"Girls," their English teacher, Ms. Blake, said to the four of them. "The guidance counselor would like to see you after class." She looked at all four of them at their desks, seeming concerned.

“Oh, great,” Erica groaned, just now waking up.

(a.k.a. Human AU where Lydia, Cora, Allison, and Erica are all best friends that go to an all-girls boarding school together that get into trouble and Stiles is Erica's partner in crime that goes to the brother school, all written from Erica's POV.)

Notes

Hi, so if you're reading this right now, thank you, it means a lot. If you're reading this because I harassed you into doing so, I'm sorry, thanks, I love you, and it means a lot. So I'm excited about this for several reasons: 1.) It's the first work of mine that I am posting online, and 2.) I'm actually really proud of this.

I cannot thank my partner in crime Samantha (hollandinspired on tumblr) enough for beta-ing this AND making the amazing cover art for this chapter (it won't always be this amazing guys I'm warning you now, mine looks ratchet as hell compared to hers), and her overwhelming praise and encouragement all the way through. I love you honey!
I am huntressqueens on tumblr, so if you want to spam my ask box with feedback, feel free, please. I even encourage in fact. Comments on here are nice as well and I would love some kudos. Share with your friends. :) Thanks for reading and enjoy! Yes, it will be multi-chapter, I just don't know how many yet.
“Once upon a hill lived four beautiful girls with so many special talents…”

Erica snorted as soon as she read the first line, tossing the notebook back to Allison across their picnic table. They’d finally managed to get a seat outside this year, and it was under the most envied tree (it gave a lot of shade). They were definitely staking claim on it for the rest of the year.

“Is that all you’ve got?” Erica snickered, failing to mention that the whole phrase could be taken in a completely different direction.

“Shut up, you know I’m not good at creative writing!” Allison snapped irritably. “I don’t even know why we have to take it.”

Cora rolled her eyes. “I know,” she said, picking up her diet Mountain Dew to take a sip. “It’s bullshit.”

“Oh god, sweetheart, it’s so easy!” Lydia exclaimed, putting down her water bottle. “Let me see.” She made grabby hands for Allison’s notebook. Allison sighed, reluctantly handing the notebook to the petite redhead on her right. Lydia gladly accepted the notebook. She only looked over it for a few seconds before starting to make corrections. “Done,” she said suddenly, placing the edited work in front of Allison.

“That was all but five seconds,” Cora droned.

“What did you do, Lydia, rewrite the whole thing?” Erica chuckled.

Lydia was a certified genius, and particularly in the Math and Science fields. Getting into the Academy of Beacon Hills for girls was probably a breeze for her. Plus, her parents could afford it, so that helped a lot, too, in some regards.

“Thanks, Lydia.” Allison giggled, biting her lip as she smiled suspiciously too long at the revised page in front of her. She looked up at Lydia with sparkling eyes.

“Not a problem,” Lydia smirked back, cheeks flushed and eyes twinkling back at Allison’s.

Cora rolled her eyes. Erica made a gagging noise as she pointed to her mouth. Allison and Lydia had been best friends since they started here at the Academy of Beacon Hills. They were basically attached at the hip (as they say). They did everything together. Wherever you saw Allison, there was Lydia. Whenever you found Allison, you could also spot Lydia right by her side. Apparently they had met the first day when they found out they were roommates for the next four years and had hit it off together ever since. (At the Academy of Beacon Hills, you get the same room and roommate all four years together. It’s just more convenient that way.) They were always there for each other. Lydia had supported Allison’s decision to break-up with Scott McCall, her boyfriend of freshmen year. Allison helped Lydia through her long-term boyfriend Jackson’s move to London. Freshmen year was tough.

“Hey!” Erica snapped her fingers in their faces to get their attention. “I know you know we’re here, and I am a great person to stare at as well. Cora’s not exactly hideous either.” She smirked at them. Lydia raised her eyebrows at Erica before forking her salad again. Allison blushed as she went back to her tuna sandwich. Cora also seemed weirdly quiet, too, at that moment.

Freshmen year had been difficult for everyone, Erica included. After she had gotten the miracle surgery that had cured her epilepsy, she finally felt good enough about herself to apply to this
place. She was a long-shot, but she made it.

After Erica was accepted, she knew that she could finally change her image and start fresh somewhere knew, for once. She changed her wardrobe, wore more make-up, and became more flirtatious, promiscuous and outgoing. She basically re-made herself for the better. Although, she did let it get to her head for a little while at first. She tried to steal Allison’s old boyfriend, Scott McCall, on several occasions. Therefore, Allison had hated her and Lydia probably did at the time, too. Sophomore year involved lots of mutual trust gain and relationship building between them. Now, all four of them were practically inseparable.

“Gosh, Erica, I’m always amazed at how humbled you are.” Cora smirked sarcastically into her double bacon cheeseburger.

“And she talks!” Erica mock-gasped, putting a hand over her mouth. She turned towards Cora to fake-gape. “A Hale is not brooding silently for once, what a shocker.” Erica smiled devilishly as she turned back to her pasta.

“Shut up and eat your noodles,” Cora snapped. Cora had met Erica on the first day of freshmen year when they had discovered that they were roommates. Cora had mostly kept to herself at first, and she still does with most people. Erica had made many attempts to invite her out with her in the evenings to go meet guys (or girls) from their brother school across the street. Cora had always declined, reading a book or working out instead. Erica got the feeling that she didn’t usually like being around big crowds of people who made a lot of noise, unlike Erica.

“So, Stiles knows some guys from their school who snuck in a keg,” Erica finally announced. “Is anyone up for it tonight?” She looked around expectantly at the group.

“I’m in,” Lydia agreed, always willing to join Erica for any intoxicating suggestions.

“I guess could go,” Allison nodded along. “It sounds like fun.”

“Okay, cool. This means you have to go too now Cora. You don’t get a say.” Erica looked at Cora pointedly.

“I never said I didn’t want to go,” Cora said, raising her arms defensively.

“You never went with me anywhere freshmen year,” Erica explained to her. “And I invited you everywhere.”

“That’s because it was just us two,” Cora said simply. “Now there are four of us. It’s not weird.”

Erica rolled her eyes. As much as she wanted to disagree, Cora was right. It would have been weird. Erica and Cora were not like Allison and Lydia, who verbalized their whole friendship to each other with love, affection, and care. That wasn’t who they were. They were different. They had formed an unspoken bond that mostly involved a lot of snarky banter and silently having other’s backs, especially when they really needed it. As a whole group, they worked together perfectly.

Cora had a whole lineage of family at the school. The Hales were the most supportive (and filthy rich) alumnas of the Academy of Beacon Hills Schools Program. Some of them still lurked around here, working. Cora’s mother, Talia Hale, was the head mistress; Peter Hale was the creepy history professor who had an infatuation with Lydia; Derek Hale was the hot (but equally broody as Cora) assistant to Coach Finstock; and their older sister Laura Hale was the badass guidance counselor to the entirely female student body. It was easy to say that Cora was a shoe-in for this school. She might have been forced to go here by her parents, but it wasn’t hard to for Erica to
While Lydia and Erica planned outfits for the keg, and Allison and Cora talked socializing strategies, the lunch bell rang.

“And there it goes,” Lydia sighed.

“We’ll see you guys later,” Allison smiled sweetly, picking her books up off the table. They all agreed on meeting Stiles together at the big tree outside of the boys’ school building (so he could show them where the secret spot was). Erica promised that she would tell Stiles the plan during her free period with him before parting ways from the others.

Erica waited outside of the boys’ school building for Stiles that day during her free period with him like she usually did when she had a free period without any of the other three. If Erica could be sure about anyone being her best friend, it was Stiles. They had taken a liking to each other since the beginning of freshmen year, when she was flirting with some curly-haired babe named Isaac and Stiles crashed into them while he was riding on his skateboard. She remembered that Isaac had known Stiles and he had been pissed, but Erica had just laughed her ass off as Stiles stumbled upon his words when he tried multiple times to apologize to both of them. She had a hot hook-up, kept Isaac from beating the shit out of Stiles, and made a new best friend. It was a win-win situation for the both of them.

Soon enough, Stiles came clambering out of the building in his school blazer that looked almost identical to the one Erica and everyone else were wearing. He was talking to a group of his friends, which included both Isaac, Scott, these two twins that looked that like they were taking shots of human growth hormones between classes, and a burly (but very cute), tall guy.

Instead of waving to Stiles like a normal person would have done, she flirtatiously leaned up against a large tree, catching the attention of many guys around her. She brushed her hair out of her face and made a point of batting her eyelashes coquettishly, which caught the attention of many guys around her. Finally, Stiles noticed her and rolled his eyes. He walked towards her and dragged her away from the tree.

“You didn’t tell me that you had this period with some very attractive fellow students,” she commented faux-innocently with a light mischievous smile playing on her lips as she looked back at Stiles’s acquaintances, whom all of waved at her.

“That’s because you didn’t need to know,” Stiles said, guiding her away from them gently.

“And, why not?” Erica inquired, reluctantly walking with him.

“Because I knew that you would find a way to find out on your own,” he explained. “And you did.”

Erica shrugged. “I always do,” she bragged, smiling smugly to herself.

“Now, now, don’t get too cocky.” Stiles planted his rear on the ground, leaning his back against the furthest tree on the property from the school building. “Sit,” he said, patting the grass next to him. “Tell me about your day.”

Erica plopped her cute butt down on the green field next to him. “Allison, Lydia, and Cora all agreed to go to the keg. We’ll meet you outside by the big tree.” She thought for a moment. “Don’t expect us too early because knowing Lydia; she’ll want all four of us to meet hours ahead of time to make sure that our colors coordinate perfectly.” Erica snorted fondly.
“Yeah,” Stiles chuckled. “She would.” He shook his head.

“Still got a hopeless crush on her?” Erica nudge him teasingly.

“No,” Stiles nudge back. “I’ll have you know that Lydia and I are just good friends now.” Stiles rolled his eyes fondly.

“That’s good, because it was getting upsetingly pathetic.” Erica looked over at Stiles to find him raising his eyebrows at her. “So, what is it then?” she interrogated him.

“What do you mean?” He asked, turning suspiciously toward her. “What are you talking about?” He question again.

“You know what I mean,” she looked at him knowingly.

“I have someone else in mind,” he mumbled shyly.

“Oh god, it’s not me!” she fake-gasped. “Is it?” She mockingly put a hand over her heart.

“No, it’s not you!” Stiles shoved her playfully.

“Then who is it?” she demanded.

“I don’t want to say,” Stiles muttered bashfully.

“Tell me, loser!” She punched him in the shoulder.

“Ow!” Stiles exclaimed. “God, you’re strong.”

“Who is it?” she repeated more forcefully this time, shaking his arm eagerly

“Oh god, will you stop that if I tell you?” he groaned.

“Yes!” she screeched, letting go of his arm. “Now, tell me.” She growled.

“It’s Derek Hale! Alright?” he yelled. “Derek Hale.”

“Cora’s brother?” She made a face.

“Yep.”

“Coach Finstock’s assistant teacher?”

“That’s the one.”

“Derek Hale?!”

“Not too loud,” Stiles put hand over her mouth, looking around worriedly, despite the fact that not a soul was out there.

“You were loud first!” She exclaimed, frustrated when he uncovered her face.

“Shh,” he said, putting a finger to her lips.

“Stiles, there is nobody out here and you’re honestly being really creepy.” She looked at him soberly. “I feel like one of those girls in those movies they make you watch in grade school about
“pedophiles.”

“I know,” he sighed, ignoring the comment about pedophilia.

“Most people would say this might be as hopeless as the last one…” she started. Stiles scoffed. “…but I encourage this completely because he’s really hot and you need to have sex.” She smiled proudly at him.

“You’re so weird,” Stiles commented with a fond chuckle.

“What?” she said, picking up her bag and putting it on her shoulder. “It’s time for you to lose your virginity.” She stood up.

“I hate you,” he scowled.

“You wouldn’t know how to survive in this place without me.”

“True.” He thought for a moment. “But I still hate you.”

“You love me.”

“Yeah, I do,” he sighed. “Unfortunately.”

Coach blew his whistle and it echoed throughout the gym. “Argent and Martin, go!” His voice boomed through the gym loudly.

“Do you think he ever gets sick of the sound of his own voice?” Erica asked Cora from the sidelines, watching as the other half of their crew jogged furiously around the perimeters of the gym.

Allison was graceful and natural, considering how athletic she was. She was trained in all types of use of weaponry (and memorized all of their terms) and was also a gymnast. The athletic abilities ran in the family.

Lydia, on the other hand, although going at a decent speed, still looked pretty dainty when she ran (because of her petite figure). But don’t you dare ever make fun of her. For Lydia Martin’s glare of death is one you do not want to be on the receiving end of. Erica learned that the hard way. They later bonded over coffee and mutual respect.

“I don’t know,” Cora said thoughtfully. “Do you?” Erica rolled her eyes but silently gave Cora credit for the clever jab.

“Hale and Reyes, go!”

Just as Cora was about to position herself to run (Hales were genetically workout junkies), Erica stopped her.

“Oh, coach?” Erica yelled.

“What is it now, Reyes?” Coach demanded.

“Well, you see, I was trying on these new heels I made for fashion design class and—“

“Okay, sit out.” Coach waved her off dismissively. Erica smiled triumphantly and started for the bleachers.
“She’s lying.”

Erica turned towards the voice. Suddenly, none other than Derek Hale emerged from his dark corner in the gym, finally speaking for once. Boy, did he have record timing.

“What?” Coach demanded.

“She’s fine,” Derek stated simply

“Reyes, get back down here!”

“But—“

“Reyes!”

Erica stomped furiously back to her place next to Cora. She couldn’t believe this. It was completely unjustified and without evidence. She caught Cora’s triumphant little smirk just in time before they started running. That little bitch told her big brother what she knew Erica would be doing ahead of time, didn’t she? Well, Erica would show her!

They started running as soon as Derek blew his whistle. At first, Erica was fine. She was going at the exact same rate as Cora right beside her. But then, she let her competitive spirit get the best of her and she kept looking at Cora’s figure sprinting next to her. She got distracted by Cora’s natural ability to practically glide across the gym, the way the muscles in Cora’s legs clenched and unclenched, her lean arms, so focused and—

Slip!

She landed right on her butt. Allison and Lydia rushed over to her as Cora stopped dead in her tracks to check on her. She quickly waved them off.

