if he was counting them. It was something he’d seen Stiles do a lot of on Lian Yu when he was particularly upset, distressed, anxious or after a bad nightmare.

“Stiles?” Oliver prompted, glancing over his shoulder, uncertain if he should go get help.

“I’ll see if I’m invited,” Stiles eventually replied, “I… I hadn’t told them I was part of the league… they might be a bit annoyed about that. Scott used to have this whole Batman no killing rule, and, well, I completely blew that tonight.”

“You were saving them… protecting them. I know how much you used to talk about Scott on the island. If he cared for you even half as much as you cared for him he wouldn’t care about what you did tonight. Why wouldn’t you be invited? They’re your friends… unless it’s a… you know… sex thing.”

“Dude… it’s a puppy pile. It’s not a sex thing.” Stiles hissed, a look of horror on his face, “They’re werewolves, not succubi or something like that.”

“What? It’s not like I know much on the subject.”

“Obviously. Ever noticed that, after a big fight Jackson gets a bit… I don’t know… clingy… more attached?”

Oliver thought about it, before nodding. Although Roy had never directed it towards him Oliver had noticed that after the fight against Slade’s Mirakuru army Roy had gone home with Felicity and slept on her couch… and then there was the hug from earlier. While Oliver knew that he’d initiated it, Roy had certainly reciprocated… something that normally Roy wouldn’t do.

“It’s about establishing pack bonds… sharing scent and all that… feeling safe and together after the danger has passed,” Stiles explained. Oliver nodded in understanding, and the two fell into a comfortable silence, standing side by side as they watched the stars in the clear night sky. The silence was broken by the sound of Stiles yawning loudly.

“Alright, time for you to sleep. You’ve had a long day.”
“Who are you, my dad?” Stiles protested as Oliver shepherded him back into the house. The Sherriff met them at the door, obviously overhearing the comment.

“No, that would be me. Go brush your teeth Stiles.”

“Yes Dad,” Stiles rolled his eyes and headed upstairs. Oliver went to keep walking, but found his path blocked.

“Look…I don’t know who you are,” the Sherriff began, “and frankly, I don’t want to know. I have my suspicions, and that’s plenty for me. Thank you…for looking out for him, both tonight, and…and before, when you were both…missing. I’m glad that he’s got a friend like you that can be there for him when he needs help, especially when I’m not around and the pack isn’t there.”

“Sir,” Oliver nodded, reading between the lines and knowing that Stiles was right…the Sherriff had figured out who he was, although he hadn’t said anything about it.

“You’re welcome back here at any time…if you ever need a break from Starling City…Beacon Hills will be safe…although perhaps no less…crazy at times.”

“Thank you, Sherriff. I…I really appreciate it. Friends like you and your son are hard to come by.”

Oliver and the Sheriff shook hands, and Oliver knew that he had made an ally in Stiles’ father.

“You would be proud of how he handled everything. He adapted far better than I did to life on the island.”

The Sherriff let out a grim laugh, “That boy has always been a little bit too good at taking care of himself…since his mother got sick. I’m glad at least it helped him then.”

Oliver and the Sheriff walked back to the sitting room, and although Oliver had been forewarned, he wasn’t expecting what was happening in the room.

Derek, Scott, Kira, Lydia and Liam were all stretched out on mattresses on the living room floor, with pillows and blankets. Parrish was sitting in one of the comfortable chairs, with Lydia leaning
against his leg as he combed his fingers through her hair, lazily braiding it.

Stiles came downstairs again, obviously having washed his teeth, and he stood beside Roy, close to the pack, but both of them obviously uncertain about if they were invited to join in.

Derek and Scott, however, had apparently anticipated the hesitance on behalf of the pair that had been away for so long. They both got up and Scott wrapped his arms around Roy and basically tackled him onto the mattress, while Derek picked up Stiles, who let out a squeal, and then deposited him gently on the bedding, before laying down beside him. Oliver’s eyebrows quirked curiously, and Melissa McCall, Scott’s mother, shrugged at him in acceptance as Roy relaxed in his place between Scott and Lydia, the latter of whom began playing idly with his hair. Oliver could visibly see Roy relaxing, and he made a mental note that maybe, when Roy was particularly tense, he should try that. Stiles, however, had curled up between Scott and Derek, looking more relaxed than Derek had ever seen him before.

“So, now that we know where the boys are going to sleep for what is left of the night, do you guys want to stay over. One of you is going to have to sleep on the couch near these guys, and the other two are going to need to sleep and Jackson and Stiles’ rooms, but…I don’t know if you’re going to get a motel or something at this time of night.” Melissa offered apologetically.

“It’ll be fine, thank you, Mrs. Stilinski,” Diggle nodded thankfully.

“We appreciate it,” Sara added, “We didn’t really think that far ahead when we planned on the tip down.”

“You guys take the rooms upstairs, I’ll sleep down here,” Oliver offered and Diggle and Sara nodded in agreement, picking up their bags, which they had brought in from the car while Oliver was talking to Stiles, and heading up, bidding everyone else a good night.

Despite the Sheriff figuring out who he was, Oliver didn’t want his identity to become public knowledge, even among Stiles and Roy’s friends, so he didn’t change, instead just ducking into the bathroom downstairs for brushing his teeth and taking off his distinctive hooded jacket and his shoes, before he headed back out to the living room and dropping down gratefully on the couch. Scott passed him a spare pillow and a blanket, which Oliver took with a thankful nod.

“Goodnight guys,” he Sheriff and Melissa waved as they made their own way up to their beds, switching the lights off in the process.
Oliver lay silently, watching as the group on the floor settled down for the night, and despite not having been involved in a fight, and being surrounded by people who were essentially strangers, it didn’t take him long to fall into sleep.

A/TW

Oliver woke early, sitting up and stretching, wincing as his back creaked form sleeping on the couch. He looked around the room, a smile spreading across his face as he took in the sleeping werewolves and other pack members.

Lydia and Parrish were sharing the chair Parrish had occupied, with the deputy having wrapped a blanket warmly around them both. On the floor Scott was spooning Kira, and Liam has his head resting on Scott’s hip, his feet tangled with Derek’s, and Stiles’ feet draped over his stomach. Oliver bit his lip to prevent himself making a noise as he beheld Stiles, comfortably using Derek’s chest as a cushion, snuggled against the eldest of the werewolves and obviously sound asleep. Oliver remembered Sara’s comments about Stiles being Bisexual, and he found himself wondering if there was something there…not that it was really any of his business for the moment.

