Fast Times at Beacon Hills Academy

by lavieboheme0919

Summary

When Derek Hale becomes the headmaster of the prestigious Beacon Hills Academy, the staff revolts. He ends up having to fire several faculty members and hire new teachers to replace them. He has the hardest time filling the Theater Teacher position. When a young, well-qualified individual applies, Derek quickly sets up the interview. He finds himself attracted to the Stiles from the very first moment, but doubts whether or not he’d be a good fit for the Academy. Necessity twists his arm and he takes a chance and hires him, hoping that he won’t grow to regret that decision.
Steven Prescott was a very serious man. He was short, portly, balding, and insisted on wearing his moustache in such a way that at first glance, he could be easily mistaken for a walrus. He never married and there was really only one human being who could say with any degree of certainty that he was "friends" with Mr. Prescott.

As Headmaster of the prestigious Beacon Hills Academy, Mr. Prescott was both feared and respected. Like everything else in his life, Mr. Prescott took his job as an educator very seriously. Those who graduated from Beacon Hills Academy often went on to study at Harvard, MIT, Yale, Oxford, and McGill. The students' parents paid great sums of money to give their kids that extra competitive edge. The teachers believed Mr. Prescott to be God's gift to their profession. The students joked that he was 'as serious as a heart attack' which made his death as ironic as it was tragic.

When the board of governors met to select a new headmaster, they wanted someone who would take the position as seriously as Mr. Prescott had. They chose someone who had a very personal connection to the school. The library bore his last name, since his ancestor was the founder of the academy. And if anyone asked, it was most certainly not related to the fact that the new headmaster's uncle had recently established an endowment that funded several scholarships to aid students whose families couldn't afford the more than $30,000 price tag that accompanied an education at the academy.

The teachers whom he now supervised didn't look at the fact that he had a Ph.D. in English Literature and wrote the definitive analysis of lupine lore in literature throughout the history of mankind. They also ignored his time as a professor at U.C. Berkley. All they saw was a young man with a famous name and a famously large bank account who was selected to run the academy over teachers who had spent their entire careers in its hallowed halls. From the very first day, Derek Hale was fighting an uphill battle.

The teachers of the Academy seemed to be declaring war. Dress codes weren't being enforced. As Derek walked through the halls, he was issuing demerits left and right. It took several days to figure out the source of insurrection, but he traced it to the theater teacher, Mrs. Costa, who was actually offering extra credit for those who were purposely breaking the rules. This led to Derek both firing Mrs. Costa (much to the ire of the other teachers) and outright banning the use of extra credit.

Upon hearing that their colleague of 20 years had been removed, five more teachers openly defied the rules, forcing Derek to fire them as well. Derek ended up having six positions to fill and not a lot of time to do it.

He had no hard time finding applicants to fill the open science, math, English, and social science positions. Derek was able to substitute teach English as he needed, but finding the replacement theater teacher proved very difficult.

As he sat at his desk, his seventh cup of coffee was getting perilously low. He filtered through the online applications, hoping to see one pop up for the still vacant theater position. School had been out for several hours by this point and Derek was exhausted. He turned out the light to his office and went home.
The next day, he pulled up the applications, hoping to go through them with fresh eyes. Three cups of coffee later, he found an application for the theater position. As he read the resume, he couldn't help but to be impressed. The applicant held a Bachelor's in Fine Arts from UC Irvine, a Master's in Dramatic Writing from the Carnegie Mellon School of Drama, and a Theater and Performance Studies Ph.D. from UCLA. He had written several screen plays as well as stage productions, and had a lot of experience with directing large performances. Derek was practically tripping over himself to reach for the phone and set up an interview.

Suddenly, it was like he was walking on air. The pressure of having to fill the position was slowly waning. And since the applicant was the only one… he was likely to get the position by default, then Derek could go back to focusing on making sure the academy lived up to its reputation.

The morning of the interview, Derek was ecstatic. The problematic open position was to be filled and life could go back to normal. "Dr. Hale, your appointment is here for you," the secretary said, peeking her head into his office.

"Send him in!" he replied cheerfully.

The man who walked into his office was nothing like what he had imagined. He was wearing paint-stained cloth sneakers. His plaid shirt was wrinkled and poorly matched the wrinkled khaki pants he chose to wear with them. Derek had to control his reaction to the man's choice of clothing, deciding to come up with redeemable qualities about him from first glance. He had pale skin, dotted with the occasional mole, wildly tousled sex hair, huge brown eyes, and beautiful pink lips that parted ever so slightly as he smiled. Derek sat up straight in his chair, trying to shake out the problematic thoughts that were working their way through his mind. "Good morning!" the applicant said cheerfully.

Derek cleared his throat. "Umm. Good morning," he replied stiffly, shuffling through his papers. "Welcome to Beacon Hills Academy."

"Thanks! I'm so glad you called me for the interview!" the applicant responded brightly.

"I apologize… I'm having a hard time figuring out how to pronounce your first name," Derek said, reading over the resume.

"Oh, just call me Stiles. My mom wanted to give me a traditionally Polish name to honor my family's ancestry. Nobody has been able to pronounce it my entire life," he said, smiling.

"Oh, okay, Stiles. So what interested you in the Academy?" Derek asked.

Stiles reclined in his chair, an awestruck look falling over his face. "This Academy has history. It's an honor, really. When I saw this position open up, I jumped at the opportunity!"

"What do you think you can bring to the Academy as a faculty member?"

Stiles smiled. "I've taught theater for six years at the college level. I've written and produced three stage productions as well as a few screenplays. And I want to inspire a love of the theater and its history. I've had a great time studying theater, and I hope I can inspire at least one of my students to want to continue studying it!"

Derek was satisfied with that answer. As he continued asking questions, the two men ventured around the school. Based on the way he acted, Derek was quite hesitant, actually, to hire Stiles. He seemed diametrically opposite of nearly every image Derek had for a teacher at the Academy. In the end, it was the necessity to fill the position that made him ultimately choose to offer Stiles the position.
"Thank you so much!" Stiles exclaimed, trying not to literally jump for joy at the offer.

"Oh, and Stiles?" Derek said before the two men parted.

"Yes sir?"

"The Academy has a strict dress code for both the students and the staff. When I see you tomorrow, I'd like for you to be in compliance with it."

Stiles grinned. "Of course, Dr. Hale."

The next morning, Derek had a full schedule. There was a meeting with the Board of Governors, a few disciplinary meetings with students, and by the time his schedule was clear, there were only two class periods left. He decided to see how his newest faculty member was doing on his first day.

The Theater classroom was attached to the Auditorium located in the newest part of the campus. There was a projection room that allowed Derek to very easily spy and as he watched, he became rather dismayed. Stiles looked like a bum. He was sporting yet another wrinkled shirt what was half tucked into pale green jeans. The black Converse shoes matched well with the thin black tie Stiles was wearing loosely around his neck, not even tucked under the collar of the shirt.

"Alright. So this is Beginning Dramatic Arts. Seems kind of odd that I teach Advanced, then Intermediate, then Beginning… but I didn't come up with the schedule so whatever. You guys can call me Stiles. 'Professor Stilinski' or 'Dr. Stilinski' sounds too stuffy and 'Mr. Stilinski' was my father. So just call me Stiles. Can anyone tell me what your previous teacher had you working on?"

A young woman raised her hand and Stiles called on her. "Mrs. Costa had us studying Elizabethan Theatre as well as memorizing the first three scenes of Shakespeare's Othello."

Stiles feigned a yawn. "That's really effing boring," he said. "Feel free to use your copy of Othello as kindling." There was a collective gasp from both Derek and the students. "Hey… don't get me wrong. Bill was a great dude… but Othello has just been so overdone. Let's study something fun! Sure, we're gonna look at the history of the theater, but if I see one Shakespeare book in my classroom, I'm giving whomever is holding said book a week's worth of detention."

Another student raised his hand. "Umm sir… then what are we going to study?"

"Good question!" Stiles responded, grabbing a piece of chalk and writing the words "1990s Musical Theater" on his chalkboard. "The Drama classes will be working together to put on RENT. It's a Pulitzer Prize winning play by the talented, late Jonathan Larson. This play defined a generation of people living in the place where dreams were supposed to come true… but their friends and family were dying around them and an unsympathetic government was doing little if anything to help with the epidemic of HIV and AIDS."

"Isn't that a little inappropriate for a high school?" one student asked.

"If this were public high school… probably. But this is Beacon Hills Academy. You are quite possibly the future leaders of the free world and if you can't stomach a play written about a very sad reality of our history… then we have far larger problems to deal with," Stiles replied. "But now for the boring housekeeping stuff: I'm pretty easy to get along with. Your grade will come from the effort I see you putting forth in both the production of RENT and in general in my class. I want everyone to perform at least one solo musical number, one solo monologue, and two duets. The duets can be either spoken dialogues or a musical number. But it must all come from a play that speaks to you personally."
A student Derek knew to be a troublemaker stood up. "I'm not singing. That's gay."

Suddenly, Derek felt bad for not warning Stiles that in the Academy, the professor must maintain absolute control. It looked as though Stiles was going to learn that lesson the hard way.

"I'm sorry… what is your name?" Stiles asked.

"Cooper."

"Well, Cooper. That brings me to the next manner of business. From this point on, I want it well known that in my classroom and in my presence; disrespect toward anyone for any reason will not be tolerated. To help you learn that lesson, I want you to write a ten page paper about the history of homosexuality in the theater. I think you might find Elizabethan theater quite eye-opening," Stiles said. Derek found himself impressed by that choice of punishment. "I want it single-spaced and size 8 font, by the way. Two weeks should be enough time, don't you think?"

"That's not fair!" Cooper complained.

Stiles approached him, leaning down so that his face was inches away from the student's. He began to recite in perfect rhythm a passage Derek immediately recognized from *The Merchant of Venice*.

"The quality of mercy is not strained.
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath. It is twice blessed:
It blesseth him that gives and him that takes.
'Tis mightiest in the mightiest. It becomes
The thronèd monarch better than his crown.
His scepter shows the force of temporal power,
The attribute to awe and majesty
Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of kings,
But mercy is above this sceptered sway.
It is enthronèd in the hearts of kings.
It is an attribute to God himself.
And earthly power doth then show likest God's
When mercy seasons justice. Therefore, Cooper, Though justice be thy plea, consider this-
That in the course of justice none of us
Should see salvation. We do pray for mercy,
And that same prayer doth teach us all to render
The deeds of mercy. I have spoke thus much
To mitigate the justice of thy plea,
Which if thou follow, this strict court of Venice
Must needs give sentence 'gainst the merchant there."

"What does that even mean?" Cooper demanded.

"I expect an annotation of that passage from *Merchant of Venice* to be handed in with your paper. I believe this will be a very informational year for you, Mr. Cooper," Stiles said before returning his attention to the rest of the class. "And if anyone else makes a disrespectful comment, I'll see to it that the assignment Mr. Cooper just received is a pittance in comparison. Am I understood?"

The rest of the class was spent with exercises in acting. When the bell finally rang, Derek made an appearance. Stiles had sixth period free for planning, so the conversation was likely to be uninterrupted by students. "Bravo, Dr. Stilinski," he said smiling.
"Good afternoon, Dr. Hale," Stiles replied, erasing the board and writing down a memo so that he didn't actually forget the extra work he'd assigned the disrespectful little shit.

"That was a very creative way you dealt with Cooper," Derek said. "I'm quite impressed. If you have any more trouble from him, I assure you that he's no stranger to my office."

"Thank you," Stiles replied.

"So as impressed as I was, I would be remiss to ignore your attire. Could you please try to dress a little more…"

"Like you?"

"Well, I was going to say professional… but that works too, I guess," Derek chuckled. His eyes lingered on Stiles' jawline, which seemed to be chiseled by the gods themselves.

"Out of curiosity, do you spy on all the teachers on their first day or did you make a special dispensation for me?" Stiles asked. Derek had a hard time discerning whether or not Stiles was intrigued or offended by it.

"I run a very tight ship. I'm not an administrator who will be staying in my office. I'll be popping into classrooms as time permits all year long. Don't worry. I'm not singling you out," Derek assured him.

The teacher cracked a coy smile. "Well damn… I thought that maybe I might be special."

The flirtatious tone in his voice was too much for Derek, who turned on his heels, heading for the door. "I'll see you tomorrow, Dr. Stilinski."

"Tomorrow is Saturday, sir. So unless you're inviting me to do something with you, I think that perhaps you'll be sorely disappointed," Stiles replied playfully.

Derek stopped in his tracks. This back and forth was wrong. He'd never done anything like this before. "Then Monday it is. And please… try not to look like you slept on a bench when you come in."

"I'll do my best, sir. Enjoy your weekend."

Chapter End Notes

Thank you for reading! This prompt was given to me by the amazing SexySourAlpha and if you haven't read his work... re-evaluate your life choices and go do that right now! Agrusahale is my amazing beta reader. Please let me know what you thought of the first chapter! I'll be updating again soon!
As Derek got comfortable in his favorite chair at home, he thought about the problem he had inadvertently created for himself. He couldn't question that Stiles had a talent for teaching dramatic arts, and that he'd been the only applicant for the position, but Derek wasn't convinced that Stiles was the best fit for the Academy. There was also the little problem of the fact that Derek found himself undeniably and inexplicably attracted to him.

It drove Derek crazy because Stiles seemed to be chaos personified. Every detail about him contrasted violently with Derek's serious, straight-laced nature. Even in his own house, not a single thing was out of place. Derek liked keeping everything in his life neat, orderly, and predictable. So why, then, was he so attracted to this train wreck?

A knock at the door snapped him back to reality. He quickly answered it, relieved to see that it was only his uncle, Peter. "You look like you've been through hell," Peter chuckled, observing his nephew.

"These past few weeks have been rough," Derek admitted, inviting his uncle in.

"It's a shame you don't drink," Peter said, choosing a spot on the couch as Derek slunk back into his chair. "A nice, cold beer can do wonders for a problem like yours."

"Uncle Peter, I'm exhausted… why are you here?" Derek asked, not intending to sound rude, but he hadn't planned on guests and he truly just wanted to watch some TV and then go to bed.

Peter answered his question with a question. "How is that new theater teacher working out?"

"Today was his first day… hard to tell just yet," Derek replied. "But I don't think he'll last."

"Why not?"

"He's not Beacon Hills Academy material. He's too relaxed. He dresses like a homeless person. He actually told his class he'd assign detention to people who were reading Shakespeare in his room," Derek replied.

"I have to wonder why you hired him in the first place," Peter pointed out.

"Why are you bringing this up at all?" Derek asked. It seemed odd to him that Peter would venture all the way over, just to mount an interrogation into his hiring practices.

"Just curious," Peter lied.

"I'm too tired to argue it with you. But believe me, I've got everything under control. The Academy will resume normal operations and those unwilling to follow the rules will suffer the consequences," Derek said groggily.

"Rule with an iron fist," Peter replied with a wink. "I'll show myself out."

Derek had the sinking suspicion that Peter was up to something, but decided to try tackling that problem after a long night's sleep. He locked the front door, set the coffee pot timer, then trudged
upstairs. His bed looked so inviting as he set out his clothes for the next day, seeing that they needed to be ironed. He could have kicked himself for not having done it earlier. Against his character, he opted to go to bed and deal with that chore later.

As he slept, he began to dream... About the Academy. He was standing outside the theater classroom watching as Stiles finished his last lesson of the day. He knew that this spying was wrong, but as he tried to walk away, he found that no matter which direction he went, Stiles was there. His unkempt clothing hung baggily off his thin frame as he beckoned for Derek to approach him.

Derek did his best to find another way to get back to his office, using hallways and back rooms no one else knew about. Still, Stiles would be standing there with his messy hair and his supple, fuckable lips. Derek grew tired of fighting it, so he finally gave into temptation and approached the young teacher. The moment their lips met, Derek was startled as a loud bang filled the room. Winds swept around him in a violent frenzy. He watched helplessly as a tornado touched down, demolishing the school he worked so hard to get back on track.

Derek sat straight up in his bed, sweat dripping from his body as he panted for breath. He quickly threw on some sweat pants and a t-shirt and hopped in his car, needing to make sure that the Academy was still in one piece.

As he pulled into the parking lot, the school seemed eerie in the still night air. The dream had been so realistic, that he didn't even feel silly for driving all the way out there in the middle of the night. It wasn't until he realized that he'd driven all the way out there in the middle of the night because of a dream about Stiles that he suddenly felt not just silly… but downright insane. "What is it about this guy?" he asked out loud.

When he got back home, he made some chamomile tea to help calm him down before he fell back to sleep. This time, however, he dreamt about wolves instead of sexy, slovenly theater teachers.

Derek decided to impose a Stiles-free weekend. He spent several hours at the gym, listening to a few of his favorite arias while he worked out. After, he returned home and watched a baseball game and spot-cleaned the grout in his kitchen with an old toothbrush.

He enjoyed solitary life. He never had to worry about things not being where he last put them (which were always in their proper places) and he didn't have to worry about other people's bad habits.

When his thoughts would inevitably creep in the direction of those lips he wanted to part with his tongue, he forced himself to think of other things… dreadful things. Like the mildew he needed to clean from the corner of the bathtub.

He forced himself to work on any little task that could possibly come to mind, rather than think about Stiles. This meant that by Saturday's end, he was thoroughly exhausted, and completely out of tasks to fill up Sunday.

Luckily, Peter called and asked if he wanted to get lunch and go see a movie, so he gladly accepted. It did the job and he spent several hours just causally conversing with his uncle instead of thinking about Stiles.

When he got back home, he decided to call it an early day, since there wasn't anything left to occupy himself with. He set the coffee pot and fell asleep.

The halls of the Academy during the early morning hours were pleasant. They were quiet, clean, and
Derek didn't have to worry about separating students who seemed to be on the verge of coitus. As he passed the staff lounge where many of the teachers took their morning coffee and ate their breakfast before students arrived, he heard a conversation. His name was brought up, so he paused. "Isn't there a home game for Lacrosse this week?" Stiles' familiar voice cut through the silence.

"Yeah," replied English teacher Scott McCall, one of the new teachers who had volunteered to replace the former Lacrosse coach, who had been part of the faculty insurrection. "Against one of our biggest rivals."

"Why isn't there a pep rally scheduled for before the game?" Stiles asked.

Lydia Martin, a math teacher, laughed. "The entire student body having fun? Hale would have an aneurism!"

Scott laughed loudly. "Can you just picture it?" He went on in a voice that rudely mocked Derek. "Tuck in those shirts! Use your inside voices! No dancing! If I see one smile, I'm issuing 50 demerits!" Lydia howled in raucous laughter, joined by several other teachers.

"Hey… give the dude a break," Stiles said. "So he's a little tightly wound. Wouldn't you be if you had six teachers planning a coup d'état because they didn't like that you got hired?"

"The springs inside my mattress are tightly wound," Scott countered. "Derek Hale is something else entirely."

That comment was followed by a new wave of laughter. Derek rushed off, trying to ensure that nobody would see that he heard it. It hurt. Didn't they see that he had made the adjustments that were necessary at the time? Didn't they realize that he was only trying to ensure that the legacy of the Academy carried on, despite the treasonous actions of their former coworkers?

Derek decided to skip breakfast entirely, no longer having much of an appetite. As he settled into the large, leather-bound chair that accented his old mahogany desk quite perfectly, he wondered how he could ever truly run this school when none of the teachers had any degree of respect for him. However, not wanting to let his morning be a complete waste, he opened up his email and began responding as needed.

There was a knock on the door frame and he looked up, seeing Stiles. He was wearing a blue corduroy blazer, a white screen-printed t-shirt that had a tie on it, dark blue jeans and leather shoes. "God damn it, Stiles!" Derek snapped. "How many times do I have to tell you about the dress code? I'm getting really sick of repeating myself!"

Stiles pursed his lips and sighed. "Look… I'm sorry… but I can't wear the stuffy outfits you want. I'll try to look neater, but I'm not gonna teach in a suit and tie. Drama classes are too physical for it."

Derek rolled his eyes, replying with a brisk, "Fine. What did you want?"

"I wanted to apologize for what you overheard. Some of the stuff they said was real asshole-ish," he said softly.

"I don't know what you're talking about," Derek lied.

Shaking his head, Stiles chuckled. "I don't need a Ph.D. in Theater to spot bad acting when I see it. I know you overheard… I came out right as you were rounding the corner."

Derek leaned back in his chair. "Thank you for apologizing… but I do not want or need apologies or ass kissing… or whatever this might be. It is my job to run this school and I'm trying damn hard to
do my job. All I want is a staff I can rely on to enforce the rules and not undermine me every time they get the chance. It's not too lofty of a request, if you ask me."

Stiles shrugged. "You're right. It's not. But you've gotta be willing to meet them half way. I know I'm new here… and my word probably doesn't count for shit, but happy teachers are gonna lead to happier students… and happier students are gonna do better."

"These parents don't pay $7500 a year for happy students," Derek replied. "They pay for a competitive edge. They pay for the reputation this Academy has held for more than a century. They pay to know that when they drop their children off in the loop that we're going to be willing to take the steps that will help prepare them for Ivy League universities. I should be focused on ensuring that they're getting their money's worth and what am I doing instead? Trying to put out fires of petty, jealous rage from a few problem teachers who have given me more shit than the worst-behaved students at this school."

Stiles shook his head, turning to leave, pausing for a moment before saying, "You studied literature in your degree, right?"

"Yes."

"A return to first principles in a republic is sometimes caused by the simple virtues of one man. His good example has such an influence that the good men strive to imitate him, and the wicked are ashamed to lead a life so contrary to his example," Stiles recited.

"Ah," came Derek's reply. "Machiavelli. A classic. But he is also the one who said 'it is much more secure to be feared than to be loved.' So I'm not entirely sure what your point was."

"Well… if that won't work, here's a personal favorite from Oscar Wilde: 'Always forgive your enemies – nothing annoys them so much,'" Stiles responded, looking back to see a smile on Derek's face.

"Don't you have class to prepare for?" Derek asked pointedly, raising his eyebrow.

"Since you aren't going to a lacrosse pep rally on Friday… would you care to go get a drink with me?" Stiles inquired.

Immediately the playful banter stopped. This crossed a line. "No. I don't drink… And I certainly don't drink with my employees."

"Then would you care to go not get a drink with me on Friday?"

"I'm serious, Dr. Stilinski," Derek said, using formality to put up a wall. "There are strict anti-fraternization policies. No."

Stiles looked a little crestfallen. "I'm sorry I misread whatever that back and forth was…"

"That back and forth was me telling you to do your job… the one I'm paying you quite well to do. Now the bell is about to ring, I think you should probably be in your classroom when it does," Derek said dismissively.

Stiles looked like he wanted to say something, but didn't. Instead, he stormed off. Instantly Derek felt bad, but then he felt angry for feeling bad. Never before had he wanted to do something so badly… yet he couldn't bring himself to do it. To just say "yes" and accept that date. He sincerely wished he had never hired Stiles Stilinski. Life was certainly not going to get easier with him here.
A/N: Thanks for reading! I hope you enjoyed this chapter. Please let me know what you think!!!
Focus and concentration seemed to be impossible. Every time he closed his eyes, even for just a second, he saw Stiles' disappointed face as he walked away. He knew the right thing to do was apologize, but he was afraid that an apology would make him look weak; and if there was one thing Derek could not afford at this point, it was for the teachers at Beacon Hills Academy to see him as weak.

Instead of eating lunch, Derek wandered to the projection room that gave him the perfect position to spy on the goings-on in the theater classroom. A young female student was singing the song "I Dreamed a Dream" from the musical *Les Misérables*. The student's voice was beautiful and melodic. It was quite obvious that she had done a lot of practice over the weekend, and she hit each note with precision.

When she was done, the class applauded her, as well they should have. Stiles stood up. "That was truly amazing, Amelia!" he said cheerfully. "But I'm afraid it lacked the emotional backing that would have brought this entire room to tears. Think about the character. Fantine is at the lowest point she's ever been in her life. She's been working hard to support her daughter, who she had to send to live far away. She was unfairly fired from her job. She was forced to sell her hair and some teeth, as well as her body in order to continue to subsist. I want you to work on accessing that emotion. Really tap into it! On Friday, I want you to perform it again, alright?"

Amelia nodded emphatically. Derek could tell by the look on her face that she was already thinking of ways to access that emotion. "Thanks, Stiles!" she replied cheerfully, sitting back down.

Stiles turned to his class. "Anyone else?" Nobody volunteered, so Stiles went into his lesson. Derek watched for a few minutes before popping into other classrooms, including Dr. Argent's French course and Dr. Lahey's History course. He also did a quick sweep of the grounds to ensure that the maintenance crew was working to ensure the aesthetic appeal of the school continued.

When he returned to his office, he had a few phone calls to return before realizing that it was sixth period and Stiles was free. He made his way back to the theater room.

"I've got lesson plans to write. What do you need?" Stiles asked icily, not even looking up from his desk.

That sort of outward disrespect angered Derek. "Actually… I was going to apologize, but since you're being an ass, I'll just go back to my office."

"I'm sorry," Stiles said, sighing as he reclined in his chair. "Do you realize how frustrating it is to have these back-and-forth exchanges, which seem pretty filled with subtext, then to have the wall thrown up immediately?"

"Do you realize how frustrating it is to have every single decision you make second-guessed because your entire staff hates that you exist?" Derek replied. "Every move I make is under constant scrutiny. And no… it doesn't justify me being rude to you like I was this morning, but at the same time, if I don't equally enforce the rules, I get seen as weak."

"So what do we do?" Stiles asked.
"What do you mean 'we'? There is no 'we'!" Derek insisted.

"I know that!" replied an exasperated Stiles. "But there could be. There's obviously a reason you seem so intent on being in my room… and spying on my classes." Derek couldn't hide his surprise. "Yeah… that glass isn't as one-way as you might think."

"So what do you propose, then?"

"How about a bet?" Stiles suggested. "You can determine whatever it is. If you win, I'll never bring it up again. If I win, you have to go out and have a drink with me."

"I already told you… I don't drink," Derek said.

"Why not, if you don't mind me asking?"

"You'll laugh at me," Derek replied, trying to avoid the subject.

"I swear," Stiles held up three fingers. "Scouts honor."

"Girl Scouts?"

"Whatever! You understand… I won't laugh. I promise!" Stiles said earnestly.

Derek swallowed, trying to figure out a way to say it that wouldn't sound like something Stiles would laugh at. He realized, however, that his reason was simply too laughable. "I don't like not being in control." He could see Stiles visibly struggling to restrain his laughter.

"Well, assuming I win, I'll make sure that it's just one beer… and that you eat something, so it won't hit you too hard," Stiles said.

Quite against his nature, Derek agreed. "Alright. But my condition is that you come to school every day this week dressed according to the dress code. And I want different outfits. You don't get to just wear the same one every day."

"Challenge accepted," Stiles replied, his facial expression unreadable.

"Alright then. I'll see you tomorrow," Derek said, casually walking out of Stiles' classroom as the theater teacher returned the greeting.

Derek only made the bet because he was certain that Stiles likely didn't own one complete dress code-compliant outfit, let alone four. He was already looking forward to a quiet Friday night at home, curled up in front of his fireplace with a good book.

The next morning, as Derek poured over his morning paper, a cheerful "Good morning!" filled his office, drawing his attention away from an editorial about the state of education in the United States, in comparison to other industrialized countries. He had to force his eyes not to linger for too long as he took in the sight of a well-dressed and well-groomed Stiles. Feeling that something had to be amiss, he stood up to get a look at Stiles' shoes, which perfectly matched his belt. Derek was impressed.

"You clean up well!" Derek said. "This is the first time I've not accidentally mistaken you for a homeless person!"

Stiles tugged uncomfortably at his collar. "I feel like my shirt is trying to suffocate me. No wonder all the teachers here are so stuffy. This is so uncomfortable!"
"You eventually get used to it," Derek said. "The itching suffocating feeling goes away right around
the time your heart turns into a little block of ice!"

"I can't tell if you're joking or not," Stiles replied, readjusting his tie.

"Only a little," Derek said. "That's the really messed up part."

"Thank God there are only three more days of this left," Stiles complained.

"You could always make it easy and just wear your regular clothes," Derek reminded him.

"You'd like that, wouldn't you?" Stiles narrowed his eyes accusingly, a goofy grin affixed to his face.

"Quite a bit."

"I'll see you tomorrow, Dr. Hale," he said in a sing-song voice.

Derek allowed himself a glance at the perfectly-formed butt as Stiles walked away. He found it hard
to peel away his eyes, but once he did, he regretted it. He knew this was wrong. This wasn't him.
But Stiles made him feel giddy and playful in a way he hadn't felt since he was young.

The week progressed without incident. Each morning, Stiles presented himself in Derek's office,
wearing a new outfit that both coincided with the academy's dress code and made Derek's self-
control all the more feeble.

Friday morning, Stiles proved that he had won the bet. "So am I going to pick you up at your place?
Or are you picking me up at mine?" he asked, a smug grin parting his perfect pink lips.

Derek's eyes narrowed, searching for something—anything—that might make the deal null-in-void.
"Fuck me…" he whispered.

"Don't get too far ahead of yourself," Stiles joked. "Let's see how getting drinks goes, first."

"That's not what I meant!" Derek said defensively.

"I guess we'll find out tonight, now won't we?"

Derek scrawled his address on a memo sheet and reluctantly handed it to Stiles. "I'll be ready around
eight."

"I'll see you then!" Stiles said cheerfully as he folded up the memo and stuck it in his pocket.

Derek wanted the day to drag on. He wanted it to last forever because he didn't want to go on that
date. Of course, the day flew by. Derek felt like he blinked and suddenly it was time to go home.
Reluctantly, he walked out to his car and headed home, tossing his keys casually on the counter as he
contemplated a sudden bout of illness in order to avoid this outing with Stiles.

However, as he looked through his medicine cabinet, he realized that short of hospitalizing himself,
there was no way to do it, so he reluctantly turned on the shower and started getting ready.

The hot water soothed his mind and he spent several minutes just standing beneath the steamy
stream, letting it wash over his body. As he rinsed away the last of the soap, he realized that his
trepidation was based in both anxiety and anticipation of the event. On one hand, he'd be spending
an entire night in close proximity to the man he wanted nothing more than to kiss and caress. But on
the other hand, he would be out drinking with a teacher from his Academy and breaking a rule he
It is held to be very important.

As he stared into the mirror, liberally applying shaving cream to his face, he repeated the words, "You can do this. Just a few hours. Just one beer. Then you can come home and pretend like it never happened."

He had just finished getting ready when the doorbell rang. Taking a moment to look at the clock, he was actually shocked to see that Stiles was a minute early. As he opened the door, Derek struggled to remain stoic as he took in the sight before him. Stiles looked amazing. He had changed into something casual that suited him quite well. His hair was that sexy mess that looked as if he'd just rolled out of bed, despite the fact that it was perfectly coiffed earlier that day. Derek didn't recognize the cologne Stiles had chosen to use, but as he inhaled it, he found that he couldn't get enough of it. Instantly, his stomach tied itself into nervous knots. "Hi," he said, attempting to keep his voice placid.

"Good evening, Dr. Hale!" Stiles said cheerfully.

Wincing, Derek corrected him. "For the purposes of this little outing… just call me Derek."

"Alright, Derek," Stiles replied, testing the feel of the name in his mouth. "Are you ready?"

"As ready as I'll ever be," Derek sighed, grabbing his keys and locking the door behind him.

"Your car or mine?" Stiles asked.

"I drive a Camaro," Derek replied, as if that were an answer.

Stiles pointed to the large, blue Jeep next to Derek's car. "I drive that."

"My car it is…"

"Hey!" Stiles scolded. "Don't be hating on the Jeep!"

As the Camaro roared to life, "La Habanera" from Carmen began to play from the MP3 player connected to the radio.

"Opera?" Stiles asked incredulously. "Really?"

"Hey! If I can't hate on your Jeep, you can't hate on 'La Habanera'!"

"Well, I'd be lying if I said that I'm surprised," Stiles said. "It was bound to be either Opera or talk radio."

"What's that supposed to mean?" Derek asked defensively.

Stiles sighed, looking out the passenger window. "No offense, but you're kind of a tight-ass."

Derek did take offense to that. "I can be fun!"