“You bitch!” Erica slammed Cora’s locker in her face.

“Excuse me?” Cora said, sounding both shocked and angry at Erica’s sudden reaction.

“You did that on purpose!” Erica snapped at her.

“I wasn’t even near you!” Cora scoffed defensively

“Yeah, but you told your brother.” Erica put her hands on her hips defiantly.

“So? That doesn’t mean that I tried to trip you,” Cora scoffed irritably picking up her bags.

“But you hoped it would happen,” Erica crossed her arms knowingly leaning up against the lockers.

Cora looked up at her in what could only be complete and utter disbelief. “Not at all,” she said, and it sounded almost sounded pained, like it was hard for her to say it.

Erica softened up a bit. “Then, why did you do it?” she demanded.

“I did it because I don’t want you to flunk out of this school because of some stupid gym class.” Erica fixated on the first part of that sentence. “Why do you care if I’m this school at all?” she
“I don’t know, maybe I shouldn’t. But I’m going to go now, because I’ve obviously pissed you off, without even trying to this time.” She slammed Erica’s locker closed in her face. “And now so am I,” she declared dramatically before slipping out. Erica felt pained watching her leave. Cora didn’t deserve that. She might be a total bitch, but so was Erica, maybe even more so. Cora always looked out for Erica, despite her dry ways sometimes. Erica sighed, picking up her things to leave the locker room. She didn’t care whether or not she would be late for her next class; she just needed to get the hell out of there.

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“Lydia, this is ridiculous!” Allison groaned, collapsing on Cora’s bed near the window.

“Erica you can’t wear that.” Lydia pointed to the outfit she was holding up on the hanger in front of her.

“What, Why the fuck not?!” Erica demanded angrily, throwing the clothes at Lydia. They landed at her feet.

“Because I’m already wearing that color,” Lydia stated coolly, referring to her waist belt. “Pick something else.” Erica grumbled and went back to her closet.

“Lydia, calm down, it’s just a keg.” Allison looked at her hopelessly. Cora was sitting next to her on the bed. Lydia was standing in the middle of the room, dictating everyone’s clothing according to her own wardrobe. Erica and Cora hadn’t spoken since the end of gym class that day. Cora was absolutely pissed. She wouldn’t even look at Erica while they waited for Allison and Lydia to come across the hallway over to their own room.

“Cora, have you picked out your clothes yet?”

“No,” Cora snorted. “I was waiting for you to come and tell that the color of my head piece will clash with the shade of your shoes.”

Allison giggled and Lydia glared at her. Allison just shrugged and smirked up at her. Lydia rolled her eyes and shuffled through Erica’s closet. Fifteen seconds later, she tossed an outfit at Cora. “You’re wearing this,” she stated simply.

“These are Erica’s,” Cora declared, as if no one had noticed.

“Yeah,” Lydia answered. “And you’re going to wear them. Is there a problem?” Lydia blinked at Cora multiple times. If it was anyone but Lydia, Erica would have thought that her eyes were going to pop out of her head. Allison looked like she was thinking the same thing as she looked between the two of them cautiously.

“Well, I don’t know if Erica wants me wearing her clothes,” Cora explained, “since we didn’t exactly ask her permission to borrow them.” Cora challenged Lydia with the raise of an eyebrow. Lydia looked like she was taking this all into consideration when she turned to Erica who was currently changing into her brand new Lydia-approved outfit. Cora’s eyes lingered on Erica’s figure a little too long as Erica slipped on her last piece of clothing. Erica pretended not to notice. Now the bitch was judging what she looked like, ugh.

“Can Cora borrow your clothes for the night?” Lydia asked primly.

Yes, Cora can borrow whatever she wants from me, she wanted to say, but instead she rolled her eyes and said, “I honestly couldn’t care less.”
“Great!” Lydia clapped her hands together. “So, Cora will change and we’ll all be ready.”

“Would somebody please tell me where the hell is Stiles?” Lydia demanded, kicking The Big Tree in front of the boys’ school.

“I told you we came too early,” sighed Allison next to her.

“If he doesn’t come out here soon, I’m going to kick his ass until it bleeds,” Erica grumbled, stomping her own foot.

“You know, guys, we could always go find it ourselves,” Cora suggested d dryly, looking at the others expectantly.

“I’m all for that, but not if I’m going to be showing up early to a keg.” Allison shuffled her feet in the leaves on the ground, an early September breeze blowing long, dark waves around her face.

“Erica, call him,” Lydia spat furiously starting to rub the sides of her arms.

“Already dialing,” Erica shivered. Right as Erica was about to press the “send” button on the call, Stiles appeared, clambering through some bushes.

“And he appears.” Erica cancelled the call and slipped her phone into her jacket pocket.

“Wow, you guys are here early. It’s only,” Stiles scrambled for his phone. “Wow, never mind. I am late. Right this way, ladies.” Stiles gestured for them to follow.

“Told you so,” Lydia whispered triumphantly to Allison. Allison stuck out her tongue at Lydia, but Lydia still wore her smug grin as they followed Stiles through a wilderness maze of crazy bushes and large trees.

“Still think we would have been able to find this place ourselves, smarty-pants?” Erica goaded Cora, but Cora just glowered at her in response. Erica made sure Cora saw her little victorious smirk. It was almost as though nothing to them earlier, but it did. Erica had no idea why she was being this difficult. Were Hales always this stubborn?

“Welcome to the magical land of beer from a keg!” Stiles exclaimed when they reached their final destination. The huge forest had finally cleared up into a large, open prairie-like area, filled with a co-ed mixture of teenagers of all ages, getting drunk and running around.

“Is one kegging enough for this many people?” Allison questioned unsurely, looking around at all the teens silly-stringing each other and toilet papering the trees.

“Who says there’s only one keg?” Stiles smirked at the girls excitedly.

“Awesome, who wants to share a full one with me,” Erica offered up enthusiastically.

“Erica could probably drink all of us under the table to be honest,” Lydia stated bluntly.

“And do a lot of other things,” Cora added harshly. Erica was caught off-guard so she responded with, “At least people want me to do things to them under the table.” She looked at Cora, daring her to a challenge, but Cora just scoffed and moved past Erica with the others towards the nearest keg. Erica immediately caught up with them. Maybe Cora wouldn’t ease up on her until she got a formal apology from Erica. Maybe Erica would give her one, maybe she wouldn’t. Maybe after a few drinks…
A couple hours later (and a more than a few drinks later), Stiles drunkenly stumbled over to where Erica was flirting with the same tall, muscular guy she saw him talking to earlier. She learned over drinks that his name was Vernon Boyd, but he liked to be called Boyd. When Stiles reached where they were, he slurred, “Yo ass wanna be pussaaaay biatch, fine, then I’ll be yo batman!” Boyd looked so confused and annoyed by Stiles’s presence that he ended up just sighing and walking away.

“Stiles, you are sooo drunk!” Erica giggled loudly.

“So are you!” Stiles blabbed back. It was like whatever little elasticity he had left in his lips had all disappeared after some beer.

“I knoow!” she laughed, always dragging out her O’s. “But dude, you totally just ruined any chance I had at getting laid with him tonight!” She smacked him upside the head, and he made a high-pitched, pained-sounding noise. “Do you know how much effort that takes? Why would you d-do that t-to mee?” She punched him in the arm.

“Ow!” he exclaimed. “Please, like Batman would let Cat-woman have sex when she’s this intoxicated.” He almost lost his balance completely before half-heartedly uprooting himself.

“You are not Batman!” Erica spat in his face.

“Yes, I am. I am Batman!” He exclaimed, and then he threw up in some bushes.

Right then, Cora came walking up towards Erica, looking a little less perfectly poised that usual. That could only mean one thing.

“Dude, you actually drank?” Erica blurted out, starting to sober up a bit.

“A little,” Cora admitted, rubbing her eyes. They were red and ret, like Erica’s.

“Girl, listen—” Erica started, but was quickly interrupted.

“Girl?” Cora mocked, laughing a little bit.

“Shut up, I’m drunk!” Erica declared loudly, which only made Cora laugh even more. It looked like she was already in a good mood.

“Don’t sound so proud,” she teased lightly.

“Would you, like, just close it for two seconds? I’m trying to apologize to you. You should feel honored.”

Erica looked at her pointedly as she sipped her red solo cup.

“Already forgiven,” Cora said, face suddenly growing more serious.

“Really?”

“Really.”

“Cool.” Erica tossed her empty cup aside, looking up just in time to see Allison and Lydia have at each other’s faces.
“That’s gonna have repercussions in the morning.”

“Yep,” Cora agreed. “Just like everything else.” She sipped her beer bottle.

Erica woke to the sound of her and Cora’s alarm on the night stand in the middle of their beds. She hit it aggressively with the palm of her hand and it immediately turned itself off.

“What time is it?” She yawned, already feeling all of the standard symptoms of a hangover wash over her. Oh, was she going to be wearing sunglasses today.

“Time to get up and get ready for school,” Cora groaned, not sounding too well either.

“I don’t want to go to school,” Erica whined, which only made her headache worse.

“Neither do I,” Cora moaned, obviously too sick to come up with a clever come back.

“What happened last night?” Erica asked suddenly, still lying in bed it was all coming back to her in a blur. Flirting with random strangers, Stiles throwing up…

“You slurred an apology to me and then we watched Allison and Lydia swap spit,” Cora answered, filling in all of Erica’s blanks. “Sound familiar?” She looked over to Erica from where she was still lying face-up in her bed too.

“Oh yeah,” Erica realized, now remembering everything. She focused on the apology part. “So, we’re cool?” she asked, looking over at Cora cautiously.

“Yeah,” Cora chuckled. “We’re cool.” She wiggled her legs a little bit, smiling up at the ceiling, looking extremely happy. Erica wondered what was so great about a ceiling.

“Should not have let Stiles mix me a margarita,” Lydia complained, letting her head drop on the desk in front of her.

“Ugh,” Allison agreed wordlessly, rubbing her face profusely. Erica was falling asleep in the desk next to her, while from behind Cora kept hopelessly poking her to keep her awake. Erica swatted her hands away sleepily.

“Girls,” their English teacher, Ms. Blake, said to the four of them. “The guidance counselor would like to see you after class.” She looked at all four of them at their desks, seeming concerned.

“Oh, great,” Erica groaned, just now waking up.

“I wouldn’t be surprised if we got expelled,” Lydia sighed as they trudged down the hallway toward Laura Hale’s office.

“Aren’t you just brimming with positivity today?” Cora remarked at Lydia.

“We aren’t going to get expelled, you guys,” Allison commented almost peacefully. “It’s the guidance counselor; she’s probably just worried about us.” Allison rubbed her eyes.

“I agree,” Erica said. “And besides, it’s your sister.” She gestured at Cora. “What have we got to lose?” She walked along with the others.
“Never ever say that,” Lydia said. “Nothing good ever happens when you say that,” she added.

Erica looked at her like she was ridiculous before knocking on Laura’s door that said:

Laura Hale

Guidance Counselor

Erica thought it was pretty fancy that she had her name up on the door. Laura opened the door immediately.

“Hey guys,” she greeted, flashing he huge pearly whites at them. “Come on in.” She held the door open for all of them to come inside, and then she closed the door behind them. They all knew Laura because they were Cora’s friends, especially Erica. She made a point of introducing herself to all of them as soon as she found out that Cora made a friend. This drove Cora crazy.

Laura Hale was young woman of about 30k give or take, making her the perfect candidate for both a relatable and personable guidance counselor. She was extremely laid-back with a cool disposition but had enough friendly spunk to make it interesting and fun.

“Okay,” she said, sitting down at her desk chair, while the rest of the girls made themselves comfortable at the four available chairs in front of them. “Which one of your ideas was it to take my sister out to a keg with you?” She asked, raising her eyebrows at each of them. They all pointed at Erica immediately.

“Really?” she demanded, feeling like she was about to throw up. “Thanks guys.” She scoffed, rolling her eyes. She did not get the reaction she expected from Laura. Or maybe she did, you just never knew with Laura.

“I knew it!” Laura squealed happily at her with her signature, big and bright smile. She ran all the way around her desk to hug Erica proudly, and then hugging Cora. Allison and Lydia looked like they felt a little left out. She walked back to desk chair and sat down.

“Sorry about that,” she said, crossing her legs. You could totally tell that she wasn’t. “I’m just so happy you got my sister to be a normal teenager!” she exclaimed happily, smile growing even bigger (if that was even possible).

“Laura—“Cora started.

“Shut up for a second, Cora!” Laura snapped face going cross for just a second. She turned back to Erica. “Thank you,” she said, then looking at Allison and Lydia. “All of you.” She held her hands together.

“You’re welcome,” Lydia and Erica sang at the exact same time, while Allison just nodded and grinned modestly.

“Okay,” Laura clapped her hands, re-positioning herself to sit up straighter. “The rest of you can go now. I just want to speak to Erica. Yes, you can go, too, Cora.”

“I wasn’t asking—“

“Shush, I like abusing my authority!” Laura exclaimed. Lydia strutted out of the office, arm in arm with Allison, closely followed by Cora who has grumbling something about bossy sisters who can’t mind their own business. She slammed the door shut behind her.
Laura turned her attention back to Erica and smiled at her. Erica raised her eyebrows. “Yes?” she asked.

“Cora trusts you,” Laura stated suddenly.

“Oh…Okay?” Erica was unsure of where she was going with this.

“She’s the most comfortable with you out of the whole group.” Laura kept her eyes on Erica.

“Really?” Erica’s voice cracked a little bit. Something inside of her warmed around her heart at that. She was also surprised, but she couldn’t help but feel way too proud of herself too.

“Yes, she talks about you a lot.” Laura paused. “Cora tells me everything.” Laura was still watching Erica carefully.

“Oh,” Erica said, not really sure what to say. What did that mean? What was everything? Did Erica even know? Would she be asking herself these questions if she did?

Laura leaned forward very carefully towards Erica. “Don’t screw it up,” she seemed to warn, as though she would do something if she did. Erica just nodded in agreement, since she wasn’t really sure about what Laura was implying. She wasn’t even sure if she wanted to know.

“I’m going to go now,” Erica finally said, trying to sound confident. She moved to get up.

“You do that,” Laura said calmly, sitting back. Erica walked out and shut the door behind her. She headed for her next class. She somehow managed to stay awake in all of her classes throughout the rest of the day, and when the time for sleep came she couldn’t find the strength to close her eyes.
You're Awesome (Sometimes)

Chapter Summary

“Gross,” Cora spat from her spot next to Erica at the edge of the group.