At some point during the night Roy had moved, away from Lydia and Scott, and towards Derek, Stiles and the couch Oliver was sleeping on. Roy’s legs were now practically touching the top of Derek’s head, and Roy’s back was pressed against the length of the couch, physically as close to Oliver as he could possibly get. Curiously, Oliver dropped his arm over the side of the couch so his hand grazed Roy’s shoulder. The younger man shifted in his sleep, visibly relaxing at Oliver’s touch.

Careful not to step on anyone, Oliver got off the couch and made his way to the kitchen, where he, unsurprisingly, found not only found Diggle, but also Melissa and the Sherriff as well.

“How was your sleep?” Melissa whispered, offering Oliver a cup of coffee. He nodded in thanks and accepted the mug.

“It was good, how did you guys sleep?”

“Like a log,” the Sheriff sighed, “Unfortunately I’m on duty today, so not much in the way of a sleep in. Parrish has the night shift, so he’s fine for a few more hours…lucky.”

“I’m just glad that I don’t have to go back until tomorrow,” Melissa replied.
“Speaking about work…we should start thinking about what we’re going to do next,” Diggle turned to Oliver, who nodded.

“We’ll head back later today,” Oliver agreed, knowing that, with the storms that had hit Starling City he was going to be busy for a few days with cases of looting or people taking advantage of the situation to do the wrong thing.

“At least Deaton told Scott he had the day off, and it’s the weekend, so that lets Kira and Lydia off work too,” the Sheriff nodded, “they’ll need their sleep after yesterday.”

“I think we all will,” Melissa replied, topping up her mug of coffee.
The first thing Stiles was really aware of was the gentle moving of his pillow. It took him a few seconds to realise that pillows were not supposed to move. He snapped awake instantly, sitting bolt upright and reaching to his side for a knife or something to use as a weapon, although there was nothing there. It took him a few moments to recognize his surroundings, and for his memories from the previous night to come trickling back. Derek carrying him into the Puppy pile…laying between Scott and Derek, with Liam tucking himself beneath Stiles’ legs like an honest to God puppy. Stiles remembered curling up against Derek, laying there as the former Alpha had scented his neck, inhaling his scent deeply, enjoying the sensation of being surrounded by the pack. It was the last thing he remembered, and Stiles realised that he’d fallen asleep. He looked down at where he had been laying. Derek lay there looking up at him, and Stiles felt his cheeks colour from embarrassment as he realised that his pillow of choice for the night had, apparently, been Derek.

“Um…did I…sleep on you last night?” Stiles asked in a hushed voice, aware that Scott, Kira, Jackson and Liam were all still sleeping around him and Derek. Derek nodded.

“Oh my God, I’m so sorry, Derek,” Stiles whispered in mortification, moving to rise up from the mattress. Derek, however, caught Stiles’ wrist in his hand.

“Stiles…it’s ok, I didn’t mind. Stay.”

Stiles slowly lowered himself back to the mattress until he was semi reclined beside Derek.

“I heard what you said last night, to Kate and then…to the man who ordered them all to leave.”

“Ra’s al Ghul,” Stiles supplied.

“Yeah…about…about me.”

Stiles swallowed. There was a part of him that had hoped that Derek hadn’t been paying attention
when he’d said those things.

“Stiles…Scott and Jackson cornered me at the pack meeting before…before we were attacked. They said that I needed to be more confident, that I might miss out. I didn’t really understand what they meant until last night when I saw you fighting. All I could think of that whole time was what I would do if something happened to you and you died.”

“I was having the same thoughts about you too,” Stiles admitted to Derek, his voice hushed. He could hear the sounds of conversation in the other room, but Stiles was pretty sure they wouldn’t be overheard…and Derek wouldn’t have initiated a conversation like this if he knew that they could be overheard.

“Stiles…I need to confess something…I’m in love with you…I have been for a while. At first you were too young, and I…I couldn’t risk doing to you what Kate did to me, but then…you got possessed by the Nogitsune and Allison and Aidan died, and then you left and we thought you’d died, and I had to deal with the fact that you died without knowing how I felt…and now you’re back, an…” Derek broke off as Stiles leaned forward and pressed his lips against Derek’s.

“I love you too,” Stiles replied simply, “and also, since when have you babbled? That’s my thing.” Derek smiled, his had reaching up and combing gently through Stiles’ hair.

“Because you weren’t there to break the silence.”

“I’m here now…and I promise…I’m not going to go anywhere. You’re stuck with me now, sour wolf.”

“I definitely hadn’t missed that nickname,” Derek smiled as he leaned up and kissed Stiles, pulling the younger man so they could lay together on the mattress and simply enjoy being so close to one another after so many years of being forced apart and thinking that they would never have the chance to see each other again.

A/TW

Oliver and Roy walked around the perimeter of the Lacrosse Field at Beacon Hills high school, both of them wearing civilian clothing, although they both had their hoods up against the cool wind that was blowing across the grass.

“What was it you wanted to tell me about?” Roy asked, curious about what had made Oliver isolate
him, although when Oliver had asked him about a place where they could go to discuss things privately, Roy had been the one to suggest the lacrosse field.

Oliver pulled out a file he’d tucked inside his jacket, and Roy stopped, taking it and opening it curiously.

“What’s this about,” Roy asked, confused.

“Felicity was doing checks on your blood…and comparing it to mine to see if there was anything obviously different with you being a werewolf,” Oliver began gently, “Only…it turned up something that we didn’t expect. Long story short…your mom and my dad had an affair while my mom was pregnant with Thea, and well, you were a result of that. You’re my half-brother.”

“I’m sorry…what?” Jackson choked, looking up at Oliver with wide eyes, “please tell me that you’re joking…that this is some elaborate plank that Stilinski and McCall put you up to.