Rolling his eyes, Stiles stared at Derek with a look of pure doubt. "You're the person 'Fun' seeks out when it gets that sudden craving to kick the bucket."

"I'm a Headmaster. I'm not supposed to be all happy-go-lucky. I'm supposed to keep the school in line. And now that all the teaching positions are filled, I can go back to running the school the way it's supposed to be run!" Derek said. "But I don't want to talk about work tonight. I just want to go, drink the beer, then get back home."
"See? You're completely taking the fun out of this! It's like you're a real life Dementor!"

"A what?"

"A Dementor! You know… from Harry Potter!" Stiles said, dumbfounded that Derek didn't get that reference. His voice took on a judgmental tone. "I thought you said you majored in English literature…"


"It doesn't get better than Harry Potter!" Stiles replied. "And if you try to argue that one, I swear I will quit."

"Really?"

"Really. I'm not even sure I can continue working for a person who hasn't read Harry Potter," Stiles said, there was not even the slightest hint that he was joking. Not wanting to make the conversation any more awkward, Derek asked directions to the bar. Stiles gave them. As they came to a stop, Stiles could see that Derek was nervous. "Relax. You're going to have fun, even if it kills you!"

Derek shot him a nervous glare.

"Okay… poor word choice. But it's just a beer. With a friend."

"No… it's a beer with a coworker… a subordinate coworker—which I may remind you, is a violation of the rules!" Derek corrected.

"Who came up with that rule, anyway?" Stiles asked.

"I did. Fraternization is wildly inappropriate!"

"So you're worried about breaking your own rule… which you have the power to suspend?" Stiles clarified.

When framed in that manner, Derek had no counter-argument. They got out and entered the bar. It was dimly lit and the music was fairly loud. Lights swirled around shirtless men danced in close proximity to one another. "This is a gay bar…" Derek said.

"No shit!" Stiles replied sarcastically, sitting down at the bar. Derek nervously sat beside him.

An attractive man with dark features walked up to him. "What'll it be tonight, Stiles?"

"Good evening, Danny-boy! My friend, Derek, here has never had alcohol. Can we hook him up with your best beer?"

Danny looked him over, licking his lips. Pulling out two mugs, he filled them with a beer Derek couldn't see, then slid them over to them. "At Jungle, a first timer's first drink is on the house." Derek felt uncomfortable from the way Danny was watching him.

Derek looked at the amber liquid in his mug with curiosity. Stiles lifted his own mug, prompting Derek to do the same. "To breaking rules and having fun!"

Begrudgingly, Derek tapped his mug against Stiles' and brought it to his lips. At first, he didn't like the taste of the beer. "Ugh… this is awful!"

"It grows on you," Stiles said before gulping down a third of his mug.
Derek kept trying, but the more he drank, the less he liked it. "Is there something else I can try?"

Stiles studied him for a few moments before ordering him a whiskey on the rocks. As the thick liquid washed over his tongue, it left a tingling sensation that he found quite pleasant. Stiles could tell that he'd found Derek's poison of choice. "That's not bad!" Derek said.

Three more of those later, Stiles was a little worried. Derek was well beyond drunk. His words barely made sense. "Hey… I think you've had enough, big guy," Stiles said, getting ready to settle the tab. Stiles helped Derek back out to the Camaro. By this point, he was entirely sober. Derek, however, was not. "I'm gonna need your keys."

For a moment, Stiles thought he was going to need to wrestle them out of Derek's hand. Derek kept holding them up, trying to make Stiles jump for them, but since he had a hard time even standing up, Stiles was able to easily grab them from him.

Once Derek was securely fastened in, Stiles walked around and brought the car to life. He'd never been in the driver's seat of a car so nice before. He felt a rush of adrenaline as the engine purred under the sounds of "Nessun Dorma".

Making his way back to the mansion where Derek lived, Stiles could see Derek's hand inching over to his knee. As soon as it did, Stiles tensed, moving Derek's hand back.

Derek felt uninhibited. All the wild thoughts of the things he wanted to do with Stiles suddenly felt as though they could easily happen. Stiles helped him to the door, but Derek had to fumble through the multitude of keys to unlock it. Once inside, Derek roughly pushed Stiles against the wall, clumsily pressing his lips toward those slightly parted, perfectly pink ones he'd lusted after from the moment he first saw them. At first, he thought Stiles was getting into it, however, when the younger man turned his head, forcing their lips apart, Derek realized that wasn't the case. "Look dude… As much as I want to make out with you… you're drunk and it wouldn't be fair of me. I'd be taking advantage of you. I'll help you get into bed and, if you don't mind, crash on your couch. If you still feel like kissing me once you're sober… then maybe we can talk."

Though he understood, Derek still felt the pain of rejection. "'M'k m'sorry," he sighed, staggering toward the stairs. Stiles knew he'd never make it all the way up, so he rushed to help Derek.

"I'll be downstairs if you need me," Stiles assured him once he was comfortably on the king-sized mattress.

"G'night," Derek muttered, drifting nearly instantly to sleep as Stiles headed back downstairs after finding a blanket and pillow in the linen closet and curled up on the couch.

As light filtered in from his window, Derek became aware of the pounding in his head. He shielded his eyes from the light, which only seemed to make the pounding worse. He was still in the clothes he'd worn last night and had slept the entire time on top of his blanket. He was thirsty. Thirstier than he'd ever been in his life.

He trudged downstairs, needing water. He was surprised to see Stiles sprawled out on his couch, having forgotten that he stayed the night. Stiles was talking to himself in his sleep, but Derek couldn't quite make out what was being said. After tossing back three bottles of water and two aspirin, Derek decided to wake his employee, wanting to stop the impropriety as soon as possible. Most of last night was a complete blur. All he really remembered was that they'd gone to a gay club.
Unceremoniously, Derek shook Stiles' shoulder. Stiles awoke with a start, throwing the blanket off of him. "Calm yourself, Ninja Warrior," Derek said, sinking into his chair, drinking yet another bottle of water.

"How are you feeling this morning?" Stiles asked.

"My head's killing me. I don't really remember much of anything…" Derek said. "And why are you on my couch?"

"You said I could crash here," Stiles replied.

*Obvious alcohol-induced lack of judgment*, Derek thought. "Any other bad decisions?"

"Aside from you trying to kiss me?" Stiles said. There was an edge in his voice as he did. Instantly, Derek stiffened. "There's no way."

"Oh yeah. You did," Stiles insisted. "Other than the fact that you were drunk off your ass and it wouldn't have been fair, the little bit of it that happened before I stopped wasn't all that bad." Derek suddenly felt nauseous. He immediately escaped into the kitchen, standing over the sink as he contemplated the horror of what had been revealed.

Stiles joined him, placing a comforting hand on Derek's shoulder. "Relax, Derek. It was just a kiss. The only reason I stopped it was because you were drunk."

"It's not just a kiss, Stiles! I'm your boss. This is wrong! I never should have let it happen!" Derek said, finally looking at Stiles. He couldn't tell if he were angrier about the fact that he'd allowed his control to slip to the point of kissing Stiles or the fact that he couldn't remember the kiss.

Stiles shook his head. "You see everything in this weird black-and-white way. I want to kiss you. Last night, you wanted to kiss me. Just fucking do it."

"There's a line!"

"One that you drew!"

Derek turned around, ready to tell Stiles to leave, but the large brown eyes staring up at him made him pause. They were close. Very close. Closer than he'd been to Stiles before, that he could remember. And those lips. Right there. Full. Pink. Luscious. Inviting. His heart pounded in his chest as he leaned down, his hands resting gently on Stiles' neck and shoulder as their faces came together in a whirlwind of passion. It was better than the dream had been. His lips were so soft. Stiles' tongue slipped into his mouth, playfully teasing his own, and fueling the fire that much more. Derek pressed Stiles up against the fridge, their bodies seemingly glued to each other. When the need for air finally overpowered Derek's need for Stiles' lips, he slowly pulled away, still somewhat shocked by what just happened.

Chapter End Notes

A/N: Since today is my birthday, I figured... hey! Let's put out another chapter! Let me know what you think
Chapter 4

His mind was running several thousand miles per second and Derek was having a very difficult time even processing what had just happened. "That was nice," Stiles said, smiling.

"Yeah," Derek admitted, sounding somewhat aloof. "It was." In the back of his mind, Derek was replaying that dream in which the kiss with Stiles led to a tornado that destroyed the school. He felt a need to go check to make sure his school was still standing, but at the same time, he also felt the need to kiss those beautiful lips again. Stiles had felt so good in his hands, pressed between his body and the fridge. He wanted to feel that closeness again… body against body, tongue against tongue. Yet he felt quite a bit of regret. He crossed the line. He had been so careful to keep his eye on it, so as to avoid this very thing, yet it was him who crossed it.

Stiles could see the emotions and thoughts raging war in Derek's head, just by observing the look of confusion in his eyes. "Are you alright?"

Derek took several steps backward, leaning against a countertop. "Uh yeah… I need you to go, Stiles… I'll see you on Monday."

"Derek… come on…" Stiles pleaded, making no effort to hide his disappointment. "You can't keep doing this to me! It isn't fair!"

"I know," he sighed. "But I'm just really confused right now… I need to do some thinking."

"Then talk it out with me…" Stiles begged, stepping forward, closing the distance between them. "Just stop shutting me out! There's something here… you know there is!"

Derek again moved, needing to create more distance. He needed to think about this logically, and Stiles' presence was preventing him from doing that. "I know. Just please… I'm not angry. I just need to think."

Stiles was upset. "I'll give you time to think," he said. "But I don't know how much more of this roller coaster I can take. I'm starting to get whiplash."

He knew that it was unfair to put Stiles through this. "I promise we can talk about it on Monday," Derek said, making sure to look Stiles straight in his beautiful brown eyes.

Stiles didn't respond. He just rolled his eyes and walked out of the kitchen, stopping only to grab his shoes and keys. Derek stood there, watching as the cause of all his problems walked out.

Derek had to figure out if the soft caress of Stiles' lips was worth the invitation of familiar agony into his life. He wasn't sure he could go through that sort of pain again. So much of his personality changed after he lost Paige. There were no longer lights dancing in his eyes; there was no laughter or joy in his heart. She had been the fuel that allowed those embers of humanity and compassion to burn brightly, and the moment he watched the life fade from her body was the moment those embers turned to ash. That ash stayed there until the day Stiles first walked into his office.

Sure, Paige's death was a tragic accident. But the way Derek saw it, inviting Stiles into his heart was tantamount to inviting the possibility of loss and pain. He simply wasn't sure he could survive it again. Slowly, he found his way to his chair and sunk into its comforting embrace. Literary examples
of his exact problem danced through his mind. He tried to shake them out, but the imagery persisted. He once wrote a paper asserting that such activity was cowardice. To eschew any possibility of love for the risk of the pain that might come of it… that was cowardice plain and simple.

There was plenty of poetry that stood as a testament to the fact that love was suffering. Derek didn’t know if “love” was necessarily the appropriate word to use at the moment. Lust was probably more accurate, but then again, that fluttery sensation in his stomach that he felt every time Stiles was in arm’s reach seemed to say otherwise. The only other person to cause that in him had been Paige.

Derek ended up tearing through his home office to find a sheet of paper. In true form, he did the one thing that seemed logical: he made a list. Two lists, actually. On one side of the sheet he listed all the reasons why he shouldn’t allow what was obviously there to develop any further. On the other side, he tried to list the reasons why he should. In the end, the list of reasons why not ended up longer. He was only able to come up with one reason why he should. He stared at it until the words etched themselves into his brain:

I want it more than air.

Stiles sat in his Jeep, hesitant to face the day ahead of him. What he feared would happen had come to pass. They kissed and now things were incredibly awkward. He contemplated avoiding Derek’s office, but he needed to get the mail from his box, which was located right by the Headmaster’s door. His thumbs unconsciously strummed the rhythm of "Light My Candle" which he'd spent the rest of his weekend choreographing as a fun way to introduce his beginner class to the idea of acting, dancing, and singing at the same time, but still within the context of the play they were going to be performing.

When he had killed enough time, he slowly exited his Jeep and made the dauntingly long trip to the administrative office. With each step, his resolve to actually enter the office faltered just a little more until he was finally there, his hand hovering just above the handle.

"Dr. Stilinski!" the secretary exclaimed in her gravelly, croaky voice as she pulled the door open, surprised to see the theater teacher standing there.

"Good morning, Mrs. Gautier," Stiles mumbled, trying to hide the fact that he had been startled by an 80 year old woman.

"Call me Jane! 'Mrs. Gautier' makes me feel old!" she complained.

"My apologies, Jane!" Stiles chimed as he smiled and stepped aside, allowing her to bustle by him before he went in.

Derek saw him immediately as he tried to quickly grab his mail and dash. "Hey Stiles… can you come in here for a second?"

Stiles stood in the doorway. "If you're going to say something to try and get me to forgive you, I want you to know that I'm only interested in hearing it if you promise that I'm not going to get a wall right after."

"Please," Derek insisted. "Sit down. And close my office door."

"You're not firing me, are you?" Stiles asked.

Derek rolled his eyes. "No. I'm not going to fire you. Now will you please sit the fuck down?" Stiles did, though he stayed on his guard. "I do want to apologize for what happened."
"You don't have to apologize for kissing me, Derek. We both know we enjoyed that kiss. I felt the erection in your pants!" Stiles replied.

Derek blushed a furious shade of crimson. "That's not what I was apologizing for."

"Then what?"

"Kicking you out the way I did. It wasn't fair to you. Nor is the way I've been leading you on and pushing you away. None of it is fair and I'm sorry," Derek said.

"Then why do you keep doing it?"

"Trust me, you'll get the full story eventually. But all you need to know right now is that for reasons that I probably should have sought counseling to deal with, I'm afraid. You make me act in a way I haven't acted in years… and you make me feel a way I haven't felt in years. And I'm fucking terrified," he admitted. His voice cracked a little as he spoke. He had never discussed Paige with anyone. Not even in a round-about way. He wasn't even sure if he could bring himself to say her name out loud. She had been so important to him and not only was he afraid of losing Stiles the way he lost her, but he was also afraid that if he opened his heart to Stiles, he'd forget her.

Stiles saw the tears form in Derek's eyes, despite the Headmaster's attempts to blink them away before they were noticed. He knew not to press the issue. "So where do we stand?" he asked. He knew Derek hated when he referred to them as a "we" but at the moment, there was no other way to put it.

Derek was silent for a moment, trying to collect himself. "Nothing serious… just casual. And it must remain secret."

A grin parted Stiles lips. He jumped to his feet and leaned across the desk, surprising Derek with a kiss, which was quickly returned. When they parted, Stiles' hand slipped on the newspaper which was folded carefully. It went flying, sending on top of it a copy of *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*. He reached over and picked it up. The bookmark was still in it. He was somewhere in chapter nine. This only made him grin more. He waved the book in a semi-accusing manner.

Derek only smiled and shrugged. "What can I say? You threatened to quit… I had to do something…"

Chapter End Notes

A/N: Thanks for reading! I'm sorry it's so short. We're going to learn more about Derek's history and it's definitely going to influence him and Stiles. Let me know what you thought!
Entering into a casual relationship with Stiles, Derek discovered, was a taxing endeavor. There were moments in which Derek cursed Stiles' large brown eyes, rosy pink lips, and awkwardly nerdy and adorable personality. Resisting the urge to fall in love was probably one of the most difficult things he had ever done. Since he promised Stiles he'd stop putting a wall between them, he had to come up with more creative ways to do just that.

He became particularly more creative once sex had been introduced to their dynamic. He had always known he was bisexual. But aside from the inappropriately long glances at his teammates in the showers after basketball games and practices during his high school and undergrad years, and the few times he had watched porn, Derek had never acted on his carnal desires for other men.

So when Derek found himself in Stiles' bed, both of them down to their boxers with their clothing strewn throughout the apartment, he was in entirely foreign territory. Curious hands ventured further and further down his torso, Stiles' hips grinding against him with desire and anticipation. However, just as the wandering fingers dipped beneath his boxers, Derek froze, grabbing Stiles' hand and pulling it away.

"Relax!" Stiles chuckled. "I'm gonna suck it, not steal it!"

"I know you're not going to steal it!" Derek replied defensively. "I just…"

Stiles' eyes widened as he realized. "Are you a virgin?"

Derek's response was a convincing, but complete lie. "No! I've had sex before… just not with a man."

"Oh," Stiles murmured. "Well… let me guide you." He slowly slid Derek's boxers down and off his body, tossing them casually to the side. Derek watched as Stiles eyed his newly-freed cock with a sexy combination of hunger, lust, and adoration. He moaned loudly as Stiles licked up the length of the shaft, letting his tongue swirl around the large head, before it disappeared into his eager mouth. This was the first time somebody other than himself had touched him there. It felt better than he could have possibly imagined. Derek felt as though he were in heaven. He could feel his orgasm approaching and Stiles could tell by the way he was breathing and moving that he needed to stop, much to Derek's disappointment. "Don't worry… I won't leave you hanging… but I didn't want to end our fun there," Stiles told him. "I was wondering if you wanted to try it on me?"

"Uh alright," Derek mumbled as Stiles finally removed his last article of clothing. He felt timid and silly as he lowered his head toward Stiles' groin, letting his lips graze the throbbing tube of flesh. He let his tongue caress it. The taste was strange, but not bad. Slowly, he took it into his mouth, wrapping his lips around Stiles. Derek became instantly aware that he had been exposed to false advertising when it came to giving blowjobs. Stiles and pornos had made this look easy and even fun. But as his head bobbed up and down, he found his jaw was starting to ache and it was
incredibly tedious trying to ensure that he was providing Stiles pleasure while not grating his teeth against the sensitive skin. Occasionally he'd try to go a little too far and would gag.

Eventually, Stiles pulled him back up, kissing him. "Are you ready to try something else?"

"I want to be on top," Derek said stiffly.

Stiles chuckled. "Don't worry big guy… I was gonna let you. But before that…” With a surprising show of strength, Stiles managed to push Derek onto his back so that his legs were in the air.

"What are you doing?" Derek asked.

"It's alright," Stiles replied. "Just trust me." He lowered his head. Derek was nervous, completely unsure of what he should expect. However when he felt something wet and slimy against his backside, he tensed, until he felt it slip into him. It took him a second to realize what he was feeling was Stiles' tongue. He relaxed when he realized how good it felt.

"That's amazing," Derek moaned, which urged Stiles to put more effort into it, stopping only when he could sense Derek was once again on the verge of orgasm.

"Alright big guy… now it's time for what we've all been waiting for," Stiles said. "But there's a little bit of prep work that goes into this. Since you're kind of big, if you were to just shove it in me, it'd hurt and we'd probably spend the rest of the night in the hospital." He leaned over, grabbing some lube and condoms out of the bedside stand.

Derek was shocked at how readily available those items were to him. "Do you have sex in here often?"

"Well… sometimes it's in the living room and the shower. Danny was pretty fond of the kitchen," Stiles admitted. Derek made a mental note to never eat while visiting Stiles.

"By 'Danny' you mean the guy from the bar?" he asked.

"Yeah… he and I used to have a thing… but I don't know… it just didn't work out," Stiles explained as he squirted some lube on Derek's fingers before repositioning them both so that he was now on his back, legs in the air. He slowly guided Derek's fingers into him. "Just work it back and forth… Alright add another…” He repeated the process, talking Derek through the process of prepping him for what he wanted most. Stiles rolled the condom onto Derek's dick and added lube to it and then more to himself. Derek got into position. "Alright… go slowly."

Derek nodded, pressing in. He was surprised at how hard it was, even after the work that he put into it beforehand, to actually pass the sphincter. However once he did, he gave an audible gasp. He was so tight and warm. He slowly pushed in, pausing and continuing based on visual cues from Stiles' face, which was turning somewhat red, as were his chest and shoulders. "Are you alright?"

Stiles nodded. "Yeah… it feels really good."

"Same here…” Derek panted, beginning a series of slow, short thrusts. He pulled out and added more lube before receding back into Stiles' body. Stiles' hand furiously pumped up and down on his cock as he basked in the pleasure of the act when Derek picked up the pace on Stiles' direction.

He leaned down, kissing as he continued to thrust, though is movements were becoming more frantic. "Are you close?" Stiles asked.

"Yeah," Derek grunted.
"Me too…"

Derek squeezed his eyes shut as he slammed into Stiles, filling the condom entirely. He felt a rush of bliss as he collapsed next to Stiles who was convulsing from his own ecstasy. There was a sheen of sweat covering both of them. He watched as Stiles just basked in the afterglow. He looked beautiful. Derek leaned over and kissed him.

They kissed and Derek moved close to Stiles, not worried that Stiles' semen was getting on him. He liked the feel of their bodies next to one another. As he rested his head on Stiles' shoulder, he realized that he could very easily come to love Stiles. He could fall asleep and wake up next to him every single day for the rest of his life. The idea of that scared the living shit out of him.

They had sex several more times before both were too exhausted to even move and they fell asleep.

The next morning, Derek woke up before Stiles did. He was able to quickly get out of bed and pull on his clothes before Stiles was aware that anything was up. It was just as Derek had made his way to the front door of the apartment that Stiles appeared in his boxers. "Hey… I sort of hoped to wake up next to you. Is everything alright?"

"Yeah," Derek lied. "I didn't want to wake you. I tend to be a bit of an early riser and I remembered there were a few things I needed to get done at home."

"Oh… alright," Stiles said. He sounded disappointed.

Derek went across the living room, kissing him. "I'll see you at school on Monday, alright?"

That seemed to cheer Stiles up. "Ok, see you then."

Immediately upon leaving the apartment Derek stopped by the library. He looked up the biochemical mechanisms that drove the feelings he felt during his time with Stiles the night before. By learning that his feelings were just neurotransmitters, he became more secure about his feelings toward Stiles could be minimized to dopamine, vasopressin, and oxytocin.

The second time they had sex was a bit of a surprise. Stiles ended up bent over Derek's desk. It was the first time he had ever done something so spontaneous. He spent the rest of the afternoon meticulously cleaning his desk, but it was definitely worth it.

Their encounters were often. They were usually at Stiles' apartment, and Derek would concentrate on the neurotransmitters as a way of creating emotional distance. It isn't love, he would tell himself. It's chemistry. I'm biologically designed to want to love him. When they were done, Derek would come up with some excuse for why he needed to leave, despite Stiles' disappointment.

It was the seventh time it happened that Stiles finally put his foot down. "Why do you never want to sleep with me?"

"We have sex… I thought that's what that was," Derek replied.

"No. We fuck… more accurately you fuck me, then you rush to get your clothes on and leave."

"What do you expect, Stiles?"

"I'd think that by now, you might care enough about me to see that I'm pretty hurt by this!" Stiles said.
"It's not love! It's chemistry! We're designed to want to feel close to the people we have sex with. It doesn't mean anything!"

"What the fuck, Derek?" Stiles asked. He was shocked by how callous Derek was being.

"Why are you surprised?" Derek shot back. "You know what this is."

"Yeah. You want it to be 'casual' but sometimes I really just feel like I'm a hole for your dick! I had the same arrangement with Danny but at least he'd stay and cuddle! I'd wake up next to him the next morning... I wouldn't have to watch him walk out right after he finished!" Stiles shot back, making no attempt to hide how hurt he truly was.

"What do you want, Stiles?"

"I'm not saying I want a boyfriend…. But I want to feel like a person!" he said. "But you know what... you aren't capable of it."

Derek wanted to walk out right then, but he'd only be proving Stiles correct. "I told you before... there's a reason..."

"Then what is it?" Stiles demanded. "Because if I'm going to walk away from the only man I've ever loved, then I want to have something to hold on to other than the fact that he was a complete dick!"

"You love me?" Derek asked, shocked.

"Yes... no... I thought I did," Stiles replied. "But it doesn't matter."

"Alright. If you want to know. Her name was Paige."

"Derek, I think this is a little overboard!"

Derek merely laughed. "Alright... it might be a little overboard, but come on... we're young... this is San Francisco. How many people get this option?"

"I don't know," Paige replied, laughing. "Probably around 800,000 San Franciscans."

"Good point. Then do you want to walk?" Derek asked.

Paige eyed the giant hill. "No... I guess the trolley you reserved for us will do."

"You should probably get used to stuff like this. You're dating a Hale, after all!" Derek mused.

"No," Paige corrected him, climbing aboard the trolley. "I'm dating Derek... a kind, romantic English major... who just so happens to be a Hale." Derek let his hand rest around her waist as they rode. "But seriously... some people spend Spring Break with their families... or in Cancun. Why San Francisco?"

"It's the city of brotherly love."

"That would be Philadelphia. San Fran is called 'The City by the Bay' and the 'Paris of the West'. Did you even pay attention in Geography?"

Derek laughed and kissed her. "When are we going to have time to visit San Francisco when you're an established cellist performing for the Queen?"
"I'll make sure to book at least two concerts here a year," she replied with a giggle.

Derek stared at her, ignoring the beautiful scenery around him because in his mind, as long as she was there, nothing could eclipse her beauty. His arm brushed the small square lump in his jacket pocket. He had been working so hard to prevent her from knowing it was there until that night. He talked to his uncle Peter about wanting to take her somewhere amazing. Peter told him to just relax and let him make all the arrangements. They were going to spend the day sightseeing, then after a nice, romantic dinner, he was going to take her to Land's End and propose. He wanted everything to be perfect. This would be a night she would never forget.

She was the first thing he thought of when woke up and the last thing he thought of when he fell asleep. The thought of spending the rest of his life with her was exciting and he wanted nothing more to start his life with her immediately. The day they spent together was amazing and Derek hoped it was prophetic of a lifetime of future days.

Dinner that night was at a five-star French restaurant called Jardinier. It was incredibly expensive, but money was no object to a Hale.

She looked amazing. She was wearing a blue evening gown that he'd given her along with a necklace and matching earrings, all of which were also gifts from Derek. "I'm so full!" she said, placing her delicate hand on her stomach as they stood up. Derek signed the check.

"Just one last thing," Derek replied. "Then we can go back to the hotel."

"Can we do it tomorrow?" Paige pleaded. "I'm exhausted."

"Just this one thing. I promise," Derek said. "Then I'll let you sleep as long as you want tomorrow."

"Alright," she relented. "But you owe me!" They had gotten about a block away from the restaurant when Paige stopped. "I think I left our hotel key in the women's restroom of the restaurant."

"It'll be alright. We can get another one," Derek replied.

"That's a waste of $50. Seriously, Derek, it'll just take a minute!" she insisted.

They turned back around. "I'll go in and get it," Derek offered.

"Don't be silly! It's in the women's restroom," she laughed. "Just stay right here. I'll be back in a moment."

Derek stood there watching as she crossed the street, then disappeared into the restaurant. It felt like she took forever, but at last he saw her emerge. She held up the key triumphantly and ran toward Derek. From his perspective, it all seemed to go in slow motion. She hadn't been looking where she was going. The car struck her. Derek felt helpless as he watched her tumble over the hood, then back onto the road. "PAIGE!" he screamed, darting across the road, dodging cars. As he got to her side, he picked her up, yelling for someone to call an ambulance. "Paige, sweetie… stay with me."

"Derek…" she whimpered. "It hurts…"

He kissed her forehead, tucking some of her hair behind her ear. "The ambulance will be here soon. Just stay with me."

She shook her head lightly. "I'm dying," she said.

Tears began to fall from his eyes. "Don't say that… please…"
"I love you, Derek," she said.

"I love you too," he replied, kissing her cheek. He had to do it now or never. He reached into his pocket, but she moved her arm to stop him.

"The answer is yes," she said. Her breathing was becoming more labored. "I know you were going to propose. Yes. I would have married you."

"Will!" he corrected, still crying. By this point, a crowd had gathered around them. "You will marry me, Paige. The ambulance will be here and you'll go to the hospital and you'll get better… then you and I can spend the rest of our lives together."

"I am spending the rest of my life with you, Derek. I want the last thing I see to be your eyes," she said weakly. "I'm not going to last much longer…"

"No," Derek whimpered. "Please stay with me…"

Using the last of her strength, she reached up and caressed his cheek, wiping the tears away. "I love you, Derek."

Derek screamed out as her eyes closed for the last time. "Wake up…" he begged, kissing her cheek. The ambulance arrived moments later. The autopsy showed several broken ribs and massive damage to her internal organs. Even if the ambulance had been faster, she would have died. That news didn't help though.

When he buried her, he buried any notion of falling in love again. He didn't believe he could love anyone the way he loved Paige, nor did he believe anyone would merit his affection like she had. After Paige's death, Derek didn't laugh. He rarely smiled. His eyes became cold and empty. He was no longer spontaneous. He had no reason to be. Without Paige, his life was empty.

Stiles remained silent for a while, trying to figure out how to respond. Derek sighed. "I know that what I've done is wrong. And I know I keep fucking up… but I can't fall in love with you, Stiles. It hurts too much."

Stiles couldn't accept that answer. "To avoid something because it might be painful is cowardice," he said simply. "I'm sorry you lost Paige. I can't imagine what that must have been like for you. But you can't hide behind that to explain how you've acted toward me."

Derek could feel the anger building up within himself. "Don't you see, Stiles?" he asked. "If I love you, she dies again. I can't do that to her."

"Do you think she'd be happy to see the way you've kept her living?" Stiles replied. "It's not healthy. I don't think she'd even recognize you."

There was nothing Derek could say in response to that statement. Stiles was right. Paige wouldn't give him the time of day if she were to see him now. He was nothing like the man she fell in love with. He was a pitiful shadow of the man she loved. "You're right," he said softly. "She would be ashamed of me."

"Then what do you intend on doing about it?"

Derek sat down on the bed next to Stiles. "I can't promise that I'm not going to keep hurting or disappointing you. It seems to be what I'm best at," he said. "But I can promise that I'll let you in."
"I don't know if that's good enough," Stiles replied honestly. "I've given you so many chances. I need something more substantial than that." Derek nodded, understanding where Stiles was coming from. Stiles had given him way more chances than he even deserved. "I'm a big boy, Derek. I can handle a little hurt and disappointment here and there. I can't handle this constant second-guessing myself in an attempt to hold your favor. I'm not going to do it anymore. I shouldn't, but I love you."

Derek tried. He put every ounce of strength into saying those three little words in response. They kept getting blocked in his throat. He couldn't force them out no matter how hard he tried to. Instead, he pulled off his clothes, down to his boxers and crawled back into bed with Stiles. It was a small gesture, but he needed to regain Stiles' trust and hopefully this was a step in the right direction.

Stiles smiled, kissing Derek on the cheek. He understood the strength that had to have been behind that gesture. Stiles fell asleep quickly with Derek next to him. Derek took quite a bit longer. He looked over, watching as Stiles' chest rose and fell in a steady, slow pace. "I love you too, Stiles..." he whispered. He knew that Stiles didn't hear it. He knew that the next morning, they'd wake up next to one another and Stiles would have no knowledge that he finally admitted it, but he didn't care because he also intended to show it. With that resolution, he wrapped his arms around Stiles' lithe body and pulled them close, breathing in Stiles' scent as he, too, faded into slumber.

Chapter End Notes

A/N: Okay. So. I know that was a bit of an emotional roller coaster ride. But I promise... hot romantic sexy time in the next chapter. Please let me know what you thought of the chapter!
Chapter 6

Chapter Notes

Trigger warning for mourning, manipulation, underage sex, and… let's just call it what it is: rape.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

To Stiles and most of the rational universe, it was simply a drawer. It was a wooden container inside a larger wooden container where various objects could be stored out of sight. However as Derek sat on his bed, staring at the drawer, he felt as if the room was closing in on him. This was a huge step for him. Stiles had a drawer in his house. Standing up, Derek stretched, before walking into the bathroom. He couldn't think of a single room in his house where Stiles' touch hadn't been added. There were two different types of shower gel, two toothbrushes, and two towels hanging in the bathroom. Every time he noticed it, he had to practice deep breathing techniques.

Though Stiles had temporarily forbidden him from entering the kitchen, Derek realized he was in desperate need of wine. He poured more than the recommended amount of a cabernet and downed it with more speed than he could be proud of.

"Slow down, big guy!" Stiles chuckled. "Dinner's almost done. I don't want you to be too drunk to enjoy it."

Derek replied with a nervous laugh and downed another gulp. "It smells divine," he croaked.

Stiles wasn't fooled. "Are you alright, Derek?"