“Told you so,” Lydia said as she sipped her cappuccino, lifting a pinkie as she picked up her mug.

“Now,” Erica said, an evil smirk playing on her face. “Let’s get to the interesting things. Have your sex lives improved or are we taking the celibate route to happiness?”

Chapter Notes

YAY, CHAPTER TWO IS UP! They all cheer, (or at least I hope so). So, I beta-ed this one by myself because tumblr was being an asshole. :P I had to do double the work. (Stop whining, Nicole. It's not attractive.) This is also slightly shorter than the last chapter as well. I'll give you an idea: the last chapter was 14 pages on word, and this one was 10. (Or you could just compare the word count, I guess.) It was mostly because I couldn't everything that I wanted to in this chapter because I have a lot of ideas saved, but no worries, soon all will be revealed (in due time). For now, enjoy what you can. THANKS SO MUCH FOR READING YOU LITTLE MUFFIN CUTIES AND ENJOY. :) :)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“Cora, I think our English teacher totally has a thing for your brother.” Lydia looked at her from where they were all sitting on the grass under a tree. Right now they were in their shared free period together. Lydia was currently giving Allison a full-on manicure. It had been almost a week since the keg and Erica hadn’t been able stop thinking about what Laura had said to her about Cora.

“Gross,” Cora spat from her spot next to Erica at the edge of the group.

“It’s completely true, though.” Lydia was on the other side of the group, buffing Allison’s finger nails, while Erica sat on the other side of Allison. “I was him visit her the other day in our classroom before school even started. They’re probably dating, or at least going to.” She started to put a clear primer coat on Allison’s nails.

“I hear he saved her from getting accidentally run over by Mr. Harris in his car, and that’s how they know each other.” Allison looked at their little clique with a knowing smirk, which really said something considering Allison never gossiped. Lydia was usually the one distributing all the dirt on students and teachers. Erica usually had something to say, too, but she always waited until the right time to drop the big bombshell.

“Ugh, god,” Cora complained with a grimace. But, seriously though, what Laura had said about
Cora that day didn’t make any sense whatsoever. If anything Cora seemed to like the others better and just merely put up with Erica.

“What a shame, Stiles is going to be so heartbroken.” Erica flashed the group a boastful smile, while they all gawked at her in confusion.

“What do you mean, ‘Stiles will be so heartbroken’?” Allison angled her body to face Erica directly. Lydia was practically in sync with her movements as she did the same. Cora leaned in more.

“Oh, you didn’t hear?” Erica asked sarcastically. “Word has it that Stiles has a crush on Derek,” Erica sang proudly as she played with her school skirt.

“What?!” Allison exclaimed, with a weirdly excited smile.

“That’s disgusting,” Cora groaned with a hand sliding over her face.

“I knew it,” Lydia declared, sounding surprised. “I called that last year.”

“You did!” Allison remembers, interjecting.

“It had to happen sometime.” She shrugged, turning her attention back to Allison’s hands.

“You guys weren’t supposed to know,” Erica announced nonchalantly. “So you’re not allowed to say anything about this to him.” She pulled at her own curly blonde locks of hair.

“I promise I won’t say anything,” Allison assured Erica with a pat to the leg. Cora stared at Allison’s hand a little too long when she patted Erica’s leg, but only Erica noticed it.

“Stiles can believe that I figured it out all on my own, and he knows that I could. So, I can say whatever I want.” Lydia began to coat Allison’s nails carefully in a light baby blue shade on her right hand. “Cora, you shouldn’t be so surprised that people want to jump your brother’s bones. He’s a total B.I.L.F.” She started on Allison’s left hand.

“What is a B.I.L.F.?” Allison asked with a small smile, clearly amused (with Lydia, obviously).

“What do you think it is?” Erica sassed at her, communicating what she meant with her eyebrows.

“Oh my god, everyone shut up. I can’t talk about this anymore!” Cora looked like she was about to vomit.

“Alright,” Erica agreed, reaching for her purse in front of her. “We’ll stop talking about how everyone wants to get fucked into oblivion by your big brother, and have all of his babies.” She smirked at Cora as she unzipped her purse. Cora smacked her on her forearm.

Erica suppressed herself from letting out a yelp. After all, she was tough too. “Sorry but you asked for it.” She pulled out a huge box of collectible Marlboros and tossed her purse back on the ground.

“Oh, how lovely is this! It’s not like we haven’t been ingesting enough illegal substances lately,” Lydia drawled, sounding cynical as she was practically in Allison’s lap.

“Where did you get those?” Allison asked out of curiosity.

“I snuck out in the middle of the night to a CVS up the road,” Erica explained, refusing to acknowledge Lydia’s negative commentary. “I almost got raped, though. Some old guy tried to
offer me a ride back and when I said no, he tried to run over me with his van. Luckily for me, he got the hint when I threw a huge rock through his windshield.” Erica smirked proudly as she passed Allison and Lydia cigarettes while she lit up her own.

“That’s why you shouldn’t go out alone so late,” Cora explained, maybe looking concerned? Or even a little bit relieved, too? “You should have let me come with you like I offered. She looked into Erica’s eyes as if this was a real serious matter, which she guessed it was, but this still made Erica uncomfortable nonetheless.

“I was fine; it was just a close call.” She lit everyone’s cigarette as she puffed out her own. “But if it makes you feel better, you can be my bodyguard the next I go out to get more tampons.” She chided at Cora with a glowing leer. Cora just rolled her eyes (like always) and seemed a little hurt? Oh god, did Erica take it too far again? She always did that.

“Hey, I was just—“


Wounded, Erica sat back, staring into space as she hoped that Allison or Lydia would say something next.

“I still don’t understand how we didn’t get into trouble,” Allison said, seeming to get the hint. “We were so obviously hung-over.”

“Please,” Erica drawled. “Everyone was hung-over after that party. And besides, Laura is not a stool pigeon. She loves us.” She took a puff.

“Especially you,” Lydia pointed out with her cigarette. “What are you and Cora dating or something? Did she give you the ‘if you ever hurt her’ speech?” Allison and Lydia both burst into giggles as they collapsed into each other on their already entwined bodies. Erica forced herself to laugh believably and Cora seemed to be chuckling a little awkwardly too, but maybe that was just Erica’s mind playing tricks on her again. It seemed to be doing that a lot lately.

“So, what did she really say to you?” Cora asked when there was a break in the laughter. Everyone looked at Erica expectantly.

“Um, nothing really,” she lied, unwilling to admit that Laura in fact did give Erica some weird version of the ‘if you hurt her’ speech. Erica was still wondering what that was all about. (Un-admittedly, she’d been afraid to see Laura ever since.) “I don’t really remember. I think it was something to do with how you tend to piss your pants when you’re drunk. I should always sneak an extra pair for you in my purse.” She gave Cora a shit eating grin, but Cora just sighed and shook her head, not really seeming to believe Erica. Cora could believe whatever she wanted to. Erica was never going to tell her shit. She felt that Cora somehow knew that.

“Derek is dating someone.” Stiles plopped his bag down on the ground next to him as he sat took a seat in the booth across from Erica. They had made plans earlier to meet at the Beacon Grille in the resort town for lunch.

“You don’t say,” Erica asked, pretending to be fascinated by this ‘new’ information. She closed her menu. “Who is it?”

“Yeah,” Stiles said, wiggling out of his blazer. “And it’s your English teacher,” he declared.

“I already knew,” she admitted, growing bored and opening her menu again.
“What?!” Stiles demanded, somehow managing to knock his entire glass of ice water all over the floor. The poor, frenzied-looking bus boy rushed over to clean it up, while Stiles muttered some lame apology as he unbuttoned and rolled up his sleeves.

“I was reluctant to tell you,” Erica shrugged apologetically.

“Well, this is just great,” Stiles grumbled, propping his now bare elbows up on the table after he rolled up his sleeves. “Now what am I going to do?” He rested his chin on his fists.

Erica thought for a moment. “What about that girl Heather you used to be friends with when you guys were kids?” Erica suggested, wanting to take Stiles’s mind off the subject of Derek.

“What about Heather?” Stiles hissed, probably not trying to sound as harsh as it came out.

“She’s in my chemistry class,” Erica said, as if that explained everything. “She’s really cute, and she says that she misses you.” Erica might have fabricated the last part of that (and she definitely did), but who cared? Erica could usually lie straight through her teeth. Stiles would never even know.

“So?” he uttered, pouting like a toddler who had just been put in time out.

“So, what I’m saying is that maybe until this whole Derek and Ms. Blake things runs its course, you could probably use a distraction. Erica put her menu down to give him her full attention.

“Do you really think so?” He asked earnestly, just now seeming intrigued.

Not really. “I know so.” She beamed. Erica just couldn’t live through another year of Stiles pining hopelessly over someone he could never have. If she could prevent his pain this time, you can bet your ass that Erica Reyes would sure as hell try to for her Batman.

“So, I might have tried to tell Stiles about Derek and Ms. Blake.”

“And?” Cora lifted her eyebrows from where she was reading her most recent issue of Seventeen magazines on her bed. Erica found it strange that Cora would read such a vanilla and girly magazine. She pegged her for more of the Biker Girls’ Weekly type, if that even existed. Erica preferred Cosmopolitan herself.

“He spit it out before I even got the chance to tell him.” Erica drew in some eyeliner around her eyes, facing the full-length mirror at her corner of the room. She was so glad that they all came with these.

“He already knew?” Cora set down Seventeen, obviously surprised.

“Yeah,” She shrugged, putting on a pair of earrings. “I guess news travels fast around here.” She turned away from the mirror to face Cora. “How do I look?” She beamed, obviously not needing any other compliments besides the ones inside of her read, but was really tempted to hear more.

“Where are you going?” Cora asked instead of answering her question. Her cheeks almost looked pink.

“Gosh it’s not like we’re sisters,” Erica griped, turning back to the mirror to put on lipstick. “We’re going to this new club downtown that just opened up.” She noticed Cora watching her from the bed. “You know if you really need make-up tips that badly, all you have to do is ask.”
She tossed her a cocky smile in the mirror.

Cora reddened, but Erica didn’t think her make-up skills were that embarrassing, considering that she never wore any. “I’m fine but thanks,” she quipped sarcastically. “Who’s ‘we’re’?” she asked, putting air quotes around the word ‘we’re’ with her fingers.

“You and me, genius,” Erica snorted, bouncing over to the bed, sitting down next to Cora. “Move,” she ordered, and Cora let out a grunt as she made more room for Erica. They lay back on the pillows at the head of the bed.

“You’re gonna mess up your hair, genius,” Cora retorted with a sneer next to her.

“That’s impossible,” Erica said, sliding a hand through her hair. “I’m the definition of perfection.” Cora chuckled fondly, blushing and looking away.

“I’m not going with you,” Cora said finally, trying to look like she meant business.

“Yes,” Erica gave her a knowing grin. “Yes, you are.” She patted her leg confidently. Cora glanced at her hand suspiciously.

“And who’s gonna stop me?” Cora craned her neck towards Erica.

“You can either go with willingly, or I’ll handcuff you to me so you have to. It’s your choice.” Erica looked at her with a glint of mischief in her eyes, and did Cora just blush again? What’s with everyone lately? “I’m pretty strong you know.”

“So am I,” challenged Cora, now confident once again.

Erica put a finger to her chin thoughtfully. “Or I could always get one of those shock collars that we used to use on my dog back home. I think there’s a Petco up the street somewhere.” That earned her a punch in the arm.

“Ow, bitch!” Erica smacked her hand. “Here let me paint your nails,” she said eyeing the bottle of black nail polish on the night stand. She reached across Cora and snatched it up before Cora could even protest. Then she yanked Cora’s hand as she lay back down to position herself.

“I admired your ability to be so impossibly gentle,” Cora simpered at her.

“Shut up,” Erica sat back as she settled herself down. Cora’s hand was strategically placed atop her thigh. Erica had no idea why she even noticed that, but whatever. She continued on and grabbed Cora’s index finger on her right hand. She covered the nail with the black liquid. As she kept going, she couldn’t help but feel how unworkably close Cora was sitting next to her. They were almost on top of each other. It was hard to get the job done with Cora breathing down her neck every five seconds (and very slowly, she might add), but Erica did it, like the beauty guru she was.

“Done,” Erica announced, standing up noticeably fast. She felt the sudden need for fresh air.

“I’ll wait for you outside,” she said briefly, before darting out of there. She had to get the hell away from whatever that was.

Cora came out about fifteen minutes later, looking clad in a tight, dark grey dress that she paired with a leather jacket. She wore charcoal-colored eyeliner mascara and eyeliner around her eyes. She looked like she’d borrowed a pair of Erica’s pumps, too. Erica found herself trying to pry her
eyes away from her (what the fuck). Thankfully, no one almost got sexually harassed on the walk downtown, which wasn’t very far. Cora and Erica could both kick anyone’s ass, but they’d still rather live without the inconvenience. When they got to the club, the lines to get inside went all the way around the block. It was opening night and everyone wanted in.

“Oh great,” Cora resigned. “Let’s just go home.” She began to spin on her heels and walk away.

Erica stopped her with the grab of an arm. “Please, tell me you didn’t honestly think that I would actually come unprepared for this, did you?” Cora seemed a little pleasantly surprised by her not-so-sudden aggression, which was honestly a little weird. Erica was chocked that Cora didn’t kick her in the knees. She played it off with a cool smile and dragged Cora to the front of the line, where the bouncer was guarding the main entrance. He was a tall, burly-looking young man with about seven tattoos on each arm.

“No,” he said immediately as soon as they walked up to him.

“But, please sir,” Erica pleaded with him. Cora turned to look at all the people chattering irritably behind them. “We’ve been waiting here all day to get inside.”

“Sorry kids,” he barked, obviously not sorry at all. “I don’t exactly have any time for whiny teenagers, as you can see here. “ He went to let in others behind them. Cora watched as Erica’s face slowly changed character from a pleading innocent girl to a sex kitten. She gradually crept closer to the guy.

“Hey, are those real?” Erica asked him, fascination playing in her eyes.

“Yeah,” he answered, seeming surprised about her sudden interest.

She took another step closer to him. “Can I..?” She began to ask him, pointing to his arm.