“I’m not joking, Roy. Your mother…your biological mother…she and her husband couldn’t have children…he was infertile. My mom was pregnant with Thea and my dad and your biological mother were having an affair, and a couple of weeks before Thea was born your biological mom found out she was having you. Her husband wanted to raise you as his own, and they came back here to Beacon Hills so that you could be raised away from the press in Starling City, and from my family too probably. When they died, and you were born, my dad wanted to come and claim you, but my mother stopped him…she said that your mother wanted you brought up away from the madness that is Starling City, so you got adopted by the Whittemore’s instead.”

Jackson stumbled over to the bleaches and sat on the bench that Stiles had spent so much time occupying as he looked over the documents Oliver had given him. It was all there, black and white proof of his supposed father’s infertility due to childhood illness, letters written by both Oliver’s parents and the DNA tests Felicity had carried out. Roy looked over at Oliver.

“How long have you known?”

“Only after you left,” Oliver replied, ‘I wanted to tell you in person, I thought that this was too big to do over the phone, and I didn’t want to intrude on you and Stiles’ trip and reunion with your friends and Stiles’ dad. You already seemed nervous enough coming back without me dumping all of this on you.
“Thea is still Merlyn’s daughter, right?” Roy asked nervously.

Oliver chuckled and nodded, “Yeah, you and Thea are not related.”

“Oh thank God, because that would make for an awkward conversation.”

“She’s not pregnant is she?”

“No,” Roy replied emphatically, “but, well, we have dated and, had sex, so, that would make things awkward enough if we found out we were half siblings.”

“You’re right,” Oliver relaxed. Roy and Thea had been broken up ever since Thea found out Roy lied to her about his helping Oliver be the Arrow, although Oliver wasn’t sure how long the break up would last.

“Are you ok,” Oliver asked Roy, who discretely wiped some tears from his eyes.

“I never knew my biological parents, I didn’t even know I was adopted and that my real parents were dead until I was seven. I knew they were rich, but they didn’t mean anything to me. I went to their graves for the first time when I came back after we thought Stiles died. In all of the years I spent in this town growing up I never really wanted to go. I never really knew how I felt about them. My adopted parents…I know that I didn’t make life easy for them, but…but even now I don’t want to reach out to them, although I know that they deserve to know that I’m alive. They…then never hurt me…not like Isaac’s dad did, but I knew that for them work came first, and I was well down their list of priorities. I was so obsessed with being number one in high school…on the Lacrosse field, in the corridors, just so that they would be proud of me, so that they would spend time with me. I used to wonder if things would be different if my biological parents were still alive, if they would have treated me differently…loved me as much as Scott’s mom, or Stiles’ parents did. I used to treat them like dirt, even after Stiles’ mom got sick and died, because I was jealous of their family, and how much they were cared about. Hell, I used to treat everyone like dirt, but those two most of all. Does that make me a shitty person?”

“No,” Oliver replied, “you were a kid. Yes, you had issues, but that doesn’t make you a shitty person. Look at how much you’ve changed since then.”

Jackson huffed out a short laugh, “I was so angry when Scott all of a sudden was better at lacrosse than me, and we were made co-captains. I was convinced he was talking drugs or steroids or
something. When I found out the truth—I demanded that Derek give me the bite. It…didn’t work right, and I became something…wrong. A Kanima. When I was shifted I had no control over myself, I was a slave to the bidding of another. It took time, but I realised that I was putting everyone else at risk, so I pushed away those that I was closest to…Lydia and Danny…to try and protect them. In the end I almost died and things…fixed themselves. I left Beacon Hills the first time with my parents not long after that, and I only came back when everyone thought Stiles was dead, and then I left again, alone. I don’t know why I thought I needed to leave Beacon Hills, maybe I just couldn’t handle being back here. Derek got it, he said that maybe I would find my place if I went out on my own, like Cora did. And I did, it took longer than I thought but it happened. For years I’d been on my own, and then I…I made a new family…a new pack, and now I found out that…that you were my brother all along…everything just makes more sense know.”

Oliver reached out and put his arm around Roy’s shoulder, and the younger man leaned against him.

“Maybe my inner wolf could tell…maybe that’s why I trusted you so much at first…more than I’d trusted anyone since Danny. My wolf could smell that we were brothers, and it latched onto you as a way of giving me pack…family…a home again.”

“Well, you’ve got it,” Oliver promised, “A home, family…pack, whatever you want, it’s yours.”

TW/A

Stiles felt lighter than he had felt in years, as if the weight of the world had been lifted off his shoulders. While Oliver and Jackson had slipped away to talk about…whatever it was that Oliver wanted them to talk about, Stiles had filled in his family on everything that had happened to him since he’d left Beacon Hills, with some exceptions. He said enough that the pack could read between the lines. He made it clear, without actually saying it, that the casualties from the previous night were not the first people Stiles had killed, self-defence or otherwise.

Before he’d said anything, he’d packed up all of his belongings, leaving them in a convenient place, just in case the pack turned on him for what he’d done….but he hadn’t needed them. Stiles had avoided meeting the gaze of the rest of the pack most of the time he was talking, and it was only when he was finished that he looked up to meet their eyes, gauging from their expressions whether or not he needed to start running.

Scott, Melissa, Lydia, and Stiles’ father were all crying, and Stiles had felt fear shoot through him, having not meant to upset them. He wondered if somehow he’d reminded them of something triggering that he hadn’t known about, or maybe he’d reminded them of Allison by something he’d said.
The fear was enough to make his breathing hitch, as if he was about to have a panic attack. Stiles started silently counting his fingers, trying to calm his breathing as his heart began to race in his chest.

“I’m sorry,” he choked out, beginning to repeat the apology as a mantra as he unconsciously began to rock backwards and forwards in his seat, thoughts cutting through his mind like knives…voices that sounded like his mother, Allison, Slade, Kate and others that Stiles had killed over the years.

‘He’s trying to hurt me. I don’t care if you don’t believe me, but he is. He’s trying to kill me!’

‘Murderer’

‘Killer’

‘Little psychopath’

‘Scott should throw you out of the pack’

‘You don’t belong here with the pack’

‘You’re going to be responsible for the death of everyone you’ve ever cared about.’

‘In so many ways, Stiles, you’re just like me…’

“Stiles,” Derek’s voice interrupted Kate’s taunting, and Stiles blinked, realizing that Derek’s hand was encircling his arm, rubbing his uninjured shoulder gently, trying to coax him back to the present. Stiles swayed and tried to inhale, his lungs refusing to co-operate, cobwebs of darkness spreading over his vision as his

“Hey…hey Stiles, stay with us,” his father’s voice joined Derek’s. Stiles blinked, fighting off the darkness in his vision as he tried to focus on his father’s voice.