"I'm fine," Derek replied his voice unintentionally much higher than he wanted it to be.

"Bullshit. What's wrong?" he paused. "It's my stuff being here, isn't it…"

"I'm not saying anything because tonight is supposed to be a good night and if I do, it will become a thing and we'll spend all night arguing. I'm just going to have to get used to this change. That's all," Derek replied.

"I don't want you to be uncomfortable in your own house," Stiles insisted. "I can take my stuff home with me and we can try this later."

"See! You're turning it into a thing!"

"I am not! It's not a thing, I promise!"

"And now you're making a thing about whether or not this nonexistent thing is actually a thing!" Derek said exasperatedly. "This is why I didn't want to discuss it!"

"Stop saying 'thing!' It's starting to not even sound like a real word anymore!"

"Because there isn't a thing. So let's just have dinner. It smells great," Derek said, sitting at the table.

Stiles' belongings being in his house really was a thing, though. It was a huge step forward for them,
particularly Derek. He was trying to show Stiles that he was putting forth an effort to be a boyfriend and not a fuck buddy. And he was the one who cleaned out that drawer for Stiles to use in the first place. The look on Stiles' face told him he'd fucked up. While the food tasted amazing, dinner became awkwardly silent. After a while, the silence became so unbearable that Derek couldn't eat. "Look, I'm sorry, Stiles… this is just a lot of change to get used to. Paige didn't even have a drawer at my place."

"Well, like I said, I don't mind trying this again at a later point. I don't want you to be uncomfortable by this," Stiles repeated. "I love you, Derek. And if you don't feel comfortable with me having a drawer here, I won't have one."

"I'm not going to get used to it if we don't just do it," Derek admitted. "I want to be a better boyfriend."

Stiles smiled. "The fact that you said that is enough for me…"

"So I didn't royally fuck up?" Derek asked.

Stiles laughed. "No, you didn't royally fuck up. And yes… you're getting laid tonight."

Derek chuckled, returning to his meal. When they were both done eating, Stiles cleared the table and began to scrub the dishes clean. Derek walked up behind him, his arms snaking around Stiles' waist and his face was buried in the crook of Stiles' neck, inhaling his scent.

Letting out a boyish giggle, Stiles squirmed out of Derek's grasp. "At least let me finish cleaning the dishes before we dirty the kitchen…"

"I don't want to wait. The dishes will still be there tomorrow," Derek replied, turning Stiles around and pushing him so he was sitting on the counter. Stiles had never seen Derek so frisky. Usually, he was timid when it came to initiating sex. He liked this side of his boyfriend so he gave in, leaning to kiss him.

Slowly, Stiles began to peel off Derek's clothing, hating the fact that it meant that he had to stop kissing as he pulled the shirt over his boyfriend's head, though he relished the feel of Derek's smooth skin beneath his palms.

Derek wrapped Stiles' legs around his waist and picked him up, carrying him up the stairs and into the bedroom where he gently set him on the bed. Derek hovered over Stiles, letting their lips touch for a lingering second before he opened his eyes, staring at the beautiful sight beneath him. *I love you,* he thought. He was still unable to say it, though every single day he knew he meant it more and more.

His hand slid down Stiles' abdomen before taking a tight, yet gentle grip of Stiles' cock, stroking it in just the manner he knew drove his boyfriend wild. Moans and dirty words tumbled out of his mouth, which only served to egg Derek on. Soon, it wasn't his hand that was pumping up and down on Stiles, but it was Derek's mouth, working feverishly to bring Stiles to the brink, though just as he was finally about to cum, Derek stopped, relishing the look of frustration and disappointment on his lover's face.

He lubed his fingers and carefully began loosening Stiles up before putting on a condom and entering him. He took his cues from Stiles' facial expressions. He slowed down when Stiles looked uncomfortable, sped up when Stiles looked like he need it. His lips playfully teased Stiles' nipples, causing his boyfriend's back to arc. Derek's rough hands caressed the smooth pale skin.
He felt his lover shudder, the signs of his impending orgasm showing. Derek carefully wrapped his hand around Stiles' shaft, gently pumping up and down as he thrust at a steady pace. He stared intensely into Stiles' eyes as he brought them to orgasm.

In that moment, as hormones flooded his brain, all Stiles wanted was for Derek to collapse next to him and just cuddle. Instead, Derek did what he always did and removed the condom before hopping into the shower. At least they slept together, but Derek's post-sex fight or flight response was still hurtful.

As he waited alone for Derek to return, Stiles decided he'd finally talk to him about it. Granted, he shouldn't have started the conversation with "We need to talk" because the post-sex grin immediately faded from Derek's face.

"Is everything alright?"

Stiles sighed. "Yeah… no… I mean it's just that you always want to get up and be away from me after sex."

"We've slept together every single time since we last fought about it," Derek replied dismissively.

Stiles shook his head. "I know that but I mean right after. You always go take a shower or pull on clothes or something to prevent you from just being with me immediately after. It's like you're putting up a wall without actually putting up a wall."

Derek had never actually viewed it that way so he became somewhat defensive. "I don't know what you're talking about. It's been a good night… let's just keep it that way."

"And now you're redirecting. Is there a relationship mis-step you're not going to take?" Stiles asked. "This is something that's really bothering me and we need to talk about it."

"What do you want me to say?" Derek asked. "I'm sorry you're seeing things that aren't there."

Immediately Derek realized he shouldn't have said that. Stiles angrily replied, "Yeah… I'm seeing something that's not there. You."

Derek rolled his eyes. "You know what… I'm just going to sleep downstairs."

"This is the exact same argument we had before, you do realize this, right?" Stiles pointed out. "You were doing so well… and now… it's just like when we first started."

Derek turned around and started to walk out, but he stopped. "I've changed almost everything for you. I've become something I'm not. Paige wouldn't have made me change. She liked me as I was…"

"No," Stiles said, his rage boiling. "You're not allowed to use her as a weapon against me. You're not the only one with baggage, Derek! I've got some of my own. But you don't see me hiding behind it like a coward."

It was all happening too fast. First his mom, then his dad. In less than a month he'd become an orphan. He stared at the little orange bottle of pills he had to keep on him at all times. He now knew the signs of a panic attack all too well. He never wanted to experience another one again.

The social worker's car smelled like cigarettes, cheap perfume, and dogs. His stare shifted silently out the window as the car brought him to a strange house in a city he'd never heard of. "Your new foster
parents are excited to meet you," she said.

Her fake cheery voice grated on him. He didn't respond. He just kept staring, watching as trees, houses, and businesses that he'd grown up seeing passed by him. In a way this was good, though. It removed the constant reminders that he'd never be able to play another game of catch with his dad. That his mom wouldn't fuss over his first high school homecoming, or his prom. That he'd never sit down to another family dinner and have his parents ask about his day. He'd only have that empty place in his chest and the dreams that ended in him screaming out for them and then crying until he was exhausted.

When the car finally stopped, it was in front of a large two-story Victorian with green paint and white trim. A handsome man and shorter beautiful woman stood in front of the porch. "It's nice to meet you, Stiles," the man said in a baritone British accent.

"We're happy to have you in our home, even if it's under such terrible circumstances," the woman replied. She held out her hand. Stiles shook it, but didn't reply. She led Stiles inside to his room while her husband took care of the final paperwork that made them Stiles' official guardians. The room was painted blue. Apparently the social worker had given them a short list of things he liked, because posters adorned the walls and the blanket had lacrosse designs. "We wanted this to feel like your home. If it's too much, we can start from scratch and let you pick everything."

"No, it's fine," Stiles mumbled, looking around. He set his bags down on the bed. "Thanks."

"I'll let you get settled in. Dinner will be ready in an hour," she said.

Stiles didn't use that hour alone to unpack. Instead, he cried into the pillow. The man knocking on his door was what told him that it was time for them to eat. "I can't imagine what you're going through right now. But if you want to talk to us, we're here for you," he said. "Come on. Let's go eat."

They ventured back downstairs. The food smelled amazing. "So what do you want me to call you?" Stiles asked quietly after he finished eating.

"Just our names," the woman replied. "My name is Kali and my husband's name is Deucalion… but everyone just calls him Duke."

"My father was a big fan of Greek mythology," Duke explained.

After dinner, Stiles drew upon the manners he'd been raised to possess. He offered to help with the dishes, but Kali insisted he just worry about settling in.

He didn't sleep the first few nights. Everything was just strange and out of place. He learned that Duke was a trial lawyer, but not much else about what he did. Kali taught theater in the high school he would be attending in the fall.

"Alright Stiles, what epic adventure are we having today?" Kali asked when Stiles trudged downstairs, a week into living with them.

He hadn't wanted to do anything so he shrugged. "Look, I know that all of this is scary and new. But it's not going to get any better if you stay cooped up in your room all the time."

Stiles nodded, seeing the logic in her argument. He poured himself a bowl of cereal and sat at the table.

"What if we went to Disneyland?" Kali asked. "Duke isn't working on Friday, we'd have all weekend long… what do you say?"
What twelve-year-old orphan was going to say no to Disneyland?

That weekend, they packed a few bags and headed to Anaheim. It was amazing. Stiles had a lot of fun and it was the first night he didn't wake up screaming.

As time passed, they fell into a comfortable schedule. Kali and Duke introduced him to their family and friends. He turned 13 years old. When fall came around, Kali enrolled him in school. He was having fun. He enjoyed the life he now had with them.

Then everything was turned upside down. Duke began tucking him into bed, which was odd because he didn't need it. He no longer even woke up screaming. Duke's hands would linger in places they shouldn't. At first, Stiles thought nothing of it.

Then the touching was no longer over the blanket… then it was no longer over the clothes. Stiles asked Duke not to, but Duke told him that it was normal, but if he said anything he'd end up homeless. The idea of being homeless scared Stiles.

He found his outlet in Kali's theater class. He had a talent and Kali was working hard on ensuring that he had the opportunity to shine like the star she saw him as. She truly saw him as her son and Stiles, in turn, viewed Kali as a strong maternal force in his life. He just couldn't bring himself to call her "mom" but Kali understood and she was fine with that.

For the Halloween play Stiles' freshman year, they did Dracula. Kali gave Stiles the lead role. He deserved it.

To celebrate, Duke took Stiles "camping."

They didn't go to the woods; instead, Duke checked them into a hotel for the night. "Are you a virgin, Stiles?"

"Yes," he answered timidly.

"Let me tell you… your first time is one you'll remember for the rest of your life. I'll never forget mine. I'm glad that I'll get to be yours," Duke replied.

"I don't want that," Stiles stammered.

"Nonsense. I know you'll change your mind after it happens. You'll realize how much you loved it," Duke said. He began to strip his clothes off and ordered Stiles to do the same. Tears fell from his eyes.

"Please… I really don't want to do this…"

"You trust me, don't you, Stiles?" Deucalion asked. Stiles nodded slowly. "Your first time should be with someone you trust. I'll bear that burden for you."

There was no kissing. There was no hugging or cuddling. There was pain. There were strange smells. There was Stiles crying into the pillow and Duke's repeated statement: "You like this, Stiles." After it was done, Stiles felt sore. He had a hard time walking, which Duke explained to a worried Kali was a result of a nasty fall he'd taken at the campsite. But as a testament to Kali's skill as a theater teacher and Stiles' skill as an actor, she never learned the truth. And Duke was right. Stiles never forgot his first time.

Duke became even more aggressive and frequent. "Please don't do this…" Stiles begged. "I'll tell!"
Duke shook his head, laughing. "No you won't. Because they won't believe you… and even if they
did, both me and Kali would go down and you would end up homeless. And let's face it, I'm a well-
known and well-respected lawyer. I'll be fine."

After Duke finished, he said the most harrowing words Stiles had ever heard. "I think I'm going to
file a motion for Kali and I to adopt you. That way this won't ever have to end."

They ended up adopting him.

Again, Stiles' talent as actor was seen. He acted as though he was genuinely happy about his new
family. When it came to Kali, he was. She loved him and he loved her. She had inspired him to study
theater more in-depth and when college application time rolled around, he only submitted
applications for theater programs and Kali drove him all around for his auditions. However, when it
came to paying for his education at UC Irvine, he hit a snag. Duke made too much money, so he
couldn't qualify for need-based aid. He managed to get some scholarships, but not enough to pay for
both tuition and housing. Duke offered to foot the bill in exchange for regular sexual favors. Stiles,
unfortunately, had no choice but to agree.

He finished that degree in only two years.

The moment he had his TA position locked in at Carnegie, he went off the grid. He never contacted
them again. He missed Kali, but to communicate with her would bring Deucalion back into his life.
He just couldn't do that.

"I'm sorry. I didn't know," Derek replied.

"Of course you didn't! Because I refuse to let my life be dictated by the fact that my foster father
raped me. I refuse to let him be a guiding force in my life. Bad shit happens to everyone, Derek. You
don't have the monopoly on young angst," Stiles said. "I'm going home." He pulled on his clothes
and emptied out the drawer.

"Stiles please… I don't want to leave it like this," Derek said.

"I really just don't want to keep having this conversation," Stiles replied. "If this is going to be what
our relationship is, I don't want it. I mean, you can't even tell me you love me."

"That's not true!" Derek shot back. He knew it was, though. "Stiles… I'm trying. I really am. I told
you I'm not good at this."

"Parent Night is in a month," Stiles said. "If things aren't better by that, this is over. No more second
chances."

He still went back to his apartment. In the course of a few hours, Derek and the drawer had come
almost full circle. He stared at it as it hung open, completely void of Stiles' belongings. It became
a thing. They argued. A beautiful night was ruined. Derek poured himself a glass of scotch and
downed it, trying to drown the fires of self-hatred which were beginning to stir. He seemed incapable
of letting himself be happy with Stiles. He poured more scotch and downed it. Only when he had
several more glasses of it did he get so drunk that he went back to his room, pulled the drawer
completely out of the dresser. Under the glow of the full moon and the influence of Chivas Regal, he
took a hammer and demolished the drawer, burying the pieces in a small hole he dug in his back
eyard.

As he stood, bottle in hand, staring at the small mound of dirt, he realized the drawer was his life.
Chapter End Notes

A/N: Thanks for reading! I hope you enjoyed learning about Stiles’ admittedly tragic past. Now if only we could get Derek to stop putting his foot in his mouth…. Please let me know what you thought! Also, sorry for how long it took to get this chapter out! I've been super swamped with work and school. I've had almost no time to write, and I feel like I'm letting my readers down. =/
"Dear God, look at yourself," Peter sneered as he let himself into Derek's room. "You're a Hale not a Hilton. Get up, get showered, and get dressed."

Derek didn't move, instead, he continued staring at the ceiling. "Why am I incapable of letting myself be happy?"

"Hales don't end up happy, they end up successful, which is like happiness, only other people recognize it," Peter replied. "Now get out of bed and stop wallowing in self-pity… and B.O."

"I'm serious, Uncle Peter," Derek insisted. "I have a chance at true love with someone who is truly amazing… and every time things start getting good, I do something to fuck it up. I love him. Why can't I show it?"

Peter rolled his eyes. "I don't know. You're emotionally unavailable, you have the humorous charm of a slaughter house, and the self-sabotaging nature of Captain Ahab. It's what makes you perfect to lead the Academy. No heart. All business."

Derek was horrified by the brutal assessment his uncle had given because it was true. He reluctantly obeyed his uncle's orders and trudged into the bathroom, getting the water running. While Derek was showering, Peter went downstairs and began brewing some coffee. He was joined after a few minutes. "What are you doing here?" Derek asked.

"I've not seen you for a while, so I wanted to come by and visit," Peter replied simply, downing more coffee.

Silence passed between them. "Do you really think I have no heart?"

"You're alive so obviously you have a heart, Derek," Peter said dismissively. "Don't be stupid."

Derek glared over his coffee mug. "You know what I mean, Uncle Peter…"

Peter sighed and set his mug on the hard oak table. "After Paige… then your parents and sister, you were different. But that's not a bad thing. You became more focused. I watched you walk across three different stages, earning three different degrees in less than four years. You made me proud and I think your parents would be proud, too. You're successful, Derek."

"But I'm not happy," Derek countered. "Except for when I'm with him."

"Who is this guy?" Peter asked, leaning forward.

"No judgment?"

"You're my nephew. I love you. Of course there's no judgment."

"His name is Stiles. He teaches theater at the Academy," Derek said, shrinking into his chair. Peter's eyes widened. "Derek!"

"You said you wouldn't judge!"
"That was before I knew you were driving yourself insane over that insufferable hipster!"

"He's not a hipster. And he loves me… and I love him."

"He wants your money… he's an actor."

"He's my boyfriend," Derek retorted, suddenly feeling the need to come to Stiles' defense. "What is this newfound classism? You were fine with Paige and she wasn't from a wealthy family. Is this because I'm dating a guy?"

"Classism? No. I'm an elitist. There's a difference," Peter corrected. "And I don't care if you are dating a guy or a girl… just so long they're from money. Like us. But Paige… That's a complicated story. I didn't approve of her, either. I was just too afraid to say something. At that age… when you're young and in love, forbidding something tends to make it all the more appealing. I was afraid that if I showed my disapproval, I'd push you even further into her arms."

"So when she died, you were relieved that I wouldn't end up marrying her?"

Peter stiffened, choosing his answer carefully. "Paige's death was a tragedy."

"Stop avoiding the question," Derek said, his voice insistent. "Were you relieved?"

Sighing, Peter averted his eyes. "There was a moment when, yes, I felt relief. But I've always been looking out for your best interests, Derek."

"Get out," Derek growled.

"Listen to me," Peter started.

"I told you to get out!" Derek pointed at the door.

"Fine," Peter snarled in response, moving to his feet. "But when you come to your senses, you know where to find me."

"Jesus Christ! I said I'm coming, hold on!" Stiles' annoyed voice rang out. When he opened the door, he saw Derek standing there, holding a box of pizza and a three-ring binder. Disappointment dripped from his voice. "Oh. It's you."

"I deserved that," Derek admitted. "But I have something that will hopefully make up for what happened."

"Unless there's a sense of decency in that pizza box, I'm not interested."

"Okay, I deserved that, too," Derek said. "But I happen to have in my hands Anthony Rapp's signed copy of the original script of Rent."

Stiles struggled to not explode. "As awesome as that is… I'm still mad at you."

"And there's a pizza with pepperonis arranged like Harry Potter's scar," Derek added.

"Fine," Stiles said, opening the door wide enough for Derek to pass through. "You've got ten minutes."

Derek set the stuff on the table before taking Stiles tightly in his arms, who melted into the embrace. I love you. He tried to say it over and over again, but it still wouldn't come out. I love you like Mr.
Darcy loves Elizabeth Bennet, like Eloise and Abelard, Napoleon and Josephine. None of the sonnets or poems or stories I've read and memorized can even begin to do justice to how I love you. "It felt strange not sleeping next to you last night," Derek said, breaking several minutes of silence.

"I didn't like it either," Stiles admitted. "I'm just tired of how fucked up our relationship is, Derek. I meant what I said. If things aren't better by Parent Night, I'm calling this off."

Derek nodded. "I understand."

"So is that really Anthony Rapp's signed script?" Stiles asked. Derek nodded. "How did you get it?"

"I'm a Hale," Derek replied cryptically. That answer seemed to satisfy Stiles because he squeezed Derek's torso tightly.

Derek sat at the table and Stiles fetched two paper plates. They dined in relative silence before Derek finally spoke. "Do you think I'm heartless?" he asked.

Stiles flashed a quizzical look, unsure what prompted this question. "I think you can be a real asshole sometimes... But 'heartless' is a bit harsh." Derek pursed his lips. "Why?"

"It doesn't matter," Derek replied.

"Bullshit," Stiles said, his eyebrows raised obstinately.

Derek tried to keep a straight face, but Stiles' stare broke him down. Finally he sighed and reclined in his chair, pushing his plate away from him. "I got a visit from my uncle. Something he said... It just hit me and I can't stop thinking about it."

"What sort of uncle calls his nephew 'heartless'?" Stiles asked, figuring that's what it was that had Derek so bothered.

Affixing a fake smile to his face, Derek finally looked at Stiles. "Mine, apparently."

"It was really shitty of him, Derek. You're not heartless. You're just a hard nut to crack," Stiles said, staring into Derek's eyes in a way that was so intense and honest that Derek had to look away.

"I really don't mean to be. I want to be more open... Especially for you. I'm scared that I'll keep doing these things and lose you, but I can't stop. But it's like I'm living proof of what he said: Hales don't end up happy. They end up successful."

"I don't see why those two things have to be mutually exclusive," Stiles pointed out. "You can be happy and successful."

"You're right."

The school was immaculate. Derek had been there now going on 24 hours. Stiles was worried that he was going to pass out from exhaustion, but Parent Night was an important night at Beacon Hills Academy. Parents were invited and encouraged to come and see what all of their hard-earned money was paying for. But more importantly for Derek, the entire Board of Governors was going to be there, and they were apparently going to be announcing the newest Chairman. "Has nobody here ever hung a banner?" Derek growled.

"Fine," Mr. McCall snapped after the fifth try, climbing down from the ladder. "You want this
banner hung, you do it."

Derek climbed up, placing the pin exactly where he knew it needed to go. He then did a room-to-
room inspection to make sure that all classrooms were neatly arranged. Stiles' room was filled with
props from the play, so he gave a reluctant pass, despite the clutter. "When was the last time you
slept?" Stiles asked, taking a moment to close his door and give them a bit of privacy.

"I can sleep when this night is over," Derek replied.

"Would you like to relieve a bit of tension before the event?" Stiles' eyebrows raised suggestively
and his tongue danced across his perfect pink lips, lingering ever so slightly.

"Are you suggesting a quickie in your classroom?"

"We've done it in your office… might as well christen this room, too," Stiles replied with a
nonchalance that would have troubled Derek if he hadn't been pressing himself against Stiles' slender
body.

"Well… teacher's pet… when I was in school, we had a word for that. It wasn't particularly nice,"
Peter's dulcet voice broke their silence, startling them both. Derek instantly put several feet of
distance between Stiles and himself.

"Uncle Peter… what are you doing here?" Derek asked, his voice trembling.

"It's parent night. Since I practically raised you… don't you think I should be here for this?" Peter
replied. "But instead, I find you with your hands in the cookie jar. This is Stiles, I presume?"

The venom dripping from his voice was so thick Derek was nearly paralyzed from it. He and his
Uncle hadn't left things on good terms. He knew his Uncle had vindictive tendencies and anyone
who was stupid enough to cross him was made into an example. But since he held the Hale name,
Derek wasn't as fearful for himself. It was Stiles that Derek worried more for.

"It's nice to meet you, Mr. Hale," Stiles said, his voice was even in a way that showed Derek that he
was either a masterful actor befitting his role in the school, that he was brave, or that he was
incredibly stupid, though Derek wasn't ready to rule out the possibility of there being a healthy
combination of the latter two.

"Believe me," Peter replied, looking at Stiles as if he were lower than trash. "The pleasure is all
yours."

"Please, Uncle Peter," Derek pleaded. "It isn't what it looks like."

"Don't lie to me, Derek," Peter replied. "It's exactly what it looks like. I wasn't born yesterday."

"Okay so it's what it looks like… but please… you have to understand," Derek implored.

"I understand perfectly," Peter's voice carried a false sweetness that chilled Derek to his marrow.
"You're in love."

Peter slowly backed out of the classroom, leaving the two of them alone, though in considerably less
of a frisky mood. "I need to go," Derek whispered, making his way to the door.

"Derek wait!" Stiles called, but Derek was already gone.

There was no way Derek could relax in the hour he had until the event started. People were already
coming in and he was forced to act as though he wasn't petrified of the consequences of his interaction with his uncle.

When it was time to start, Derek approached the podium that had been set up in the gymnasium. He delivered a speech about how for more than a century, Beacon Hills Academy had turned out the best and the brightest and that he was proud to be able to continue its noble history. When he was done rambling, he introduced the former chairman of the Board of Governors who was going to announce the newest chairman.

As Derek took his seat and listened to the former chairman, though he only paid attention to the last sentence. "So it is with great pride that I leave my seat to a man whose family has been a part of this academy's success since its inception: my very good friend Mr. Peter Hale."

Derek's eyes widened and he shot a worried look at Stiles who was sitting in the audience. Peter couldn't hear his uncle's speech due to his heart thudding rapidly in his chest. This meant that his uncle now had the power to dismiss him and any other faculty member.

After the speeches were done, Peter turned around and flashed a sinister grin at Derek. During the catered reception, instead of bouncing busily from family to family, Derek decided to tend to his own familial issues and angrily pulled Peter out into the hallway. "Why didn't you tell me?" he demanded.

"You kicked me out of your house before I could." It amused Peter that Derek was so worried by this.

"Why?"

"There needs to be at least one respectable Hale in a leadership role at this Academy," Peter replied. His words stung, but Derek didn't back down. "I'm a perfectly respectable leader. I don't need you meddling in my business."

"Well now, your business is my business. But I'm a fair man, Derek. I'll give you a little bit of time to clear up any loose ends… such as those vicious little rumors spreading about you and Dr. Stilinski," Peter said.

"What rumor?"

"Haven't you heard?" Peter's voice was playfully curious. "Someone spotted you two in a very compromising position in his classroom today." Before Derek could rear back his fist, which was ready to punch at any moment, Peter grinned again and walked away.

He didn't stay for the rest of Parent Night. He went out to his car and sat there, dumbfounded. Staring off into space, he could practically see any chances of a life with Stiles crumbling in front of him.

Before going home, he made the familiar drive to Stiles' apartment. He sat in his car, staring at the window where Stiles' bedroom would be. He even watched as Stiles pulled in, climbed the stairs, and then turned the lights on. He wasn't sure what to do.

Eventually, however, he brought the engine to life and drove home. He stared at his ceiling for a while before exhaustion finally overtook him.

*The din of chirping birds and children's laughter filled the air. Derek laughed as he watched his son climb the giant dome-shaped jungle gym. It was moments like these that Derek felt the most at*
peace. All he needed now was Stiles for it to be true perfection. He stared for a moment at the golden band on his finger before returning his gaze to their son.

"Daddy! Daddy! Did you see what I just did?" Caleb asked excitedly.

Derek hadn't, but he didn't want to disappoint his son. "I sure did, buddy!" he replied, slowly approaching. "Do it again! Maybe we can show Papa when he gets here!"

The little boy's bright blue eyes lit up. "Papa's coming?" he asked excitedly.

"Of course Papa's coming!" Derek chuckled back. Apparently the trick that he'd accomplished was going from hanging upside-down on the top of the jungle gym to somersaulting and landing on his feet below. The second time he attempted it, Caleb didn't quite stick the landing and fell flat on his back. Immediately Derek's papa bear instincts kicked in. "Oh come here, sweetie!" called. Caleb ran to him and Derek wrapped his arms around his little boy, picking him up. "Are you hurt?"

Caleb nodded slowly into his chest. "Mhmm!"

"Tell me where it hurts. I'll kiss it and make it all better," Derek insisted.

"My hand," Caleb replied softly. Derek carefully inspected his son's hands. One of them was a little scraped up. Derek brought it to his lips and then stared into his son's eyes. They seemed relieved.

"Is that better?" Derek asked.

"Yes," he whimpered.

Glancing at his watch, Derek realized that Stiles would be arriving momentarily. "Why don't we see if we can find Papa?" he suggested. Caleb lit up. The two of them walked, hand-in-hand in search of the last member of the Stilinski-Hale household. Derek hated having to write all of that out when he signed his name, but it had been important to Stiles that they hyphenate.

"I'm not a Hale," he said. "I'll never be a Hale. I'm a Stilinski through-and-through, and that's something you'll never be. So either we keep our own names or we hyphenate them."

They had walked to the edge of the park when Caleb finally caught sight of Stiles. "Papa!" he squealed, clapping his hands excitedly. Even from the distance, Derek could see how Stiles' mood completely changed upon seeing them.

Not being one to jay-walk, Stiles waited for the crossing signal to change. As soon as he had the signal, he began to cross. A car speeding out of nowhere ran the red light. Derek quickly covered Caleb's eyes, but watched as the car slammed into Stiles. A sickening noise could be heard and Stiles tumbled over the car, landing on the asphalt, blood leaking from his mouth.

"STILES NO!" Derek screamed out. He sat straight up in bed, utterly drenched in sweat. He couldn't get his heart to stop racing as he fumbled for his phone, needing to hear Stiles' voice… something… anything to tell him that he was alright.

"Hello?" came the groggy voice at the other end.

Derek didn't speak. Tears simply streamed down his cheeks.

"Derek?" Stiles asked again, still sounding tired. "It's three in the morning. Is everything alright?" He thought he heard the sound of Derek crying, but he wasn't sure. He resigned himself to the idea that
perhaps Derek dialed him by accident and hung up. Derek sat in the perspiration, shaking. It felt so real and without Stiles beside him, he panicked.

Still reeling from the experience, Derek managed to pull himself out of bed. He stripped the sheets and blankets, bringing them down to the washer and starting it. The steady hum helped to calm him as he then began heating some water and rifled through the cabinet for some chamomile tea. The scream of the boiling water startled him and he quickly turned off the heat, poured the water into the cup and began dunking the tea bags. The scent filled his nostrils, its effect was nearly instantaneous. As he brought the scorching liquid to his lips, he blew on it, trying to cool it down just a bit.

After adding a little bit of honey, he slowly sipped on the tea, trying to get the image of Stiles' death out of his head. When the little bell chimed, saying that his sheets and blanket were clean, Derek got up and moved them into the dryer. He then took his cup of tea to the living room where he turned on the TV and sat in his favorite chair, flipping through channels as he went from one infomercial to another. The people hocking useless junk seemed utterly feckless considering the few who might see it. Derek found himself somewhat nostalgic for Billy Mays.

The chamomile tea was doing its job. His eyelids were feeling heavy again. By his count the dryer would be almost done. He took another long sip, letting the hot liquid rest in his mouth before dancing down his throat, filling him with the warm, calm sensation.

The buzzer of the dryer alerted him that it was time to go back to sleep. He grabbed the silky sheets and the soft blanket and carried them upstairs, stretching them over the mattress. He stuffed his pillows into the pillow cases and neatly spread the blanket over the bed, making perfect hospital corners. When he was satisfied, he climbed back into bed for another hour or so of restless sleep before his alarm went off.

He showered in silence. He still felt uneasy from the nightmare, but as he soaped his body, rinsing away the suds, he felt somewhat out-of-sorts, but he had a school to run. He was just thankful that it was Friday and he could spend the weekend with Stiles.

As he let himself into his office, he found someone was already in his seat, facing the windows behind the desk. "Stiles?" Derek asked.

"Not exactly," Peter replied, spinning around.

"Get out of my office," Derek ordered.

"Is that any way to talk to your uncle?" Peter asked. "Much less your new boss…"

"Please, Uncle Peter… why are you doing this?" Derek asked. "I love him."

"Does he know that?" Peter asked. "I mean… have you told him?"

"No…"

"If you haven't told him, then perhaps you don't love him as much as you think you do," Peter offered. "I'm doing this for you, Derek. You'll appreciate it one day. But I am serious. Something needs to be done about the theater teacher. Today. I'm giving you the opportunity to do it, or I will. And believe you know me well enough to know that you don't want me to do it."

Derek rolled his eyes and walked out, heading to the staff lounge for more coffee. As he walked in, he knew immediately that they had been talking about him. One teacher snickered, but Derek didn't see who. He filled his coffee cup and walked out as Stiles rounded the corner, dressed in his usual unprofessional attire. McCall walked by. Upon seeing the two of them together, he let out a wolf

"No," Derek replied. He had to do it now. He had to say something. It would show the other teachers that he meant business and it might dispel the rumors. His face was hard. It was good to see Stiles alive and well, which made what was coming out of his mouth that much more difficult. "I want you to go home and come back dressed like you don't eat out of a dumpster. If you come to work like this again, you're fired."

"Derek… what's wrong?" Stiles asked.

"It's Dr. Hale," Derek corrected. He tried to show in his eyes that there was another reason for this. He was begging for Stiles to see it. He could tell that Stiles was defiantly holding back tears.

"Fine," Stiles said. To Derek, it sounded a bit more like 'fuck you.'

Derek followed him outside and out of earshot. "Stiles…"

"It's Dr. Stilinski," Stiles replied.

"Please… there's a reason…" Derek insisted.