“Uh, sure,” he said, pulling up his right sleeve to expose his arm for her.

“Wow,” she cooed as she put a hand on his arm and squeezed lightly. “These look so good on you.” She caressed his forearm.

“You know what,” he said, tearing his forearm away and pulling his sleeve down. “I think I was a little harsh on you and your friend over here earlier. You girls do look older.” He waved them inside without even carding them.

“Well done,” Cora said as soon as they were far enough inside, sounding like she was holding back some admiration.

“It was nothing new,” Erica bragged as she led them to the bar and ordered a couple of mixed drinks for them. Lana Del Rey’s remix of “Summertime Sadness” boomed over the speakers. She remembered that Cora loved this song. She hopped up onto a bar stool and Cora slid easily into the one next to her. Cora leaned in toward her like she was about to tell her a secret.

“Don’t tell anyone I said this,” Cora looked up into her eyes. “But sometimes you can be kind of awesome.” Erica just let her insides warm, unable to come up with a cleverly crafted remark in response.

The next morning, they met Allison and Lydia for coffee at the school’s coffee shop, The Beacon Brew. (Erica thought it was a dumb, predictable name.) They sat down across from Allison and Lydia at their favorite table by the window. Erica couldn’t help but notice that they seemed awful
close for two people who made at a party last week, but never even talked about it, as far as Erica’s knowledge went.

She could be wrong, though. People drunkenly made out at parties all the time and it probably meant next to nothing. Although, Cora looked like she was thinking the same as Erica, as stoic as her face may be. Apparently, Allison and Lydia had something to tell them and that’s why they were meeting there so damn early in the morning. Erica was crabby, but listened willingly.

“We’re dating,” Allison finally said.

“That’s it?” Cora blinked unbelievably.

“Knew it,” Erica shook her head and sipped her caramel macchiato.

“What?” Allison exclaimed, clueless, like she had been to Lydia’s feelings for the past two years.

“It was bound to happen sometime.” Cora shrugged, picking up her ice coffee.

“So, this isn’t going to be awkward for you guys?” Allison’s eyes darted between the two of them worriedly.

“Please,” Erica drawled. “If anything, this is an improvement.” She gulped down the piping hot caffeine like it was nothing. Cora looked concerned for a second, but then remembered herself.

“Told you so,” Lydia said as she sipped her cappuccino, lifting a pinky as she picked up her mug.

“Now,” Erica said, an evil smirk playing on her face. “Let’s get to the interesting things. Have your sex lives improved or are we taking the celibate route to happiness?”

- 

“She said yes.” Stiles came up behind her and climbed over the bench to sit next to her.

“Who?” Erica asked, immediately closing her book. She didn’t care what Ms. Blake said. Jane Austen put her to sleep. She just came to the Beacon Park to read it because she’d hoped maybe one of those sexy literature junkies would come up to her and ask her about it so she could feign interest in it until she got into their pants. Or, she might actually see something interesting, like someone falling of their bike and face-planting or something. Anything beat stuffy English people gossiping about rich folk for 19 pages at a time.

“Heather,” Stiles laughed, looking at her in disbelief. “You know, the girl you suggested that I ask on a date?” He blinked at her impatiently.

“Oh yeah,” she remembered now, her crusade to save Stiles’s almost-broken heart. “Duh.” She put down her book.

Suddenly, Stiles practically tackled her into an unexpected bear hug. “Thank you, thank you, and thank you!” He exclaimed, sounding completely ecstatic as he squished her into the bench.

“Oh my—“Erica cried, startled by the unexpected affection. “What did I do?” she asked from beneath him. “Get off of me, before I make you!” She squirmed, trying to kick him off of her.

Stiles happily obeyed and let her go, but didn’t look alarmed. He was still smiling at like she just restored his favorite endangered species or saved the world from global warming (or maybe both). Either way, it was really starting to freak her out.
“You encouraged me to be happy for once in my entire life, instead of pining after what I can’t have,” he explained, still grinning from ear to ear. “Thanks.” He walked away before Erica had the chance to make fun of him for being such a softy.

- “Lydia, my hair looks fine!” Stiles pouted, frustrated with the amount of hands grooming him right now. They all broke into his dorm that night after Erica had proudly announced her match-making success to everyone over dinner (a little too loudly, or so Cora had so obnoxiously pointed out). They insisted on getting him ready for his date with Heather.

Erica shuffled through his closet quickly taking out two shirts. One was a black polo and the other was a dark, navy blue v-neck. “Which one?” she asked, holding both up so that they were facing Lydia.

“Definitely the v-neck,” Lydia replied as she ran a comb through his newly grown-out hair. Allison and Cora were currently whispering as they tried to decide what shoes Stiles should wear.

“What? A v-neck? I don’t—” he managed to turn out a little bit of Lydia’s grip so he could see the shirt of choice. “Oh god, that’s Isaac’s.” He shook his head. “But the polo’s mine, I’ll wear that.”

“It figures,” Lydia huffed, exasperated. “He’s always had a better fashion sense than you.” She ran her fingers through his hair. “You’re still wearing the v-neck.”

“But—“

Lydia thwacked his head for trying to protest. “Ouch!” he rubbed his forehead. “Girls are violent,” he glowered.

“Speaking of violence and fashion sense,” Erica cut in. “I remember when Isaac and I hooked up freshman year, and he wore one of those scarves and we—“

“Okay, Erica!” Everyone yelled at the same time. Cora looked especially grossed out. Erica threw her arms up in surrender and threw the stupid v-neck at Stiles’s head. He stuck out his tongue at her when he didn’t catch it.

“Done,” Lydia finally said, examining his hair.

“Same,” Allison stated as Cora tossed Stiles a pair of checkered Vans sneakers. Stiles flailed uncontrollably, but he managed to catch them this time. Erica mock-applauded his little victory, and he glared at her.

“Um, guys,” he said. “You forgot pants.” He gestured to the lacrosse shorts that he still had on from this afternoon’s practice session (A.K.A. Stiles mostly sitting on the sidelines, fiddling with the net on his lacrosse stick).

Erica grabbed a pair of light grey skinny jeans from his closet. “Here!” She threw the jeans at his face.

“Careful!” He yelped, barely managing to seize them. “This has to look presentable tonight,” he stated, moving his hands around his face.

“Ugh, go change you big baby!” Erica shooed him off to the bathroom. They all waited for him to come out and present his final product.

“Okay,” he said, opening the door. “How embarrassing is it? Should I take out all my college
funds now and use the money to change my name to Juarez and move to Mexico?” He stepped out of the bathroom with his eyes shut.

Erica whistled appreciatively. “No,” she claimed. “Just the opposite.” She examined him. “Want to come and hide in my bed tonight?”

“Ha ha, very funny,” Stiles said sarcastically. Everyone knew she was joking. Stiles and Erica were so close; the thought of them together reminded everybody of incest. It wouldn’t be the good kind either, like Jace and Clary from The Mortal Instruments. He turned to look at himself in the mirror. “Wow, you guys did well.” He turned to study himself some more.

“Naturally,” Lydia said with the flip of her hair, smiling as Allison wrapped an arm around her waist and kissed her cheek. Suddenly, Stiles’s phone beeped. He scrambled to check it and see who it was, even though everyone already knew.

“It’s her,” he announced, like that was a surprise. “She’s here.” His eyes grew wide as he quickly grabbed his wallet and headed for the door.

“Have fun,” Allison told him with a reassuring smile. She leaned against Lydia in the doorway.

“Thanks.”

“Don’t stick her with the check!” Cora reminded hastily.

“Obviously!”

“And don’t get caught in any rain,” Lydia ordered him. “You’ll ruin the masterpiece I made out of your hair.”

“Okay,” he sighed.

“And don’t come home until you’ve gotten someone pregnant!” Erica taunted loudly, making sure that this whole section of dorms heard her.

“I hate you so much!” she heard Stiles scream back.

“Love you too!” she yelled in retort.

“You wanna know what’s weird?” Allison asked from her spot next to Lydia.

“What?” Cora asked.

“The fact that Isaac’s clothes are here, but Scott is Stiles’s roommate.” Lydia just shook her head and chuckled into Allison’s hair like she was one step ahead of everyone, as usual.

“Well, we know that Stiles isn’t getting any. Otherwise, I’d kick his ass for making us have arguments with him about v-necks and polo’s.” She scoffed and looked at everyone else.

“A distraction would be good for him, considering his love life.” Lydia tried not to giggle as Allison nuzzled her cheek.

Chapter End Notes
I like feedback.

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A Little Too Loud & A Little Too Fast

Chapter Summary

“Can’t do it,” Lydia said finally. “I wish I could, but I can’t.” They were in the East Wing. Lydia was hanging up flyers for the Junior High Science Camp Retreat that she was helping to co-run that weekend.

“Ugh, man!” Erica punched someone’s locker nearby; leaving a huge dent in the middle of the door that was the shape of her fist. Someone really had to replace these cheap-ass lockers.

“Why don’t you just ask Cora?” Lydia suggested, as if that should have been an obvious first choice. Erica wondered why.

Chapter Notes

Hey, hey, hey! And so it’s up, lo and behold. Sorry for the long wait. My life has been crazy busy and my brain uncooperative. But, here it is! It's slightly longer than the last chapter, but still a little shorter than the first. ENJOY MY LOVELIES. ;]

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“Hey, Allison, slow the fuck down!” Erica called after her as she ran to catch up with the tall brunette in the hallway. Allison turned around, looking unsurprised by Erica’s presence.

“Hey, Erica, what’s up?” She greeted with a friendly smirk as she stood and waited for Erica to catch up with her.

“My fall collections just got in from the design company for fashion class, and I need a model.” Erica explained this to her when they finally fell into step with each other.

“Yeah, I’m sorry. I can’t do it this year!” Allison offered Erica an apologetic frown.

“You’ve got to be kidding me right now.” Erica let out a frustrated groan.

“Yeah, I have a huge Euro mid-term that week.” She let out a sad sigh. She looked at Erica with a disappointed look in her eyes. “You should ask Lydia, she’d love it.” She suggested this to Erica with an encouraging smile.

“Can’t do it,” Lydia said finally. “I wish I could, but I can’t.” They were in the East Wing. Lydia was hanging up flyers for the Junior High Science Camp Retreat that she was helping to co-run that weekend.

“Ugh, man!” Erica punched someone’s locker nearby; leaving a huge dent in the middle of the door that was the shape of her fist. Someone really had to replace these cheap-ass lockers.
“Why don’t you just ask Cora?” Lydia suggested, as if that should have been an obvious first choice. Erica wondered why.

“I don’t think Cora is exactly the modeling type,” Erica said instead. “But thanks anyway,” she sang sarcastically before furiously strutting down the hallway as Lydia still remained unfazed by Erica’s violence.

As she was getting ready for bed that night, Cora dropped down a pile of school catalogs on the desk in front of her.

“What are these?” Erica demanded as she picked them with curiosity.

“School catalogs,” Cora answered in a casual tone as she pulled her hair up into a high ponytail for bed. Erica watched as a few loose strands hit her cheekbones, the ends barely brushing Cora’s defined collarbone. Cora looked away from her mirror on the nightstand at Erica. “Just look at them,” she said before entering the bathroom.

Erica flipped through the school catalogs, only to find that the Hales were the talked-about gorgeous models everyone swooned over every year. Laura leaned against her desk with her classic wide smile in her office. Derek gave a surprisingly genuine smile to the camera as he held a dodge ball in the gymnasium. And finally, scattered throughout the pages was Cora, smiling as she sat on the grass outside, laughing with students in the cafeteria, posing with her mom in the main office. She obviously looked gorgeous in all of them, and absolutely nothing like herself. Erica felt something in her stomach flip as she turned the pages.

“See anything you like?” Cora teased when she stepped out of the bathroom in nothing but a towel as she dried her hair with it.

“I didn’t know you could model.” Erica could hear the crack in her voice as she watched Cora shake out her brown locks.

“Yeah, well nobody cares about the school catalog.” Cora shrugged, dropping her towel.

Erica looked up and away. She totally didn’t want to gawk at Cora’s naked body at all. There was absolutely nothing to gawk at.

“Well, I can see why,” she teased, obviously uncomfortable. “It’s practically a family photo album.” She scoffed.

“Oh gosh, I know, but Peter insists that we’re prettier than anyone else, so.” She shrugged into some pajamas, thankfully. Erica avoided asking why she never referred to him as her uncle, mostly because it was pretty obvious.

“I can do it,” Cora insisted. “Even though you don’t think I’m the modeling type.” She eyed at Erica. “Laura told me.”

“Laura? How did Laura know? I said that to Lydia.” She rolled her eyes. Their whole clique was wrong. Laura totally loved Lydia the most.

“I don’t understand,” Cora mused. “Why don’t you just model your own fall line? You seem conceited enough.” She teased Erica with a nudge.

“Ha ha,” Erica pretended to laugh. “Very funny, Hale, I’ll remember that next year when your face is plastered all over my school catalog that nobody cares about.” Cora stuck her tongue out at
Erica, still waiting for an explanation. “I already tried that freshmen year with Stiles. He’s a god-awful photographer when he’s not snapping Instagram photos.” She shook her head with the roll of her eyes. “I’ll show you the clothes when you model for me next week,” she promised Cora. “Now good night,” she declared when she went to turn out the lights, before muttering a ‘thank you’ to Cora as she fell asleep.

“Where are you taking me?” Cora asked from the passenger’s seat of Erica’s car.

“Into town,” Erica said. “The scenery is nice this time of year and I already went to the nature preserve with Allison last year,” she explained as she tossed Cora her catalog from last year, with Allison as her muse. “Here, in case you wanted to look.”

Cora flipped through the booklet. “Wow, Allison’s great at this,” Cora commented with admiration.

“Allison is great at everything.” Erica rolled her eyes as she made a right hand turn. “She’s probably great at sex, too.”

“Why don’t you just ask Lydia?” Cora joked.

Erica let out a snort. “Cute, I like it.” She laughed as Cora blushed, and made a left hand turn. “We’re here!” She announced as she parked the car and they got out.

“Wow,” Cora declared, sounding impressed. “Good eye.”

“Thanks,” Erica smirked, flipping her hair. “Let’s get to work!” She pulled out her camera.

“Where do you want to start?”

“Um, what about over here,” Cora suggested, guiding her to an old-fashioned lamp post.