“I…I can’t…I’m sorry.”
“Come on, Son, focus on me…focus on my breathing. Here.” Stiles felt his father grab his hand, pressing it against his own chest. The familiar technique stirred something within Stiles, and he automatically began to track the rise and fall of his father’s chest, focusing on replicating the movement with his own breathing. He felt his panic attack sliding away, and he slumped a little, still tired after the previous day, and the worn out by the panic attack, and the strain of talking to the others about what had happened during his time away from Beacon Hills.

Stiles stiffened up when Derek moved away, before relaxing again when Scott occupied the space Derek had vacated, enveloped him in a hug, pulling Stiles to rest against the Alpha’s chest, while Stiles’ father sat on Stiles’ other side, running his fingers gently through Stiles’ hair, while clasping Stiles’ hand reassuringly in his own.

“I…I’m actually surprised I lasted that long and got through telling you guys all of that that without having a panic attack,” Stiles admitted with a wry smile, but his father shook his head, his eyes shining with tears.

“Oh, God, Stiles, come here,” The Sherriff murmured, running his hand through Stiles’ hair, before cupping his face and gently kissing Stiles’ forehead.

“You…you went through hell, dude.” Scott softly added.

“Purgatory, actually Scott” Stiles corrected. Lydia laughed, although no-one else appeared to get the joke.

“Lian Yu…it means purgatory in Chinese,” Lydia explained reaching out and taking Stiles’ hand in her own.

“Wanna tell us what the panic attack was about?” Stiles’ father prompted gently.

“I…I thought you were going to kick me out,” Stiles replied honestly, “for what I did. I’m no better than Peter…or Kate. I’ve killed people, I am a trained assassin.”

“No…Oh God no, Stiles,” his father shook his head.
Scott too was shaking his head, “Dude, that was self-defense… You were protecting yourself and your friends. You’re not a murderer. Hell, you went overseas and trained to be an assassin. You’re like, a real life freaking Arya Stark.”

“Scott’s right,” Derek contributed from where he was crouched, “You’re not a bad person. You’re one of the best people I’ve ever had the privilege of meeting, who went through some horrible situations, and came out with your humanity intact.”

The Sherriff nodded to Derek’s words where he was sitting, “Stiles…you did what you had to do. I’m proud that you realised that. I was so worried after what happened with the Nogitsune that you were going to give up, but you didn’t. You kept fighting to stay alive, to come back. It would have been so easy for you to give up, but you never did. I’m so damn proud of you, Stiles.”
Chapter 33

Stiles watched as Oliver, Sara and Diggle carried their bags towards the door, ready to leave. Jackson stood with them, looking conflicted, as if he wanted to go back to Starling City with them, although his car was in Beacon Hills.

Jackson hadn’t told Stiles what had been discussed by he and Oliver, and Stiles hadn’t pushed, respecting the other man’s right to privacy, although he was curious. Ever since Jackson and Oliver had returned to the house Oliver had stayed close to Jackson, and Jackson hadn’t objected to the protective hovering, a fact that Stiles was not the only one to notice. Both Derek and Scott had noticed, Stiles could tell by the look of bemusement on Derek’s face, and the confusion on Scott’s.

Stiles understood it though. Although Derek had been the one who had bitten Jackson, Oliver was Jackson’s Alpha, and after being kidnapped and taken hostage by the League, and shot with a wolfsbane bullet, plus whatever it was that Oliver and Jackson had discussed between themselves, Jackson’s instincts...his inner wolf, were screaming at him to be near his Alpha...to be protected. It was touching to see Jackson actually having someone there for him that he trusted, and for Oliver to have someone to look out for.

The time had come, however, for the vigilantes to leave. Oliver had offered to take both Jackson and Stiles back with him. Stiles had automatically declined, and, much to Stiles’ surprise, Jackson had as well.

It was obvious, to Stiles anyway, that although Jackson had grown up in Beacon Hills, he belonged in Starling City, with Oliver, Sara, Diggle and Felicity. They were his pack, he didn’t feel the same ties to Beacon Hills that Stiles himself did. This trip back to Beacon Hills, for Jackson, had been about tying up loose ends and apologising for how he left for last time. It was part of his starting a new life in Starling City, although Stiles was sure that this more mature and selfless version of Jackson wouldn’t sever ties with the Beacon Hills pack completely. If the pack needed him Stiles though Jackson would come, and it would work both ways. Oliver had gained numerous allies through Jackson, in the forms of Scott, Derek, Lydia and the pack.

“Thanks for the hospitality,” Diggle offered to Melissa and the Sherriff, accepting the paper bag of salad rolls that Melissa had made for their lunch. Stiles walked up to the group and shook Diggle’s, and then Oliver’s, hands, before Sara enveloped him in a bear hug.

“Don’t scare me like that again,” she chastised, “I don’t need to start getting grey hairs because of you. Nyssa wouldn’t ever shut up about it.”
“Just because she’s, like immortal, and eternally pretty,” Stiles rolled his eyes, and Sara laughed as the rest of the pack said their goodbyes, shaking hands and making promises of alliances, should the other side ever need it. Stiles watched on proudly, knowing that, perhaps inadvertently, he had helped make this happen. If he hadn’t returned to the United States Jackson might never have gathered the courage to return to Beacon Hills, and Both Oliver and the rest of Team Arrow, and the Beacon Hills Pack, would never have the benefit of forming an alliance, ready to help the other team out, should they ever need it.

“Hey Sa….Canary,” Stiles’ father offered as Oliver and Diggle were about to walk out the door. Sara turned.

“Tell your dad I say hi, would you?”

“Sure thing Sherriff Stilinski,” Sara replied with a smile, giving Jackson’s shoulder one last gentle squeeze, before she made her way out to the car. Stiles watched through the window as the hire car drove away.

“How come you’re staying?” Stiles asked when he felt Jackson stand beside him at the window, watching the world outside.

“The full moon is soon. I can handle it in Starling City, no problems, but… I kind of want to be able to run freely in the woods… just this once.” Jackson replied, “Besides… my car is here, and I don’t want you driving her back to Starling City on your own. You’ll crash.”