"I'm not interested. You let me in… you put up a wall. I told you I was done. I meant it," Stiles replied. "Now I'm going to go home, change, and I'll be back before first period. This rollercoaster ride has been a complete blast. I hope you live a long, lonely life… just like you want."

"I mean it… Let me explain," Derek tried again.

"Go fuck yourself, Dr. Hale," Stiles said before climbing into his Jeep and driving away.

Derek struggled to maintain composure as he made his way to his office. Peter smiled at him.

"Bravo, Derek. I'm proud of you."

"Stop," Derek choked out. "Just stop. I just let go of the first person I've loved since Paige. I don't need you gloating."

"Oh Derek," Peter whispered, pulling his nephew into an awkward hug. "I told you before… Hales don't end up happy." Derek cried into his uncle's shoulder, unaware of the sinister smile parting his relative's lips. Everything was falling apart for Derek. It was all falling into place for Peter.

Chapter End Notes

A/N: Let me know what you think? I'm sorry about how long it took. I've had some wicked midterms to study for.
Pain. Loss. Hopelessness. Derek felt all of this and more every second of every day. In many ways, this hurt more than losing Paige. At least he didn't have to see her walking around his school every day. He had begun drinking quite a bit more. Every night as the Chivas Regal coursed through his system, lowering his inhibitions, he'd scrawl out excerpts from literary masterpieces onto sheets of lined paper before folding them carefully and stuffing them into an envelope which he'd then place in Stiles' box each morning before school.

The first one:

*You are my heart, my life, my one and only thought.* – Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

Another one said:

*I love your feet because they have wandered over the earth and through the wind and water until they brought you to me.* – Pablo Neruda

Hoping to appeal to Stiles' more nerdy leanings, he took a quote from *The Fellowship of the Ring*:

*I would rather share one lifetime with you than face all the ages of the world alone.* – J.R.R. Tolkien

In an attempt to appeal to Stiles' romantic side, he brought out a little *Wuthering Heights*:

*Whatever our souls are made of, his and mine are the same.* – Emily Brontë.

And to show Stiles that he finished the entire *Harry Potter* series, he used a passage that made him cry.

*Dumbledore watched it fly away, and as her silvery glow faded he turned back to Snape, and his eyes were full of tears.*

"*After all this time?*"

"*Always,* said Snape. – J.K. Rowling."

There were many others, but none of them were ever read by their intended recipient. Each morning, Derek felt the agony of watching Stiles pick up the envelope, rip it in half and throw it in the paper recycling box near the secretary's desk. This went on for weeks until Derek gave up, deciding to write one last one, this time he was sober.

On the envelope, he wrote the words "Please read this one."

*Stiles,*

*I know I fucked up. But I really want to explain. My uncle was threatening to fire you if I didn't do something to quell the rumors he started. What I did was awful, but I did it for you. If you're fired from this school, it'll be hard to find another job and I wanted to make sure you didn't have to go through that. I could have gone about it another way. I realize that.*

*And even if this is the last interaction we have, I want you to know something: I love you. I've loved*
you for a while now. I was attracted to you from the moment you first walked into my door. My entire time in universities, I read about love at first sight and I didn't know what it meant or even believe in it until I found you. And like so many literary characters, I screwed it up and I don't get a happy ending. I know I don't deserve you, but it would make life without you easier to bear if you simply knew that I love you. Not "loved"… love. You deserve happiness and someone who can show it easily. Maybe that wasn't me.

I'm not asking for your forgiveness. I'm just asking that you realize that I love you.

-Derek.

That one wasn't read either. As Derek watched the two halves float into the recycling bin, it was as if something within him tore as well. He was already having trouble sleeping, but it became worse. He couldn't concentrate. He saw Stiles everywhere.

Ever a glutton for punishment, Derek made the mistake of wandering into the space that gave him a view of Stiles' classroom. They were practicing a song that seemed to be wrought with emotion. Derek didn't know the context, though.

Stiles was working with the same student who had sung "I Dreamed a Dream" before. He stopped her and stood on stage with her, starting the music. Derek had never heard him sing before. He was struck by how beautiful his voice was, even if what it was singing sounded a bit harsh. However, as it reached a certain point, Derek saw Stiles angrily staring straight at him.

"He was the same way he was always run away, hit the road, don't commit, you're full of shit! He's in denial… didn't give an inch when I gave a mile! … I'd be happy to die for a taste of what Angel had: Someone to live for, unafraid to say 'I love you!'"

Derek shook his head and walked away. Upon returning to his office, he found Peter already there. "Wow… you look even less fun than normal. Who kicked your puppy?" his uncle asked.

Derek gave a roll of his eyes and sat down in his chair. "I don't think I can keep doing this," Derek admitted. "It hurts too much."

"Oh my God, change the record!" Peter complained. "He's just a guy. You'll get over him. Maybe you should just take some vacation time… go somewhere and really let loose. Fuck some new people… loosen up."

He felt as if his uncle didn't even know him. "And what part of that sounds like something I would do?"

"It's not. You're a tight-ass. I was just putting out suggestions," Peter replied. "But you should do something to help yourself get over him."

"But I don't want to get over him," Derek stated. "I really just want to be with him."

"No, you want the feeling you get from being with him," Peter corrected. "I really thought you were smarter than this."

Derek didn't appreciate his uncle's patronizing tone. "Don't talk to me like I'm an idiot. Of the two of us, I'm the one with a Doctorate."

"There are many different kinds of intelligence, Derek."

"Why do I feel like you're up to something?" Derek asked.
"It might be those legendary trust issues your beloved complained about…" Those words ripped through Derek's chest like a knife. There was so much physical pain that accompanied them that Derek nearly cried. Peter noticed the change. "Too soon?"

"Just go," Derek ordered.

"I didn't mean anything by it," Peter said.

"Yes you did. You're getting some kind of satisfaction from this. Don't deny it," Derek added. "I honestly wish for once in my life you could just be my uncle instead of scheming about one thing or another."

"Scheming?" Peter chuckled as he made his way to the door. "I'm not scheming. I'm genuinely trying to help. The best thing for you is to move on. I think you should take a week and go do something fun. I'll run the school in your absence."

"Absolutely not," Derek countered.

"Why?"

"I don't trust you."

"That hurts!" Peter placed his hand over his heart. "All I've ever done is try give you the best advice and opportunities I can. Certainly my methods have been a little unorthodox, but they've gotten you this far. At least take a few days off… do whatever you literary types do…"

"Like Sylvia Plath?"

"Well… that's not what I meant, but if that's what you wish to do, I'll respect your decision," Peter replied.

"The correct answer was 'No.' Now please get out of my office," Derek said dryly.

Stiles felt he had earned his Oscar. Only Derek seemed to know just how upset he truly was over the split and that was only because he made a concerted effort to tear up every note or letter or whatever it was concealed within those envelopes.

Every single day, he dressed in a suit and tie. He was miserable. He wasn't going to renew his teaching contract at the end of the year. He wanted to find something as far away as he could. He had fond memories of Pittsburg from when he was at Carnegie Mellon. He also heard that New Haven and Hartford were both amazing cities to live in. They had the added bonus of being all the way across the country from Derek.

His life had developed a sad routine that it never before possessed. In the mornings, he'd wake up and shower before deciding on which soul-crushing outfit he'd force himself into, all the while dreading the long car ride that would inevitably lead to him seeing the one face in the world would rather go the rest of his life without ever seeing again.

And then there was the matter of Derek spying on his classes. When they were playing cat-and-mouse and flirting back and forth, it was cute. But now, Stiles found it to be oppressive and a constant reminder that there was nothing he could do that would allow him to escape Derek's influence so long as he worked at this school. Part of him wanted to just get the class through the play and quit immediately after, but his students deserved to finish the year with him, so he resigned to stay.
Since Derek never went into the staff lounge, Stiles thought that it would be a safe place for him to spend his lunch break without risking Derek's prying eyes. "Really?" he muttered as he saw Derek in there, though upon taking a closer look, Stiles recognized something. It was that look of paralyzing fear that accompanied a panic attack. "Derek!" Stiles called. "Calm down…" But he knew how pointless it was to tell someone in the midst of a panic attack to 'calm down.' It was impossible to be calm in the face of the overwhelming and completely suffocating terror that accompanied them. There was that desire to crawl out of one's own skin in an attempt to escape to somewhere safe.

He quickly pressed his lips to Derek's in an attempt to make the oxytocin burst that could come from a kiss interrupt the chemical cycle. They stood there, locked together. Stiles could feel Derek's pulse slowing down along with his breathing rate. Derek's arms snaked around his waist and Stiles could feel Derek's tongue trying to enter his mouth. "Stiles…" he breathed, relief permeating through his voice.

Stiles pushed Derek away, glaring at him angrily. "Oh no…" he said. "Don't flatter yourself! That was just to stop the panic attack. You don't get to kiss me again. Not ever. You're still a fucking asshole."

"Thank you for stopping the panic attack," Derek managed. The pain of Stiles' words seemed to be threatening yet another. Derek felt completely fatigued. It was as if the panic attack sapped every last ounce of his energy. "And… I'm sorry, Stiles. I only did it to help you."

"Help me?" Stiles sneered. "How is it helping me that I can't sleep at night? That I'm completely miserable and that I can't even seek solace in the one thing that has always brought me joy: teaching. How did it help me that you humiliated me in front of my colleagues after I stood up for you to them? No. I told you, Derek. I'm done. No more excuses. No more second chances."

"Stiles, I…" Derek started, wanting to complete that sentence that he'd written what seemed like hundreds of times in his little notes.

"You what?" Stiles asked. "If you were going to say that you're sorry, well, you've said that enough, I think, for one relationship. Just… go home and wind down from the panic attack and leave me alone."

"I had a dream about us," Derek started. "The night I called and didn't say anything."

"I have dreams about us all the time," Stiles replied. "It doesn't change anything."

"We were married. We had a kid. I watched you die just like Paige died," Derek continued. "That was the closest I've come to a panic attack before today. I called because I just wanted to hear your voice and know that you were alright. I still want to just hear your voice and know you're alright."

"Well I'm not, Derek," Stiles said. "Is that what you want to know? That despite this peachy-keen façade, I'm not alright. I thought we would have something and we didn't."

"We still could," Derek said urgently, closing the distance between them.

Stiles simply opened the distance back up. "No we can't. Go home, Derek."

Derek didn't go home. Instead, he went back to his office and accomplished nothing. He had disciplinary hearings he should have scheduled, paperwork that should have been filed, and there were a few teachers whose reviews he should have prepared for. Instead, he sat behind his desk reflecting on just how badly he fucked everything up.

An hour after the last bell rang, Derek made his way to his car. He was surprised to find that the
normally clear road was backed up. The traffic was stop and go, which gave Derek more time to think about what a failure he was becoming. "Jesus Christ... why is this taking forever?" he asked, not wanting to be trapped alone with his own thoughts for too long.

Soon, he was able to see the flashing lights ahead of him. After moving a little further, he could see a vehicle flipped over on the side of the road. A few more moments and he realized he knew that vehicle. That was Stiles' jeep. He pulled off the road, not even bothering to turn off his car as he ran toward the stretcher being loaded into the back of the ambulance.

"What happened?" Derek demanded as soon as he was in earshot of the paramedics. "Is he alright?"

A police officer ran at Derek, holding him back from the scene. "Sir, I need you to calm down."

"Is he alright?" Derek asked again. He couldn't see any movement on the stretcher.

"Are you his next of kin?"

"No. Just tell me if he's alright! Please!"

"We're taking him to Beacon Hills Memorial. That's all we can say now," the officer replied.

"Can I go with him?" Derek asked.

"I'm sorry, but only next of kin can ride in the ambulance with him. You're welcome to follow him, but you'll still have to wait in the emergency waiting room until he's stable."

He felt helpless as he watched the doors of the ambulance close. He ran back to his car, driving along the side of the road, passing all the vehicles that had been waiting so that he could stay behind the ambulance.

"You better be alright, Stiles," Derek muttered as the song 'Time to Say Goodbye' began playing from his MP3 player. Derek snatched the tiny device, unplugging it and tossing it out the window. "Go fuck yourself, Andrea Bocelli."

His mind kept playing visuals of every horrible way this could end. It was tormenting him. Despite his desperate hope for the contrary, all he could think about was Stiles dying. After running several red lights, he sped into a parking spot and ran into the hospital.

"Where is he?" Derek asked the front desk clerk. "Stiles... where is he?"

"I'm sorry? Who?" the clerk asked.

"His last name is Stilinski. He came here by ambulance," Derek explained.

"And are you related to him?" she asked.

"I'm his fiancé," Derek lied.

"Follow me."

Derek hated hospitals. They were depressing. As he passed beds with people suffering from illnesses and injuries he couldn't see, Derek just wanted to be by Stiles' side. They rounded a corner and continued down a hall before arriving at the room. Derek thanked the clerk and let himself in, slipping past the privacy curtain.

His head was wrapped in bandages and his arm was set in a cast. There were cuts and scrapes
dotting his perfect face, but he was alive and that was all that mattered. "Stiles! I'm so glad you're alright!"

"Get out," he said, his voice weak. "I don't even know how you got back here."

"I sort of told them I was your fiancé," Derek explained. "But please… let me explain."

"That's rich coming from you. I'll call the nurse, Derek," Stiles threatened. "I swear I will."

Derek saw his hand move toward the button. He quickly grabbed it, moving it out of reach. "Please… just listen to me."

"I don't want to hear anything you have to say. Get out or I'll call for security," Stiles said.

Derek wasn't deterred. "Okay. Let's make a deal. Just like the one we had before. If you'll let me just say this one thing… then if you still want me to leave, I will."

"If that's the only way to get you out of here, then fine."

"My uncle started a rumor about us to try and get me to do something about you. He wasn't happy that I was getting close to you because you're not from money like I am. But I don't care, Stiles," Derek started. "I acted like a jackass, but it was so that he wouldn't fire you. I tried to explain, but you wouldn't let me."

"What's your point?"

"My point is…" Derek said, trying to force those three words out. He needed to say them. It was now or never. "I… I love you."

"Great!" Stiles replied. "The dramatic hospital bedside revelation. Cue the sappy music and zoom in on our faces… maybe even have an audience group 'aww!' for added effect. I'm sorry, Derek… three words doesn't undo months of this same pattern. I see how this plays out: you say 'I love you', I forgive you and we get back together, then in a couple of weeks, something happens and you push me away, but beg me not to be angry about it because you had some good reason for it and your angst is justified."

Derek was hurt by this. It was definitely not the way he imagined this going. "I'm sorry, Stiles."

"We had a deal. I want you to leave now," Stiles replied.

"Is there something I can do to make this right?" Derek pleaded, not wanting this to be the end.

"Yeah," Stiles said slowly. Derek perked up. "For once be a man of your word and get the hell out."

Fighting the tears that were threatening to spill from his eyes, Derek turned around, leaving Stiles alone with the steady beep of the machine monitoring his pulse.

Feeling completely alone, Derek dialed, regrettably, the only person he had: his uncle. "Can you meet me at my place?" he asked, feeling vulnerable.

"Sure," came the response.

A little while later, Derek was gulping down scotch and completely drunk. Peter let himself in, finding Derek in this state. "You weren't even this surly when you were a teenager, Derek."

"He doesn't want anything to do with me," Derek hiccupped.
Peter rolled his eyes. "Get up," he ordered.

Derek struggled to his feet, unsteadily swaying. "We're going out. You need to realize that there are plenty of other people out there."

"I don't want to," Derek said. "I want him."

"He's nothing!" Peter shouted. "He's an insect. You are so much better than him."

"I'm not going anywhere…"

"Fine," Peter growled, tapping his phone feverishly. "Then they'll come here."

"Who?"

"Your freedom," Peter replied.

It was an hour later when the door rang. Derek was still somewhat drunk, though considerably less so since Peter had hidden the remaining Chivas. He watched as his uncle opened the door, greeting a beautiful short brunette woman and a tall handsome thin man who bore a striking resemblance to Stiles. Peter pulled some money out of his pocket and handed it to the man before whispering something into his ear, then jerking his head in Derek's direction. The man approached Derek, grabbing his hand and gently tugging it, pulling him toward the stairs. Derek begrudgingly followed the man to his room, leaving Peter alone with the woman.

"What's your name?" Derek asked.

"I was told not to tell you," he replied. "Just relax. This will be fun." He began unbuttoning Derek's shirt, revealing the hairy, muscular torso and licking his lips.

Derek covered himself back up. "What are you doing?"

"I'm going to show you a good time…" He sunk to his knees, pulling Derek's pants down, kissing the concealed member through the boxers.

"No," Derek protested, pushing the man away. "You're not Stiles."

The man stood up, putting his lips close to Derek's ear and whispered, "I can be anyone you want me to be. Tonight, I'm all yours…"

His heart was thudding rapidly in his chest as the man sunk back down, pulling the boxers away, leaving Derek nude and feeling completely vulnerable. When he felt soft fingers gently caressing his shaft, he stepped backwards, falling on the bed. "I can't do this."

"Don't you find me attractive?" the prostitute asked.

Derek nodded. "You just look like someone…"

"Then close your eyes… I'll just help you to relax."

"I'll pay you double whatever my uncle gave you to just leave," Derek said.

The prostitute sighed. "This is a first for me…"

"I'm sorry for taking up your time…"
Derek picked up his pants and pulled more money out of his wallet, thrusting it at the prostitute. "Do you need a ride anywhere?"

He shook his head. "Have a great night, I guess…"

"You too," Derek replied, crawling into bed. He could smell the prostitute's cologne on his skin, but he was too tired to do anything else. He cried himself to sleep.

Chapter End Notes

A/N: Happy Halloween! I hope you enjoy the chapter. Tell me what you thought. It'll get happy... eventually... I promise!
Chapter 9

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Peter Hale had been called many things in his life, but each time it was preceded by the word "textbook". "Textbook narcissist" and "textbook sociopath" were his two favorite. But Peter would argue that while he was a narcissist and he was a sociopath, there was nothing textbook about him. What many saw as character flaws and personality disorders, he viewed as basic survival instinct that the rest of humanity seemed to have forgotten somewhere along their evolutionary journey.

In Peter's mind, when the first ancestors of humanity descended from the safety of the trees, they brought with them a survival instinct that would allow for the species to get to the pinnacle of life. It had dissipated over the millennia but Peter fancied himself a well-bred and well-to-do survivalist and was determined to capitalize on those instincts. If a few people had to be sacrificed for the betterment of the Hale line, well, that was simply too bad for them and it wasn't his problem.

Things got messy, however, when fellow Hales got in the way of the betterment of the Hale line. His sister and brother-in-law had been guilty of it and they were dealt with. But as Peter looked at his nephew, pining over the hipster theater teacher who threatened everything he'd been working years to set in motion, he saw Stiles as the next obstacle to be removed. Yet he was intelligent and knew that he needed to do it carefully. His hand could not be seen in it. He barely escaped scrutiny when he killed Derek's parents and siblings.

He had hoped to be able to groom Derek into the survivalist heir to the Hale line, but he was unable to thwart his sister's influence, though he managed to convince her to give her children the Hale name rather than the unbecoming name their father had. Hales had power. They had prestige. They were respected and had been for as long as there had been Hales, yet the burden fell on Peter to ensure that the family name remained strong and that weak members of the herd were taken out. He missed Talia, but as she got older, she got weaker. She was no longer good for the line, and since she was the one who'd had kids, the entirety of the Hale fortune was going to be split up amongst them.

Peter chose the only thing he could see as a rational option: bottleneck the fortune, especially since his own trust fund was growing smaller and smaller, and he lost so much when the markets fell. Certainly he could have just killed everyone else and allowed the fortune to go to the most deserving person, but that was too suspicious. He kept Derek alive and helped guide him, but if Derek got married and had any children, then all of the work he'd put into protecting Derek, finding him a job in the Academy, working to become the Chairman of the Board to ensure that he stayed in close proximity to Derek and the fortune would have been for nothing.

Stiles was simply a thorn in his side that needed to be removed one way or another. The crash was supposed to kill him, but it didn't. The former headmaster had been much easier to dispose of. His lack of a proper diet made a large dose of potassium look just like a heart attack. It was back to the drawing board for the theater teacher, though. Peter chuckled at the idea of haunting the upcoming production of \textit{RENT} like the Phantom of the Opera. He could simultaneously get rid of Stiles \textit{and} scar an entire class of students for life. It was a win-win situation if he'd ever seen one before. However, Peter was more likely to choose a more subtle way to dispose of the object of his nephew's desire.

Peter stepped out onto the balcony of his bedroom, a luxurious robe wrapped loosely around his body. He stared up at the cloudy night sky, purple with the reflections of the distant lights. There were still flaws with this plan that he needed to work out, such as finding Derek someone over
whom he could exert influence, but was of high enough birth who could help carry on the Hale name and ensure the survival of the line. It was in this moment that Peter, a member of the original American Aristocracy, who could trace his lineage back at least six centuries, even back before the colonization of the New World.

The school was the best way for his family's legacy to remain intact. Now that he was the chairman of the board of Governors, he wanted to bring up the idea of naming the school the "Hale Academy." Yet now, it seemed as though he were playing a game of chess. The pieces were all in place, but that little pawn, his nephew, was ruining everything. His past told him he had no problem sacrificing a pawn for the greater good, unfortunately, he needed this pawn. He refused to have any brats of his own. It was beneath him.

Heaving a sigh, he walked back into the bedroom, closing the door behind him. He fell on the bed, which still smelled like the prostitute's cheap perfume. He made her leave when he was done with her, preferring to sleep alone.

The next morning, he woke before Derek did and decided to prepare breakfast. As the smells of frying bacon, eggs, toast, and coffee mingled and permeated through the house, Derek was roused from the depths of another dream in which he and Stiles were a bit older and had a child, though in this dream, the boy Caleb was a girl named Elizabeth. "Why are you still here?" he asked his uncle.

"Is that any way to greet the uncle who got up and made you breakfast? It is the most important meal of the day," Peter replied, avoiding the question altogether.

"Guess not," Derek shrugged, sitting down and helping himself to several strips of bacon and some eggs.

"So how was your night with what's-his-name?"

"It didn't happen," Derek said between bites.

"After all that money I paid?" Peter did little to mask his annoyance at this revelation.

"I told you… I want Stiles, not some prostitute," Derek said stiffly.

"I'm fairly certain you mentioned nothing of the prostitute," Peter pointed out.

"It was heavily implied."

"You need to think about your future, Derek!"

"My future is with a prostitute?" Derek was unconvinced.

"Of course not! You're a Hale!"

"So why can't my future be with Stiles?"

"For one, he doesn't want you anymore. For two, how can you carry on the Hale name with him?" Peter reasoned.

"We'll adopt…"

Peter snickered. "Yeah… the future of the Hale line falling on the shoulders of some bargain-bin second-hand rejected child… Are you insane?"

"Considering the fact that I'm an orphan… that's a bit harsh, you know…" Derek shot back.
"Just let me help find you a wife!" Peter insisted, ignoring the chastisement. "You are still into women, right?" Derek's eyes narrowed. Peter didn't relent. "What? You need an heir."

"If you're so concerned about the next generation of Hales, why don't you contribute to it?" Derek asked.

"Me? A father?" Peter laughed. Derek had to admit, a child was better off as an orphan than with Peter as its father.

"While you make a good point, the point remains… either you do something to contribute, or get the hell out of my business," Derek asserted.

"Can't you see? I am contributing. I'm trying to ensure that you're able to do what needs to be done for our family," Peter said.

Derek rolled his eyes. "You annoy me more and more every time I see you."

"Perhaps if I annoy you enough, you'll finally move on from that low-bred asshole," Peter argued.

"Can we just stop talking about this? I'd like to have just one conversation with my only living relative that doesn't make me want to punch your teeth out," Derek said darkly.

Peter understood when he should stop, so he cleared his throat. "Point taken."

Despite his uncle's pressure, Stiles was still the only thing Derek could think of. He decided to see how his recovery was doing. He'd been released from the hospital, so that meant he'd likely be home. Derek could feel the butterflies in his stomach as he approached the door. Three knocks in rapid succession lead to Stiles opening the door. Upon seeing who his visitor was, he moved to shut it in Derek's face. Quickly, Derek placed his foot in the small space, preventing it from closing entirely. "Get the hell out, Derek. I'll call the cops."

"Stiles, please," Derek begged. "Just give me five minutes…" Stiles was still sporting cuts and bruises on his face and there was still a bandage on his head.

"I think I've given you enough time," Stiles replied, pushing on the door again.

"Stiles, I love you. Give me a chance to prove that to you one last time. I'll do anything," desperation tainted Derek's normally strong voice.

"You won't even stand up to your uncle!" Stiles argued. "And you expect me to believe you?"

"He's the only family I have…" Derek countered.

"Boo-hoo!" Stiles replied. "I don't have any family."

Derek was determined not to give up. "I'll do anything."

"Fine," Stiles said, rolling his eyes. He opened the door, allowing Derek entrance. "This doesn't mean that I forgive you for all the shit you've done. It also doesn't mean that I'll want to get back with you."

Derek nodded, understanding that he had put Stiles through hell.

"Epic missions are a common theme in literature, right?" Stiles asked.
"Yeah," Derek replied. "The Odyssey, Iliad, Epic of Gilgamesh, Twelve Labors of Hercules, Beowulf…"

"I didn't ask for an English lesson," Stiles snapped, wanting to ensure that Derek understood that he wasn't in charge in this setting. "I'll give you three tasks. You can't use your title as a Hale to help you… and no outsourcing the task. If you do, that's it… no second chance. And if you fail, then you have to promise to stop coming by my house… coming by my classroom… basically you agree to cease all interaction with me whatsoever because it's not fair to me that you keep trying to insert yourself into my life."

Again, Derek nodded, nervously wondering exactly what tasks that rattled, beautiful head could come up with. "What's my first task?"

"I want you to admit your love over the school intercom," Stiles said, a coy smile parting his lips.

"I can't do that…" Derek said softly. "You know I can't…"

Stiles shrugged. "Well then… this has been a blast! But I'm going to finish my weekend. Have a good life, Derek."

Down-trodden, Derek showed himself out. Stiles mustn't have wanted any of this because if he did, he wouldn't have picked a task he knew Derek couldn't do.

He didn't get much sleep the rest of the weekend. He kept pouring over how he could possibly manage to accomplish his task.

So when Monday morning came around, the idea struck him. Stiles never specified when the announcement had to be made. After Stiles came to check his mailbox, Derek waited for him to get a good distance around the hallway before picking up the microphone.

"You'll love me yet!-and I can tarry

Your love's protracted growing:

June reared that bunch of flowers you carry

From seeds of April's sowing.

I plant a heartful now: some seed

At least is sure to strike

And yield-what you'll not pluck indeed,

Not love, but, may be like!

You'll look at least on love's remains

A grave's one violet:

Your look?-that pays a thousand pains.

What's death?-You'll love me yet!

A poem by Robert Browning."
It took mere moments for Stiles to appear in his office. "Really?"

Derek smirked. "Really."

"You chose a poem about unrequited love…"

"Seemed appropriate to me," Derek reasoned.

"Alright," Stiles relented. "You won this one…"

"What's my next task?" Derek asked.

Stiles thought for a moment and replied, "The actual prop Grimmerie from Broadway's Wicked."

Derek's jaw dropped. "You've got to be kidding me."

"Nope. That's the next task," Stiles said. "Good luck."

The task required Derek to visit New York, since the play was held in the Gershwin Theatre. He didn't, however, feel comfortable leaving the power vacuum to be filled by his uncle, so he invited Peter along, framing it as a trip to try and get over Stiles. Of course, Peter was more than willing to comply.

As they sat in First Class, Peter was dividing his time between texting a friend of his in New York City. The stewardess politely approached. "What can I get for you gentlemen to drink?"

"Two scotches on the rocks," Peter replied.

"Right away," she said, smiling back at them.

"Did it ever occur to you that maybe I didn't want to spend this entire flight completely sloshed?" Derek asked.

"Leave it to you to make vacation boring," Peter replied.

"Who are you texting?"

"A friend of mine I want you to meet," said Peter. "She's an English Professor at Columbia. I think you'll like her."

Derek scowled. "I didn't invite you on this trip so that you could try to hook me up for your strange dream of Hale purity."

"No, you wanted to ensure I wouldn't have any time alone with Stiles," Peter said.

Derek stiffened. "I don't trust you, what can I say?"

Peter shrugged. "A healthy amount of suspicion can be good for survival." Derek agreed, but he also knew that there was nothing healthy about the amount of suspicion he held toward his only relative.

The stewardess returned with the drinks. Both Hale men graciously accepted them. Soon, she was making the typical pre-flight announcements. They passed most of the flight in silence.

When they landed several hours later, Derek was excited to be able to stretch his legs. They chose to store their luggage in the over-head containers so they didn't have to wait at the checked baggage
"We need to check into our hotel," Derek told his uncle.

"I've done this before, you know," Peter reminded him, somewhat annoyed.

"Lose the tone," Derek warned. "You would be home relaxing if I could trust you not to fuck things up between me and Stiles while I'm here."

Peter's eyes narrowed, but he let that comment go. The two of them hailed a cab.

After checking into the hotel, Peter complained, "I'm hungry."

"You're a big boy… find some food."

Peter sighed. "If I'd have known this was how it was going to be, I wouldn't have come at all."

"Fine," Derek replied, his voice was measured, but deadly. "What can I do to get you off of my case?"

"Just meet her."

"That's it? Then you'll leave me the hell alone?"

"I promise."

"Text her. Tell her to meet us at dinner."

Peter turned away, pulling out his phone. An indelible smirk crossed his face. He turned back to his nephew. "She's meeting us at Sparks Steak House. Get ready."

The cab ride was silent. Derek pulled some cash out of his pocket and handed it to the driver. "Thanks," he said. "Keep whatever's left."

Peter had already gone inside, so Derek took a few deep breaths and ventured in. Peter was in the midst of an animated conversation with a beautiful woman with long, wavy brown hair. Her smile seemed to go on for days. "Dr. Derek Hale! It's an honor to meet you!"

"Please," Derek replied… "Just call me Derek. And why is it an honor?"

"I'm sorry… Look at me… I'm completely star-struck!" she giggled her infectious laugh, causing Derek to actually respond in-kind. "I'm using your doctoral thesis as a textbook for the class I'm teaching on comparative themes in literature. It's so great to actually be able to meet the person who wrote such an exhaustive and interesting text!"

"Remember, I told you she's a professor at Columbia… she must be the reason behind all of those royalties payments that just came in," Peter said.

"Well, I thank you and so does my publisher, I'm sure!" Derek mused.

"Would you be willing to do a lecture for my class?" she asked.

"Of course… I'm only in the city for a short amount of time," Derek said. "What's your name?"

"Oh, where are my manners?" Peter interjected. "Derek, meet my friend Dr. Jennifer Blake."
Author's Note: So just so everyone knows, the word "Grimmerie" will be better explained in the next chapter. Also, the semester is coming to a head, hence the almost half a month between chapters. Luckily, in less than a month, my semester is over and then I'll be updating all of my stories! Please give me some feedback! It always helps fuel my muse.
Derek had a bit of a problem. He needed to get the "Grimmerie" but had no idea what that actually was. The easiest way to solve that problem was to see the show. Peter walked into the room. "What are you doing?"

"Reserving tickets to Wicked," Derek replied.

"Isn't that the one about the Wicked Witch of the West?" Peter asked. "I've always looked up to her."

"I don't think you two have much in common," Derek said honestly. "Apparently, she wasn't always a complete ass."

"Hey! I introduced you to Jennifer… you two seemed to hit it off pretty well," Peter said. "Therefore I'm not a complete ass." Derek looked at him with incredulity. "And let me remind you that I'm your uncle… and also your boss."

"Jennifer was pretty nice," Derek admitted.

"Why don't you bring her to see the play?" Peter suggested.

If it would keep Peter from realizing the true reason he was here, he'd go along with it. He shrugged. "Sure, why not?"

Peter smiled. "I'll pass the message along to her for you." He took his phone out and tapped out a message. *I think the plan is working. He's going to take you to see Wicked.*

Moments later, his phone buzzed with her reply. *Of course it's working, you asked me to seduce him. You just better hold up your end of the bargain, Hale.*

*Let's not talk business now. We'll save that for the prep session before your date with him.*

"What'd she say?" Derek asked, feigning earnest interest.