“Perfect,” Erica agreed. She pulled out the box of clothes, which was huge, but Cora accepted it gracefully when she handed it to her anyway. “Pick out whatever you want to wear first, and go change in that Starbucks over there,” Erica ordered.

“Bossy already,” Cora quipped, before running inside with the box. Erica refused to acknowledge that comment. Cora came back out, looking clad in the first outfit that she had chosen.

“Good choice,” Erica said. “Say cheese!” She snapped a photo of Cora looking dazed.

“That doesn’t count. You didn’t even warn me.”

“That’s going to be the cover page.”

“You’re such a bitch.”

“Take one to know one.”

So they wandered through town, with Cora occasionally changing outfits and sometimes going to different sceneries. Of course Cora just had to look beautiful with everything and anything. Erica couldn’t help but smile at that when she loaded the pictures onto her computer with Cora looming over her shoulder the whole time, helping her choose which pictures to use. Since Erica thought they were all perfect, she called in Cora to help her pick them out. Obviously, she made up
another excuse why.

“I like that one,” Cora said, pointing to the current photo on the screen in front of them.

“Me too,” Erica agreed with a blush she had managed to hide. She clicked ‘save’ on the screen and it went into her folder for the catalog.

“Wow, these are all so great,” Cora commented when they flicked through some more pictures.

“Who’s conceited now?” Erica chided with a grin.

“No,” Cora said in a serious tone. “I mean you, Erica. You’re really talented. You’re a good designer and photographer.” Cora sounded genuinely admirable. Once again, Erica was way too flustered to even say thanks. So, she just clicked through some more photos and asked for Cora’s discretion every now and then.

- 

“It’s here!” Allison exclaimed with excitement, pointing at the book in Erica’s arms as she sat down at their usual lunch table.

“Let me see it,” Lydia demanded, snatching the glossy-paged catalog from Erica’s hands. It had been a few weeks.

“Wow, Cora, you’re amazing!” Allison complimented from where she was looking over Lydia’s shoulder.

“Thanks,” Cora grinned from her side of the table.

“You did an excellent job on choosing the landscape, Erica.” Lydia nodded. “I’m very impressed.” She handed the catalog back to Erica.

“Thank you,” Erica declared with pride and a beaming grin.

“So, what was the grad you got on it?” Cora asked.

“A hundred,” Erica announced with a cocky smile. “I also have other news.” Everyone leaned in with curiosity. “Kali wants me to get the clothes made in multiple amounts and sold in the school boutique to all the students. She’s talking to Cora’s mom about it right now.” Kali was Erica’s fashion design teacher. She was really scary, mean, and she wouldn’t tell anyone her last name. She also refused to wear shoes. Erica suspected she was one of those hippy types, but Erica liked the clothes she wore. She obviously had good taste if she liked Erica’s stuff.

“That’s awesome!” Allison clapped her hands, a bright smile being adorned on her cheerful face.

“Brilliant work,” Lydia agreed with an encouraging nod and a grin.

“You deserve it.” Cora said it like it was a fact. Erica once again tried to hide her smile, but it was useless this time.

- 

A couple weeks later, Erica found Laura in the middle of the common area of the school grounds. She was passing out copies of Erica’s clothing catalog with Cora beaming on the cover to all of the students.

“What’s this?” Erica asked.
Laura turned around, unsurprised by Erica’s presence. “Oh, you didn’t hear? Your clothes are being put in the school boutique by the end of next week.” Laura smiled as if this whole surprise thing was exactly what she was going for.

“What’s this?” Erica asked.

“Your mom said yes?” Erica blurted out anyway with uncharacteristically goofy smile.

“Puh-lease, like I was going to let her say no to clothes that my baby sister modeled.” Laura smirked proudly as if to silently be saying ‘you’re welcome.’ “Cora was pretty adamant about how much you deserved this. She says you have talent.” With that, Laura strutted off, leaving Erica with her unfathomable thoughts.

- “He was totally staring at you today in fifth period!”

“So? He always stares at me! This is hardly news to anyone with eyes.”

“What is all that noise?” Cora asked Erica, who was currently leaning up against their door into the hallway with her right ear pressed to it. She put a finger to her lips, making a shushing gesture at Cora. She motioned for Cora to come listen, too. “Allison and Lydia are having a fight,” she explained to her in a whisper. “It’s pretty bad.” It was enough for Cora to press her left ear up against the door, so that she could listen in and face Erica at the same time.

“Yes, but he’s totally hot!”

“Allison, this is ridiculous. I have proven myself to you on countless occasions. You shouldn’t care about some pervert!”

“Are they talking about Peter?” Cora asked. Erica responded with a nod. Cora made a face that expressed complete disgust. They continued to listen in.

“Maybe you should go sleep with him tonight, instead!”

“You know what, Allison? I think I will.” There was of a slamming door and Lydia’s heels clicking down the hallway with much more volume than usual.

“Well now they’ve done it.” Erica turned away from the door.

“Yep,” Cora agreed. “It’s not like Allison to be that insecure, either.”

“So, what do we do now?” Erica caught herself asking Cora.

Cora shrugged. “See what happens tomorrow, I guess.” With that, they headed for bed, collapsing onto their mattresses as they did so.

- “Where in the fuck are they?” Erica demanded, plopping down in the seat next to Cora at their table. Cora was the only other soul there.

“Oh, you didn’t hear?” Cora’s tone was sarcastic. “Because she was so angry, Lydia stomped into my uncle’s office that night and demanded that he fuck her. Peter, being the creepy little asshole that he is, gladly accepted the request.” She shook her head before angrily crushing her soda can with one hand.
“Well, that escalated quickly,” Erica commented as she threw her water bottle at some poor girl’s head in fury. Thankfully, she ducked out of Erica’s way just in time. “This couldn’t get any worse.” She shook her head.

“I’m going to kick his ass.” Cora nodded at her own decision.

“I’m helping you.”

“It’s a deal.”

- 

The grand premiere of Erica’s fall clothing line brought new customers to the school’s fashion boutique. All were coming to adorn Erica’s products.

“My mom said that the profits are going to help fund the design department of the school,” Cora announced from where she was standing next to Erica in the front window by one of the outfit displays.

“Yeah, I know.” Erica smiled at a gleeful school girl purchasing an outfit. “Kali said I could keep the profits. I decided to give them to the school.” She shrugged it off like it was no big deal.

“You were generous?” Cora widened her eyes in mock-shock.

“Shut it.” Erica threw one of the fedoras at Cora’s head. “If you tell anyone about it, I’ll make sure Laura walks you to each of your classes every day. You know she’ll do it.”

“Yeah, especially after you did what you just did.” Cora nudged her with a fond smile and Erica turned her head to the side so that she wouldn’t see her blush.

- 

Heather was the perfect girl for Stiles. She was cute, sassy, and funny. She reminded Erica of a watered down version of herself, which was a strange thought. Nonetheless, things had been going great between the two of them. Erica thought she did a pretty damn good job.

“Heather and I broke it off.”

Or so she thought.

“What did you do?” Erica immediately flopped down her issue of vogue on the couch next to where she was sitting in the library. Stiles had plopped down at the love seat in front of her. Erica had been in the library because she was looking for design inspiration for the annual Halloween Costume Fashion Show that Lydia had agreed to model in for her. Or at least that’s what she told herself when Cora kept distracting her by putting on a black tank top and booty shorts. It was definitely an outfit Erica would wear, but for some unknown reason, the sight of Cora in it made her feels things. Erica wasn’t even sure if she was ready to talk about it yet. She decided to keep the conversation about Stiles today.

“Nothing,” he retorted. “It’s what you did.” Well, that task should be easy enough today.

“Me?” Erica narrowed her eyes at her friend. “What could I have possibly done?” She crossed her arms over her chest in indigence. “I am the reason you two were together in the first place, after all.”

“Yeah,” he guffawed. “And it’s because of a freaking lie!”
She raised her eyebrows at him. “Stiles, I honestly do not know what the hell you're talking about. So, you better tell me or no one will find your body.” She put her hands on her hips to establish herself as dominant.

“'She misses you’?" Stiles reminded her of her own words as he flailed his arms. “'She wants to see you'? Any of this crap rings a bell for you, Erica!” He blinked uncontrollably at her and she winced.

“I’m sorry,” she apologized. “I just wanted to see you happy!” Her tone was sincere. She leaned toward him, grabbing for his hands. He moved away from her.

“Well, it’s too late now.” Stiles leaned back in his loveseat. “You totally screwed me over.”

Erica looked down sadly. “How did you find out?” She asked.

“She says that she doesn’t even remember me,” He sighed.

“I guess it’s not really your fault. You probably didn’t know, just assumed—“He waved his hands around. “…I don’t know.” He looked deflated.

“Do you still like her?” She inquired carefully, and he shook his head in response.

“Then why so glum, chum?” She nudged him with her legs.

“I don’t know,” he replied again with a shrug of his shoulders. “I guess I just thought that I could find something with someone, you know? But it wouldn’t turn out at all the way I wanted it to. She just wanted me for sex.” He shook his head at the floor.

“Did you…?” Erica asked.

“No,” he said, rubbing his eyes as he stared at the ceiling. “We didn’t get that far, but we almost did. That was when I found out.” He let his arms drop beside him as he looked back at Erica again.

“Oh,” was all she said in response, but nodded in understanding.

“I just don’t get it!” He exclaimed. “Am I old-fashioned for wanting my first time to special? I mean, why does everyone just want to bang anything that looks nice? I don’t understand.” He groaned, covering his face with his hands.

“It still can be, you know.” She moved next to him on the love seat. “Special,” she finished. “I could—”

“Erica, no,” he interrupted. “I do not need to get laid so bad that it should ruin our precious friendship forever. You’re gorgeous and all, but I can’t—“She smacked him in the face. He held his face with a mournful expression of pain. “OW!”

“I was going to say that I could set you up on another date, you dumbass!” She scoffed, shaking her head. “Please, as if would let you touch this. You’d really have to work hard for it.” She smirked proudly at her curvaceous figure.

“With whom?” he asked, ignoring the other part of her statement. “Yes, because that worked out so well the last time.” He was still rubbing his face from where she smacked him.

She rolled her eyes at him. “You’re such a baby!” She pinched his cheeks and whined. She cackled.
“You’re evil,” he groaned, and she smirked with a shrug.

She cleared her throat. “Cora’s not seeing anyone right now.”

“Cora?” He winced in confusion. “I thought you liked her.” He gave Erica a quizzical expression.

“Me!” She blurted out, a little too loud and a little too fast. A few students turned to look at her. She ignored them. “What made you think that?” she asked, a little quieter now. Stiles just shrugged in return. It wasn’t like him to avoid commentary on a subject. This was weird.

This was the best idea. If Stiles couldn’t have the older Hale right now, why not take the younger one? It made so much logical sense, even though they weren’t the same person. It also gave Erica more time to deal with whatever feelings she was having lately, if that was even what they were.

“Ooh!” She pulled on Stiles’s arm with enthusiasm. “I have another idea!” She shook him with excitement.

“Ouch!” He complained, pulling away from her. “What?” he moaned.

“You guys could go on a double date with Allison and Lydia.” He winced. “Come on, it’ll help them get back together!” she begged him.

“Why do you care if they get back together?” he pried with suspicion.

“Isn’t it obvious?” she exclaimed. “The whole group is falling apart. Someone has to fix it. I need my girls, so it might as well be me.” This had honestly been bothering her, even though she had never said anything about it to Stiles before. She had just hoped he would somehow understand.

“I’ll do it.” From the expression on his face, it looked like he did, too. “I promise,” he reassured her, holding her hand.

“Thank you,” she said, resting her head on his shoulder.

- Shortly after her conversation with Stiles, Erica found Cora where she knew she would be: the fitness center. The place was pretty nice. It was as huge as the library. It contained about the same amount of work-out equipment as the library did books. Needless to say, it was extravagant, like everything else in the school, and fit in perfectly. Erica came in here sometimes, but Cora practically made it like a second home for herself.

“What do you want?” Cora asked, sounding slightly more fond than usual as she did pull-ups.

“I didn’t even say anything yet,” Erica retorted, now feeling a little defensive. “‘Hi’ is a nice way to greet someone too, you know.” She rolled her eyes. “How do you even know what I’m here for?” She crossed her arms in defiance at Cora’s bobbing figure, all tan and lean muscle in black sports gear. She was only wearing Nike brand sweat pants and a sports bra. But Erica definitely wasn’t here to tell her how great she looked in it, or how she wondered what the skin of her would feel in her hands, or how she wanted to see Cora do pull-ups wearing less clothing.

“Because you never talk to me unless you want something from me,” Cora answered in return, hopping down from where she was doing her pull-ups. That was most certainly not true, and Erica didn’t hesitate to let her know with a cuff to the back of her head.

“Whoa, hey there, I was just kidding.” Cora held her hands up in surrender as she dropped down from the bar to face Erica. “But seriously, what’s up?”
Erica sighed. “Heather and Stiles broke up.”

“Oh,” was all Cora commented.

“Yeah,” Erica said. “Everything is falling apart.” She straightened up. “But I do have a plan.”

Cora mirrored her. “What do you need me to do?” she asked.

Erica gave her a serious look. “I need you to go on a double date with Stiles, Allison, and Lydia. We’ll have to trick Allison and Lydia into going.”

“Okay,” Cora agreed with a small nod. “When and where is it?” she asked.

“It’s at the Prim Rose Diner in Uptown tonight at seven o’clock.” Erica bit her lip. “Just be there. I’ll take care of Allison and Lydia.”


She gave Erica a small smile.

“Thanks,” she muttered awkwardly, feeling a little too vulnerable for comfort.

Cora tossed her a crooked smirk as Erica walked out the door. “Don’t mention.”

Erica gave her a grateful wave before clicking out of the gym in her animal printed high heels. Boy, she was fucking screwed.

Later that night, around midnight, Erica’s sleep was interrupted. She assumed that it was due to any extra stress that was leftover from earlier that day. It was also weird to sleep in the room without Cora. She decided to forget about that part when she took a walk to the campus coffee shop. There, she found Cora sitting by herself at a corner table. It was like the universe wanted to remind her of whatever the hell this even was. Nonetheless, she walked inside towards Cora’s table and sat down across from her.

“How did the date go?” she asked.

“Awkward,” Cora admitted, just as Erica had expected. “But great for Allison and Lydia.” Her face brightened.