“I would not,” Stiles protested, “I’m a good driver.”

“You ran me over,”

“That was to save your life.”

“How did we ever miss this?” Scott groaned to Lydia, who simply rolled her eyes in agreement.

TW/A

Walking out onto the back deck of the home his father and Melissa shared, Stiles quietly sat down beside Jackson, offering him a bottle of water. Jackson took it with a grateful nod, and began to pick
at the label, looking out at the trees on the other side of the back fence.

“Everything ok?” Stiles asked.

“What? Yeah, everything’s fine,” Jackson replied, shaking his head and looking down at the bottle.

Stiles frowned, “you know, Oliver would kill me if something was hurting you. We might have been island hobos together, but you’re a part of his little pack.”

“We’re a team, Stiles, not a pack.” Jackson rolled his eyes

“Same thing,” Stiles shrugged, “He’s still going to be all protective over you, trust me, I’ve seen protective Oliver happen, and I’ve been on the receiving end of it too.”

“It’s different,” Jackson replied, his gaze shifting back to the trees.

“How?” Stiles asked.

Jackson sighed, “After we left to come back to Beacon Hills Felicity was looking at a sample of my blood, to see what difference it made being a werewolf. For ease of access, she compared it against Oliver’s blood. Only, she found out that we’re half-brothers.”

“What?” Stiles choked, “you and Oliver are…half-brothers?”

“Yeah. Turns out my mom and his dad had an affair back in the day. My mom’s husband couldn’t have kids, so I was obviously not his, and yeah, they were together. Oliver’s parents both knew, and my mom and her husband knew too. Oliver’s mom was furious about it, she was pregnant with Thea when this was all happening, and my real mom and her husband decided that they wanted to bring me up away from Starling City, so that I could grow up without the media being in my face constantly. Apparently, when my mom and her husband died in the car crash, Oliver’s dad wanted to come and claim me as his, or at least adopt me, just as the son of his friends, but Mrs. Queen wouldn’t let him do it. The Whitemore’s adopted me in the end, and because no-one official knew any different, my mom’s husband’s name was put on my birth certificate.”
“Ok, wow, that’s…unexpected.”

“I…I wish I could talk to them…any of them about it…but they’re all dead.” Jackson sighed. Stiles shuddered, reliving the moment Robert Queen committed suicide just to give Oliver and Stiles a better chance at surviving.

“I’m sorry.” Stiles apologised, “your dad…your blood father, I mean. He put Oliver ahead of himself, and from what I’ve heard he would do the same for Thea. He would have done the same for you.”

“I wish I could have met him.” Jackson quietly told Stiles, “I met Mrs. Queen, when she came to see your dad after the Queen’s gambit went down. I saw her staring at me a couple of times, but I ignored it, I was trying to focus on Lydia. She knew who I was, she knew I was the son of her husband…the husband that had just died. She never said anything to me. I met her a couple of times later, when I was in Starling City. She ignored me then, I was just the trash that Thea was playing around with to her. I still can’t believe that she didn’t recognize me. She thought that I was dead, just like everyone else.”

“I think your dad would have been proud of you,” Stiles offered, “and, well, now I know not to do anything that risks your safety. No wonder Oliver hugged you like that when he saw you the first time when he got here. He would have been going crazy with how worried he was about you.”

“Yeah,” Jackson nodded with a smirk, “although I think I hurt him when I said that I didn’t want to go back yet. I…I just wasn’t ready to leave yet, despite what happened here.”

“I’m sure he gets it, he probably would have stayed here with you, if it wasn’t for needing to go back to Starling City and do his, you know, “you have failed this city,” routine. Oh, God, just imagine what he would do to someone if he thought they were lining up to take a shot at you? He kicked me into an air conditioning unit, and that was before he found out. Imagine what he’s going to do now.”

Jackson huffed out a laugh, “I wouldn’t like to be in that persona’s shoes,” he admitted, “If he’s going to start treating me like he treats Thea…” Jackson faded off as a look of horror crossed his face.

“What if he stops me from helping him out in Starling City?”

“Huh?”
“What if he, I don’t know, stops me from helping him? What if he stops me from hanging out with him and Diggle and Felicity and Sara because it’s too dangerous or something.”

“Jackson, stop, he won’t do that to you, and if he tries it, you hit him, just so he doesn’t forget that you’re not a kid, ok?” Stiles told Jackson in a firm voice, “You are a freaking werewolf, not some kid who has never been a street fight before. You know how to handle yourself in a fight, and Oliver knows it. Hell, you’re pretty much bullet proof, as long as no one starts using wolfsbane for some reason. You heal quickly from most injuries, and you’ve got super powered senses. He’d be stupid if he tried to stop you, and I know this is Oliver we’re talking about, and that he isn’t necessarily the sharpest tool in the shed, but he isn’t that stupid. Besides, the others all know that you are a good fighter, they wouldn’t let him kick you out. And if he tries it, you can just threaten to go out alone, without having him watching over you. He’d be wanting you back under his wing within days.”

Jackson nodded, knowing that Stiles was right. “Thank you…I needed to hear that.”

“You’re welcome,” Stiles replied, “And if, for whatever reason, you need someone to talk some sense into Oliver, and the others aren’t getting involved, well, you know where to find me.”
Chapter 34

Stiles let out a low whistle of appreciation as he looked around the large room he’d been shown into by Derek. One of the lower levels of the building Derek’s loft was in had been converted into a gym for the pack, and Stiles was reminded of Oliver’s underground basement lair in Starling City, or the training gyms at Nanda Parbat. This one, however, was made for werewolves. Everything was reinforced to handle a werewolf on full moon, allowing the werewolves to do what they wanted without holding back for fear of trashing the place.

Around the outside of the room was a parkour course, much like the one at Nanda Parbat, although Stiles was willing to bet that this one would be harder, given that it was designed for werewolves, while in the centre there were sparring mats and weights, and other workout gear. At the far end of the room was a shooting range, obviously intended for the human members of the pack.

“Impressive,” Stiles turned to face Derek with a smile, “Now I know why you’re all built like Greek gods.”