"She said she'd love to and wants to know what time you'll pick her up!"

"Have her meet me here at 7," Derek said.

"Great," Peter replied, pretending to send the message. "I'm going to do some sight-seeing. I'll see you later."

Derek said goodbye and began trying to find everything he could about the theater he'd be in. He needed to know where the props were kept and what security might be like, since he *was* going to be stealing something that likely would be missed.

Cloaked by the rapid movement of New York City, Peter and Jennifer met at a coffee shop. "What
do you mean you're going to give it out in increments?" she demanded.

"Things can happen… you'll have enough to pay for whatever you need as it goes along, but you're not getting the full sum until you have Derek's child," Peter said matter-of-factly.

"How do I know I can trust you to keep your word?" she asked. "I mean… you're currently plotting to trap your only living relative in a marriage of necessity…"

"Derek doesn't always understand what is best for him or the family. That's why I'm here to pull the necessary strings to ensure both of our wellbeing," replied Peter.

Jennifer narrowed her eyes, scanning the man before her. She bit her bottom lip as she leaned back slightly in her seat. "You really do care about him, don't you?" she said softly. After pausing for a beat, she added, "Well, you certainly have a very strange way of showing it."

"You leave the mechanics of our relationship to me," Peter said dismissively. "You just worry about seducing him."

"Don't worry… I'll be able to seduce him."

Jennifer's gown was so beautiful that even Derek had to admit it. She looked truly lovely. She chose an earthy green tone, joking that she wanted to show some solidarity with the Wicked Witch. Her perfume smelled of lavender and spices. The moment Derek caught a whiff of it, he was filled with nostalgic sadness. "My mom wore that perfume a lot," he said softly.

"I can take it off if you'd like," she offered. Though she knew he might respond to that perfume. Peter was the one who told her to wear it.

Derek shook his head. "No… I like that smell."

Derek had a plan. He needed to watch the play through once, take note when the book might be most vulnerable, then come back at another showing, sneak into the props area and steal it while the majority of the actors are on stage. He could afford to play the part he needed to tonight, because tomorrow, he'd have his item and be one step closer to winning back Stiles. There was also the distinct possibility that he might never be able to return to New York City after this, but Stiles' love was worth that.

"Don't you look dapper," Jennifer mused, trying to take the focus off of herself.

"Not too bad yourself," Derek replied honestly. The two of them walked into the theater and found their seats.

Derek watched the play with meticulous attention to details. Jennifer scooted closer to him.

During the intermission, both of them stretched their legs and chatted a little about the subtleties of various works of literature they both adored. When the lights dimmed, telling them to return to their seats, they did so, Derek still searching for his best opportunity to steal the book the next day.

When the play was over, Derek realized he actually enjoyed it quite a bit. It was a take on a literary character that he'd never imagined. "I'm glad you liked it," she said. "This is one of my favorite plays."
"I can definitely see why," Derek replied.

Jennifer stayed close to him. "So what do you say to going back to my place for a drink?"

"I'm not so sure that's a good idea…"

She chuckled. "Stop making me feel like I'm trying to steal your virtue or something… Just a drink… then you can go back to your uncle safe and sound… I daresay even by curfew…"

"What's that supposed to mean?"

"Just that I've never seen a grown man so oddly attached to his uncle," Jennifer chuckled.

"Honestly, I only brought him here to keep an eye on him," Derek admitted.

"Well how much trouble can he get into here?" Jennifer asked.

"Good point," Derek said. "One drink… I'm a bit of a lightweight."

"Are you really?" she asked. "Well color me surprised…" They took a cab to Jennifer's apartment. Derek was surprised to see how small it was. It was well-decorated. "Welcome to my humble abode!"

"It's nice," Derek said. He always preferred apartment style living. Life was so lonely in the vast expanses of the Hale mansion.

"Make yourself comfortable," Jennifer encouraged. "I'll pour us some wine. Just a guess, but Cabernet?"

Derek smiled brightly. "Yeah. It's my favorite." He sat awkwardly on the couch while she disappeared into the kitchen to pour the drinks.

After several minutes, she reappeared, two large glasses in hand. She snuggled up close to Derek, passing him the large balloon glass. "To developing friendships!" Jennifer said, raising her glass.

"To developing friendships," Derek repeated, clinking his glass against hers. He swirled the deep red liquid several times before bringing the glass to his lips and letting some of the wine splash across his tongue. It was slightly bitter. Much more bitter than any cabernet he'd ever had, but he reminded himself that typically, he drank expensive vintage wines and resigned himself to the possibility that this was a bottle of bargain wine. Trying to be polite, he acted as though he thoroughly enjoyed it.

"So how long are you planning on staying in the city?" she asked.

"To be honest, I'm on a bit of a mission, so I'll be here for as long as it takes. But hopefully it shouldn't take more than a few days," Derek replied.

"And what would that mission be?" Jennifer asked, wanting to keep the conversation going.

"It's classified," Derek joked, taking another bitter sip of wine.

"Okay," She replied. "I was just wondering when I could have you speak to my class."

"Oh!" Derek exclaimed, having completely forgotten that he'd agreed to do that. "I'm a bit busy tomorrow…"

"My class doesn't meet tomorrow. It does, however, meet the day after," said Jennifer, her large
After several minutes passed, Derek began to feel the room spinning around him. He cautiously set his glass down. He tried to force his eyes to focus on one point, but found that he couldn't. Shapes just seemed to swirl. "What's happening?" he asked.

"Derek?" Jennifer called. "Derek, are you alright? You weren't kidding about being a lightweight…"

"This has never happened before…" he managed, moving to stand up. Gravity seemed to shift around him alongside the colors and shapes, pulling each of his limbs in different directions. His ability maintain balance failed. He fell back on the couch. He tried to move again, but no amount of will power could force his limbs to obey.

"What the hell did you have me give him?" Jennifer asked, holding the phone to her ear. She worked to make sure that Derek was in a position that the vomit would drain from his mouth rather than choke him.

"Why do you ask?"

"He started vomiting… and he hasn't really moved in an hour!" Though she tried her best, Jennifer was unable to hide the worry in her voice.

"Do I need to draw you a fucking diagram?" Peter snarled on the other end. "Men operate on basic friction. That drug will ensure that he remembers none of it. Just unbutton his pants and let his Y chromosome do the rest."

"How am I supposed to do it when he's unconscious and vomiting?" demanded the panicking Jennifer.

"I don't care!" Peter shouted. "But no baby, no money!"

Jennifer growled in frustration, resting the phone between her shoulder and her ear as she worked to unfasten Derek's pants and pull his dick out. She took it in her grasp, trying to coax it to life so she could do what she needed to do. The money Peter promised her was too great a sum to not give her very best attempt. After several minutes of useless caressing, she sighed. "It isn't working, Peter! The drug is too strong!"

"I would expect this to be right up your alley… your job is to please a man for cash… only this time the man you're pleasing isn't the one paying you," Peter replied maliciously. He knew it might have been crossing a line to bring that up, but perhaps she just needed some motivation.

"Go fuck yourself, Peter…"

"No, Jennifer… if you want this money, it will be you who has to fuck yourself… on Derek." The line went dead and Jennifer tossed the phone onto the coffee table next to Derek's drink. She kept trying, wishing she would have also spiked his wine with Viagra.

When she feared permanent injury due to carpal tunnel, she gave up, tucking him back into his underwear and tossing a blanket over him before going to bed.
There was a bittersweetness to Derek being away. On one hand, the part of Stiles that craved and lived for the pain that seeing him brought was growing ever more desperate for some sort of contact with him. However, the idea that he was gone because he was trying to steal an important prop from one of Broadway's most successful musicals meant that there was a very good chance that Derek had changed. He was willing to do anything to get back to him… even these stupid tasks that Stiles had assigned.

The fact that his lessons were able to proceed without risk of Derek spying was simply a bonus. The most senior member of the Board of Governors was taking care of all administrative duties in the Headmaster's absence. This was the tradition for the school. Never in its history had there ever been a position for an assistant headmaster. Rarely was one ever needed.

As he dreamed of beautiful days spent by Derek's side, a smile crept over Stiles' face. He both loved and hated the effect Derek had on him. It felt so foreign for him to love a person so deeply, but to be so infuriated by that person. He wondered if that was what romance truly was… love and fury, blending together to create unbridled passion, the flame that burned so brightly it always reddened his cheeks and ears in Derek's presence.

"La Habanera" began playing loudly. It was Derek's ringtone. It cut through his slumber. He reached for his phone, yanking the charging cord out and bringing it to his ear. "Hello?"

"I don't know where I am," Derek whispered. "I don't know how I got here… I'm scared…"

Immediately, Stiles was wide awake. "Are you alright?"

"I've got a splitting headache…" he said. "I feel like I'm gonna throw up… And I'm exhausted."

"Did you drink anything strange?" Stiles asked.

"I don't remember anything from last night…"

"Are you sure it's not just a hangover?"

He heard a door open. "Shit… there's someone coming… I've gotta go…"

Stiles voice was panicked as he replied, "Wait, Derek! Don't hang up!” but it was too late. The call disconnected.

Jennifer emerged from the darkness with a silky blue nightgown concealing her body. "Jennifer?"

"Good morning sleepy head…"

"What happened… where am I? Why are my pants unbuttoned?"

"Don't you remember?" she smiled innocently, sitting down next to him.

"How much did I drink?" Derek asked, trying to fill in the massive blank canvas that was the night before.

She pointed to his unfinished, drugged glass. "That was your fourth," she told him. "Things got a little hot and heavy… we were in the heat of the moment when you sort of just conked out." Derek searched her face for any tell… any sign that she might be making it up. He couldn't believe himself capable of coming that close to cheating on Stiles. Granted, it wasn't necessarily cheating because
they weren't technically a couple… but to him, it was tantamount to adultery. "It's a pity, really… I was quite looking forward to that…"

Jennifer began climbing on top of him. Perhaps a drug wouldn't have been required. Simple seduction could get someone a long way… she wondered why Peter was so adamant about drugging him anyway. Derek pushed her off. "I'm sorry if I might have lead you to think that there's something here between us," Derek said. "But my heart belongs to someone else…"

"I don't see a ring on that finger of yours," Jennifer pointed out, her large puppy dog eyes batting in one last effort. "Which means they probably wouldn't mind you sharing…" She crawled back up on him, kissing him. Again, he pushed her off, wiping his lips on his sleeve.

"No!" he said forcefully. "I won't betray him…"

Jennifer paused. "Him?" That certainly explained the need to drug…

"Stiles… he's the love of my life. And even finding out that this happened would crush him… I'm sorry. But I have to go… Please don't tell my uncle what happened."

"Your secret is safe with me," she promised. It was obvious that she was annoyed, but Derek didn't care.

His phone was almost dead, so he decided to conserve the battery. He left her apartment and hailed a cab, having it take him back to his hotel. Even though he'd apparently slept, he felt as though he could just fall straight into a coma. As he reached his bed, that's very nearly what he did.

He slept on and off for a day or so, completely missing the appointment he'd set up to speak to Jennifer's class. However, thanks to the roofie, he didn't actually remember finalizing that appointment anyway. Stiles tried to contact him, but he slept so deeply that he missed each of the calls.

Stiles only left one voicemail. "Hey Derek. Please call me back. I just want to make sure you're alright. Things were a little up in the air in that regard when you and I last spoke. I lo—I mean I miss you. Bye."

Chapter End Notes

Author's Note: Thanks for reading! I got one of my big papers of the semester done, so to celebrate… you get this! Don't worry… Peter will eventually pay for what he's done. And there's also been quite a lack of intimacy… we're going to have to fix that soon… maybe not next chapter, but very soon! As always, I encourage you to give me feedback. It's immensely helpful in writing.
Chapter 11

Chapter Notes

Warning for a graphic murder scene! DUN DUN DUN!!!!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

When Derek finally woke up, he still felt groggy and hungover. He forced himself out of his bed and got a glass of water. Looking over, he saw that his uncle was gone, but he actually preferred it that way. He brushed his teeth, showered, and pulled on his last set of clean clothes. He needed to return to Beacon Hills soon, which meant the last day he could steal the Grimmerie.

Picking up his phone, he saw twelve missed calls from Stiles, and listened to the voicemail. He heard the slip. Stiles still loved him. He was concerned. That knowledge meant more to him than Stiles would ever know. He quickly tapped out a reply, wanting to save the phone call for the news that he had the book.

He shelled out more money for a taxi and a ticket to enter the theater. Unfortunately, his time sleeping left him unable to truly plan everything out. He tried to approach the side door that would lead to the backstage area. "Sir, this is for cast members only," an usher said. "Do you need help finding your seat?"

Derek looked around. There was nobody else in the hallway. "You know what… I think I'm pretty lost. I was trying to get to the side balconies…"

"Oh in that case, just go down this hallway…" the usher began explaining the directions. Derek acted as though he were listening, but in actuality, he was trying to figure out how to incapacitate the man in the quickest and most painless way possible. Finally, he just cocked his arm back and delivered a swift punch to the usher's throat. Pain immediately exploded in his hand and he shook it, before squeezing it close to his chest with his other hand, trying to alleviate the pain. He hadn't expected for it to hurt so badly.

"I'm really sorry!" Derek whispered, opening the door and pulling the usher in once the pain in his arm abated. Stiles better appreciate this, Derek thought as he stowed the guy out of the way and in the most comfortable position he could manage. "I'm so sorry… it's just that the guy I love really likes this play and if I steal the Grimmerie, I might be able to get him back," Derek explained to the unconscious man, as though it might somehow help the situation.

Derek continued to sneak down the hallway, trying to act like he belonged there. People were hustling to get ready for the upcoming performance and were so absorbed in their own pre-show process that they weren't even paying attention to him. When he finally located the book, he'd been there for ten minutes and had no idea when the usher would be waking up, or if he already was awake. He stared at it for several moments, realizing that he had in his hands the item that would bring him one step closer to getting back with Stiles, or so he hoped. As he thought about it clearly, he realized that Stiles had been a little less-than-clear about that. Instead, he began to briskly walk toward the nearest exit sign.

The light nearly blinded him, being in stark contrast from the dim lighting in the backstage area. He ran quickly to the road and hailed a taxi and returning to the hotel. He felt a twinge of relief despite
the fact that he was now guilty of larceny and assault. There was the added perk of Peter still being out, giving him a bit of peace and quiet to bask in the fact that he'd succeeded.

"What do you mean you didn't sleep with him?" Peter roared.

"I mean the drugs were too strong. I had nothing to work with," Jennifer said, incredibly unhappy that Peter was talking to her as if she were a child. That's one thing she definitely was not.

"You've failed me, Jennifer," Peter said softly. "You know what happens to those who fail me."

Jennifer's eyes widened. "Peter… what are you talking about…"

His voice was low, calm, and unflinching. "Don't play dumb with me. You're smarter than that." He reached into his blazer, pulling out a vial and a syringe.

"What's that?" Jennifer stammered, backing away from him.

"I'm sorry, Jennifer," Peter lied. "But I can't tolerate failure."

"Please don't," she begged, finding herself unable to back away any further. "I won't say anything, I promise!"

Peter smiled maliciously. "Oh, I know." He pulled out a large dose of the liquid and quickly jammed the syringe into her skin, pressing the plunger until all of the liquid was circulating through her bloodstream. "It should take about fifteen minutes before you really feel anything," he said, guiding her to her couch. Tears streamed down her face. She knew she was going to die. She knew there was no point in fighting back.

"Your nephew is a good person," she said. "Don't ruin his life."

"How sweet," he said dryly. "But I don't disagree with you. He's a very good person. He's just a little myopic sometimes. It's unfortunately an inherited trait. His mother possessed the same character flaw. I had to take care of that, too." She was horrified by what she heard. "Everything I've done has been for him."

"You only think it has, Peter," Jennifer replied. "Really, it's all been for you. You orphaned him because you needed someone to rely on you because your soul is so empty that you need something to give it meaning. You focused on Derek. You've manipulated, lied, killed, and cheated things around him… not for his sake… but for yours. So that you can lay your head down at night with ease because you've deluded yourself into thinking that you're a good person for it."

Rage built up in Peter so quickly that he couldn't control his actions. A powerful swing of his arm lead to a sharp, loud, painful contact between his hand and her cheek. She didn't seem fazed by his behavior. She glared defiantly at him, starting to feel the effects of the insulin. The world was beginning to move around her. "You, who has spent her entire life alone… only bothering to spend time with others when they've paid you for it… you question my motives?"

"I wasn't lucky enough to be born into the Hale fortune," Jennifer said. "I did things that I'm not proud of… but it was to make a life for myself. One that I could eventually be proud of."

"Too bad you'll simply die full of regret…"

Jennifer simply laughed. "I only regret that I'm not going to get to see all of this blow up in your face." She lost her ability to stand and fell onto the couch. Peter knew she'd not be able to call for
help. He needed only to wait until she was unconscious.

"Empty words from an empty woman who has lived an empty life," said Peter dismissively.

"My life wasn't empty, Peter..." she said. "But yours will be. You'll eventually realize that he's not going to do what you want him to do. And then what? Are you going to kill him too? You've backed yourself into a corner."

"Do you know why I decided to kill you this way?" Peter asked. "I mean, it would certainly have been much easier to shoot you... or slice open a main blood vessel... yet I chose this..."

"You have an unfortunate flair for the dramatic," Jennifer said.

"As true as that may be... I want you to think about the fact that your life has had no impact. There is nothing left to carry on the legacy of Jennifer Blake. You will fade from history as insignificant a speck as you entered it. There is nothing remarkable about you," Peter told her. "And nobody will remember you."

"And again, you're wrong..." Jennifer managed.

"Do you know what it's like to watch someone die?" Peter asked. Of course he knew she didn't. "It's powerful. It's addictive. To be there when the last breath leaves a person's body. And knowing that you caused it... it's better than even the best drug out there."

"What's wrong with you?"

Peter flew into a rage. "There's nothing wrong with me!" he roared. "I'm the one who has worked hard. My sister had everything handed to her. Her husband wasn't even like us! He was a leech on the Hale name... he was a parasite and she was his host! So I killed them. I stood over them as I watched the poison work its way through their system and then I killed my nieces because I knew they'd be too weak to handle their parent's deaths. Derek was strong... he was like me. He could see past trivial things like people and their emotions. And all you had to do was sleep with him! My sister, her husband, and their daughters failed me because they were weak. You failed me because you were incapable of doing the one thing you were good for!"

"I'm more than just my body," she said hotly. "And don't you see... emotions are what make us human... what makes us all the same."

"Shut up!" Peter shouted. His eyes were wild. He was breathing heavily. "I'm nothing like you. I'm better. I'm faster. I'm stronger. I'm more rational. I see past other people's needs to take what is mine."

"And because you believe that, it means that you're the weakest of them all! You're the most fragile because you have nothing to hold onto. And you'll never see it... which also makes you the most tragic human to ever exist," she countered.

Peter lunged. He wrapped his hands around her throat and pressed. He could feel her struggling. Each exhale meant that he could squeeze harder. Her fingers grabbed at him, trying to cause him enough injury to make him let go. Her lungs were burning in their desperate attempt to get oxygen, still Peter squeezed harder. His eyes stared into hers. Their piercing blue intensity frightened her even more. It took so much longer than it did in the movies or TV. However, when she finally stopped fighting... when she was finally dead, he felt the biggest post-murder rush he'd ever gotten. It was better than the best orgasm he'd ever had. He stared at his hands. They were red and shaking. But they were powerful. He had actually held another person's life in his hands before snuffing it out. It was intimate and personal. She died knowing who was killing her. For the first time in his life, Peter
Hale truly felt a sense of pride.

Derek finally met up with Peter the night before they were supposed to return to California. "Where've you been?" Derek asked, though the moment the words escaped his lips he realized that the answer might not be something he wanted to know.

"Tying up some loose ends," Peter replied vaguely. Derek raised an eyebrow, but decided he'd rather not press the issue. Knowing Peter, the answer was likely not going to be something he wanted to hear. "What about you? Did you enjoy your bite of the Big Apple?"

Derek nodded. "Yeah, I definitely accomplished what I came here for."

"Good," replied Peter. "Maybe now we can move this petty breakup drama behind us once and for all."

Derek smiled knowingly. "You're right. I think perhaps we can."

Holding a boxed-up Grimmerie in hand, Derek sat in his car, parked outside Stiles' apartment. He was excited, nervous, scared, elated… so many emotions were cycling through him that he felt overwhelmed. His self-sabotaging nature began to rise up, urging him to just drive away. Certainly, if he accomplished this task, then Stiles would set an even more impossible one for the third. After all, the point of these tasks were to prevent them from getting back together.

A long sigh escaped his lips. He stared at the prop in his hands, trying to figure out if it was truly a key to happiness and a life with Stiles or if it was just the gate to a labyrinth that could only lead to the crippling sadness that would be his life without Stiles.

A loud knock on the window simultaneously drew Derek out of his self-deprecating thought cycle and also elicited a scream that was more girly than he'd have liked. He looked up to see Stiles' slightly annoyed face staring back at him.

"Why are you being a super creeper?" Stiles asked.

"Can we move this conversation inside?"

"Don't answer my question with a question," Stiles countered. But Derek felt trapped. He couldn't explain that he was sitting in the car contemplating all the ways their relationship could end badly, because that would show that he hadn't changed a bit. Yet, he didn't want to just present the Grimmerie without there being at least an illusion of a surprise. Stiles' eyes narrowed, focusing on the box. "What's that?"

"Like I said… can we move this conversation inside?" Derek asked again, looking into the beautiful brown orbs that stared back at him. He saw them roll slightly before hearing a sigh.

"I guess…” Stiles opened Derek's car door. Derek was careful in the way he moved to ensure that the contents of the box stayed secret to the person for whom they were intended until the right moment. As they walked side-by-side, the silence between them painful and awkward. Finally, Stiles decided to break it. "You had me worried that morning you called."

"That's all still kind of fuzzy… I think I might have just drank way too much…” Derek said. "I literally remember nothing from that night. I didn't feel right for an entire day afterward…”

Stiles cocked his head to the side. "Are you sure you weren't slipped a roofie?"
"A what?"

"Rohypnol… it's a date-rape drug," Stiles explained.

Derek thought for a moment, but dismissed the idea. He knew he'd been with Jennifer. "There's no way… you know how much of a lightweight I am…"

Stiles shrugged as he unlocked his apartment door and motioned for Derek to enter. He did, making himself comfortable on Stiles' couch. He gently set the box on the coffee table and patted the seat beside him, wanting Stiles to be close to him when he revealed the fact that he accomplished the task. "What is all of this about?" Stiles asked convincingly feigning exasperation. While he had missed Derek, he wanted it to be clear: they were still ex-boyfriends.

Staring at the box, Derek could feel his heart racing. "I need to know why I'm doing these tasks."

"What do you mean?"

Derek shifted his eyes from the box to Stiles. "Is this all one big wild goose chase to keep me out of your hair or am I working toward being with you again?" he asked, wanting to be blunt. "Because I love you… and I want to prove that to you… but I don't want for this to be just a way for you to get back at me for all the times I fucked up in our relationship. I don't think I could handle that."

Stiles seemed to relax, recognizing how hard this must have been for Derek to go through. "I was pissed at you for the way things ended… and for constantly trying to re-insert yourself in my life… but I would never do that to you, Derek. I care way too much about you."

"But that doesn't answer the question," Derek pointed out. "Do you want to be with me again… or more to the point, are these tasks going to get me any closer to being with you?"

Derek watched as Stiles inhaled deeply before shrugging. "I'm not sure, to be honest. You caved so easily when Peter put pressure on you… and now that he's your boss… being with you means that my livelihood is constantly in danger. Our relationship is constantly in danger. It wasn't fair of me to ask you to stand up to him… but at the same time, he's the one standing in the way. I don't see how we can work out when we have him hovering over us."

"I'm willing to handle my uncle… You're worth it, Stiles… and I only regret that it took me as long as it did to realize it," Derek said.

Stiles leaned forward and placed a chaste kiss on Derek's cheek. Derek smiled at the warmth that brief moment of contact filled him with. "So are you going to tell me what's in the box?" A coy smile parted Derek's lips. He lifted the cover off, revealing the Grimmeire, watching as Stiles' jaw dropped. For the very first time in his life, Stiles Stilinski was speechless. He slowly and carefully picked the book up, staring at it with wide-eyed wonder. "How?" was all he could manage.

Derek shifted slightly. "Well, I sort of punched an usher in the throat…"

"You didn't…"

"I did."

Stiles burst into laughter, setting the book down and kissing Derek, though this time, the kiss was much less chaste. The surprise and force with which it was delivered took Derek by surprise, forcing him to fall backwards on the couch. The familiar taste of Stiles urging his hands to wander into territory that he knew by heart. They wrapped around the small waist and pulled their bodies impossibly closer. Stiles ground his hips against Derek's, making clear his desires.
When the kiss finally broke, Derek smiled and stared into Stiles' eyes. "Forgive me if I'm being too presumptuous… but maybe we should move this to your bedroom?" He raised an eyebrow, hoping that he was right in his assessment of the situation.

Stiles gave a devilish grin before climbing off of Derek and taking his hand, pulling him along. He didn't want to delay it any longer. Every atom in his body was craving Derek. The moment the bed was in sight, Derek pushed Stiles against the wall, kissing and nibbling on his neck, forcing him to release a muffled gasp of surprise and pleasure. There was a ferocity in the way in which Derek touched him that both excited and intimidated Stiles. Derek ripped open Stiles' shirt, sending the small plastic buttons flying in all directions. "I liked that shirt…" Stiles whined.

"I like what's underneath it." Derek licked his lips before allowing his tongue to trace and tease the line from Stiles' neck down to his shoulder, then he slowly made his way down to Stiles' chest, teasing his lover's left nipple with his mouth and then reached up, manipulating the other with his thumb and forefinger, eliciting moans and bucks of Stiles' hips in response.

He moved back to Stiles' lips, letting them hover millimeters away before the anticipation was too much and Stiles closed the distance, parting his own lips just enough to let Derek's tongue through. Stiles' slender fingers worked diligently in an attempt to unbutton Derek's pants before dropping down, mouthing the erect member through Derek's underwear. Derek pulled his lover back up. "Tonight is all about you," he said. Stiles pouted. He loved the feeling of Derek's cock in his mouth; that said, he also quite enjoyed the feeling of his own cock parting Derek's perfect lips.

Derek's hands reached down, finding a home on Stiles' legs. He picked his lover up, continuing to kiss him against the wall before moving them to the unmade bed in the center of the room. He managed to release Stiles, but also pull his remaining clothes off in one graceful motion. Removing the last of his own clothes, Derek then resumed his continual kissing of nearly every inch on Derek's body with a reverence and adoration. Derek looked up and saw tears running down his lover's cheeks. "What's wrong?" he asked.

"I've just never been touched like this before…" Stiles replied.

"Do you want me to stop?" Derek became instantly concerned, knowing Stiles' history.

"Can you hold me?" Stiles asked.

Derek nodded, moving back up the bed and snaking his arms around his lover, Stiles nestled himself so that his head was resting on Derek's powerful chest. They stayed like that for several minutes. Stiles listened to the steady drumming of Derek's heartbeat and memorized the way his chest rose and fell with each breath. Soon, Stiles felt better. He took Derek's hand, moving it further and further down, until the backs of Derek's fingers were caressing Stiles' length. A soft moan escaped Stiles' lips. Derek grasped it tightly. Again, Stiles' hips bucked, meeting his strokes. "That feels great," Stiles grunted. "Faster…"

Derek obeyed, continuing the pace for a few moments, before stopping to grab some lube. Stiles frowned. That frown was soon replaced by Stiles biting his bottom lip as Derek worked finger after finger into him. Derek then rolled on a condom and moved into position.

Stiles leaned up, kissing him. "Will you take off the condom?" he asked between pecks.

Blushing, Derek pulled back. "But I thought you said you always use condoms…"

"I want to know what it's like to really feel you inside me," Stiles said, reaching down and removing
the condom from Derek's cock and adding more lube, both to Derek's dick and his hole. Cautiously, Derek got back into position. Again, he was greeted with kisses that only paused while Stiles grimaced at the intrusion. It became instantly clear that this time was going to be different. He hadn't expected how soft and pleasurable the naked grip of his lover would feel.

The first time he had unprotected sex had been against his will with Duke. And though he had enjoyed several sex partners since his adoptive father, he'd never been willing to let them penetrate him without protection. He'd never trusted any of them the way he trusted Derek. As he felt himself stretch to accommodate the man in his arms, he whimpered slightly.

"Am I hurting you?" Derek asked, immediately stopping.

"You're kind of big," Stiles admitted. "It always hurts at first." Again, their lips were together. Derek could feel Stiles tense beneath him as he continued pushing in. The warm tightness was familiar yet different and so pleasurable that it was almost overwhelming. Stiles was relishing the stretched, full sensation of having Derek inside him.

Slowly, Derek began thrusting. Each thrust was slow, torturous, and made both men shiver with pleasure.

With one hand, Derek held himself up and with the other he slowly stroked Stiles' erect cock, putting every ounce of effort into making sure that each thrust hit that spot that made Stiles yelp in ecstasy. As much as he tried to stave off his orgasm, it was a mere 10 minutes before he emptied himself into Stiles. His cock became hyper sensitive. Each continued thrust bordered on excruciating, but he was determined not to stop until Stiles was thoroughly satisfied.

Feeling Derek's emission in him whipped Stiles into a frenzy. He urged Derek to go faster, so he did, grunting loudly as his fist pumped up and down on Stiles cock. At last, Derek felt Stiles clamp down on him, making it even more agonizingly pleasurable. Hot, powerful ropes of Stiles' essence blasted onto their torsos.

Unable to even muster the energy to pull out, Derek collapsed on top of his lover, still buried deep within him. "That was amazing," Stiles grunted. Taking a deep breath, Derek pulled out, whimpering as his sensitive cock was squeezed and caressed by Stiles' tight ass. He took his position next to Stiles, who again rested his head on Derek's chest, curling up his body. Derek did his best to intertwine their limbs, maximizing the skin contact.

Derek stared at the ceiling of Stiles' room. Both men were covered in sweat and semen. Both had racing heartbeats and were panting for breath. Both of them needed this release and the comfort of each other's arms. "I love you, Stiles," Derek whispered, kissing the top of his lover's head.

Though Derek couldn't see it, Stiles smiled. He allowed his hand to drift, mindlessly playing with Derek's balls. Derek chuckled, mimicking the act on Stiles. "I love you, too."

The men basked in the glow of their orgasms for a while longer before Derek suggested that they shower. Stiles got up, starting the water so it would get nice and warm. They entered the shower together, letting the hot spray cover them both. Derek's semen was beginning to drip out of Stiles, washing down the drain. Stiles aggressively backed Derek against the wall, leaning up slightly, kissing him before turning his back and bending over, guiding Derek back into him. He braced himself on the wall as Derek took hold of Stiles' hips for leverage.

There was no preparation needed this time. Stiles was slicked and stretched from having made love so recently. "I like feeling my seed inside you," Derek growled, pulling Stiles' torso up so that he could thrust his tongue into Stiles' ear. While their time on the bed was quiet and intimate, this time
was loud and feral. Stiles was certain he would receive complaints from the neighbors, but the sensation of Derek’s cock thrusting all the way into him made him unlikely to care. They’d be screaming like a banshee too if they were experiencing this.

This time, Stiles came before Derek after a long symphony of “Fuck me harder…” Derek wanted the entire apartment complex to know that he had brought this man whom he loved more than his own life to the heights of pleasure before once again emptying himself into Stiles. He stood there for several moments, still impaled on Derek’s cock, partially relying on it to support him as his knees were weak with his pleasure, the evidence of which was slowly running down the shower wall. He’d managed to cum without even touching himself. "Do it again," he begged.

Derek laughed. "I’m gonna need some time after that," he said regretfully, because he wanted to. He wanted to fuck Stiles all night, in every room of the apartment, and in every position they could manage.

So he did. By the time they finished, Stiles was sore, numb, and filled to the brim with Derek’s ejaculate. Both of them passed out on the bed from pure exhaustion, Derek still inside him.