“Did they—“

“They did.” Cora beamed at her, and it was probably the most beautiful thing Erica had ever seen. She silently cursed herself for the corny choice of words in her thoughts.

“Awesome!” she exclaimed. “Nice job!”

“It was nothing, really.” Cora smirked down at her mug of coffee. “I didn’t really do anything.”

Erica resisted the urge to argue with her on that part. “So, how did it go with Stiles?”

“That’s not really going to go anywhere.” Cora waved a hand dismissively, and Erica repressed the feeling of relief. “I’m pretty sure we’re just good friends now, but he doesn’t seem to mind.” She shrugged. “I’ll never be as close to him as you are, but I think he needs to learn to value friendship more than dating right now.”
“Agreed,” Erica said. “You will be in no time. He becomes attached to people fast. Soon, you won’t be able to shake him.” They shared a laughed and toasted their coffee cups together at their newfound success in fixing their immature friends’ lives.

Chapter End Notes

THANK YOU FOR READING :)

I LOVE GETTING FEEDBACK AND COMMENTS AND KUDOS AND ALL THAT OTHER GOOD STUFF. but please be gentle for I am a fragile thing with feelings.

tumblr- huntressqueens
“Erica, honey, you know better than to boss me around.” Lydia fondly moved a blonde curl out of Erica’s eyes. Erica could feel Cora’s eyes fixating in her peripheral. “Besides, you just admitted that we’re adorable.” She strutted off to the changing rooms at that. Cora was cackling next to her. She barely even flinched when Erica went to punch her.

“Dude, she got you so good!” Cora tilted her head back in laughter.

“Shut up,” Erica grumbled next to her.

“Guess who managed to get Peter off the staff?” Cora traipsed up to the couch where Erica, Allison, and Lydia were strewn about on top of in the student lounge. Allison and Lydia were cuddling, while Erica dozed off lazily next to them.

“Fuck yeah!” Erica immediately sat up and brought her attention to Cora when she entered the room. “Bang up job, Hale.” She clapped as she made room for Cora next to her on the couch.

“Wait, but is he seriously fired?” Allison asked as Lydia nuzzled her neck absentmindedly.

“No.” Cora shook her head. She had plopped herself down on the couch next to Erica. She was sitting really fucking close, too. “He’s just being forced to take a leave of absence due to ‘personal business.’” She put air quotes around the phrase with her fingers. “Laura did most of the work anyway. Besides, our mom already knew. She just needed proof.” Cora shrugged, and Erica felt it. Everything from their shoulders down to their feet brushed up against each other. Erica wished this stupid couch was bigger.

“That Laura man,” Erica crowed instead. “You can count on her for anything. Thanks to you, she’s always in our corner.” She nudged Cora to get her attention and winked at her. Erica turned her attention back to the group. “Besides, the whole school knows the real reason anyway.”

Lydia straightened, flashing Erica an ‘I saw that’ smirk about the wink, Erica assumed. “I don’t care,” she declared with pride. “Let them talk, have their afternoon table gossip and night time
pillow talk. It doesn’t bother me.” She tightened her arms around Allison’s waist and kissed her on
the cheek. This made Allison to blush and giggle, biting her lip.

“Ugh,” Erica complained as she stuck out her tongue at them. “You two are getting worse by the
season. My teeth are going to rot from how sweet this is.” This caused Cora to smile and chuckle,
which made Erica prouder than it should have. She laughed along with Cora.

“Oh please,” Lydia drawled. “Give me a break. As if you two are any better are any better.”

Erica could practically hear Cora stiffening next to her while Allison’s eyes wandered around on
the ceiling. Erica changed the subject to planning Lydia’s runway strut in the Halloween Costume
Fashion Showcase this year. This year’s theme was a masquerade ball.

“Wow, she holds perfectly still.” Erica carefully traced Lydia’s eyes with liquid eyeliner, giving
her wings at the corners. “This is much better than when I was trying to put make-up on your
twitchy face,” she jabbed at Cora with a smirk and a sideways glance.

“Oh, shut up.” Cora spat with the roll of her eyes. They were back backstage at the dress rehearsal
for the Halloween Costume Fashion Show. Each of the students in the fashion design program
designed a costume each year to go with whatever theme the Annual Halloween Ball had that
specific year, but obviously with their own twist. It could be a classic character with some added
flare or even a completely original idea. It just had to be formal and long enough to be considered
a ball gown. Kali looked at Erica with warning eyes when she reminded them of this rule every
year. The costumes were bid on in an auction that closely followed the fashion show by the rich
parents for their children who were students at the school.

“That’s because everything that Lydia does is perfect,” Allison cooed from her spot next to Cora,
who was standing really fucking close to Erica right now. Did she somehow forget what personal
space was altogether? It’s not that Erica was one to complain about that, but it still made her
uncomfortable, and she didn’t know why. Well, that was a lie. She did know why, but she
couldn’t seem to put her finger on why it bothered her so much.

“Oh of course I am.” Lydia had tried to sound cocky, but her bright red blushing face (that Erica
hadn’t even touched with make-up yet) had failed her miserably. The clearly giddy smile plastered
on it didn’t really help either. Erica refrained from commenting on how disgusting they were this
time, since it had failed her in her last attempt. (A.K.A. Erica’s not in the mood to be embarrassed
again by Lydia and her stupidly amazing wit.) She instead turned her aggression on Cora.

“Can you back the fuck up off me?” She snapped at her, but maybe a little too harsh. “God, it’s
like trying to do make-up in a jewelry box,” she huffed as she went to shade in Lydia’s smoky eye
shadow. She had these huge eyes (that Allison wouldn’t shut up about), so the more around them,
the merrier. Erica was very lucky that all of her friends had beautiful faces (one that she really
liked to look at) that she could work with at ease. She wouldn’t know how to manage her high
grades in this class without them.

“Okay, god, calm the fuck down.” Cora took a few steps to the side away from where she was
crouching next to Erica and stood up straight. “I was just trying to see what you were doing.
There’s no need to be a nasty bitch about it.” Erica could see in her peripheral vision that a look of
hurt briefly crossed Cora’s face. If you blinked, you would have missed it. Cora quickly covered it
up with the cross of her arms and wore a grimace on her face. Erica felt guilty, now. Sometimes
she forgot that Cora actually had feelings, too. She was just really good at hiding them. She wasn’t
anything like Erica, who was loud, obnoxious, extroverted, rambunctious, bitchy, reckless, and
feisty. Cora had just as much fight in her, but was definitely much more reserved. How could they
“Sorry,” Erica grumbled out while she penciled in Lydia’s eyebrows.

“It’s fine,” Cora said, and she softened her stance.

“You really have been bitchier lately,” Allison agreed with an observational nod. “What’s going on with you? Is everything okay?” Allison was probably already in tune to what was going on (she was dating Lydia for cripes sake), but Allison at least had the common courtesy to pretend to be naïve about it. She was also very good at playing clueless. If you looked carefully, you could see that Allison was just as smart and clever as Lydia was. In fact, they all were, in their own ways. That’s probably why they all became friends and bonded so quickly in the first place.

“Nothing,” she replied. “I’m just stressed about the show,” she lied. She knew it didn’t make any sense because everyone knew that she was a pro at this. She barely even broke a sweat while all of the other girls ran around in a panic as they scrambled for ideas and accessories at the last minute. Allison left it alone. That was probably because she knew that Lydia wouldn’t.

“Sure,” Lydia crowed. “That’s what’s going on.” She smiled up at Erica with eyes that said ‘you’re a liar’. At that moment, Erica would have complained about Lydia holding still just to fill the silence that followed.

It was useless. Lydia always kept flawless composure in a perfection position for Erica to work on her face. So, she said nothing as she skillfully brushed Lydia’s already naturally defined cheekbones with the pink powder from the blush.

“Done,” Erica declared with the last swipe of her brush on Lydia’s face. She picked up a handheld mirror from the table next to her and handed it to Lydia. “Take a look, and then change into your costume.”

Lydia took the mirror and gazed with admiration at her reflected portrait. “Great color scheme,” she told Erica as she smiled at her reflection. “I really like the way the tones set off one another so that everything pops.” She handed the mirror back to Erica and stood up. She flattened her skirt out with her hands. Allison hugged her from behind, whispering something sweet in her ear about how beautiful she looked. She better not fucking ruin Erica’s make-up job, which she didn’t, thank god. It would not have been pretty, and not just the make-up.

“No!” Erica pushed the hanging dress bag that held the costume in it at Lydia. “Stop the adorable hanky-panky! You’re supposed to be changing, go!” She demanded. Allison released Lydia from her embrace.

“Erica, honey, you know better than to boss me around.” Lydia fondly moved a blonde curl out of Erica’s eyes. Erica could feel Cora’s eyes fixating in her peripheral. “Besides, you just admitted that we’re adorable.” She strutted off to the changing rooms at that. Cora was cackling next to her. She barely even flinched when Erica went to punch her.

“Dude, she got you so good!” Cora tilted her head back in laughter.

“Shut up,” Erica grumbled next to her.

“You guys should really start looking for dates to the Halloween Ball soon.” Allison shot a knowing smile at the two of them where she was standing next to Cora. That bitch was just as sneaky as her girlfriend.
When Lydia exited the changing area, she had adorned Erica’s exquisite costume.

“Little Red Riding Hood.” Lydia declared as she pushed past some poor girl in a female Dracula ensemble and stepped up to the three-way mirror. “I wonder where you got the idea from.” She twirled on the pedestal. The gown flared out perfectly around her tiny figure.

“You know where I got the idea from,” Erica chuckled with fondness. The red floor-length, velvet hood contrasted just the right amount with her wavy strawberry hair.

“Obviously,” Lydia agreed as she posed in the mirror. The gown was black. The long skirt part was completely black lace with glittery sparkles sprinkled all about it here and there. The top part (the torso and breast area) was a plain black silk, and it was strapless. The skirt portion also had a short black mini-skirt underneath where you could see through the lace. The red, velvet cape had rose patterns on every inch of it that you could also feel in the texture of the material if you touched it. It was gorgeous and Erica was proud.

“I think you look perfect.” Allison smiled at Lydia’s stature before turning to Erica. “And I think you’re incredibly talented, Erica.” Erica wore a smug grin at that.

“She definitely is,” Lydia agreed, wiggling her hips in the mirror. “It’s cool, edgy, absolutely stunning, looks different and better than everyone else’s designs, and it almost breaks the rules without breaking them at all.” She whirlered around from the mirror to face Erica. “Well done.” She gave Erica an approving smile before letting Allison come on the stool with her to do couples’ poses in the mirrors. Erica turned to Cora with a questionable look.

“You’re unusually quiet,” Erica remarked in sarcasm. “What’s the matter, cat got your tongue?” She nudged her in a teasing manner. The fact that she didn’t get Cora’s stamp of approval on the formal wear made her feel all kinds of nervous, and she couldn’t understand why. She’d already heard Allison and Lydia’s undying praise on her abilities countless times. Why did she need Cora’s too? She knew the answer to that question. She cared about what Cora thought of her, at least to some degree, which was very bad. This made her uneasy with ripe feelings that she never experiences before and couldn’t identify just yet. She wasn’t ready for this.

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“I think it’s…” Cora seemed at a loss for words as she trailed off. “I’m speechless. I don’t know what to say. No adjective could even do it justice. This is even better than anything else I’ve ever seen you do before, which really says something, since everything you create pretty much amazes me.” She made eye contact with Erica. “It’s like Lydia said, well done.” She nearly full-on beamed at Erica before turning back to studying Allison and Lydia. Erica wanted to thank her so badly, but the only ways she could think of were completely out of character or very inappropriate. So she settled for just admiring Cora when she knew that she wouldn’t notice. She couldn’t decide whether to indulge in the fuzzy warmth of her insides or be afraid of its strength. For now, she chose to just enjoy it and not let it bother her. Maybe she was a little bit closer to being ready than she thought.

“Alright, tonight’s the big night. Lydia, are you ready?” Erica was currently at the hair station with Lydia, curling her hair into soft waves. Everyone was buzzing around them, trying (and mostly failing) to get their shit together.

“Always,” Lydia answered breezily. “Are you?” She gave Erica a pointed look in the mirror. “Since, you know, you were just so nervous at dress rehearsal the other day.” She flashed Erica a devilish smirk before going back to texting on her iPhone.

“We’re so not talking about this right now.” Erica sprayed her hair with a purpose. She coughed
and waved the fragrance out of her face with her free hand.

“Yes, we so are.” Lydia uncovered her face when Erica was done. “We need to.”

“There’s nothing to talk about!” Erica went to get the red hooded cape for Lydia. When she came back, Lydia was staring at her halfway turned around in her hair.

“Erica.” She stood up in her so-called ball gown to take the costume piece from Erica. “You know I’m smarter than that.” She slipped the cape around her bare shoulders and tied it right in the front of her collarbone.

“Alright, what do you have to say?” Erica snatched Lydia’s mask, since the theme was masquerade, and handed it to her.

“It’s not about what I have to say.” She accepted the mask from Erica. “It’s about what you need to do.” She tied the mask around her head.

“And what is that?” Erica demanded, crossing her harms with the cock of a brow. “I’ll give you a hint.” Lydia slid her feet into the shiny Mary-Jane black pumps to complete the elaborate costume. “Just do something!”

“Right, like how you didn’t totally wait two years to do something with Allison?” Erica furrowed her eyebrows and gave her an inquisitive look. Lydia played with her hair in the mirror.

“Exactly,” Lydia said in a matter-of-fact tone. “Now you’re getting it.” She saw Erica’s confused expression. “Let me explain. You and I are very similar, Erica. We don’t want to believe we have emotions. We just want to have simple fun and distractions. But the truth is that sometimes we do have feelings. It usually happens with people close to us that we wouldn’t expect for a million light years. Deep down, something was brewing all along. We eventually figure it out, and maybe we always knew it along.” She shrugged. “It’s just a fact of life.” They called Lydia’s number and she hugged Erica out of nowhere. “I hope that helped.” At that, she bounded towards the catwalk. Erica was very grateful to have a friend like Lydia who made her see the truth when she needed to. But sometimes she just wished she could pretend a little bit longer.

- 

A few days later, Laura crept up to their lunch table. She sat down with a triumphant look on her face.

“Go away.” Cora grimaced.

“No,” Laura pouted. “I want to tell Erica about her furthering success.” She shot Cora a victory smile.

“Why has it furthered?” Erica leaned forward with interested and her elbows on the table.

