

## Through Veiled Eyes

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](http://archiveofourown.org/works/10482222) at <http://archiveofourown.org/works/10482222>.

Rating:	<a href="#">Explicit</a>
Archive Warning:	<a href="#">Creator Chose Not To Use Archive Warnings</a>
Category:	<a href="#">M/M</a>
Fandom:	<a href="#">Teen Wolf (TV)</a>
Relationship:	<a href="#">Derek Hale/Stiles Stilinski</a>
Characters:	<a href="#">Derek Hale</a> , <a href="#">Stiles Stilinski</a> , <a href="#">Lydia Martin</a> , <a href="#">Allison Argent</a> , <a href="#">Sheriff Stilinski</a> , <a href="#">Talía Hale</a> , <a href="#">Peter Hale</a> , <a href="#">Gerard Argent</a> , <a href="#">Original Characters</a>
Additional Tags:	<a href="#">Alternate Universe - Gods &amp; Goddesses</a> , <a href="#">Alternate Universe - Greek Mythology</a> , <a href="#">Demigod Derek Hale</a> , <a href="#">Oracle Stiles Stilinski</a> , <a href="#">Explicit Sexual Content</a> , <a href="#">Minor Dubious Consent</a> , <a href="#">Possession</a> , <a href="#">Priests and Priestesses</a>
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2017-03-29 Completed: 2017-05-19 Words: 25,928 Chapters: 4/4

# Through Veiled Eyes

by [Dexterous Sinistrous](#)

## Summary

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Derek narrowed his eyes at Stiles, observing him carefully as he kept his features stoically guarded. “To touch you is sacrilege,” he finally uttered, unable to completely deny his desire to discover what touching Stiles would be like.

“What they force me to do is sacrilege,” Stiles countered, carefully observing Derek. “What you would do would be divine. You would keep me from being their plaything—taking a key player off the board in their pursuit of corruption. What I’ve asked of you ... I’ve already seen it—the phantom touch of it lingering on me afterwards.”

## Notes

I take liberty with the religion/mythology aspect of this fic. I play with Greco-Roman customs and beliefs and created an alternate reality. I hope you all enjoy this, it has been in the making for some time.

Explanation about dubious consent tag can be found in the end note.

# Chapter 1

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Derek watched the oracle's head fall back, the pale stretch of throat being put on display. There was something erratic in his movements, as if he was fighting off something crashing over him in waves. His eyes caught the way the candles flickered, a chilling gust rippling through the temple.

The oracle was young, barely hitting the cusp of manhood. His limbs were long and slender, his body broad but graceful in his movements. There were darkened circles around his eyes, marking his skin as even paler in contrast. His hair was in complete disarray, a telling characteristic to how intense the trance truly was.

The oracle gasped, his limbs folding beneath him. His entire body had collapsed against the cold marble floor, his breathing shallow as he slowly recovered from the possession. The priests crowded him, desperate to find the answer to Derek's question of atonement for his crimes.

The oracle's lips barely moved, his voice a hushed whisper that the priests strained to hear.

"The gorgon," one of the priests announced. "Euryale," he specified as he straightened his body, fixing his robes as he turned to face Derek. "The gorgon who still mourns her sister has been wreaking havoc. Bring us her head, and some of your crimes shall be forgiven by the gods."

"Some?" Derek growled in disbelief.

"Your crimes are great, son of Hale," the priest answered with a look of condemnation. "The gods ask for your faith in their guidance."

"Do I bring *you* her head?" Derek asked, annoyed with the priest's outright sense of superiority.

"Her head, still dripping with blood," the oracle stated, his voice firm and unwavering for the first time. He rose with ease, looking regal in his movements as he turned his burning gaze on the priests. "Leave us."

The priest that had spoken carefully evaluated the oracle, as if he was looking for confirmation of something. He nodded to one of the eunuchs, watching with a lack of fascination when the eunuch lifted the oracle's hand to pierce a needle through the skin between his thumb and forefinger.

The oracle didn't flinch.

It appeared to be ample enough proof that they could leave Derek with the oracle.

The oracle's shoulders slumped the moment they were alone. He appeared at ease, running his hands over his face as he tried to wipe the exhaustion away. "Apologies," he mumbled, turning to look at Derek. He appeared younger—as if he was suddenly allowed to act his age. "They'll leave us be as long as they believe I'm still speaking for the gods."

Derek arched an eyebrow at him. "Are you *not* speaking for the gods?"

"Not at the moment," the oracle replied. "I'm called Stiles, by the way—that way you don't keep calling me oracle in your head." He didn't appear to be thrown by Derek's surprised reaction. "I needed to speak to you, without prying ears. They think that I can't feel pain when I'm in a trance, hence the needle."

Derek looked from Stiles to the ornate chair the priests had the oracle sitting on upon his arrival. "Is it all a show then?"

"I feel pain whether the gods choose to leave me on my own or not," Stiles sharply answered. "If you're a nonbeliever, you picked one hell of a description—defender of man, son of the gods."