Neither woke up until it was well into the afternoon on the next day. Both men’s stomachs were growling furiously from hunger. They didn’t want to separate, but they agreed that perhaps they should shower one at a time. Stiles managed to rinse out what was left of Derek’s cum from his body. He had a hard time walking. Derek actually felt lonely in the shower and made it a point to kiss Stiles the moment he finished toweling off.

Lacking the energy to cook, they agreed to find somewhere they could get breakfast for lunch and settled on a diner. Stiles saw how the way Derek looked at him was different now. There was a reverence and desire that burned in his eyes. They twinkled in a way they never had before. When both of them were nearly done with their dinner, Derek finally asked, "So what is the next task?"

Stiles was caught somewhat off-guard by the question. After the night before, he’d almost forgotten that he’d been assigning tasks. He froze, considering it carefully. "Move in with me. I can either move to your place or you to mine… but the third task is that we live together."

Chapter End Notes

Author’s Note: Thanks for being so patient! Finals are almost over... then I'll be more frequent with updates until my next semester starts. And see? I told you it'd get happy... and there was some just desserts AND some sexy time! Please let me know what you thought!
Derek stepped cautiously out of the shower onto the mat that provided traction, protecting him from the possibility of slipping on the steam-covered tiles of the master bedroom. Once again, he was surrounded by Stiles' belongings. He felt uneasy. He slowly rubbed the towel across his skin, removing much of the water, but leaving a fine layer of moisture from the humid air of the bathroom. After stepping into some loose-fitting pajama bottoms, he stood in front of the sink, staring in the mirror as he put toothpaste on his toothbrush and continued his nightly ritual. This was one thing that was allowed to remain unchanged.

Derek had always looked forward to his nightly shower. It was a way of removing the stress a day can place on a person. Stiles preferred showering in the morning, as a way of waking himself up. Derek cherished the sensation of the coarse bristles, frayed from use, against his teeth and gums. The minty flavor of the toothpaste helped relax him.

Slowly, the door opened. Derek watched in the reflection as two veiny, nimble hands wrapped around his waist. He felt Stiles' head rest against his back. He continued to brush his teeth, staring straight ahead. After several minutes had passed, Derek bent over to spit and rinse out his mouth. As he looked up, his eyes locked with Stiles'. Still, the men remained silent. Derek wondered if Stiles realized how petrified he was.

Stiles shifted, standing on his tip-toes as he placed a kiss on Derek's cheek, staring into the reflection of Derek's bright green eyes. "Everything is going to be alright, Derek," he said softly, breaking the silence that had existed between them since their dinner conversation got heated, when Derek expressed his concern for how Peter might take the fact that Stiles was now living in the Hale mansion. "I have faith in us. We'll make it this time," Stiles assured him, caressing Derek's ear. Just as silently and swiftly as he'd appeared, Stiles was gone. Derek reached beneath his sink and pulled out some mouthwash, pouring some into his mouth and swishing it around. He agreed that if his uncle wasn't a factor, they would have nothing to worry about. But now, their livelihoods were both in peril. The more time passed before Peter realized, the angrier he would be. Derek spat the harsh liquid into the sink, turning on the faucet. He watched as the last of it slipped down the drain.

Peter was his last remaining relative, as he so often pointed out. Yet sometimes, he wished getting rid of his uncle was as easy as getting rid of the mouthwash. He wanted his mom. He wanted her to meet Stiles, to offer her words of encouragement and to threaten bodily harm if he let that boy slip through his fingers. He had no doubt that would be her exact reaction. He wanted his sisters to fawn over Stiles. He wanted to hear Laura beg for his permission to plan the wedding. He wanted to watch as Cora feigned disinterest until the day of the wedding when she would have undoubtedly astonished them all by some surprise gift or revelation that would allow them to look back on it with joyous wonder. He wanted to overhear his dad pull Stiles aside and tell him say, "Stop calling me Mr. Hale. You married my son. You're family. Call me 'Dad'." He knew without a doubt that his parents and sisters would love Stiles.

But he didn't have his parents and sisters anymore. He had his uncle, who had become hard and unfeeling after the years of loss. His uncle who seemed content on allowing Derek to follow any path he wanted, so long as it didn't lead to happiness. As Derek studied his reflection, he saw his mother. He'd often been told that he looked just like her. He wiped away a few tears and left the bathroom, crawling into bed. Stiles reached over and turned off the light as Derek pulled the blankets
over them both. He let his lover get comfortable before doing the same. Silence still hung in the air, but Derek never wanted to go to sleep without letting Stiles know how much he was loved. He couldn't remember if he'd managed to tell his family before they died, though he was certain they knew. He craned his neck, returning the kiss left on his cheek in the bathroom. He couldn't see Stiles smile in response as he then rested his head on Stiles' shoulder, his hands finding a comfortable place on his lover's chest.

Despite his heavy heart, the feel of Stiles next to him was all he needed to sleep peacefully.

Thud. Peter jerked around. Thud. He slowly backed up, ensuring he was as close to the wall behind him as was permissible by the laws of physics. "I'm not afraid of you!" he roared. His eyes were wild. Spit sprayed out of his mouth and mixed with the sweat that was rolling down his face. Thud. "Is it you?" Thud. "I fucking killed you," Peter exclaimed as he saw faces converging on him. Thud. A shimmer of light passed over them, illuminating them all one-by-one. His sister and his brother-in-law. His nieces, Laura and Cora. Stephen Prescott, the former Headmaster of the Academy. Jennifer Blake. Thud. "You were all weak. You were in the way… you had to die…" Thud. As Talia, got closer, he saw that she lit a match. Her eyes were cold and dead. Thud. There was no forgiveness in them. Thud. Each of his victims lit matches of their own. Thud. One by one, each of them were thrown at him. Thud. He tried to stomp them out, but there was dry straw beneath him. Thud. It caught fire. Thud. Flames licked at his skin. Thud. He could feel them burning as they caught his clothing. Thud.

He sat straight up in bed, gasping. Throwing the blankets off of him, he ran to his bathroom, turning on the light. His heart was beating so fast, he couldn't hear the ticking of his clock. He checked his body, needing to make sure he'd not actually been in the flames. There was only one thing in the world that scared Peter. It wasn't even as though he'd ever been significantly burned in his life, but when it came to fire, Peter was petrified. Fire was the one force that couldn't be subdued. It couldn't be controlled. It moved and jumped and destroyed without prejudice.

Despite Jennifer's words, which still rang in his ears, he truly did love his nephew… as much and as best as he could. He slowly made his way back to his bed, which was soaked in sweat. He sat on the edge, staring down as he took his phone in hand. From memory, he typed in the number that would connect him to the one person he had: Derek.

It rang several times, before his nephew answered, his voice obviously showing that he'd been woken up. "Hello?"

"Hey," Peter started. "I just… I had a crazy dream and needed to talk to someone… but you're the only person I have…"

"Uncle Peter, what's wrong?" Though still tired, Derek's voice became instantly more caring. That was yet another of Talia's traits that Derek had inherited, and despite Peter's attempts to crush it, it seemed to remain, though in this moment he was glad for it.

"Nothing… not anymore," Peter replied. "I just needed to talk. I'm sorry I woke you up."

"It's alright. Are you sure you're ok?" Derek asked. Peter could hear another voice, but couldn't make it out. Then muffled, as though Derek were covering the receiver, he heard "It's alright, Stiles… go back to sleep…"

"You're with Stiles?" Peter blurted out. "But I thought I called you at…"

"Uncle Peter, it's three in the morning. I really don't want to have this argument," Derek replied, his
voice almost pleading.

"Fine," Peter said coldly. "We'll talk tomorrow then." He hung up the phone and letting out a scream of rage, he threw his phone as hard as he could against his wall, watching as the glass shattered, some of it falling into around the now ruined device. Adrenaline was coursing through his veins and he knew he wouldn't be able to sleep. He felt the bloodlust that crept over him while his hands had been around Jennifer's neck again poison his mind. He had tried to kill Stiles once already, without success. Stiles wasn't supposed to survive that car crash, but he did. He refused to allow that worthless peace of common shit theater teacher to continue poisoning everything he'd worked so hard for. He would deal with Stiles in a much more direct manner. He would watch as the lights left those pale brown eyes for the last and final time. He would relish in the feeling of the last breath leaving that pain-in-the-ass. He intended to kill Stiles slowly, though. He wanted Stiles to beg for mercy. He wanted to hear screams as he peeled the skin from his muscles. He wanted Stiles to bargain with whatever chips he might have thought that he had. And then just before the man finally passed out from shock or blood loss, Peter wanted him to feel the pain and panic of strangulation.

His palms itched at the idea of squeezing around the veiny pale neck. Yes… Peter was suddenly glad that Stiles had survived the car crash because now he had the opportunity to quite literally take matters into his own hands.

Stiles was unsure he'd ever get used to the pleasant beauty of opening his eyes for the first time each day and gazing at Derek's perfection. The thick black hair was sticking out in all directions and a little drool made its way from the corner of his gorgeous lips onto the pillow below him. It made Stiles smile. He slowly reached over and shook Derek. "We have to go to work… it's time to get up…" He leaned over and placed a kiss on Derek's forehead before crawling out of bed and into the shower.

As he stepped beneath the hot spray and began to lather his hair with shampoo and his body with soap, he felt a stab of guilt over having put Derek through the paces he did, and forcing Derek into a situation where they were to cohabitate, especially since there was still an empty drawer space where the one Stiles had previously occupied had been destroyed and not replaced. He began to wonder how many sleepless nights Derek might have had leading up to his asking whether or not the tasks would do him any good. He didn't really even care anymore about the fact that they'd had that on-again-off-again spurt because he genuinely loved Derek and the thing he was most sad about was the possibility that he might have hurt the man he loved in some way… then cornering him into moving in together? "Who does that?" Stiles wondered out loud.

"Who does what?" Derek asked, startling his lover.

Stiles turned off the water and pulled back the shower curtain. He opted for honesty. "I need to apologize," Stiles said.

"If it's about the argument we had… you don't need to. I'll find a way to deal with my uncle," Derek replied.

"No, it's not that," Stiles said, toweling off in front of Derek. "I feel bad for having pretty much blackmailed you into living together. If you're not ready, or if you want me to move back out, I can…"

Derek cocked his head to the side. "Where is this coming from?"

"I just realized that I've been kind of a shitty person," Stiles admitted.
Shaking his head, Derek approached Stiles and pulled him into a tight hug. "I wanted to get back with you… I was willing to do whatever it took to do so. I only regret that it took us getting to a point where you had to make ultimatums like that. Don't beat yourself up, Stiles… Really."

He felt Stiles return the hug. "So you don't hate me for it?"

Derek pushed them apart, holding Stiles' face in his hands. "I don't hate you. I love you. I love you so much that I read a poem to you over the intercom… I love you so much that I flew to New York, punched an usher in the throat, and stole one of the most important props from the set of one of the most popular musicals on Broadway… I love you so much that I cleared out three drawers so you could put your stuff in them. I love you. Never forget that." Stiles smiled back, unable to form words. He leaned forward kissing Derek. When the kiss finally broke, Derek said, "Now get dressed… we're going to be late for work."

The two men finished their morning routines separately before Derek made a thermos of coffee for them both, eliciting a smile from Stiles. They held hands in the Camaro as Derek drove them to school. They gave each other a quick peck on the lips before parting, Stiles going to his classroom and Derek to his office where he was pleased to see Jane, his secretary already there. "Mr. Hale, there's some mail here for you… and a newspaper headline you might want to see," she said.

"Thank you, Jane!" Derek replied brightly. "I don't know what I'm going to do when you retire!"

She looked at him sternly over her glasses. Her normally matronly demeanor changed and her voice became very severe. "Now Mr. Hale, I told you when you first became the Headmaster that I would not tolerate the use of that filthy word! Use it again and I'll make you put a quarter in the 'Retirement' jar and wash your mouth out with soap! I've been at this school for 60 years and if God is willing, I'll be here another 60!"

Derek chuckled. "I apologize, Jane… I won't use that word again."

She smiled, pushing her glasses back up the bridge of her nose and resumed her typically grandmotherly demeanor. "Oh, and your uncle is here to see you… he's in your office already."

Derek pursed his lips, but thanked Jane for her help before grabbing the letters and newspaper and opening the door to his office where he saw Peter sitting in his chair. "How many times do I have to tell you… you are not the Headmaster, stay out of the Headmaster's chair!" He didn't bother to close the door behind him.

"I've tried to be patient, Derek… but you've forced my hand. I'm firing the theater teacher," Peter said, jumping straight to business.

"This again? Really?" Derek shot back. "I'm getting a little tired of having this discussion every few days.

"Join the club."

"Does my happiness mean so little to you that you would actually fire the man I love?" Derek asked. Of course he knew the answer already.

"It isn't love, Derek. You barely even understand what that is!" Peter shot back.

"I'm not a child anymore!" Derek exclaimed. "I'm old enough to know what real love is… and I know that I have it with him."

"You need to think about the name and reputation of your family," Peter scolded. "I mean
honestly… he's nothing. He has no real family… he doesn't come from money… I tried to set you up with an NYU professor who threw herself at you and you couldn't even handle that!"

Derek froze. He studied his uncle carefully. In his anger, there was a vein that twitched on his neck with each heartbeat. Derek stared at it. "I never told you that I didn't sleep with Jennifer. Did she tell you?"

"No, I figured it out on my own," he said. Peter was panicking. He'd fucked up and gotten himself into a corner that he wasn't sure he could get out of.

Derek watched as the twitch got faster. He then looked into his uncle's eyes. "You're lying. All you do is lie to me and you know what? I'm tired of it. Emotionally speaking, you need me a hell of a lot more than I need you. He's a part of my life now and if you don't like that, you don't have to be a part of *my* life. I think you know your way out… and if not, Ms. Jane can show you."

He looked over to see the elderly secretary ominously in the doorway with a ruler. Peter remained still. Jane broke the tense silence. "I'm 80 years old and I heard him! Get a move on!" she croaked. Peter shot Derek one last look of disgust before storming out, brushing past Jane. "I didn't think you'd ever stand up to that asshole!" she muttered before sitting back down at her desk. Derek had never heard her use profanity in his life, and he was an alumnus of the school.

When he managed to pick up his jaw from the shock of hearing that word come out of her mouth, he looked down at the headline Jane had circled. "NYU Professor Slain, Leaves Fortune to Academy in California".

Chapter End Notes

Author's Note: Alright, the semester is over so all of my stories will be getting an update, starting with this one! Thanks for being so patient! As always, I encourage feedback!
It was a headline that, as much as Derek tried to, he simply couldn't escape. He had to pay for extra security on campus to keep the reporters from interfering with the students' education. He and Stiles had even rented a room in hotel for some added privacy because reporters were camped outside his house and his lawyer was petitioning the court for restraining orders that day, to allow them to return to some semblance of normalcy.

In a large conference room, the Board of Governors were seated around a table for an emergency meeting. As the Chairman, Peter looked and sounded very angry. "You can't just throw me off the Board!" he snapped. "There are rules and procedures!"

"And part of those rules include a contingency that at a unanimous vote of the other members plus the sitting Headmaster can remove any Board member if it is agreed that to do so would be in the best interests of the school. This academy is has a $50 million donation just sitting there, contingent upon your removal," explained one of the members. Derek was zoned out and as such, he wasn't entirely sure who spoke.

"We can still name the school Hale Academy, but the board simply cannot refuse this donation, particularly when the Winter Festival is so close and the news of this donation is on every newspaper and blog in the country!" another exclaimed.

"Fuck the festival!" Peter growled. His eyes were wild with rage.

Derek chuckled. "Really? 'Fuck the festival'? This is coming from the same man who is always preaching about the Hale Legacy? The person who started this school created the festival… it's the biggest event in city. And we voted, Peter… you're no longer the Chairman of the Board. By the rules of that endowment, you can't be affiliated with this school in any professional way. So get off the property."

"Listen here, you ungrateful little shit!" Peter yelled, jumping to his feet with an accusatory finger pointed at Derek. "Chairman or not, I'm still your uncle and you will show me the respect I deserve!"

"I am," Derek replied, a coy smile parting his lips. "Get the fuck out of my school."

Derek could have sworn he heard Peter growl, but dismissed it. His eyes never left his uncle until the door was closed behind him.

The second-ranking board member finally spoke. "So now we need to address the fact that typically, the chairman of the board does the majority of the planning for the Winter Festival…"

The classroom door burst open. Stiles looked up, seeing an angry Peter Hale in the doorway. "Knocking is polite," he said, returning to his gradebook where he was inputting the results of a quiz on the history of theatre.

Peter didn't take the disrespect kindly. Instead, he slammed the door behind him. "I'm sick of you getting in the way," he snarled.
"And I'm sick of you interfering in my relationship," Stiles replied, not looking up.

Not even all the acting skills Stiles possessed would have prevented him from showing his fear when Peter took one arm and swiped it across the theater teacher's desk, throwing everything onto the floor in one explosive motion that forced Stiles to finally look at Peter. "Good, I have your attention," Peter said in a lethal voice. "You have fucked up every single thing I've worked for. You're going to pay for it."

"Does your nephew's happiness mean so little to you?" Stiles asked. "That's what I don't understand. You claim to love him and want what's best for him… but no. You want what's best for you. Are you jealous of me, Peter?" Stiles knew he was treading into dangerous territory. Peter's wild eyes were less than a foot away from his own fearful eyes, yet the defiant sarcasm wouldn't stop. "Is that it? You want to bone your nephew, but I'm the one getting in the way of that?"

The veins in Peter's forehead and neck bulged as his hand flew across the desk, grabbing Stiles by the neck and squeezing. Peter managed to easily close the distance between them by walking around the desk, forcing Stiles' torso backwards in a painful manner as he tried to fight back. "You sick fuck," Peter's nails dug sharply into Stiles' skin. As much as he tried, Stiles couldn't breathe. He feared that this would be how he died. He tried to remember what his last words to Derek were. He hoped they were 'I love you.' After what felt like an eternity, Peter released Stiles' neck. "I won't do it now. But next time I see you, I will fucking kill you." With that, Peter turned on his heels and walked away leaving Stiles visibly shaken.

He couldn't remember the last time he had felt this low. Years of planning and molding his nephew was going right down the drain and Peter was watching it all happen almost helpless to stop it. It took more will power than he anticipated not ending his problem while it was literally in his grasp. He could feel the heightened pulse beneath his fingers and he wanted to squeeze until it stopped. He wanted to watch as Stiles' eyes stared back at him for the very last time. He was ready to make it happen.

The thought kept cycling through his head. Peter needed to distract himself so he took a quick walk to get his mail. As he shuffled through it, he saw much of the same old dreg. Bills, appointment reminders, and then one that just didn't seem to fit. A pale yellow envelope, hand-addressed to Mr. Peter Hale from a lawyer he'd never heard of. He stared at the neat print as he walked back inside, setting the other mail on the counter. His index finger carefully tore it open as he pulled out a folded-up sheet of paper and another envelope.

_Dear Mr. Hale,_

_Enclosed is a letter from my client Jennifer Blake. I had instructions to mail this letter to you upon the event of her death by unnatural circumstances._

_I am unaware of its contents, but if you and Miss Blake were close, I give my deepest condolences. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact me. You'll find my information below._

_Sincerely,_

_Jacob Arrants, Esq._

Peter's eyes narrowed as he set that letter aside and opened the second envelope. The enclosed letter was written in Jennifer's elegant hand.
Peter-

How I wish I could see what is happening. I thought you might double-cross me. You always seemed to think that my life was inconsequential. You made it seem as though I was defined by the fact that I was once a prostitute. I'm more than just my past. You seem to think that because you picked me up out of the gutter, that I owed you something. But I didn't.

I instructed my lawyer to send you this little note upon the event that I turn up inexplicably dead. I figured that if that ended up being the case, you were probably to blame. By now, you should know that I have left quite a fortune for that precious academy of yours, contingent upon your removal as the Chairman of the Board of Governors.

There's also a letter that will be delivered to the FBI detailing some of the many terrible things you've done. Once they're finished, you'll never see the light of day again.

How inconsequential is my life now?

-Jennifer

The tremor began in Peter's fingers as the paper slipped, making somersaults through the air as it danced back and forth toward the ground. It moved up his arms and into his core, carrying with it a burning rage. The scream built louder and louder, contorting his face as he collapsed to his knees and shouted at the ceiling above him.

Derek eyed Stiles from across the table. Barely a word had passed between them all afternoon. The silence was maddening. Derek wanted to talk. He wanted to seek support from the man he loved, but there was an almost tangible wall surrounding him. Derek took a long sip of wine, using that opportunity to get a good glance at Stiles, trying to figure out what was wrong. He hadn't even seen a smile cross his lover's lips.

Dinner ended and Stiles excused himself from the table. Derek cleaned up the dishes and trudged upstairs, now worried he might have done something. He could hear the shower running. Quietly he sat in the bathroom, waiting for the water to turn off. When it finally did, Derek was able to make out Stiles' silhouette standing still behind the glass. "I don't know what I did," Derek started. "But... I don't like this silence."

"You didn't do anything," Stiles replied. His voice cracked and Derek knew instantly that he was crying.

He slid open the glass door, his eyes instantly resting on the bright red marks that had been covered by Stiles' scarf earlier. Stepping inside, he quickly pulled Stiles close to him, hoping to be able to inspect the marks more carefully. "Stiles what happened?"

"It was Peter," he admitted. "He came by my classroom. He threatened to kill me. Hell... he almost did."

"Why didn't you say anything?" Derek asked, his hands trembling as they moved over the bruises. Stiles winced as they made contact and Derek rested his hands on Stiles' unblemished shoulders.

"What good would it have done?" Stiles answered the question with a question.

"We could have called the police!"
"He's a Hale. He's got money and connections. It's not like anything would have happened to him," Stiles said. This time it was Derek's turn to wince. "I didn't mean it like that, Derek. But you know what kind of weight your name carries."

Derek nodded. "But how can I use any of that to help protect you when you don't tell me? You wanted a relationship without walls. That has to work both ways."

It wasn't the best Winter Festival in recent memory, but the people of Beacon Hills were willing to accept any escape from the day to day repetition. Derek was able to use his name and his wealth to call in a few favors. Admittedly, he was impressed at how well it came together on such short notice. It helped that there was a certain influx of money for the school, but the majority of that was already earmarked for improvements to the library, computers, and several scholarships, one of which was to be named after Jennifer and aimed at attracting and recruiting bright young women who might not otherwise attend the academy.

Derek and Stiles perused the nearly empty walkways in the large field beside the school where various carnival rides had gone up over the last week. Their hands interlocked. School had been let out early to allow the students to go home and get ready for the festival kick-off, which was to include a preview of the play.

"Are you nervous?" Derek asked, surveying the workers who were running last-minute safety tests on the rides.

"What would I be nervous about?"

"You're basically previewing the play tonight for the whole town to see…" Derek replied. "It's your Beacon Hills directorial debut."

"I think you're forgetting that I was once nominated for a Tony," Stiles replied nonchalantly.

Derek froze. "You were? Why didn't you put that on your application?"

Stiles chuckled. "How pretentious would that look? 'Tony Award-Nominated Theater teacher!' I mean honestly. My resume was already impressive enough to speak for itself."

"How is it that after all this time I can still learn new things about you?"

Stiles shrugged, a coy smile parting his lips. "Just leave the theater program to me. You have much larger things to worry about."

"Peter won't hurt you again," Derek vowed, stopping them and turning to face his boyfriend. The fading bruises were still visible, marring the milky smooth skin.

"I meant the festival and the school, but yeah… that too," Stiles replied. He noticed Derek's gaze. "Stop worrying about me. I can take care of myself. I survived on my own before meeting you… I think I'll be alright."

"You were pretty shaken up by the attack…"

"Because it happened in my classroom!" he countered. "I just wasn't expecting it. Now I'm prepared, so I'll say it just one more time: stop worrying about me!"
Knowing he was fighting a losing battle, Derek decided to drop it and leaned forward kissing him on the nose, forcing a smile from Stiles. "Fine. I won't worry about you ever again," Derek joked, smiling.

"That's all I ask," Stiles chuckled back.

"I need to go run some errands," Derek said. "I'm not sure how long it will take, but I'll be back in time to see the show."

"You promise?"

"Now who's worrying?" Derek flashed a smile. "I'll be here."

"I love you!" Stiles called as Derek left.

Derek turned around and blew his boyfriend a kiss.

A special sort of excitement surrounded the students. It energized Stiles in a way he hadn't felt in a very long time. As he looked around his classroom, he saw his students preparing for their number. As a group, they'd chosen to perform the "La Vie Bohème" scene as the excerpt. Though he recognized that their song choice could be a bit subversive, Stiles trusted their decision and was willing to take any flack that might come from it.

Using a falsely dramatic voice, Stiles called for his students. "Alright gather 'round, gather 'round!" as he waved them in closer. "Okay you little street rats and degenerates! I am so proud of all the hard work you've put into this show. I want you to go out there, have fun, and stick it to the man! Will you do that?"

A chorus of "Yes!"

"Hands in everyone!" Stiles said, sticking his arm out. The other students followed suit except for one. Stiles glared at him. "You too, Cooper." The teen rolled his eyes and reluctantly joined the rest of the group. "I want a very loud 'No Day but Today' on three! 1… 2… 3…"

"No Day but Today!" the students yelled.

"Let's go make some old people blush!" Stiles shouted.

The students all filed out of the classroom and toward the field next to the school. Walking behind them, he checked his phone. He'd hoped to see a text from Derek explaining that he was there and waiting.

The field was packed. The rides were all lit up and the entire town was somehow jammed into the area. It wasn't until Stiles got to the main staging area that he saw Derek there, ready to make his speech. An uncontrollable smile stuck to his face as he climbed up the risers and took his seat next to Derek.

The butterflies in his stomach made it almost impossible to pay attention to what Derek was saying. He heard a part about continuing the legacy of the school and being proud of the students who were about to perform. "And none of this would be possible without our amazing Tony Award-Nominated Theater Teacher, Dr. Stiles Stilinski!" A light found its way into Stiles' eyes. He was caught off-guard, but waved and smiled. "Dr. Stilinski, would you like to say a few words?"

Internally, Stiles was glaring at Derek. He'd definitely pay for this later. Outwardly, he stood up and gracefully made his way across the stage, taking the microphone. "I wasn't really planning on
talking, so I'll make this quick. I have had so much fun this year teaching at the Academy and working with the students who are about to perform. They've worked very hard on this piece and I'm not sure I can wait another minute to see them. So everyone, please join me in welcoming them to the stage!

Stiles and Derek moved off the stage and into two chairs reserved in the crowd, which was giving deafening applause.

The stage went dark for a few minutes and Stiles watched as the students took their marks. The moment the light switched back on, it began.

"Who died?"

"Our Akita."

"Evita!"

Stiles made it a point to survey the crowd to see how they were interpreting the performance. He was pleasantly surprised that they displayed a sense of humor, though there were a few stern looks. Derek seemed utterly lost in the performance, laughing and hooting. Though Stiles enjoyed the performance, he was also taking notes on slight tweaks and improvements that could be made before the play opened in the Spring. When the students made their final triumphant cry of "Viva la vie bohème!" he jumped to his feet in applause, joined by the vast majority of the crowd. There were only a few hold-outs who were mostly older individuals.

The musical number marked the official opening of the festival. Derek allowed the students who performed to ride the rides for free and the group of spectators dispersed into the walkways and filed into lines for various rides and games.

Derek accompanied Stiles back into the theater room where the students changed out of their costumes and the room was locked up securely before they, too, left to join the fun.

The shortest line was, surprisingly, for the Ferris wheel. Derek and Stiles boarded it and the carriage lurched forward as it moved to allow others to climb in. It was a small carriage, and as such, they needed to sit on opposite sides to maintain balance. Derek seemed oddly aloof. "What's wrong?"

"I was going to wait until we were a bit higher, but I don't necessarily see the point in that, I guess," Derek started. The way he spoke caused an anxious knot to form in Stiles' stomach. He slid one hand out of view, crossing his fingers that Derek wasn't going to break up with him in this rickety metal box. "This is something I've been thinking about for a while now. I don't want to put this off any longer. My uncle would always say that happiness just doesn't happen for Hales and I think he's actually right. I'm a Hale and happiness just didn't happen for me."

Stiles stared at him in disbelief. Tears began welling up in his eyes. "Are you really doing this right now?"

"Let me finish," Derek urged. "Happiness didn't happen for me. I worked hard for it. I worked harder to get you than I've ever worked for anything because I realized, almost when it was too late that I never wanted to lose you. I still don't and I can't imagine a time in my life when I'll ever be okay with you not being with me." He reached into his pocket.

Stiles then realized that Derek was, in fact, not breaking up with him. Quite the opposite, actually. "Oh my God," he whispered. "Are you really doing this right now?" He looked around. "Is this happening?"
Derek smiled, cautiously getting to his knee as he held the small box in front of him, opening it for Stiles to see. "I want you beside me as a Hale, working for this happiness together. Will you?"

Stiles' breath was unsteady. He picked up the ring and looked closely at it. It was beautiful. Gold, divided by a row of diamonds. The sides were lined with a rope of silver. "Holy shit this is happening…" He tried to collect his thoughts as he held the jewelry between his fingers. Finally he looked back at Derek. "To answer your question, no."

The air seemed to visibly leave Derek's body as his eyes fell. "Oh," he said softly, shifting back in his seat.

"Let me finish," Stiles replied. Derek looked back up, the sad mix of hurt and defeat hesitantly fading from his lovely green eyes. "I'm not a Hale. I'll never be a Hale. And you're not a Stilinski and I wouldn't ask you to be one. I'll marry you, Derek, but I want us to keep our own names because we are who we are, and that's what makes us amazing."

Lights danced across Derek's face as what Stiles said sunk in. They leaned forward, kissing each other passionately as Derek put the ring on his new fiancé's finger. As the Ferris wheel kept spinning, they could barely keep their hands off of one another. Giddy excitement was beginning to overpower pragmatism. Neither man wanted the space that had to exist between them so as soon as the wheel came to a stop and they were able to get off, Derek lifted Stiles off the ground, forcing him to giggle slightly as they spun around kissing. There was a surprised gasp from the spectators who didn't understand why they were watching these two men kissing so jubilantly. When Derek finally set Stiles back on his feet, he turned to the crowd and lifted Stiles' hand into the air. The diamonds caught the light shining. "We're getting married!" he announced. Applause erupted. It seemed that the entire town of Beacon Hills was celebrating. The teachers who worked at the Academy, who often thought that Derek had some sort of black vortex in the middle of his chest were pleasantly surprised and happy for their boss and colleague.

In truth, there was only one person in the crowd who wasn't a part of the excited fervor that was the celebration of this engagement and as the curl of disgust turned down the corner of his mouth, Peter Hale backed away, disappearing in the sea of people. It seemed his timeline was growing shorter and shorter. He was determined that his nephew would not marry Stiles and he was ever more resolute that Stiles would not survive the next week.

Chapter End Notes

Author's note: Thank you for your patience! Unfortunately, a move and a lack of internet made all of my good intentions for writing over the winter break not so much a reality. But… I hope you enjoyed the chapter. Here’s the ring Derek chose. Please let me know what you thought! Feedback is always appreciated!
No matter how much he tried, Stiles simply could not look away from the ring that was now adorning his finger. As he and Derek stood in line for various rides, all he could do was stare at it.

"Do you like it?" Derek asked timidly after noticing how much Stiles kept looking at it.

"I love it!" Stiles exclaimed. "Why?"

Derek shrugged. "I wasn't sure if you would," he admitted. "I've never seen you wear jewelry. I didn't know if you'd think it was too showy."

"You worry too much," Stiles chuckled. "I would have liked it even if it was cubic zirconia."

Derek smirked. "If you think I'd be caught dead buying cubic zirconia, then maybe we should call this wedding off…"

"I just meant that I'd love it no matter what… it's about what it represents that's important," Stiles clarified.

"Traditionally, the engagement ring was a sort of down-payment on the bride-to-be," Derek pointed out.

Again Stiles chuckled, "Ever the romantic, Derek."

After a while, the two of them grew bored and decided to head home. Though the ride was in silence, their hands were firmly holding onto one another as their arms rested on the center console.

Though he managed to keep his calm during the ride home, once they were inside and the door was closed behind them, all bets were off. Stiles' mouth attacked Derek's with passionate vigor. It made no difference how deeply they kissed, Stiles couldn't get enough, revealing a side that Derek found incredibly sexy. "I love you," Stiles panted when his need for oxygen finally overpowered his need for Derek's lips.