Laura whirled her head around towards Erica with a demonic smirk on her face. “Your dress got the highest bid at the auction.” Erica almost choked on her tortellini pasta.

“I figured it would.” Lydia examined her soup in a little too nonchalant of a manner.

“That’s absolutely amazingly fantastic!” Allison exclaimed, jumping up to give Erica a suffocating hug. She was surprisingly strong for someone so thin. It seemed like everyone wanted to embrace Erica lately. Except for Cora, and she was still being a little more quiet than usual.

“Who was the bidder?” Erica managed when she somehow swallowed her tortellini down her
throat and Allison was done tackling her.

“They bid anonymously.” Laura shrugged with a little too much innocence. What the hell was going on? It seemed like everyone knew something she didn’t know. Even Allison was trying to be sweeter than she normally was. When Laura finally got up and walked away, Erica decided that she was going to force Cora to talk, since she’d only said two words the whole time.

“Are you hiding something from me?” she asked.

“No,” Cora answered. She made herself look really suspicious while she tried to look away. Allison and Lydia tried to be discreet by sipping their milkshakes through the straws. Erica really needed a new group of friends, even though she didn’t want to trade this one for the world.

Erica went to go confront Laura about the bidder after school that day and to see if she would tell her who it was. Just as she approached Laura’s office, she heard muffled arguing coming from the inside. She recognized Cora’s voice and remained frozen in the hallway. God, it was like Cora had to be everywhere that she was. She tucked a blonde wave behind her ear and pressed her ear up against the door to eavesdrop.

“That was a really dick move, Laura!” she heard Cora yell.

“I prefer to think of it as a good foreshadowing,” Laura said with ease.

“It’s supposed to be a surprise!” Cora exclaimed at high volume. “And you’re not supposed to ruin it. She’s probably here to ask you about it now.”

“Somehow I highly doubt that now.” She heard Laura’s heels click towards the door. Erica slowly started to back away from the wooden paneling.

“I don’t need you to interfere on my friendships,” Cora harrumphed.

“I’m glad we had this conversation.” Erica saw Laura turn the door knob on her office door. “Now I know that you’ve tricked yourself into thinking that what you have is a friendship with that beautiful girl.” Erica quickly hid behind a fake potted plant nearby before Laura opened her door for Cora to leave. Cora was too angry when she stomped out of the office to notice to notice Erica, for which Erica was grateful. She couldn’t shake the very distinct feeling that they might have been talking about her.

“Where are you going?” Cora asked a couple days later when she entered their dorm room.

“Shopping,” Erica replied as she threw her purse over her shoulder. “I didn’t have the time to make my own Halloween Gala outfit this year. There’s a clearance at that designer place on First Street tonight. I want to get there before all of the other girls who waited until the last minute to shop for their get-ups.” She checked the time on her phone. It was half past six. She’d be very early, but it was worth it not to let Tracy Silverman snatch the best dress in the store before anyone else has even stepped inside yet. She’d obviously never been in a boutique with Erica before, who wasn’t afraid to get into a wrestling match with someone over a cheap charm bracelet.

“Actually, yes you did.” Erica cocked her head to the side and gave Cora an inquisitive look when she reached under her bed and pulled out a huge box in silver wrapping paper with a golden ribbon tied around it in a bow.
“Cora, honey, I think you’re confusing your holidays. You’re supposed to put this under that big green tree in December.” She sat on the bed with a bounce and a teasing smirk aimed in Cora’s direction.

“Shut up.” Cora pushed the box toward her. “Open it,” she demanded. Erica opened the box without a word. This was all a little bit inconspicuous. Her mind wandered over the conversation she overheard Laura have that day in the office. She never told Cora about it. She kept it to herself, which was another unusual behavior for her. She ripped through the wrapping paper. When she sifted through the tissue, her heart suddenly stopped at the sight.

“No way,” she breathed out.

“Take it out.” Cora smiled as she perched herself on the bed next to Erica.

“How did you…” Erica trailed off as she lifted the black dress out of the box. It was the one that she had made, her Little Red Riding Hood costume that she had crafted. The box held the skimpy black gown, the red & velvet hooded cape with the ribbon tie in the front, the Mary-Jane styled black pumps, and even the white-beaded black mask. It had everything. She put the pieces together in her mind before setting the dress down in shock.

“You were the highest bidder,” she announced. It should have been phrased like a question. At least, that was how she meant for it to come out at first.

“My mom actually,” Cora corrected. “I was going to convince her to bid on it in the first place, but I didn’t need to. When she heard your name, she wanted to bid on your costume. And then, when she saw what you designed, she was blown away. She fought for hours with Allison’s crazy grandfather on that bid. She tried to make me agree to wear it, at first, but I managed to persuade her into thinking that it was more your style. She agreed that you deserve to wear such an awesome design.” There was a shy smile plastered on her face as she stared down at the bed covers. Erica stared at her in disbelief. She was rendered speechless. She didn’t know what to say. She wanted to kiss Cora with reckless abandon, and thank her in paragraphs, but she didn’t even know where to start.

“That’s the most words I’ve heard you say all week,” she said instead. Cora laughed loudly at that with large amounts of her fondness in her voice. That was not the reaction Erica had expected from her making that comment. Then Cora wrapped Erica in a small, one-armed hug. It was very brief, but it was enough to make Erica’s heart stutter.

“Happy Halloween,” she whispered in Erica’s ear before letting go. “Almost,” she added with a laugh before heading out to dinner. Once again, Erica was frozen. But this time, it was a different kind of fear. It was a realization that her feelings for Cora might be even strong than she had initially thought. In other words, she might actually be falling for Cora Hale. This could not be good. It wouldn’t end well.

Chapter End Notes

**Do I really need to keep saying my Tumblr or do you all know it? I’ll do it anyway.**

Tumblr- Huntressqueens
Tell Me How You Feel

Chapter Summary

“For being sincere,” he said. “You should try it more often.”

“Ha ha, very funny, Mister Hale!” Erica retorted. “You know, I’m almost positive that’s the first time I’ve heard you make a joke. I didn’t even know you could do that.” Erica suddenly felt a little more like herself; she was starting to get her spunk back.

“Careful,” Derek stepped back inside. “I told my mom we should expand the gymnasium, and I know Finstock wouldn’t be opposed to making you run more laps.” He smirked at her before shutting the door.

Chapter Notes

Oh my god, first of all, I would like to apologize for my ridiculously long absence. I am so sorry. Life got too overwhelming and I couldn't handle writing like at all. Secondly, since I'm back now, I think you should all know that there will probably be one more chapter after this since this isn't the end of the story. I'm so sorry, and I promise I won't make everyone wait a million years again for me to update it. Thank you for being patient with me, and enjoy reading.

tumblr- huntressqueens (I changed my url before but it's back to this now.)

ATTENTION; I REPEAT. THIS IS NOT THE END OF THE FIC. THERE'S STILL ONE MORE CHAPTER TO GO AFTER THIS. THANK YOU.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Erica wants to ask Cora to the Halloween Ball. She really does. She just doesn’t know how. Okay, correction: She knows how. Normally, she’d flirt; show some skin, maybe a little bit of cleavage, and the deal would be sealed. It wouldn’t take very long to lead up to. But she couldn’t use those cheap, hackneyed moves on Cora. This was Cora, and unfortunately for Erica she was pretty damn special. Erica was pretty gone on her.

“So, are you waiting for the world to end before you ask her? Because it’s less than two weeks away, and Erica Reyes never goes without some eligible suitor. You could’ve picked out anyone else from the litter of male specimen lining up to escort you. What’s going on?” Lydia crossed her arms and blinked at her in anticipation.

Erica sighed at a window of headless mannequins wearing cashmere sweaters. Lydia had dragged Erica to an impromptu shopping spree to supposedly celebrate their recent victories in their social and romantic lives. (Allison was on an away competition with the archery team.) Usually, Erica would be digging this sort of thing, but she wasn’t really into it. She’d been distracted by things, or rather, people; a certain person, whose name starts with a C and ends with an –ora. Honestly,
she’d almost expected Lydia to push the issue on this day. She didn’t really care at this point. She was too stressed out.

“No sassy remarks, huh? No sassy retorts about how I need to get my head out of my ass, and stop thinking I’m so great at everything? Nothing? God, you’re really not yourself. This is much worse than I thought it would be.” Lydia pursed her lips, and looked back at Erica. “C’mon, let’s go get coffee.” She dragged the sullen Erica to the nearest shop in the shopping center. They ordered two lattes and sat down at a far-off table in the corner.

“You know, I would’ve told the guy I wanted an espresso instead if you hadn’t been such a control freak about what would get my mojo back.” Erica smirked into her to-go cup’s sipping hole as she took a swig of her caramel latte.

“Obviously it worked. You’re being an insufferable bitch again.” Lydia forcibly smiled at her as put down her own coffee and placed her hands carefully on the table. “But, you’re still not your total self so I’d rather not get into that right now.” She paused. “Let’s talk about what’s really on your mind, and we all know it.” She cocked her head towards Erica.

“I’d rather not, but thanks for asking.” Erica leaned back in her wooden chair and rested her head against the wall. This is why she and Stiles were friends: they could both live an eternity in denial if they didn’t have such pushy friends to shove them out of it.

“C’mon, Erica, I’m one of your closest friends. I know you better than most people. We hang out every day.” Lydia seemed sincere. “I know we’re both total bitches who think they’re the shit because we are. I know exactly what you’re thinking.” Lydia looked at her.

“And what is that?” Erica asked, sounding a bit softened. Obviously, it was unintentional.

“You’re scared because you have feelings for one of your closest friends, and you can’t do your normal dick-tricks to impress her.”

“Dick tricks?” Erica snorted. “Now you sound like me.” She threw her head back in rambunctious laughter.

“I knew that would get a chuckle out of you,” Lydia teased, but then turned serious again. “But we can’t avoid the subject matter here. You need to tell her how you feel, just like it is.”

“Cora doesn’t have a dick.”

“Stay focused!” Lydia smacked her hands. “Are you going to take my advice or not? You know it’ll end up being the best way in the end.”

Erica deflated back into her chair and gazed off at two girls who looked like they were on a date. One was blonde, and the other was a brunette. The blonde had curly golden locks that cascaded down her shoulders while the brunette’s was sleek and shiny. The blonde was trying to get her girlfriend, the brunette, to laugh, but the brunette just kept a straight face the whole. Finally, the brunette exploded into a fit of laughter while the blonde sported a victory smile.

“Erica, are you at home? Are you even listening to me?” Lydia turned to see what Erica was staring at and turned back. “Oh, I see,” she remarked, folding her hands. Erica turned her attention back to Lydia. The truth was that she always knew that Lydia’s advice was the best, but did she have the courage to take it?

“Erica, the girl has dropped every hint in the book. What more do you want from her?” Allison
groaned in frustration. You’d think it was her relationship. But she needs something else to focus on, since that’s actually going perfectly. Erica’s troubles are the most geographically convenient for her.

“You know, Lydia said the exact same thing, but I don’t know what on earth either of you could be talking about.” She fell back in Lydia’s red bean bag chair, and handed Allison a beer from the mini fridge. Allison reached from her blue bean bag and snatched it.

“Give me that!” Allison exclaimed. Erica had honestly already picked up on her signals already and knew exactly what Allison was talking about. She just didn’t know how to react or express that she had. What was a girl to do but pretend to be clueless? “You’re going to give me an anxiety attack, I swear to God himself. I’m going to turn into an alcoholic because you stress me out so much.” Allison popped the cap off her beer bottle and nearly choked when she threw back the fizzing liquid.

“Why?” Erica grimaced. “You were voted most likely to be a model in last year’s yearbook, you could shoot whoever gets on your nerves with a bow and arrow, and you have someone that’s perfect for you.” She guffawed as she tipped back her own bottle.

Allison took the top of the bottle away from her lips and wiped her upper lip with her sleeves. “If that’s Erica for calling me pretty and talented, thank you, I appreciate it. Second, I know I do, and she’s not the problem. You are!” She pointed at Erica with her index finger. “You’re going to screw up this whole really great thing with Cora that you could have because you’re afraid of having feelings!” Allison exclaimed emphatically. She tipped the bottle back into her mouth again and took a big gulp.

“Okay, first of all, slow the fuck down. You get wilder than I am when you’re drunk. I’m not exactly myself right now, as you can tell, so I don’t really feel like waking up in sleazy musician’s hotel in east LA again, as much fun as that was.” Erica took another sip of beer. “Secondly, I’m not afraid of feelings. I’m just not used to it yet. And besides, who says I need to get used to it? This whole thing could go south in day.”

“It’s only going to go south if you make it go south!” Allison stood up quickly to pretzel-cross her legs in her chair. “I know what you’re doing. Don’t think that Lydia and I don’t talk about these things together. You think you need to impress her and you don’t know how because you can’t just be Sex Kitten Erica anymore! And that’s because this is real! It’s not about sex, you are really into her!” Allison shouted.

“‘Sex Kitten Erica’?” Erica cackled. “Oh god, you drank that bottle too fast.” Erica sipped her own.

“Stop avoiding the subject!” Allison snatched it from her and set it down on the floor. “You cannot drink away your problems!”

“Oh, kettle.” Erica reached for her bottle again but Allison slapped her arm. Allison and Lydia need some time apart from each other.

“Not the point!” Allison raised her eyebrows at her. “The point is that you don’t need to impress Cora. She already is all up into you. All you have to do is tell her exactly how you feel and she will just fall right into your arms.” Allison hugged herself in imitation of love-making.

Erica laughed. “Damn, girl. Did you spike your beer? There’s no way you’re that silly off of one bottle.” She chuckled.

“Shut up,” Allison pouted. “Alcohol affects me more strongly when I’m stressed.”
“Yeah,” Erica stared down into the bottom of her empty bottle. “Same here.”

“You have to ask her,” Stiles said to Erica, nearly stumbling over a pile of leaves. They were at the Preserve. It was basically just a huge property of forest that the Beacon school system owned on top of everything.

“You know, everyone keeps uttering that same sentence to me.” Erica crunched through the leaves. “To be honest, I don’t really know what they’re talking about.” She shrugged, pretending to be nonchalant and not know about the whole situation.

Stiles straightened his posture and attempted to walk coolly. “Don’t try the whole sarcasm thing on me. I invented avoiding problems until they fix themselves. Although that usually works, it’s not going to for this.” He stepped in front of Erica, stopping her in her tracks. “I know you, Erica. You would have had a date by now if you weren’t feeling so conflicted.” He gave her a serious look.