Derek’s cheeks coloured at the compliment, and Stiles smirked at the reaction, before he turned around to join Jackson, who had moved towards the centre of the room. As Stiles walked towards Jackson, he spotted a salmon ladder, towering above the rest of the equipment, and tilted his head curiously.

“Hey Jackson,” Stiles began. Jackson looked towards him, then followed Stiles’ line of sight to the salmon ladder.

“Race you to it?” Jackson offered.

Stiles looked over his shoulder at the rest of the pack, “I’ve got a better idea.”

“What are you boys talking about?” Chris asked, joining Jackson and Stiles.

“Nothing,” Jackson shrugged, although Stiles caught the quick smile Jackson threw towards him.

“Do you do much working out in here, Chris?” Stiles asked.
“Me…god no, I’m getting too old for this level of training. Your dad doesn’t either, although we both have used the shooting range, just to get the practise in, without bothering with going to the public one, or to try something new out. Lydia sometimes does sparring training with Parrish or Derek, but she doesn’t attempt the ladder or the Parkour course anything like that though. Parrish does, and the wolves all do, and Kira of course, why, you thinking about it?”

Stiles shrugged. Melissa had pulled out his stitches a couple of days earlier and said he should be ok to go back to physical activity, and so far he hadn’t done anything major, just doing some light exercises and his katas every morning.

“Stiles…I’ve heard rumours of what the League training is like, plus snippets of what you’ve talked about doing during training. I don’t think you would have much trouble, and, well, I kind of want to see they’re reaction” Chris dropped his voice to a conspiring whisper, before he wandered casually back towards the pack.

Stiles and Jackson both smirked at one another, and Jackson reached his hand into his pocket and pulled out his phone. Stiles began stretching, unnoticed by the rest of the pack, who were engaged in conversation lead by Chris, who was distracting them from what Jackson and Stiles were doing.

“So, what’s your plan?” Jackson asked.

“Parkour course, then I’ll do the Salmon ladder.” Stiles replied, studying the course for any choke points, and plotting his route through the course.

“Don’t push it too hard.” Jackson warned, “This was designed for werewolves.”

“Dude, I’ve done courses that were designed for people twice my size. I know what I’m capable of and how to adapt the course to suit my skill level.”

“Good,” Jackson nodded, “Because I don’t have to be the one to tell Oliver that you broke your neck trying to show off.”

“Ha. The only thing that’s going to get broken are the jaws of the pack when they hit the ground.” Stiles replied, finishing off his stretches and warm up, before he wandered nonchalantly back towards the pack who were conveniently standing near the start of the course, with Jackson following behind.
“So,” Stiles began casually, attracting their attention, “is it work out time?”

The pack all turned their attention towards him as Stiles pulled the t-shirt he was wearing over his head, exposing his bare chest, complete with his scars and various tattoos. Most of the pack had seen it all on the night of the fight against the league, while Melissa had been tending to Stiles’ wounds, but at the time Stiles guessed that they’d been more worried about his injuries then looking at his exposed skin.

Stiles knew how much muscle he’d put on while he was away. He’d found some boxes of his old clothes just the other day and he’d been surprised by how tight they were now compared to how they had fitted before. It had been a little shocking to realise just how much his body had changed during his time away from Beacon Hills.

Now, Stiles turned his back to the rest of the pack, stretching slightly, flexing his muscles just slightly, before he started towards the parkour course.’

“Stiles, be careful,” Derek called, a hint of nerves in his voice. It made Stiles feel warm, deep in his chest, at how worried Derek was, although there was a part of him that was determined to prove, once and for all, that he wasn’t the same helpless teenager he had once been. Sarcasm was no longer his only defence.

Stiles moved through the course, jumping over obstacles, hurdling over gaps and using what was around him to climb to different levels. He could feel the eyes of the pack on him. Scott and Liam were cheering him on, and Jackson was busily recording him, as well as the Pack’s reaction.

Stiles jumped off the last obstacle, finished the course with a flip that, although not completely necessary, was a bit fun, but he didn’t stop there, leaping off a platform towards the salmon ladder, catching the bar with both hands on his way down, and then using his momentum to begin to slowly climb. He blocked out the noise of the pack, although they’d fallen mostly silent, focusing instead on his own body and his momentum, along with the rhythmic clanging of the salmon ladder as he climbed.

Reaching the top, Stiles threw in a few chin ups, just because he could, before he pulled himself up and rested his stomach on the bar, looking down at the ground, and at the pack. He could see their mouth’s hanging open in shock…and the smile on Jackson’s face. He flipped the whole way over the bar, swinging a couple of times so he could let go and change his grip slightly, before he began to descend again all the way to the bottom rung, where he flipped off and landed in a crouch on the mats on the floor below the ladder.
His arms were burning a little from the amount of energy he’d used, and his abdominal muscles were protesting the strenuous workout after not having done much lately, but Stiles generally felt pretty good. It hadn’t completely warn him out, although a drink of water and a rest for a few minutes sounded like a good idea.

“That was pretty cool Stilinski,” Jackson was the first to comment, seeing as the rest of the pack were still sharing at Stiles in shock.

“You get their reactions?” Stiles asked with a smirk, high fiving Jackson, who nodded.

“Oh yeah…I’ll send it to you. When I’m back in Starling City and things get rough I’ll watch it… and laugh at them.”

“Send it to Danny and Ethan as well, they’d appreciate it.” Stiles requested, and Jackson nodded enthusiastically, fiddling with his phone.

“I think you broke Derek,” Lydia offered, looking at the way the Alpha’s eyes had glazed over.

“Just a bit. Dude, that was awesome,” Liam agreed enthusiastically, “I’ve never seen a human do that. It was way better than when Parrish does it.”

“Jordan does quite well for himself, Stiles has just had more specialised…training,” Lydia defended her boyfriend, as Parrish wasn’t there.

Chris clasped Stiles on the shoulder, “Well done. That was…amazing, Stiles. You should be proud of yourself, of what you’ve achieved. Allison would be proud.”

“Thanks Chris.”

“Chris is right, that was so cool,” Scott enthused, “Coach would flip if he saw you now.”

Stiles smiled at his best friend, but deep down he was beginning to feel overwhelmed by the pack’s praise. Lydia, however, seemed to spot it before the werewolves noticed it.
“Weren’t you all going to do some training, not pester Stiles?” she prompted pointedly. Scott immediately nodded, his eyes widening slightly as his nostrils flared a little, obviously picking up the subtle change in Stiles’ scent.