"I love you, too," Derek chuckled, finally able to regain his composure. He hadn't even hung up his coat yet.

"With everything that's been going on, we haven't had any time to ourselves. Let's make up for that," Stiles suggested.

"That sounds like the best idea I've heard all day," Derek whispered, picking Stiles up and carrying him to their bedroom. Stiles wrapped his arms and legs around Derek to make it easier on him.

The lovemaking was simple. It was intimate. Fulfilling. Slow. Neither of them wanted it to end, so they made it last, taking breaks just to lie in each other's arms.

When they were too tired and drained to continue, they fell asleep. Their limbs were interlocked and Derek's head rested on Stiles' chest. The steady strum of Stiles' heartbeat was all Derek needed to sleep peacefully.
The doorbell jolted Peter out of his reverie. Two FBI agents stood at his doorstep. "Are you Peter Hale?" one of them asked.

"Who's asking?" Peter replied, playing into the scene that must have happened a million times a day across the country.

The agents flashed their badges. "I'm Agent Malone, this is Agent Whittemore. We're investigating the death of Jennifer Blake. We know you two contacted each other often over the past few months and you and your nephew recently visited her in New York, right before she died."

"Do you have a warrant?" Peter asked, making no effort to hide how annoyed he was by their presence.

"We'd prefer to not have to bother a judge to get one," Agent Whittemore replied. "But we have more than enough evidence... so if you wish to go that route..."

"Come back when I'm legally obligated to entertain this. I'll have my lawyer ready," Peter said before slamming the door in their faces. His time was running out. He needed to get rid of Stiles soon. He knew it wouldn't take long for the agents to get their warrant and then he'd be completely fucked.

He quickly grabbed a bag, packing only the essentials and waited for evidence that the agents were truly gone before hopping in his car. He had a small cabin in the middle of nowhere. It wasn't in his name and Derek didn't even know about it, so he'd be safe there, he reasoned, while he prepared for his final kill. After that, he'd have to disappear entirely. He always knew where he'd go if that were the case. His proficiency in Spanish made Argentina the perfect choice, especially considering their extradition policies.

His drive gave him time to think. Thinking was always his relaxation technique. He envisioned Stiles throat in his hands. He could practically feel his pulse dropping. He needed to make it soon. All that was required was a little more planning.

Derek was reading changes to educational law passed in the most recent state legislative session, though was finding it hard to concentrate as Jane kept coughing. It was a loud, hacking cough that frankly worried Derek. Jane was getting up there in age and the last thing she needed was to work through something she should be resting through.

He got up from his desk, leaning against the door frame. "Jane... why don't you take the rest of the day off?"

"And why would I do that?" she asked.

"Because it's obvious that you're not feeling well. You need to go home and get rested... It will be a strain, but we'll function for a little while without you," Derek said with a concerned smile.

"Pish posh!" Jane replied dismissively. "I'm fine... it's just a little cough."

Derek pulled out his wallet and handed her a $20 bill.

"What's this for?" she asked.

"So you can pick yourself up some medicine on the way home," Derek said. "Or some stuff to make soup... My mom used to make home-made chicken soup when I was sick... it always worked wonders on me."
She handed it back to him. "Keep your money, sweetheart," she replied. "You have a wedding to be planning. Besides... I already have the ingredients for that soup... and I was the one who taught your mother how to make it! And it's Friday so I'm going to finish out the day. It's half-over already!"

"Jane... as your boss and as your friend, I'm insisting. Go home and get some rest. I'll manage until you get better," Derek insisted.

Jane stared Derek down, determined to make him blink first. Unfortunately another round of coughs made her lose the stare-down. "Fine," she said tersely. "But I'll be back here bright and early on Monday!"

"I'd send out the national guard if you weren't," Derek chuckled.

She gathered her belongings and picked the $20 off the desk. "I'll return this on Monday as well. You're sweet, Derek..."

She gave him an affectionate pat on the arm before bustling out of the office.

Derek smiled, returning to his desk where he continued reading the law changes. He prepared several instructors' reviews. The afternoon was wholeheartedly productive. It wasn't until fifth period that he had any interruptions whatsoever. A knock on the doorframe pulled Derek's attention away from a few financial reports. He looked up to see a man standing there. "Hello. Can I help you?" he asked.

"Yes," the man replied in a smooth British baritone. "I was wondering if you could tell me where Dr. Stilinski's classroom is. I was one of his professors and mentors when he was in college and I thought I would drop by and surprise him since I was in the area."

Derek smiled warmly. "Yes just sign in using that notebook right there and his room is straight down that hallway to the left. You won't be able to miss it."

The man grabbed the pen, filled out what was required and Derek grabbed a bright yellow "Visitor" sticker to place on his shirt. "Thank you!" the man said before heading off.

Derek returned to his desk, but after a while, he couldn't shake the feeling that something was off. He was certain that if there were a professor Stiles had been this close to, he'd have heard about him by now. There were scarcely any secrets they had from each other. When it became all he could think about, Derek went and checked the name that the visitor had written down: Deucalion Megalos. "Shit," Derek muttered, running to Stiles' classroom.

The moment the bell rang, Stiles' students filed out, despite the fact that he was still mid-sentence. "Remember that we'll start doing Monologues on Monday!" He knew they likely didn't hear him, but went back to his desk and began inputting grades from previous assignments.

He didn't even realize that someone had come into his classroom until he heard the voice he'd spent years trying to forget. He instantly began shaking. Despite wanting to close his eyes and will it away, he forced himself to look up, verifying that he was actually there. "What are you doing here?" he asked. "How did you find me?"

"I know it took a long time, Stiles... but I'll always find you. The principal was particularly helpful, though. Good man," Deucalion replied. As he looked around, he smiled. "Kali would be very proud... too bad she was heartbroken that you cut us out of your life."
For years, Stiles had practiced what he might say if he ever came face-to-face with Deucalion again, and now that he was standing there, Stiles' mouth was dry and he could barely draw breath, let alone form words.

Deucalion moved closer. "I was particularly hurt that you'd leave without calling... I mean after all, I was your first... All of those nights we shared a bed..."

"All of those nights I tasted blood from biting my tongue so I wouldn't scream?" Stiles replied angrily. "Or the times I went hoarse from begging you to stop?"

"You make it sound like we didn't have fun..."

"Because I didn't!" Stiles shouted angrily. It took a moment for him to realize where he was and lower his voice. He didn't want his colleagues to know his secret. "I was saving my first time for someone special..."

"Someone as broken as you would never find someone special, Stiles... that's why I took that burden for you... I spared you the years of heartache and gave you the best hands-on sex ed you could have ever asked for!" Deucalion sneered.

Deucalion got ever closer and Stiles tried moving further away, but the set pieces from the play were blocking him from going anywhere. He noticed a baseball bat he'd confiscated from a student and picked it up, holding it threateningly toward his former foster father.

"What do you plan on doing with that?" Duke demanded. "You were never particularly gifted at Junior League."

"I'll repaint these set pieces with your fucking head, Duke. I swear to God I will! Leave now and I won't get the police involved," Stiles snarled.

"You ungrateful little shit," Duke derided. "The amount of money I spent putting you through your undergrad... the amount of money I spent clothing and feeding you when you came live with my wife and slept under my roof... and this is how you thank me?"

"He doesn't owe you anything. Get the fuck out of my school!" Derek said ominously as he appeared in the doorway.

"This is between me and the theater teacher. Go back to patrolling hallways or whatever it is you do," said Duke, dismissing Derek. "This has nothing to do with you."

"My fiancé said he doesn't want you here... so you can go now, or I can drag out the pieces of you that are left when he's done with that bat!" Derek threatened.

"Fine... I can see I'm no longer welcome here..." Duke ceded as he made his way to the door. It appeared to him that he was wrong in his assessment of Stiles. But Derek Hale's name and story was one that Deucalion recognized. It seemed only fitting to him that Stiles would be attracted to such a concentrated source of misery and despair. Perhaps, thought Deucalion, Derek would make Stiles more miserable than I ever could. Tragedy had surrounded the Hale name throughout the Nation's history. There was nothing, Deucalion reasoned, that would indicate that Derek was excluded from that legacy.

The moment he was in range to do so, Derek grabbed him by the front of his shirt and slammed him against the wall. "I never want to hear of you coming anywhere near here again. The moment you so much as cross back into the city limits, you're a dead man. And I'll be the one helping hide the body after Stiles kills you in any way he sees fit. Do I make myself clear?"
"Crystal…” Duke replied.

Derek didn't release him just yet. Instead, he looked over toward Stiles. "Hey… why don't you give him one last thing to remember you by… because if you don't, I will…”

Stiles instantly understood what his fiancé meant and Derek didn't let Deucalion go until Stiles was close enough. The moment Deucalion thought he was safe, Stiles' right fist made contact with Duke's face while Derek's got him right in the gut. As Deucalion doubled over in pain, Stiles knelt down. "If you come back, you don't have to worry about Derek's threat because there won't be a body left to hide. Now get the fuck out of this school."

Deucalion scrambled to leave and Derek didn't feel the need to make sure he actually did. He knew Deucalion was smart enough to take the warning he was given and not test them. Once he was out of sight, Stiles' strong demeanor faded and he sunk into Derek's arms crying. "It's alright," Derek whispered. "I've got you." Derek felt Stiles' hands clutch his shirt, pulling them closer as he cried. Derek encouraged him to let it out… to scream and cry and let go of everything that Deucalion had done. "It's alright to let it go… it doesn't mean you have to forget… it doesn't even mean you have to forgive him. It just means that he can't hold any power over you anymore."

Eventually, Stiles stopped crying. He felt exhausted and realized he'd wasted too much energy crying about a person who didn't deserve so much as a thought from him. He was thankful that Derek was there to hold him. Stiles knew he'd be able to talk to Derek if he ever found himself waking up from a nightmare regarding Deucalion, but the need never arose. Even though he recognized that what Duke did was a part of his past and therefore a part of him, he felt enough closure after having finally faced the figure behind the fear, that Deucalion never again entered his dreams. When an intrusive thought regarding his adoptive father would pass through his mind, he would fiddle with his ring, reminded of the day that Derek helped him move on.

Chapter End Notes

Author's Note: Thanks for your patience! My final semester is kicking my butt, but I'm trying to make sure I don't abandon my lovely readers! Please let me know how you enjoyed this chapter!
Chapter 15

Chapter Summary

When Stiles hears something he shouldn't have, tensions reach a boiling point between him and Derek.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

It had been a long time since Derek had performed this ritual. In a field not too far from his mansion, he gathered lilacs and wild roses. He returned to his car and drove to a used book store. He settled on a nicely worn copy of Pride and Prejudice before then driving to a liquor store to buy some expensive scotch. He couldn't remember his father's preferred brand, so he got a small bottle of Chivas Regal, his own favorite.

He could feel the surge of emotions that typically accompanied this ride. The giant marble building looked out of place among the garden of simple headstones. The Hale Mausoleum was an architectural beauty. Derek had it redesigned when his parents and sisters were interred within it. The building had fallen into disrepair and he couldn't stomach the thought of his family spending eternity in the dilapidated building.

Derek spent a few moments trying to find the key that unlocked the doors before quickly disarming the alarm with the date he lost them all. Peter had once remarked at the irony that the four digits that now protected them was the reason they were all there in the first place. Derek continued his ritual, placing the Lilacs on Laura, the wild roses on his mother, Talia. His father Daniel got the scotch and Cora got the book. She now had the entire collected works of Jane Austen, the Brontë Sisters, and most of Oscar Wilde.

He tried to swallow down the lump building in his throat. "I'm sorry I haven't been to visit you in a while," he said. "I—uh—I wanted to tell you guys that I'm getting married. I think you would all love him. I love him. But I'm terrified. I don't know if I should have proposed to him… I'm not even entirely sure why I did it. We've been together for less than a year and I… I just don't know."

He began to cry. It felt both incredibly relieving and painful to finally say the words out loud. "He's smart, funny, charming, everything I want. He comes with baggage… he understands that I do, too… and on paper, this should be the easiest relationship in the world. I should be at a wedding planner's office right now, not here telling you that I don't want to get married." He rested his hand on Talia's marble coffin. "If there was ever a time I wished you were here , it's now , because I can't go to Uncle Peter about this. He wants Stiles dead… and I have nobody else… I feel so alone…"

Derek pulled a handkerchief out of his pocket and blew his nose and wiped his eyes. "He's just such a good person," he said. "And I really love him. I know that if I tell him I made a mistake by proposing, it's going to kill him. He's going to think I'm shutting him out again and I'm not… He's the first person I've felt like this about since Paige and I've hurt him so much already… I can't do it again. I just can't."

Derek didn't know that at the other end of the very same cemetery, there had been another member of the Beacon Hills Academy Faculty visiting two graves, side-by-side, dug and filled one month
Stiles brought flowers to their graves nearly weekly and people always seemed to steal them. "I'm getting married," he said to them, sitting between their graves. "I know I've told you before... He's sarcastic, sour, he challenges me... But he's gonna kill me when he finds out that I lost the ring. I don't even know how to tell him..."

The sound of a car disrupted the quiet time he usually enjoyed. He always came so early in the morning to avoid having other people there. When he saw the unmistakable black Camaro pulling up to the giant white mausoleum, he knew that Derek was there. "I wish you could meet him," Stiles told his parents. He touched his right hand to his lips and then touched each of their headstones before walking over to the mausoleum, ready to comfort his fiancé when he came out of the building. He stood by the car, trying to give Derek his space. However the deep voice echoed loudly and Stiles heard Derek admit that he regretted their engagement. He felt his chest and stomach tie up in knots. He wanted to walk away, and he knew he should have. But he couldn't. He understood Derek's reasoning, but he couldn't help but to feel hurt by hearing the words come out of his mouth.

When Derek set the alarm and locked the mausoleum behind himself, he was a little shocked to see Stiles. "Hey... what are you doing here?" he asked.

Stiles pointed to his jeep, visible from afar. "I was visiting my parents. Originally, I'm from here. They're buried at the other end of the cemetery. I saw you pull up so I figured I'd come over and see if you needed a hug or anything."

Derek wondered how long Stiles had been there, but didn't feel that it was the appropriate place to ask, so he simply said, "I'm going to head back home. I'll see you there."

Stiles nodded, kissing Derek's cheek before they parted ways.

Seeing the distance Stiles had to walk, Derek called after him. "Do you want me to drive you to your Jeep?"

Stiles waved him off. "I'll be fine."

Derek got in his car and left.

As much as he tried not to, he couldn't keep himself from focusing on the fact that Stiles had been waiting there for him when he walked out. He wondered if he had heard anything. When he got home, he saw some of the RENT sets were drying from a fresh layer of paint. He grabbed a bottle of water from the fridge and went to his study.

As Stiles drove, he was faced with two problems: the first of which being how to handle the fact that he knew what Derek confessed and the second being that he lost the ring. He knew Derek paid a small fortune for it and couldn't afford to replace it without borrowing the money from him, yet he wasn't sure why he should even bother if Derek regretted giving the ring to him anyway.

The house was eerily silent as he walked in. "Derek, I'm home," he called as he set his keys down.

Walking downstairs, Derek headed into the kitchen. "I'm hungry. Do you want me to make you something for lunch?"

"Sure," Stiles said. "But something light... maybe a sandwich or something."

Silence filled the room as Derek made the sandwiches and poured two glasses of juice before sitting down at the table across from Stiles. Derek ate slowly, the topic still weighing heavily on him. It
wasn't until Stiles was almost done that he noticed the lack of a ring on his finger. It seemed like confirmation that he had, in fact, heard. "Where's your ring?" he asked softly.

Stiles looked down at his hand. "I took it off to paint the sets and I don't know where it went."

Derek nodded. "I just think you would have taken it off somewhere it wouldn't have gotten lost... It's not just a piece of metal and rocks... it symbolizes something, you know."

"I'm well aware of what it symbolizes," Stiles replied coolly. "I just don't know that it symbolizes the same thing for us both."

Derek's eyes narrowed. "What do you mean?"

"A relationship without walls, right?" Stiles sighed. "Well... I heard what you said about how you regret proposing."

Derek's fears confirmed, he became angry. "So you were spying..."

"No I wasn't spying!" he argued. "I meant what I said about why I was there. I wanted to make sure you were alright."

"That was a gross invasion of my privacy, Stiles! I go visit them when I need to figure things out!"

"Like our relationship? Don't you think you should come to me for that?" Stiles countered. "Especially when it's something like retracting our engagement?"

"I was going to talk to you about it... when I was ready... when I knew what my thoughts really were! I didn't want to have the conversation like this!" Derek's voice began to rise.

"So when was I going to find out?" Stiles yelled back. "When you just didn't show up to the fucking wedding?"

Derek paused. "Do you really think I'd do that to you?"

"You've proven to be whole-heartedly unpredictable, Derek... at this point, I have no idea!" Stiles replied.

Derek was unprepared for how painful Stiles' response was. "Perhaps if you put more effort into simply talking to me than spying or trying to predict my actions, you wouldn't have to worry about it."

"Really? You want to lecture me about coming to you with my problems?" Stiles growled. "And I wasn't spying on you!"

"And I'm supposed to trust that?" Derek replied. "I wanted a chance to talk myself through what I was feeling and thinking in a place that I consider solemn and sacred. I wasn't saying I wanted to leave you or that I never want to marry you!"

"But you don't want to marry me. That part was made abundantly clear!" Stiles said.

"Are you even listening to yourself?" Derek yelled. "Because you're certainly not listening to a word coming out of my mouth." Stiles threw his hands up and walked away. Derek's rage was reaching levels he hadn't felt in a very long time. He picked up his glass and whipped it across the room in the opposite direction of Stiles. It smashed against the wall, littering the floor with shards.
Stiles turned around. "Congratulations! After that display I'm sure our stemware is shaking in the cabinet! But I've never reacted well to acts of intimidation or bullying."

"Fuck you, Stiles!" Derek shouted. "And fuck your sense of moral superiority. What you did was wrong, so why don't you just admit it?"

"No, Derek… fuck you because if you had come to me first… we wouldn't even be having this argument!" Stiles replied.

"No we wouldn't," Derek admitted, his voice still loud and angry. "We'd be having the same argument we had before about how you feel I'm putting up walls or some other bullshit! Just because you're not the first person on my list to discuss something with doesn't mean I'm shutting you out!"

"Because nothing has changed! This is the exact same fight we've had before… I don't know how you can't see it!" Stiles cocked his head to the side in a way that made another wave of anger boil through Derek.

"That's not fair! I've changed nearly everything about myself to fit in line with what you want and what you need. I was so caught up in it that I proposed… even though I'm not ready for something like that! I'm tired of trying to be something I'm not." Derek said, his voice returning to a normal volume.

"I never asked for you to change, Derek! You can't just pin that on me!" Stiles replied. "I just wanted for you to be yourself… and to be honest with yourself and with me!"

"We broke up when I was being myself!" Derek maintained. "So no… I didn't do those ridiculous tasks you set forth for my own health… I did it to prove that I love you because just being myself wasn't enough for you!"

"And I've already apologized for that!"

"But how can our relationship continue when what you claim you want from me is something that we've seen doesn't work!" Derek continued. "So what the fuck else am I supposed to do? I love you… and I really just don't know how else to make that clear to you."

Stiles shrugged. "I don't know… just show it. Act in a way that I know you love me… I don't need those expensive gifts… or an engagement ring that's worth more than my student loan debt. Being a Hale doesn't mean you can just buy my love."

Derek felt nearly defeated. "And this is what it always comes back to… I'm a Hale and you're not like me. What hurts the most about that though, Stiles, is the fact that I have gone to great lengths for you… but because this is the underpinning issue you have… it looks like Peter might win. But you know what? If you want me to be me… guess what. I'm a Hale. I was a Hale before you moved back to Beacon Hills. I was a Hale when you applied to work for me. I was a Hale when we first kissed… and I will die a Hale. If you can't accept that, you know where the door is."

Tears began to fill Stiles' eyes. "So where do we go from here?"

Derek shrugged. "I don't want to lose you, Stiles. But from here on out, I want to be me." He slowly approached Stiles and gently wiped the tears from his face.

"I'm sorry, Derek," he replied, reaching out to pull Derek closer. "I really am."

Derek wrapped his arms around Stiles. He felt Stiles clutch his shirt. He kissed Stiles' head and rubbed his boyfriend's back. "I forgive you."
Author's Note: Thanks for reading! I know this might have seemed a little out of left-field after all they've been through, but there was a reason. Let me know what you thought!
Though they had genuinely forgiven one another, the atmosphere was still tense around the Hale mansion. Both Derek and Stiles had the feeling that there were still things left unsaid between them and neither knew how to clear the air without ripping open the wound of their fight. Derek did the thing that usually helped him clear his head: he went for a run.

A relationship without walls. That was what both of them wanted, but Derek realized that there was a wall that he still hadn't demolished because he forgot that it still existed. There was an important aspect of their relationship that was predicated on a lie Derek told for the sake of his own pride. The only reason this was even coming up was because of what this day was; namely the anniversary of Paige's death.

He ran for hours, thinking about how he could bring it up. When he was finally too tired to continue, he headed back home, slowing to a walk only once he was in the confines of his yard. A flash from the ground caught his eye as he walked past the area where Stiles had been painting set pieces for the play. Nearly entirely buried, except for a tiny spot was the ring he'd bought for Stiles. He bent down and picked it up, brushing off the dirt that he could with his fingers.

Inside, Stiles was cooking. "How was your run?" he asked as Derek walked in.

"It was good," Derek replied. "I've not worked out that hard in a long time. Dinner smells good."

"Thanks," Stiles replied. "It's a recipe I'm trying out."

"I'm going to take a shower before we eat," Derek said.

Stiles stopped stirring long enough to kiss Derek on the cheek. "Don't be too long. It's almost done!"

Derek wanted Stiles to join him, but couldn't bear asking with what was weighing on his mind. He showered quickly and rinsed the dirt off the ring. After, he dressed comfortably in pajama pants and a tee shirt and went back downstairs, the ring in his pocket.

Stiles had set out two plates and two glasses of wine. There were three courses that Stiles had planned, the first being a bright, colorful salad. They ate the first course in silence before Stiles brought out two large bowls of something that looked halfway between a soup and a stew. It smelled delicious. Before he could catch himself, Derek mused, "Paige once made something that looked similar to this… it didn't smell as good." He tensed the moment he realized what he'd said. "Stiles… I'm sorry. I didn't mean to bring her up…"

Stiles replied with kind eyes. "It's fine. She was your first love. You're allowed to have fond memories of her… even if you don't seem to have any about her cooking."

Derek shrugged. "It's just not fair to you. Stiles I'm sorry… truly I am. The only reason she was even on my mind was because today was…"

Reaching across the table, Stiles grabbed Derek's hand. "Derek, I understand. Relax."

"I can't relax," Derek said. "Not until I get this off my chest. I've lied to you about something important and I feel awful."
"Derek, I'm sure it can wait for a day that's not so emotionally charged for you," Stiles insisted. "You should feel free to mourn Paige. She's someone you loved and someone who loved you. Whatever it is… wait until things have cooled down."

Derek found himself frustrated at how compassionate Stiles was. "You should hate me for this! Please… I know we agreed to be ourselves… but for once can you not be such a good person?"

Stiles' eyes narrowed, now truly concerned about what terrible thing Derek could be trying to confess. He took a large gulp of wine. "Alright, Derek… I'm listening."

There was a momentary silence as Derek prepared himself. Just as he opened his mouth to speak, a loud knock was heard at the front door. "Are you fucking kidding me?" he growled.

He tried to ignore it, but a voice came from the other side. "This is the FBI. Open up!"

Thinking the confession was related, Stiles' eyes shifted from his view of the door and back to Derek in horror. "What the hell did you do that the FBI is knocking on our door!"

"I lied about being a virgin!" Derek said, his voice panicked. "I have no idea why the FBI is here!"

"Well this conversation isn't done yet," Stiles said as they walked to the door.

"Can we help you?" Derek asked as he opened it.

"I'm Agent Whittemore, this is my partner, Agent Malone. We're investigating the murder of a Ms. Jennifer Blake. Your uncle, Peter Hale, has been implicated in it and he's gone missing. We were wondering if you could help us find him," the Agent explained.

"I'll be in the dining room," Stiles murmured before dismissing himself.

Derek stepped out onto the porch to be with the Agents. "I'm sorry, but I have no information for you. He attacked my fiancé and disappeared. I haven't seen him since and I really don't care to."

"Is there anywhere he might have escaped to? Does he have any other house or apartment?" Agent Malone asked.

Derek shook his head. "Not that I know of."

"Alright," the Agents replied, pulling business cards out of their pockets and handing them to Derek. "If you can think of anything that might help our investigation, please let us know."

"I will. I want him caught just as much as you do," Derek replied coldly.

"I doubt that," Agent Whittemore replied before they left.

Derek slowly returned to the dining room where a visibly unhappy Stiles was sitting there. "So where were we?"

Sighing loudly, Derek sat back down in his chair. "I am really sorry, Stiles. When we first had sex… I lied to you."

"You said you'd never been with a man before…" Stiles said.

"And that part wasn't a lie," Derek admitted. "But I had also never been with a woman."

Stiles' eyes widened. "I was your first?"
Derek nodded.

"Why didn't you tell me?"

"Because I didn't want to admit to being a 31 year old virgin!" Derek replied. "Paige and I were probably going to have sex the night she died. But after that, I didn't want to date… and I certainly didn't want to have casual sex. And then I met you."

"That was something I should have known!" Stiles argued. "I'd have tried to make it more special…"

Derek stopped him. "The only thing I regret about that night is the fact that I wasn't honest with you. There is nothing else about it that I would change."

Stiles got up and kissed Derek again. "I forgive you. But no more lies."

"Agreed," Derek replied. His eyes lingered on that jaw line that had driven him so mad the first time he saw it before bringing Stiles' lips back to his, their supple nature so inviting. A hunger rose up in him that he'd never felt before, devouring any ability to think clearly. He wanted to give himself over to Stiles completely. He pulled their bodies closer and the moment their lips finally parted, Derek whispered in a breathy tone, "Will you take the last part of my virginity?"

"Can't it wait until after dinner?" Stiles asked. "Not that I don't want to… but I'm sort of hungry…"

Derek looked pleadingly into Stiles' eyes. "So am I…" he replied. "Please, Stiles… I want this and I'm not sure I can wait for it."

Stiles hesitated, reading his lover carefully. "Alright," he said softly. He took Derek's hand and began pulling him toward the bedroom. "Come on."

A bizarre mix of giddiness and fear began to swirl inside Derek. For him, this was the ultimate display of love and trust. There was so much zipping through his head. He felt his heart race. Once they were in the bedroom, Stiles pushed Derek onto the bed and climbed on top of him. "We can stop at any time."

"Is it going to hurt?" Derek asked.

"I won't lie to you… it's not going to be comfortable at first… but it will feel better as we go. I'm going to do a few things to help it along," Stiles told him as he pulled off his shirt and got to work taking off Derek's pants and then boxers. "Turn over onto your stomach."

"I was hoping I could look into your eyes when we…" Derek protested.

"You will. But if you want me to do this, you need to trust me," Stiles replied. "You trust me, right?" Derek nodded as he slowly turned over and Stiles crawled off of him, kneeling behind his lover. "This might feel a little odd," Stiles said. "But I assure you… it's awesome."

Nothing could have prepared Derek for the strange sensation of Stiles' wet tongue licking that area of him where nobody had ever been before. Once he got over the initial strangeness of the sensation, he found himself melting into it. "That feels so good, Stiles…"

Stiles paused what he was doing to respond. "I'm glad you're enjoying yourself." Stiles tongue returned to tracing circles around Derek's opening, teasing and playing with it. Derek's fingernails raked across the blanket as Stiles' tongue entered him, eliciting a moan. Soon, Stiles' tongue was replaced by a well-lubed finger. Derek squirmed and tensed up. "Just relax, big guy," Stiles replied as he continued to work the finger in and out of him.
"It feels weird," Derek complained.

Stiles chuckled. "I told you that it might. I'm trying to loosen you up a bit before I put my dick in."

"Can we go back to your tongue? That felt better," Derek asked, making Stiles chuckle again.

"I would, but I assure you that lube tastes awful."

"Can't taste any worse than another man's ass," Derek muttered.

"You'd be surprised," Stiles replied as he added another finger.

"How many people have you done this with?" Derek asked.

"A boyfriend of mine from college, a few random guys from my club phase, and Danny," said Stiles as he worked in yet another finger. Derek grunted and tensed up again. "Relax! It hurts more if you tense… This is supposed to feel good."

"I thought you were a bottom," Derek said, trying hard to relax.

Stiles laughed. "Actually, I'm a versatile top. With Deucalion, I didn't have a choice but to bottom and you never seemed comfortable with the idea until today…"

"Why didn't you say anything?" Derek asked, melting into the pleasure that burst through him when Stiles hit his prostate.

"Because I love you… and I didn't want to pressure you into anything you were uncomfortable with," Stiles answered simply. "And besides that, I really just like having sex with you. You always make sure I'm satisfied before you finish. It's not easy to find someone like that." Stiles was able to move four fingers in and out of Derek with relative ease. "Alright are you ready?" he asked as he pulled out of Derek and wiped his fingers on a small towel they kept near the bed.

Derek turned over and pulled off his shirt. He watched as Stiles started to rip open a condom packet and stopped him. "My first time doing this with you… I want to be able to feel you," Derek said. "All of you." Stiles seemed hesitant. "I trust you, Stiles… so if you're comfortable with it, then please…"

Stiles sighed as he looked at the condom. "I was always taught that you need to use condoms because it can protect you and the person you're with."

"Stiles, now you and I know who each other has been with… for me, it's only you. And if you were safe with the other men you've been with, then we're going to be alright. But if you'd rather use a condom, I understand," Derek said.

"No," Stiles replied. "I want this to be perfect for you. But before we do this, there's something you need to know. Deucalion never used a condom with me. I begged him to each time, but he justified it by saying that I couldn't be a part of his family if I didn't have any of his DNA in me. I've gotten tested numerous times and they've all come back clean… but that's something you should know."

Derek leaned up and kissed Stiles. "That wasn't your fault. I still want this."

Stiles nodded and added lube to his dick. "It's gonna feel strange. It'll hurt a bit… maybe even burn… but I'll make sure you enjoy it."

Derek stared up at Stiles as he felt Stiles lift his legs onto his shoulders and slowly push in. He gritted
his teeth. "I forgot that you're kind of big."

Stiles laughed and continued to push in. Derek felt soft and inviting around him. It felt better than he ever imagined. He rocked in and out slowly, giving Derek time to adjust. He could tell every time he grazed Derek's prostate because Derek would clench slightly and his eyes would widen. He kept going, slowly. Derek grunted and moaned until Stiles stopped. "I'm all the way in."

"It feels like a soda bottle or something is in me…"

Again, Stiles laughed. "You flatter me." He began to slowly move. "Does this help?" Derek nodded. He could tell by the way Derek's muscles tensed that he was fighting it. "Just let it happen. Let me do the work. You just enjoy it."

Derek nodded and tried to relax. He watched the way Stiles moved. He could see every muscle beneath the taut, pale skin. The ache in his backside became a strange burn, before fading away to a blissful sensation that Derek loved. He began to move alongside Stiles. He wanted Stiles to go deeper and faster. "This is amazing," he grunted.

Derek bent down and kissed Derek. "Let me know if you want to change positions," he said.

Derek wrapped his arms around his legs and shook his head. "No. Keep going… I'm close…"

"Me too," Stiles replied. It took only a few more thrusts before Derek let out a loud groan and covered his stomach in his orgasm. The way Derek looked as he came combined with the way his body tightened around Stiles' cock drove him over the edge. He pushed himself all the way in and came, loudly moaning as he collapsed on top of Derek. "That was amazing, Derek," he panted as Derek slowly wrapped his legs around Stiles.

Feeling Stiles come inside him had a profound effect on Derek. He felt connected to Stiles in a way that he hadn't before. "I love you," he whispered as Stiles rested his head on Derek's chest.

"I love you too," Stiles replied.

After lying there together for several minutes, Derek remembered what he had in his pocket. "By the way, I have something for you," he whispered. Stiles rolled to Derek's side, forcing him to slide out of Derek with a pout.