Erica licked her lips, and opened her mouth. “You know, I don’t see why everyone is making such a big deal out of that. I was thinking about asking that Boyd guy. He’s really cute and he seems nice.” She shrugged. That was a blatant lie.

Of course, Stiles saw right through it. “He’s a distraction, Erica, which is what you’ve always had. Only he’s a different kind, but you can’t replace love.” Stiles offered her a tender expression.

“So now I’m in love?” Erica snorted. “Please. Everyone’s making too big a deal out of this.” She stepped around Stiles and continued to walk ahead of him in the forest.

He scrambled after her. “Well, how else would you explain this? I’ve never seen you so afraid of going after something in the entire time I’ve known you.”

“I am not afraid!” Erica snapped abruptly, and that was where she officially lost it. “What about you? Isn’t the pot calling the kettle black over here? Have you done anything about your wildly inappropriate crush on her brother? Let me guess: no.” She scoffed, shaking her head in a mocking manner.

“You know you’re really one to talk about inappropriate,” Stiles bit his lip in frustration. “Maybe that’s why you’re so afraid of Cora. She might not like you when she gets to know the real you.” Stiles smirked at her in contempt.

“You know what, Stiles?” Erica retorted. “Fuck you. Maybe you’re the one who’s really afraid to go after what you really want. You should really stop protruding your flaws on others.” She tossed him a condescending smile.

Stiles huffed. “You know what, that’s it! I’m really sick of your shit. I’m tired of being such a good friend to you and having you just always act like a completely ignorant asshole in return. Cora deserves better than you can give her.”

“’Good friend’?” Erica mocked. “Yeah, okay, sure. Keep telling yourself that, Stiles.”

With that, Stiles ran out of the forest and got the hell away from her. Erica wasn’t even really mad at him, just what he said. This is why she could never be enough for Cora. She always ruined everything and alienated everyone as soon as she couldn’t handle something.
“Of course,” Erica shook her head, fighting back the tears that wanted to drip down her cheeks. “He’s upset with me. Of course he would do this to me.” She stared down into her cappuccino. She hadn’t even touched it because she was too upset by the news that had just come her way.

“Stiles isn’t that condescending, Erica.” Lydia put a hand on her forearm. “He probably thinks that he’s doing her a favor because she doesn’t have anyone else who asked her, or at least she didn’t.” Lydia took her hand away, and sighed as she sipped her macchiato. She did everything but basically flat out say that Erica waited too long to ask Cora, and it was her own fault that she was going as Stiles’s date.

“I’m sure he thought that,” Erica ran her fingers through her hair and looked up at Lydia. “He thinks that she deserves better than me. He said it himself.” She sipped her coffee.

“Just because you guys have one fight doesn’t mean he’s going to stab you in the back like that,” Lydia stated. “Maybe he should’ve asked you if it was okay first, but you’re mad at him and you also weren’t doing anything so he was probably afraid to ask.” She shrugged. “I really don’t know what to tell you, Erica. This isn’t that surprising to me. I sort of saw things heading this way.” She looked sadly at Erica.

“So you think I deserve this?” Erica asked her.

“No,” Lydia said. “I don’t, but I think you need to take some initiative of the situation instead of avoiding all of your own conflicts that you created for yourself.”

Erica perked up at that statement. “That’s a great idea, actually.” An evil smirk grew on her mouth. “And I know exactly what to do about this.” She snatched her purse, and hopped out of her bar stool, heading for the exit.

“Where are you going?” Lydia called after in her in a concerned tone.

“To take initiative,” Erica called back with a wicked smile on her face.

“Don’t do something you’re going to regret!” Lydia yelled after her, but it was too late. Erica had already slammed the door shut behind her, both literally and figuratively.

For the first time in what felt forever (when it was actually about a week give or take), Erica strutted across the campus with confidence, and also a vengeance. She felt more like herself, except maybe a little more out of control than usual, and a little bit crazier. Cora and Stiles could forget her. She didn’t care, or at least that’s what she’d told herself. She would get over it, eventually. She would go with that nice guy Boyd she’d met at the beginning of the year. He was a catch. In fact, she couldn’t really pinpoint why she’d liked Cora in the first place, or when she’d started to. Right now she just had to focus on the plan that she had concocted in her mind about fifteen minutes ago when Lydia had told her to take initiative. Although, this might not have been what Lydia had mean when she’d said that.

She was on her way to Derek’s condo, which was on the other side of the campus from the coffee shop, which felt like forever in heels. The building was where all of the Hale family members lived in different parts of it and it was far enough away for privacy. Cora had a room with Erica so that she could get to classes on time, or at least that’s what Erica had assumed. When she got to Derek’s living space she’d planned to throw herself at Derek until he agreed to go to the dance with her. He was pretty hot, so it wasn’t exactly torturous for her. He was pretty stubborn, so it would be hard, but he also seemed lonely at times. Surely he would have to agree, eventually. She was sure Laura could talk Talia into making an exception for her, since the Hale family loved her
to death, for now. Besides, this was only temporary so that she could make Cora jealous and get back at Stiles.

When she got to the building, she rode the elevator up to Derek’s level and pounded on his door. She didn’t have a key to the building but she flirted with the creepy maintenance guy outside until he snuck her inside.

Derek opened the door with the same fed up expression that always adorned his face.

“Cora isn’t here,” he answered. “Why are you here?”

“To see you,” she smiled at him and batted her eyelashes. He raised his eyebrows at her. “Would you let me inside?” she asked in a saccharine sweet voice. He huffed and stepped aside for her come inside.

“Wow, you live in such a nice place,” she cooed. “I wish our dorm rooms were this nice. I don’t understand why Cora would ever want to live in them.” She caressed the patterned wallpaper in Derek’s entryway.

“Yeah, me neither.” He eyed Erica with a dirty look when she wasn’t looking. “What is it that you want?” He crossed his arms.

She turned around to face. “Why should I want something?” She smiled faux-sweetly at him. “I just wanted to see you.” She stepped closer to him. “Is that so wrong?” She blinked up at him with her big eyes. Derek grunted in discomfort, but she kept going. “You know,” she said, putting a hand on his chest. “I’ve been thinking a lot about you lately.” She let her hand travel up to the back of his neck. “And I just thought you should know that I think we would be a great idea.” She smiled at him in a fake manner.

“Erica, what are you doing here?” A voice rose from the back of the foyer. Was that Stiles? “And, what are you doing with my boyfriend?” He crossed his arms.

Erica whipped around. “I could ask you the same thing.” She looked around. “What boyfriend?” She looked at Derek. “Derek’s not-” Then she realized what was going on. “Since when?” She exclaimed.

“For a while now,” Stiles answered with a guarded stance.

“Why didn’t you tell me?” Erica asked, hurt. She knew Stiles was mad at her, but they were supposed to be best friends.

“Derek wanted to keep it quiet for a while before we told anyone,” Stiles said. “I’m sorry you had to find out this way.”

“Are you?” Erica inquired, biting back tears for the second time in a night. She was really getting sick of this whole crying thing. She has no idea how Allison does it during The Notebook.

“You’re the one who just threw yourself at him,” Stiles explained. “I think you’re the one who needs to be sorry.” He shrugged.

“I am,” she said. “But I guess I just thought-“

“What? That we were better friends than that? I guess not.” He sighed. “Listen, we can talk about this later, but you should probably go before-“

“Before what?” A petite brunette emerged from behind Stiles. “Before I found out?” Cora crossed
her arms. “It’s a little late for that.” She shot Erica the coldest look from across the room.

“I don’t understand,” Erica said. “If you’re with Derek, then why are you taking Cora to the ball?” This whole thing was spinning way out of control.

“Because Cora didn’t have anyone to go with, and Derek technically isn’t supposed to go with students.” Stiles gave Erica a face that told her that should have been obvious to her.

“Yeah, so I guess you threw yourself at him for nothing.” Cora shrugged. “That’s too bad.” She examined Erica up and down. “Stiles is right, you should probably just go. You’ve made enough of a fool out of yourself already.” Cora was the one wearing an evil smile this time. “By the way, don’t expect me back at the dorm anytime soon.” She cocked her head. “Bye.” She waved at Erica. Derek held the door open for her to leave. She turned around and floated out of the condo, dazed and confused. What had just happened?

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It’d been two days, and Cora had her word on not coming back to the dorm. Hell, she wasn’t even answering any texts or calls. She’d been living with Derek ever since Erica had humiliated the crap out of herself there. Laura gave her dirty looks when she’d walked past her office the other day so now Erica had to take the long way back to the dorm, which meant her feet were going to be killing her in her stilettos every single day. Derek’s extra mean to her in PE. Cora also hasn’t shown up for lunch with Allison and Lydia either. She probably eats in the teacher’s lounge with her brother or something. The only time Erica had seen her was when she came to get more of her clothes when she thought Erica wouldn’t be there. She’d looked so irritated when Erica walked into the dorm room to find her rustling through her closet. She’d quickly gathered her things in a sports equipment bag and left. Erica often found her sitting and staring at her empty bed that had been stripped of all of her covers and sheets.

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Erica pounded on Derek’s door until he answered.

“Cora’s not here right now,” he said. “What do you want?”

“I’m sorry,” she said. “I didn’t know you and Stiles were together, and I wouldn’t have done that if I had known that. Although you’re very attractive, nice job, I just don’t think of you that way-“

“Apology accepted,” Derek held a hand up to stop her from embarrassing herself anymore. “But I don’t think it’s me that you need to apologize to.” He raised his eyebrows at her.

“Ugh,” Erica groaned. “I don’t have the time for you to be right about everything.” She picked up the huge box on the ground that contained something precious and valuable that she would never get the chance to wear, but at this point she didn’t care. Surprisingly, sex wasn’t the only thing that was more important to her than clothes these days. “Here,” she said, pushing the box into Derek’s arms. “I need you to give this to Cora for me, since she does live here, correct?” She looked to him for an answer.

He nodded. “But, what is it?” he asked.

Erica took a sharp breath in. “It’s my way of redeeming me to her. She’ll understand when she gets it,” she explained. She gave Derek a sorrowful look. “Tell her that I’m sorry, too.” She looked down at the ground. “I know she must hate me right now, and probably forever.” She sighed.

Derek nodded. “Yeah, right now she does.” He agreed. “But probably not forever, though.” Erica
offered him a weak smile. “I’ll give this to her,” he said. “Thanks.”


“For being sincere,” he said. “You should try it more often.”

“Ha ha, very funny, Mister Hale!” Erica retorted. “You know, I’m almost positive that’s the first time I’ve heard you make a joke. I didn’t even know you could do that.” Erica suddenly felt a little more like herself; she was starting to get her spunk back.

“Careful,” Derek stepped back inside. “I told my mom we should expand the gymnasium, and I know Finstock wouldn’t be opposed to making you run more laps.” He smirked at her before shutting the door.

As it turns out, Erica’s attempt to make things up to Cora ended up leaving Cora feeling more insulted than patched up. A day later, Cora barged into what used to be their room and dropped the box down at Erica’s feet without any explanation whatsoever. She just stared at Erica with this murderous twinkle in her eyes.

“Uh..” Erica was at a loss for words. She was so confused that she didn’t even know where to start with what questions to ask first.

“Why would you give this to me?” Cora demanded. “I already have a costume, and you knew that too.” She crossed her arms, tapping her foot in impatience.

“Look,” Erica started. “I wanted to make things up to you about how I acted, and since I don’t need the dress anymore because I’m not even going, then I thought that you should at least have the option to enjoy yourself in it if you wanted to. It’s fine if you don’t want to wear it. You don’t have to. That’s not what I was trying to do here. I just wanted to show you how sorry I am.” She waited for Cora to respond; since that was the most mature speech Erica had ever given to someone. Who knew love could make you grow up?

“But I gave this to you, Erica.” Cora stepped forward, slowly closing the distance between herself and Erica. “Don’t you see? I gave this to you because I care about you. Giving this back to me is not an apology; it’s telling me that you don’t want me to care.” Erica could tell that Cora was trying really hard not to raise her voice at Erica. She seemed mad.

Erica breathed in, and tried to remember that she didn’t have a good enough reason to be upset right now. “Obviously, that’s not what I was trying to do, since I just told you that I was trying to apologize. Maybe I could have done it better, or left a note. But you make it really hard for me to approach you. You completely ignored me, which is fine. You had every right to. I don’t what you expected if you wouldn’t let me talk to you, though.” The volume in Erica’s voice started to rise. “Also, for a long time, I wasn’t even aware you cared about me, so excuse me for not knowing. I feel like I’m reading Chinese when I’m with you, Cora. It took a long time for us to be friends, too.” She tried her best not to snarl.

“Well, it’s really hard to become friends with your roommate when you’ve had a huge crush on them since the first day you’ve met them,” Cora blurted out. Her cheeks pinked at her own slip of the tongue.

“What?” Erica’s mouth suddenly became dry and she couldn’t close it.

Cora stared at the ceiling. “I’ve always really liked you, in that way. That’s why I never talked to you that much at first.” She looked at Erica. “You might not understand this, but when you like
someone, they kind of make you shy. But then, we started getting closer and hanging out more. I also noticed you weren’t exactly opposed to having fun with girls, so I thought that maybe this could go somewhere.” Cora shook her head. “Just forget it.” Cora started to head for the door, but something stopped her.

“I get it,” Erica called after her.

Cora turned around slowly to look at her. “You do?” She carefully took a step towards her.

Erica nodded. “I do.” She looked around. “That’s sort of why I was sort of dodging you recently.” She stepped closer to the other girl. “You see, I’m not really that used to having anything but physical attractions to anyone, and I was fine with that. But then, you know, you happened and I was sort of taken by surprise, you know?” She closed the distance between herself and Cora. “You kind of took me by surprise.” She tucked a piece of glossy brown hair behind Cora’s ear, letting her hand rest there.

“Well, we both seem to be afraid of our own feelings.” Cora laughed as she wrapped her arms around Erica’s waist. Erica couldn’t help but smile with her. “But I’m glad that we both know that we can figure that out together now.” Erica couldn’t help herself after that. She leaned down and kissed Cora so fiercely that it would make Shakespeare wonder if he could even write love stories. They tried to take things slowly but they ended up having sex on Erica’s bed anyway.

Chapter End Notes

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