“Yeah, come on, I’ve got to go to work tonight, and I want to have a shower before I have to start my shift.”

Scott, Jackson, Kira, Liam and Chris moved away, occupying themselves with their own training, leaving Stiles with Lydia and Derek, who sat down on the floor on either side of Stiles.

Lydia offered Stiles a water bottle, and he took a lengthy swig, “thanks,” he murmured, staring at his hands.

“It’s ok, they can get a bit much sometimes,” Lydia shrugged, watching the pack, giving Stiles some illusion of privacy. Stiles appreciated it, his head spinning. His abdomen, where Kate had clawed it, was beginning to ache a little, and he was fairly sure he’d pushed it too far.

Wordlessly, as if he knew Stiles was in pain, Derek reached out and touched his hand to Stiles’ bare arm. Stiles startled at the gesture, turning his head and watching silently as the veins of Derek’s arm went back, the werewolf absorbing his pain. There was a part of Stiles that wanted to pull away, convinced, even after all this time, that he didn’t deserve to have his pain taken like that…that he deserved to be in pain, but Stiles managed to silence that particular thought.


‘Your tattoos…do the mean anything in particular?” Derek asked in a gentle voice.

Stiles nodded, “Scott’s pack, obviously.” Stiles tapped the two bands around his left bicep, near identical to Scott’s tattoo, “and your pack, again obviously”, Stiles indicated the triskelion on his right shoulder blade, “Together I had them to…remind myself that I wasn’t alone, that no matter what happen, I had you guys with me, even though you weren’t actually there, and you probably thought I was dead, I still had you all with me. The tattoo for Scott’s pack…has a double meaning to it,” Stiles admitted, turning his arm over so the underside was exposed, revealing the scarring within the tattoo, the fine white lines of raised skin, clearly resembling two capital A’s.

“How did you do that?” Derek asked, although Stiles suspected Derek really didn’t want to hear the answer, but he still replied truthfully.
“I waited for the tattoo to heal, and then I…wrote the letters…with a small knife. It was still early on, and let me tell you, it was mild compared to what I saw some of the other people doing to themselves at Nada Parbat.”

Derek looked nauseated, and Lydia had tears in her eyes, although she was trying to hide it.

“What about the one on your hip,” Lydia poked at the top of it, and Stiles recoiled…not because it had hurt, but because Lydia had accidently touched one of his ticklish spots.

“That’s for my dad, it’s just the silhouette of his badge. I couldn’t let myself forget him. Also, it was a way of anchoring myself…from drowning in how…dark everything was there. It reminded me of the kind of person I wanted to be…that I wanted my dad to be able to be proud of me.”

“I’m sure he is, Stiles,” Lydia offered encouragingly.

“What about the one on your back?” Derek asked.

“Ah, yes… that one. That one has a story behind it. I don’t know if you guys heard it the night…the night that you were captured, but Kate and some of the others called me ‘the fox’, or something along those lines.”

Derek and Lydia nodded, and Stiles continued, “At the league pretty much everyone has a nickname…a alternative identity. Part of it is so you lose your sense of self, but other parts is to hide our identities from the rest of the league. Not many people their trust the other members…trusting others goes against the training. My nickname was Al ththaelib Aldhy yudir mae al dhdhiab…not much of a nickname, I know, I think my actual name is easier to say, but, you know, when in Rome…” Stiles shrugged.

“Anyway Ra’s knew about the Nogitsu…he was convinced that I was going to become this great leader within the League, perhaps even Ra’s’ heir, which is stupid because the guy literally has a proven way of being brought back from the dead. He named me Al ththaelib Aldhy yudir mae al dhdhiab when I was still fairly newly arrived at the league. It’s Arabic, it means the Fox who runs with Wolves. The tattoo on my back is the word Fox in Arabic, and then in Japanese, because the Nogitsu was a Japanese spirit, originally. I put the tattoos there so I could, literally, put my demons behind me.”
Stiles looked over at Derek, aware that all of the werewolves had been eavesdropping on the conversation. Derek’s eyes were filled with compassion.

“They…they suit you,” Derek nodded, “they reflect who you are…what you value. It’s good that you were able to use them to focus on not losing yourself.”

Stiles shrugged, focusing on his water bottle. Lydia got to her feet and moved away, leaving him and Derek alone, and Derek slowly and cautiously put his arm around Stiles’ shoulders. The weight felt reassuring…calming Stiles’ overactive mind and settling his turbulent emotions, and Stiles leaned against Derek’s side.

“I’ve got to say, though, you looked amazing out there,” Derek added with a smile. Stiles felt his cheeks colour at the compliment, and he looked over his shoulder at the rest of the pack.

“Do you want to go for a walk?” Derek offered. Stiles nodded rising to his feet and draining the bottle of water, throwing it into the rubbish bin.

“We’ll be back soon,” Derek called to Scott, who was sparring with Liam, and nodded briefly…before Liam took advantage of Scott’s distracted state and licked him in the stomach, sending Scott to the floor.

Knowing that the Alpha would heal quickly, Stiles and Derek walked out of the gym and down the stairs to the ground level, walking out into the daylight. Derek led the way to the back of the property, which backed onto the woods. There was a worn path through the trees, and Derek led Stiles along it. They said nothing as they walked, until the came to a fallen tree alongside the path.

“They can’t hear us now,” Derek told Stiles. Stiles nodded. Years ago, before the Nogitsune…back when Scott first got bitten he would have been terrified being in this situation. Now, after everything he’d been through, Derek was far from scary, even when he was trying to be intimidating, especially now, after the conversation Stiles and Derek had shared the morning.

Stiles stepped closer to Derek, who wrapped his arms around Stiles, holding him in a tight hug.

“You looked so good out there. The way you were using your muscles. I wanted to take you right then and there,” Derek practically moaned. Stiles snorted, tucking his head against Derek’s neck.
No-one other than Derek and Stiles knew about the fledging relationship between them, although Stiles was fairly sure that everyone knew that Derek and Stiles had feelings for one another. So far, however, there had been next to no opportunities for them to be alone together. There was no need for them to hide the relationship, of course. They were both consenting adults now, but after so many years of bottling up everything and trusting next to no one Stiles had wanted to keep things quiet for the time being, and Derek had gone along with the plan.