Digging through his pocket, Derek closed his hand around the small metal ring and climbed back up onto the bed. He actually loved the way he felt after being on the receiving end of such a hard, passionate fuck. He wanted more of it. He climbed back into bed, motioning for Stiles to crawl up next to him.

He grabbed Stiles hand and placed the ring into it. "I found something I thought you might be missing."

His eyes lit up. "Where was it?"

"Near where you were painting the sets for RENT," Derek replied.

Stiles face became sad. "I don't think I need it anymore… I mean we're not engaged anymore, after all."

"About that," Derek replied. "I know I said I'm not ready for marriage yet… and that's still true. But I meant what I said. I want to spend the rest of my life with you. Some people are engaged for years before a wedding ever happens. Everything is slowly falling into place. The FBI is looking for my
uncle. The school is finally becoming everything I hoped… and I'm working on some of my
issues… and hopefully we'll be able to walk down the aisle in a better position than we were before."

"So what are you saying?" Stiles asked.

Derek picked the ring up out of Stiles' hand and rolled it around between his fingers as he studied it.
"I'm saying that I want to marry you, Stiles. I just don't want to marry you right now. Are you alright
with that?"

Stiles' eyes stayed planted on the ring as well before looking up at Derek. He plucked it from Derek's
hand and slid it onto his finger. "What we have isn't always perfect… but I love you and I don't want
it to change. So I'll wait until you're ready." Derek smiled and climbed on top of Stiles, kissing him.
After a few minutes of passionate, breathless kisses, Stiles gave a mischievous smile. "Are you ready
for round two?"

Returning Stiles' grin, Derek reached behind and guided Stiles back into him.

Chapter End Notes

Author's Note: So... They're finally in a place where they have completely honest
relationship. Unfortunately it won't last if Peter has anything to do with it. He's going to
strike before the FBI can find him... and Derek may end up reliving an old painful
memory... Find out how it plays out in the next chapter! But in the meantime, please
give me feedback on this one!
"Do you have plans tonight?" Stiles asked, taking a seat in Derek's office.

"Aside from being home with you, no…" Derek replied. "And I thought you had rehearsals for the play. It's in less than a month."

"I do, but they'll be over around 8:00. I was thinking maybe we could do something tonight," Stiles suggested.

Derek tensed before walking around and shutting his office door. "I hardly think this is the place for us to talk about that!"

Stiles returned Derek's prudery with a deadpan glare. "Really? You've fucked me on this desk."

"Be that as it may… I'm still your boss, technically, and it's not appropriate for us to talk about our sex life here!" Derek scolded.

Stiles' mouth fell open in annoyed shock. "I meant going out and doing something together… like a date night, you nymphomaniac!"

Derek blushed, immediately averting his eyes. "I—uh—I'm so sorry, Stiles…"

Stiles merely chuckled. "Derek's it's alright…"

Shaking his head, Derek replied, "No… it's not. That was inappropriate… I crossed a line. I'm really sorry."

Stiles studied his fiancé closely. "Derek, are you okay?"

"I'm fine," Derek nodded. "I just… we can't do that. Not here."

"Okay," Stiles replied, understanding. He stood up and leaned across the desk, placing a chaste kiss on Derek's forehead. "I'll text you when the rehearsal is almost over. I love you."

Derek forced a smile. "I love you, too."

It was 8:01 when Derek received the text saying that Stiles was on his way home. He began getting ready, changing out of his suit and tie and into more comfortable clothing. He was waiting on the couch when Stiles burst through the door like a tornado, dropping his backpack on the kitchen table and running upstairs to change out of his more professional attire into something that was comfortable and more him.

Derek stood up as Stiles came back downstairs. "So do you know where you want to go?" Stiles asked.

Nodding, Derek replied, "I think you'll enjoy it. But it's going to be a surprise."

Stiles loved surprises, so he was incredibly excited to follow Derek to the car. However, there had been something weighing on his mind the entire day and pursuant to their relationship without walls
policy, he wanted to bring it up. "So there's a pattern that I've noticed with you," he began. Derek raised his eyebrow as the engine of the Camaro roared into life. "Every time you say that you're fine or alright or whatever… it usually means that you're not. And granted, I shouldn't have even mentioned our sex life at work, but the way you closed up like that was troubling."

"It's nothing you need to worry about," Derek assured him.

"If it was, would you tell me?" Stiles asked.

Derek leaned over and kissed Stiles on the cheek. "Relationship without walls, remember?" Stiles smiled and turned his face so that their lips touched. Derek grinned at first, but then deepened the kiss. When it broke, Derek chuckled. "We could stay home and make out and have sex…"

"Ever since you first bottomed, you've become one horny little hermit," Stiles noted. "We need go out and do something… I'm starting to get cabin fever."

"It was just a suggestion," Derek muttered, putting the car in gear and speeding down the driveway.

Where Derek was taking Stiles was somewhere they had only been once. Stiles did his best to try and figure it out, only realizing when Derek had taken a turn that would have meant only one place.

"Jungle?" he asked excitedly.

"Yeah… it's where we went on our first date…"

"It's where we went because you lost a bet…"

"So… our first date!" Derek repeated with a wink.

They walked in together, the music pumping loudly into the room as laser lights danced all around. Shirtless, sweaty men danced against one another. Stiles and Derek made their way over to the bar. Stiles ordered a beer and Derek got a Scotch on the rocks.

After both had finished their first drinks, Stiles took Derek's arm and brought him onto the dance floor. "Stiles… you really don't want to do this!"

"Of course I do!"

"No really! I can't dance… it's kind of pitiful, really…” Derek told him.

"Just move your body along with mine," Stiles told him, getting close. Stiles stood behind Derek, pressed tight against him. Stiles hands wrapped around Derek's body, trying to force movement in tandem. "Loosen up," Stiles ordered. "I know your hips can move more fluidly than that!"

"It's obscene!" Derek complained. "It's like we're having sex in public!"

"That's the point!" Stiles exclaimed, bringing Derek back to the bar to get another drink in him. He realized he was approaching dancing the entirely wrong way. Derek was, at his core, an academic. "Think of this club as an actual jungle and you are a sort of alpha male…"

"I am an alpha male!" Derek challenged, feeling as though his manliness may have come into question.

Stiles' eyes twinkled and a grin turned the corners of his lips. "Then prove it. All the men here want to fuck either you or me… show them all that we're both spoken for… and make them jealous that they'll never get a chance to experience it."
Slamming back his second glass of scotch, Derek carefully considered what Stiles said while watching the other men interact. He ordered another glass, drinking it a little more slowly. His mouth was going numb and the light-headedness was beginning to set in. He drank another, then yet another. He smirked seductively as his eyes stayed glued to Stiles, dancing alone on the floor, the object of many men's desire. As Derek sat the now empty glass down on the bar, the bartender, Danny, came and took it. "You better get over there," he said. "Or else Stiles won't be dancing alone for much longer."

With slightly less grace than he felt he possessed, Derek moved behind Stiles. No longer stiff from inhibitions, Derek's hips moved in a way they only ever did in the bedroom. Stiles grinned, playing along, extremely aroused by Derek's display. "They want more," Stiles whispered into Derek's ear.

The physical activity was working the alcohol through his system faster and Derek had finally gone from tipsy to drunk. "Take off your shirt and let's really give them a show," Derek replied seductively.

Stiles unbuttoned his shirt, sending Derek into a sex-fueled frenzy. A crowd gathered around, watching as their bodies moved in tandem with erotic twists and turns. It was poetry in motion. It was pornography in clothes. It was obscene and elegant. There were men who wanted nothing more than to be Stiles, and there were others who would sacrifice their right arms to be in Derek's shoes. Only one person acted on those desires.

"I feel queasy," Derek complained, suddenly ceasing movement.

"Let's get you to the bathroom," Stiles said, leading Derek off the dance floor.

"No," Derek said, his words slurring together, heading closer to the bar. "I just…. I need some water or something…"

A guy in his early twenties promptly inserted himself between Stiles and Derek. "Leave him," he said. "Come home with someone who really knows how to work your hips."

Stiles' eyes didn't leave Derek, who seemed to be having trouble focusing in the rapidly changing light. "Go home to your mommy," he told the man. "It's past your curfew."

The response angered the young man who began moving Stiles further away from Derek. "I'm young… I'll last a lot longer than that old fuckwad. He can't even hold his liquor."

"And you're barely old enough to drink liquor," Stiles quipped. "Now leave me alone."

"No," he said indignantly.

Derek became increasingly annoyed. However when the young man went to grab Stiles, Derek's patience broke. He grabbed the man's shirt and slammed him hard into the bar, sending several bottles and glasses flying. Danny had to act fast to avoid being struck by shards of the shattering glass. "I don't know if you're deaf or you're just fucking stupid. He said he wasn't interested. Leave him alone!"

The entire bar came to a halt as the young man crumpled to the floor, holding his stomach in pain.

"He has to go," Danny told Stiles, who nodded and helped Derek once again find his bearings. His equilibrium was shot after such a show of brute force. Stiles pulled some money out of his wallet to pay for their drinks.

Stiles put his arm around Derek, guiding him outside. "Let's get you home and asleep… and
tomorrow we can have a nice long conversation about a couple of things called 'moderation' and 'proper coping techniques.'"

"You were really hot in there," Derek said as Stiles helped him into the Camaro.

"Yeah, it was kind of warm. Put your seatbelt on and give me the keys," Stiles said.

Derek handed them to his fiancé, before struggling to put his seatbelt on, very obviously and childishly annoyed by the shoulder strap. When Stiles was in the car with him, Derek reached over, placing his hand on Stiles' thigh. "No… I meant you were sexy…"

Stiles moved Derek's hand back and put the car into gear. As he began the drive home, he glanced at the clock. It was only 10. They'd been in there nearly two hours and Derek was shitfaced and got into a bar fight. He wondered if Derek would remember any of it.

Derek watched the world pass by the window, hitting his knee with his palm in an unsuccessful attempt to keep time with the radio. "When we get home, we should have sex… just all night long."

"You're drunk. That's a big negatorial, big guy," Stiles replied. Derek burst into laughter. "What's so funny?"

"You said 'negatorial.' That's not even a real word…” He continued chuckling. "The 'l' is silent, dummy…”

"And you're officially so drunk you've turned into a five-year-old," Stiles remarked.

"Nuh-uh!" Derek said in a way that unintentionally proved Stiles' point. It wasn't long before they were nearly home. "So are we gonna have sex?"

"Not tonight," Stiles replied.

"Why not?"

"Remind me to add 'decision-making paradigms' and 'enthusiastic consent' to that list of things we'll talk about tomorrow when you're not drunk off your ass," Stiles said, turning down the driveway to the Hale mansion.

Derek grinned and jabbed his finger in Stiles' direction. "You… you're a good boyfriend, Stiles. You're the best boyfriend in the world."

"I'm glad you think so," Stiles said, humoring his drunken ramblings. Stiles cut the engine when they were finally at the house and struggled to help Derek up the stairs and inside, realizing that he had to then help Derek to the second floor where their bedroom was. Derek cackled boyishly as he tried to help Stiles, but was actually only complicating the situation. "Alright you giant man-child, I'm gonna need you to just take this one step at a time…"

Derek nodded, struggling to make the stairs stop spinning in his head. It took ten full minutes to get Derek upstairs, but from there, it was smooth sailing as Stiles managed to undress Derek, brush his teeth, and help him crawl into bed. "Will you fuck me?" Derek asked.

"Again… no. Goodnight, Derek," Stiles replied as he crawled into bed, turning off the light. He laid his head on the pillow, his back facing Derek and closed his eyes.

"Stiles?" Derek asked.
"Go to sleep, Derek," Stiles grumbled as fatigue was beginning to weigh more heavily on him now that he was comfortably tucked into bed.

"Stiles… I'm really horny. I can't sleep like this…" Derek complained.

"You lost your virginity at 31, Derek. I'm sure you know how to masturbate," Stiles replied. Derek moved away from him, but nearly instantly, Stiles felt movement and heard rustling on the other side of the bed that could only have meant one thing. "Can't you do that in the bathroom?"

Grunts issued from Derek’s mouth along with streams of profanity and dirty talk that Stiles had never heard Derek use before. "I'm almost there…" Derek moaned "Can you stick a finger into me?"

"No," Stiles replied, taking great effort not to show how annoyed he was becoming.

Loud gasps and moans punctuated the sudden stop of motion. Stiles heard Derek wipe himself clean before moving back into place. "I thought about you," he whispered into his lover's ear.

"That's lovely, Derek. Now will you go to sleep?" Stiles asked.

Several minutes of silence passed. Stiles found himself finally able to drift into slumber. "Hey Stiles?"

"What?" There was no attempt, this time, to hide his frustration.

"You're the best thing that ever happened to me. I don't tell you often enough," Derek said. "I love you."

Despite his frustration, Stiles smiled. "Thanks, Derek. I love you too. Now can we sleep?"

Derek gave a groggy, "Mhmm!" and silence once again fell between them. Stiles could again feel the sandman's cozy grasp beginning to consume him. "I know sometimes I act like a complete asshole. But you should know I appreciate the things you've done for me… and I want to be a better person because of you."

"Hey Derek… do you know what I would appreciate?" Stiles asked.

"What?"

"Sleep."

Chapter End Notes

Author's Note: So this chapter was supposed to contain Peter's attack on Stiles and Derek. I'm not sure how, but somehow cute, snarky Drunk Derek and Stiles Sass happened instead. I hope you enjoyed this and in the next chapter, we'll see Peter again... and someone will die. Let me know what you thought of this chapter!
As the alarm clock chimed, Derek groaned, turning over and pulling the pillow over his throbbing head. Stiles climbed over him to turn it off and hopped in the shower. Minutes later, he had to shake Derek awake. "Come on… we've got to go to work."

"I think I'm going to take a personal day. My head is killing me," Derek complained.

"You're hung over. Unfortunately, we've got that conference with Cooper's parents today. You can't just take a personal day," Stiles reminded him. "Go ahead and shower. I'll get some coffee started for you."

Again, Derek groaned, but he eventually threw the covers off of himself and trudged into the shower. He turned the bathroom light off as he showered, unable to take the light. He dressed and headed downstairs, where Stiles had coffee and breakfast waiting. "You're a god-send," Derek muttered as he wolfed down the food and gulped down the searing hot coffee. "What happened last night?"

"You seriously don't remember?" Stiles asked.

Derek concentrated, but most of it was a blank. "I remember getting to the bar and you tried to teach me how to dance… but after that it's sort of a blur."

"Well let me paint you a picture. We danced. You got drunk off your ass, slammed a guy into a bar, got us kicked out of Jungle, then you became the horniest, albeit funniest, five-year-old I've ever met before I managed to actually get you to go to sleep," Stiles replied. Derek could tell by the edge in his voice that Stiles was still somewhat annoyed by his behavior the night before.

"Stiles, I'm sorry," Derek replied. "I—"

"Lost control?" Stiles offered. Derek nodded. "Please never drink more than two drinks again. I really didn't like seeing you like that."

Derek was at a loss for words. "I really am sorry," Derek repeated. "I won't drink like that again."

"The thing is, Derek, I don't actually care if you drink," Stiles clarified as they made their way to the car. "Just know your limit."

Derek nodded, tossing Stiles the keys, unable to focus his vision enough to drive. He pulled a pair of sunglasses out of the glove compartment and put them on, helping to shield his eyes from the bright morning light.

The drive to work was mostly silent until Derek turned on the radio. His head was still pounding and he had no idea how he was going to make it through the day. When they were finally on campus, both he and Stiles headed straight for the faculty lounge. Stiles needed to photocopy some handouts and Derek needed a refill on his coffee.

When he got to his office, Jane chuckled at the sight of him. "Rough night?"

"We just won't even discuss that," Derek told her. "When is my first appointment?"
"Your schedule is actually clear until 3:00 when you have the meeting with Dr. Stilinski and that nasty little Cooper child's parents."

"Good," Derek replied. "No phone calls unless they're an emergency."

"And what are you planning to do for the next eight hours?"

"Not a whole lot," Derek muttered, closing his office door behind him.

The one thing he could do, which he figured would prove to be least abrasive to his current physical condition, was to prepare for his upcoming review with the Board of Governors, in which he'd find out whether or not his contract would be extended and for how long. After popping some aspirin, he set to the task of cataloging a list of improvements he'd made to the school as well as improvements in the school's metrics overall.

Once he had that done, he realized that he had already killed four hours and his headache was still fairly bad, so he began drinking water, figuring he might be slightly dehydrated. He checked his email, finding one that contained a thread of conversation from the Academy's Board of Governors.

Fellow Governors –

Seeing as I am still very new to the Board, I don't necessarily know how well I could evaluate Dr. Hale's performance as Headmaster. Should I abstain from the review?

Regards,

Rick

----Hale's review is merely a formality. He's a respectable person with a Ph.D. and a personal investment in the school. Just prepare a few questions and it will be fine. – Charles

--------So we're disregarding merit as a basis for this position? –Rick

--------Merit can go when a bank account and legacy like Derek Hale's is there in its stead. –Charles

Derek reread the email, realizing that it had been sent to him on accident. He had a rush of emotions: hurt, anger, betrayal. The one thing he thought was his because of skill and aptitude was really only his because he was a Hale.

Derek needed fresh air. He needed to clear his mind. He did a patrol of the school. The first lunch period was about to begin and students filed into the hallway, as did several teachers, Stiles included.

"Hey Dr. Hale!" one student called out. "What's up with those shades?"

The volume with which the student asked his question caused Derek to flinch. He decided to respond honestly. "I've got a rather serious hangover."

The student froze, as did several teachers. "Why would you have a hangover?" the student asked.

"Because I went out and got some drinks last night with someone I care about," Derek replied gruffly.

"But Dr. Hale, this school is always talking about not drinking alcohol and stuff… why would you go out and drink?" the student pressed.
Feeling his patience hitting a breaking point, Derek snapped. "Because I took one glance at your current GPA and was filled with such profound sadness and self-loathing at the degree to which the educational system has failed you that I needed to drown my sorrows in any way I could. Now if you don't get to the cafeteria, you'll be facing detention every single day until you graduate."

The student looked as though he might start crying as Derek moved in the other direction. "Der—I mean Dr. Hale!" Stiles called after him. "What was that?"

Derek could feel his heart beginning to race. He tried to draw breath, but couldn't. He glanced, terrified, at Stiles. He was having a panic attack. Stiles quickly moved him outside where he could get fresh air.

Stiles rubbed Derek's back, unsure if a kiss could help him this time. "Just breathe, Derek," Stiles whispered.

When he was finally able to catch his breath, he looked into Stiles' eyes and was filled with self-doubt and disappointment. He spent so long trying to prove to Stiles that he worked for what he had, only to find out that Stiles had been right all along. He opened his mouth to tell Stiles what was wrong, but the words became caught in his throat. He couldn't say it. At least not out loud. That would make it real. So instead, Derek did the thing he was most skilled at doing: he built a wall and tucked this little nugget of information behind it.

"Are you going to be alright?" Stiles asked.

Derek nodded, offering a weak smile. "I will be," he murmured.

"Drink some water and try to relax until Cooper's disciplinary conference," he suggested. Derek nodded and Stiles helped him back to his office, where he accomplished nothing until Jane announced the arrival of Stiles, Cooper, and Cooper's parents several hours later.

Stiles helped bring in extra chairs and Derek began the meeting by reading off the list of incidents that often landed Cooper in his office, and was the reason for their meeting. "Sleeping in class, that is when he bothers to show up, disrespecting faculty members, disrespecting fellow students, failure to adhere to the rules of conduct… need I continue?"

A defiant look was affixed to the young Cooper's face. It seemed to be shared by his parents, though they held a more apathetic air. "Do you realize that I had to cancel a very important client to be here?" Cooper's father replied. Both Stiles and Derek were struck by the way he spoke and more so by the way he directed that question not at his son, but at Derek.

Anger boiled up in the headmaster. "And do you realize that I don't care? Do you realize that I have sufficient grounds to expel your son from this school? Or that your tuition dollars are essentially being wasted on an impertinent little brat who doesn't realize the opportunity he's been afforded by attending this school? Or that the only reason why I haven't already done it is because I know that the negative impact it will have on his future is much further reaching than a mere disciplinary problem which could easily be fixed if he had parents who actually gave two shits about him!"

Cooper's father jumped indignantly to his feet. "How dare you!"

"Sit back down," Derek snarled. "You don't intimidate me, so stop wasting my time. Stop wasting the time and efforts of my faculty. So either withdraw your child voluntarily or start performing the duties you're supposed to and be a fucking parent before Cooper continues to suffer needlessly from your ineptitude!"
Stiles smirked as he heard Jane chuckle. Cooper's father didn't sit down. "You'll lose your job for this disrespect! I'm friends with two of the Governors."

This time Derek stood up, but did so with grace and dignity. "That was cute… but I'm a Hale. Get out of my office." The man's nostrils flared. He turned to leave, followed by his wife, and then his son. "Cooper, wait," Derek said. The boy stopped, turning back. "This is your last chance. If I have one more complaint about you from anyone, I will expel you. I'm begging you to use this opportunity to change. Do something with your life. Apply yourself."

"Yes sir," he replied before following his parents out into the hallway.

Once they were alone, Stiles broke the silence. "That was intense…"

"I'm sorry you had to see me like that," Derek replied, reclining in his chair.

"You've been acting strangely all day, Derek," Stiles said. "Should I be worried?"

"No," Derek replied cryptically. "For the first time in a while… I've got complete clarity."

Stiles eyed him suspiciously as he stood up. "Alright… well… I'm going to head back to my classroom until you're ready to go."

"Stiles… I'm fine. Really," Derek insisted.

They rode home together in silence. As they got to the house, Stiles went into the kitchen to begin dinner. "Derek?" he called.

"Yeah?"

"We have everything we need for paella except saffron for the rice. Would you mind going to the store and getting some?" Stiles asked.

"Sure," Derek replied, pulling his shoes. "Anything else you need while I'm out?"

"Feel free to pick up a wine that will go with it," Stiles said. Derek peeked into the kitchen, stealing a kiss.

"I'll be right back," he replied. Luckily, there was a store not too far from the Hale mansion.

He heard Derek leave and finished preparing the other ingredients. Five minutes later, he heard the door open again. "Derek?" he called again. "Did you forget your wallet?"

A different voice responded. "No… it's right here."

Adrenaline immediately coursed through his veins as he looked up to see Peter, a smile causing his perfectly white teeth to flash in a way that looked so sinister, it was as if he had fangs. "What are you doing here?" His eyes weren't the cold, calculating orbs Stiles had seen previously. They were feral.

"What I've been waiting a very long time to do, Stiles" Peter replied. "The only question is… do I do it quickly and get it over with… or do I make you suffer? And let's face it… you've been a huge pain in my ass for some time. You deserve a very slow, and painful death." Stiles picked up a knife from the block and wielded it in an attempt to try and defend myself. Peter laughed, pulling a pistol from his coat. "Really? You would bring a knife to a gun fight."

"Don't do this, Peter," Stiles begged. "Derek is going to be home soon…"
"And he'll find your dead body on the floor," Peter said. "Or better yet… I think I'll hang you. We can pen a little suicide note and leave it on his pillow. A death monologue from your favorite play, perhaps?"

"Why would you want to hurt Derek like this?" Stiles asked.

"It wouldn't be the first time," Peter admitted. He motioned with the gun. "Drop the knife. Go upstairs, now."

Stiles did as he was told, setting the knife gingerly on the counter. "I'll do whatever you want. Please don't kill me."

"I tried that option, Stiles… and still you stayed with him. I can't trust you to keep your word," Peter said simply as he followed Stiles up the large staircase, the gun poking his back.

Derek hated shopping. He hated it even more when he couldn't find what he was looking for. Pulling out his phone, he called the house. It rang repeatedly until the voicemail kicked on. "You've reached Derek and Stiles. We're not in right now, please leave a message."

Derek sighed. "Hey Stiles… it's me. They're out of saffron. Is there something I can get instead? Call me back."

He then dialed Stiles' cell, knowing it was on him at all times. It, too, went to voicemail. There was something intensely strange about it. Something in the pit of his stomach told him he needed to get to Stiles' side immediately. He rushed home, speeding through red lights and stop signs. His tires screeched to a halt as he pulled into the driveway, seeing a dreadfully familiar car in his driveway. "It can't be," he whispered in disbelief, bounding into his house. "STILES!" he yelled, hoping he wasn't too late.

"DEREK!" he heard Stiles reply. "We're upstairs! Hurry!"

Derek leapt up two and three stairs at a time, bursting into his bedroom to find Stiles hoisted up on a chair, a noose around his neck. He wasn't aware of the conversation before he entered the room, but right as he got there, Peter had confessed to killing all of the remaining Hales. Derek felt his stomach drop. Peter turned around, facing his nephew. "Maybe I should have saved Cora instead. She was younger than you. I could have exerted more control. I could have prevented her from becoming weak and pathetic like you."

"You have one chance to leave this house alive and never return," Derek said, his voice so deadly low it made the hair on the back of Stiles' neck bristle. "And if you choose not to, then you'll leave in a body bag. Just like the rest of our—my—family."

"Would you really kill me, Derek?" Peter taunted. "Would you really murder the only other living relative you have?"

Derek didn't blink. He just stood there, unfazed by Peter's jeers. "Fine."

"Be careful, Derek… you can either kill me or save your little boyfriend," Peter said, kicking the chair out from under Stiles. He knew Derek would immediately go for Stiles, then he'd shoot them both and make it look like a murder/suicide and collect on Derek's life insurance.

But Derek didn't go straight for Stiles. He knew enough biology to know that since the fall didn't snap Stiles' neck, he had at least a few minutes, and it was likely that Peter would just kill them both anyway. He lunged at Peter, who fired a shot, getting Derek's shoulder. It hurt like hell. He saw stars, but he continued on, knowing how little time he had. He crashed into Peter and they fell through the large French doors that led to the balcony. Shattered glass sliced Derek's arms and face,
but much of it was stuck in Peter's back.

Derek glanced back to see Stiles fighting, struggling to pull himself up enough to survive.

"I'll say hello to Talia for you," Peter whispered.

"You're not going to the same place she did," Derek replied. Summoning all of his strength, he managed to pick Peter up and toss him off the balcony. The pain was blinding. He staggered over to Stiles and picked him up enough to allow him to breathe. He coughed loudly. "Stiles, I'm about to collapse… I need you to help me out here…"

Stiles reached up, loosening the noose enough to slide it over his head. Derek finally gave out, going unconscious.

When he woke up, he was in the hospital. Stiles was by his side. As Derek looked around, he saw long bandages on his arms, likely covering stitches. His shoulder was bandaged as well. He didn't feel pain, though. Apparently there were enough narcotics going through his system that pain wouldn't be a factor for a while. Stiles was stroking his hair the way his mom used to do when he was sick. "You lost a lot of blood trying to be a hero," Stiles told him.

Derek's reply came out slurred, a side-effect of the narcotics racing through his bloodstream. "I couldn't let you die." Stiles leaned forward and kissed him, allowing Derek to see the ugly purple/black bruises on his neck. "You okay?"

"Yeah I'm fine," Stiles replied, standing back up. "Same can't be said for Peter."

"How is he?"

"The fall pushed two large fragments of glass into his lungs. It killed him," Stiles said. "I'm sorry, Derek…"

"Don't be," Derek replied. He wasn't.

"I love you," Stiles said softly.

"I love you, too," Derek replied before fading back out.

Chapter End Notes

Author's Note: Sorry it took so long to update. But alas... Peter is finally dead. Tell me what you think? And I think the next chapter might just end up being the last.
Epilogue

Chapter Summary

This is it... the final chapter.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

When he was finally cleared to leave the hospital, Derek's shoulder was still bandaged and his arm immobilized. He was only thankful that his left arm had been shot. He wouldn't be too helpless. A week after being released, he was given the all-clear to return to school, where his faculty members welcomed him back with hugs and handshakes. Stiles, of course, did so with a kiss.

Of course, he'd needed to make arrangements for Peter's funeral. It didn't happen. Derek had his body cremated, something that Peter had always insisted he didn't want to happen. He wasn't afforded the honor of being interred in the Hale Mausoleum. Instead, Derek took the undecorated box that held his uncle's remains and a shovel and walked in a straight line into the woods surrounding his property. When he finally passed off Hale territory and into the Beacon Hills preserve, he chose the most unassuming spot he could find. He struggled, but managed to dig the hole using the one good arm he had. It caused him to work up a bit of a sweat, but finally a deep enough hole had been formed and he slowly sat the box into it and covered it up before spreading leaves and other debris on top. Peter Hale's grave would go unnoticed. He would be forgotten to time and society itself. His legacy would fade away into nothingness. He would never be allowed to achieve the type of immortality he'd always craved. That was Derek's punishment for him.

His time sitting at home gave him the opportunity he needed to think about the email he'd received by accident on the day of the attack. With a clear mind, he was able to decide his course of action. Which is why on his second day back to school, he decided to hold a conference with the entire Board of Governors. As each man took their seat, Derek at the head of the large conference table, he passed forward several copies of the same letter. "Gentlemen, you'll find my letter of resignation from the post of Headmaster of this school."

Derek took a sip of water before continuing on. "I do not want to leave the school. And in fact, I'd love to be hired on as a teacher instead. But it came to my attention a few weeks ago that I didn't get this job based on any qualifications I possessed. In fact, it was quite the opposite. I got this job because of my last name."

"Derek, your uncle assured us that you were highly qualified for the position," the chairman said.

"And maybe I am," Derek replied. "But that doesn't change the fact that my qualifications weren't the basis of you hiring me."

"Dr. Hale, what can we do to get you to stay?"

"I've got someone in mind to replace me as headmaster. Hire him on and place me as an English
teacher. That's it. I can still help advise the board if you want, but I don't want to be the Headmaster," Derek replied.

"Who is this person you want to have replace you?"

As the alarm clock rang on the first day of school, Derek reached over to turn it off, only to find that Stiles was already up and out of bed. Derek imagined that he'd always been eager for the first day of school.

Completely useless before his first cup of coffee, he made that his primary goal, before going about the rest of his routine. Stiles already left for work and as Derek brushed his teeth, his bathroom light glimmered off his wedding band. For the first time in his life, everything was perfect.

He'd already set up his classroom. It had been so long since he taught English that he was somewhat nervous, but he was ready. The bell rang and students filed into the classroom, taking their seats. Derek introduced them to his course and they began their discussion of the books they'd been assigned to read over the summer.

Four class periods passed before his free period. He was writing lesson plans, always wanting to be ahead of the game, when a sharp knock at the door jerked his attention. He saw Stiles standing in the doorway. "That was a very good job you did, Dr. Hale," Stiles said.

Derek stood walking over to greet his husband and now boss. "Why thank you, Dr. Stilinski," he said.

"And as impressed as I was, I think I would be remiss to ignore your attire," Stiles replied with a smile. Derek remembered this conversation. It was the exact same conversation they'd had on Stiles' first day as a teacher. "Here at Beacon Hills Academy, we no longer have a strict dress code." Stiles untucked Derek's shirt. Of course, he was just going to tuck it right back in once Stiles left, but he couldn't help but giggle in an almost schoolgirl-ish way.

"Out of curiosity, do you spy on all the teachers on their first day? Or did you make special dispensation for me?" Derek asked.

"Only the ones I'm married to," Stiles replied before kissing Derek in a way that nearly knocked the wind out of his lungs. He had never before known it was possible to love somebody this much.

When the kiss broke, Derek held Stiles' head and gazed into his eyes before going in for one more kiss. "I love you," he said as Stiles finally pulled away.

"I love you, too," came Stiles' response as he slowly backed out of the classroom, leaving Derek, shirt untucked and hair slightly tousled from the passion of their kisses just as awestruck and dumbfounded as he'd been on the very first day he'd ever met Stiles Stilinski.

Chapter End Notes

Author's Note: Thank you so much to everyone who's supported me through the writing of this story. This has been a blast to write and I'm really excited to have shared this journey with you. I want to thank my beta reader, Agrusahale as well as the person who gave me the idea for this fic, SexySourAlpha. And of course, please find me on Tumblr
where my url is forevermyalpha.tumblr.com and you can follow me on Twitter, where my handle is @orioniswatching.

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!