Derek kissed the top of Stiles’ head, and Stiles let out a happy murmur, lifting his head from Derek’s shoulders so he could kiss the older man.

“What are you going to do now?” Derek asked once Stiles pulled away. Stiles sighed and they both sat down on the fallen tree.

“The first thing I need to do is get myself declared not dead,” he replied, “which, unfortunately, means going back overseas for a bit. I could do it here, but then there would be a lot of awkward questions regarding how I got into the States, and since I’m using a fake passport that wouldn’t be a good.”

“Then what…are you going back to Starling City and help them? Jackson seemed to want to go back.”

“Jackson belongs in Starling City. He’s at home there…he has a pack…a family, and yeah, I could be a member of that pack, easily. They would happily have me there, well, Jackson might pretend to be pissy about it, but the rest of them would be fine with it…but my place is always going to be here in Beacon Hills. It took coming back here for me to understand it, but this is my home. I don’t want to leave. I want to stay here, with you, and Dad, and be a member of Scott’s pack, and help protect the town which I grew up in.”

“Stiles, you could go anywhere. Once you’re legally alive again you could go to college or travel, or anything you want.” Derek pointed out, “the world is more than Beacon Hills.

“I’ve seen a lot of the world, Derek,” Stiles reminded, “and yeah, maybe one day I will go to college or travel a bit, but…seven years ago I got Allison killed. Chris is getting too old, and so is my Dad, and Parrish has his job and can’t be everywhere at once. I think someone needs to step up in the role as resident pack hunter and general badass human, don’t you?”
Epilogue

Oliver looked out the plane window, staring at the blanket of white fluffy clouds as the plane coasted smoothly along the top as it flew back towards Starling City. He stretched out his legs, enjoying the space offered on the small privately only jet he had chosen for this particular journey, before looking over at his travelling companions.

Stiles was asleep, his head resting on his father’s shoulder, a blanket draped over him, the younger man looking more relaxed than Oliver had ever seen him during their time together on Lian Yu. Tears were still shining in the Sherriff’s eyes, residue from the staged reunion between father and son at the American consulate. Oliver had to give the Sherriff due credit for his acting skills. He had been rather convincing in his role as a father who hadn’t seen his son in seven years, and had indeed thought that Stiles was dead, when in reality it had been less than a month since they’d last seen each other.

Getting Stiles out of the United States had been surprisingly easy, and the whole time Oliver had been reminded, painfully, of the last time he’d smuggled Stiles onto a mode of transport bound for overseas. Oliver had accompanied Stiles on the trip, on the guise of attending to business in Asia. Stiles had slipped away at the airport, going to lay low for a few weeks, while Oliver attended a few meetings, signed some pieces of paper, and then headed back to the States.

Then, as planned, a few weeks after Oliver’s return to Starling City, where Roy, Felicity and Sara had eagerly listened to how well the plan had worked, Stiles had stumbled up to the American consulate and told them who he was. Stiles had spun some story about clinging onto some wreckage and drifting for a few days, before he’d been rescued by some fishermen, who hadn’t understood a word of English. Stiles had then gone on to tell the consulate how he’d been kept captive and used as free labour by the fishermen, locked up when they were in port to prevent escape. He’d told them how he’d escaped when one of the fishermen had died, and the others hadn’t bothered to keep Stiles locked up during their time in port.

Of course, the consulate had asked questions about the fishermen, but Stiles had played at being too dumb and scared beautifully, blaming language barriers and his own fear for not remembering details that would help identify the fishermen or their boat. The consulate had taken Stiles in, arranging for the appropriate medical and identity checks to be carried out on Stiles.

The Sherriff had been called, and a media buzz had started about rumours of Stiles’ survival. Oliver had publicly offered to accompany Stiles’ father over to Asia so that a DNA test could be done, and then so Stiles could be brought home. Initially Stiles and his father had been kept separate, until the DNA test confirmed Stiles’ identity, and then they were free to reunite.

The ‘reunion’ between Stiles, his father, and then with Oliver, had all been done privately at the US
consulate, but the media, all over the world, were going crazy over the story. Felicity was sending him articles that had been written about Stiles miraculous return, how amazing it was that not only Oliver Queen, but also the young teenager who had accompanied him, had survived the wreckage of the Queen’s Gambit.

Now they were heading back to the United States, first to Starling City, where a media storm was waiting for them, clamouring for photos and interviews with Stiles about his miraculous return from the dead. Then, Stiles and his father would return to Beacon Hills, and Stiles would be able to start living his life again, without having to worry about the league following him. He could go to college, or get a job (although Oliver knew that Queen Consolidated were going to give Stiles a massive compensation payout, that would easily support Stiles for the rest of his life without Stiles ever having to work a day), and be free to live out the rest of his life however he wanted to.

Oliver looked down at the laptop screen in front of him. On the screen was the old Beacon Hills high yearbook article about Stiles and Roy, or rather, Jackson, and their victory in the lacrosse championships. He smiled to himself as he leaned back comfortably in his car, looking at the photo of Stiles and Roy together, along with Scott McCall, the now werewolf Alpha in Beacon Hills, all three of them holding onto a trophy, all blissfully aware that in less than a year they would be scattered across the world, with Stiles on Lian Yu, Roy just starting off his life as a street kid in Starling City, and Scott back in Beacon Hills.

Still, now they were safe. Stiles would be with his family in Beacon Hills, and Jackson in Starling City, with Oliver…the brother he’d never known about. It seemed to have all turned out for the best, which was an unusual concept for them all.

Oliver wasn’t going to complain about it though, and instead smiled to himself at how everything had turned out, Oliver and Jackson had found their way to one another after all, despite circumstance ripping the two brothers apart when Jackson was born, and that Stiles was safely on his way to being back with his own family, ready to start healing after everything that had happened to him since he’d left Beacon Hills, all those years ago.

It was a hopeful beginning to the next stage of all of their lives.

End Notes

So, unlike most of my other stories, this is finished...pretty much. I'll still post only once or twice a week, when i get the chance, but, yeah, this is completed, so it won't be, yet another, story that just won't get finished.

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