"My lineage has nothing to do with my faith," Derek answered.

"Doesn't it?" Stiles countered. His makeup was smudged around his eyes, his fingertips stained with the intense charcoal. "You truly believe your mother is the Queen of the Gods, yet you treat their existence with sarcasm and contempt."

"Don't you?" Derek questioned back.

"I may hold contempt for the shackles they bind me with, but I believe in them and their plan for us," Stiles replied intently.

Derek scoffed, "They turn a blind eye, except when they find it suitable to use us for their own advantage. You'll never be free of their shackles because you're more valuable to them on a leash than being free."

Stiles gazed at Derek, as if he was reading something from him, a sadness consuming the spark of intrigue in his eyes. "You blame your mother for the death of your family."

Anger overtook Derek's features.

"Yet you still blame yourself," Stiles pushed. "But you'd rather blame your mother—she's divine, surely if anyone could have prevented the tragedy, she could have."

"She turned a blind eye on us," Derek countered in anger.

"You think because she's a god that she doesn't feel pain as we do?" Stiles questioned, knowing that the gods were petty in their assistance, but that they wept the same as humans. "That she didn't mourn your sisters and father?"

"I think she did *nothing* because she never cared," Derek replied.

“Then that is your burden to bare, Derek,” Stiles replied, his eyes carefully tracking Derek’s form.

“Why did you want to speak with me?” Derek demanded, wishing to forget their current topic of discussion.

“Because I need your help,” Stiles replied, a nervousness settling in his stomach as he turned from Derek. He observed the various decorations hanging from the temple’s walls, detailing the different sacrifices so many made in hopes the gods would answer their prayers. “The priests are corrupt,” he started, closing his eyes as he drew in a steady breath. “I’ve waited years to say that aloud, terrified that they would discover me before I had a chance to tell someone.”

“You’re saying they are not men of faith?” Derek questioned.

“I’m saying they are not men of the Hale faith,” Stiles corrected, turning to look at Derek. “Your mother maintains a peaceful reign among the divine and mundane. But many would see her fail—to fall from power to begin their own reign. And it starts with the wavering of faith in her people. The moment people cease to believe in her, that’s when she will lose everything.”

“To whom?” Derek tiredly asked. “I wouldn’t be surprised if it was to one of her own kin.”

“Argents,” Stiles replied. “They’re thirsty for power and they are willing to shed blood and sew seeds of doubt.”

“What would you have me do?” Derek replied in question, wishing Stiles would just tell him.

“These priests, they don’t follow your mother’s divine will,” Stiles started to explain. “They fear me when they believe I am speaking directly for the gods—whether it be Argent or Hale. But they use me to sway people’s belief—to misinterpret signs, ultimately breaking faith when my lies bare no fruit.”

“And you would have me do ... what exactly?” Derek waited for Stiles to answer.

“Lay with me,” Stiles plainly stated, as if he asked a menial thing of him.

Derek narrowed his eyes at Stiles, observing him carefully as he kept his features stoically guarded. “To touch you is sacrilege,” he finally uttered, unable to completely deny his desire to discover what touching Stiles would be like.

“What they force me to do is sacrilege,” Stiles countered, carefully observing Derek. “What you would do would be divine. You would keep me from being their plaything—taking a key player off the board in their pursuit of corruption. Without my purity intact, my visions will leave me. What I’ve asked of you ... I’ve already seen it—the phantom touch of it lingering on me afterwards.”

“You argue for the gods, but then ask me to go against everything they are—to take from them something as sacred as their oracle?” Derek questioned, wanting to laugh at the

situation. Part of him wanted to take hold of the oracle—Stiles. He wanted to take the gods' prized possession away from them, even make the stain on his name greater when it was revealed that the son of Hale couldn't keep his hands to himself when instructed to.

"They're afraid of you," Stiles stated as he gathered himself, not bothering to correct the loose material hanging from his body. "Not just the priests, but the gods as well."

"I tend to have that effect on people," Derek answered, carefully watching Stiles as he drew closer.

"They don't fear you for your strength," Stiles lowly stated as he moved close to Derek. He allowed his chest to brush against Derek's arm, circling him until he was directly before him. "Not for your brutality, nor for their own sakes." He pressed into Derek.

Derek remained still, watching Stiles and remembering that the priests instructed for him not to actively touch the oracle—a fear of sully something that belonged to the gods.

"The priests fear you around me," Stiles finally breathed.

Derek could smell the vapors that were still on the oracle's breath, even over the incense burning. He found himself answering, "I'd never willingly hurt you."

"No," Stiles thoughtfully stated, already knowing. "I know—the gods showed me that you wouldn't."

"Then why are the priests afraid?" Derek questioned, unable to stop himself from swaying forward when the oracle pulled back, his allure almost making him lightheaded.

"Because," Stiles almost whispered, moving his hand to brush low along Derek's waist. "You're very *far* from being a eunuch," the words rolled off of Stiles' tongue as his fingertips ran along the inside of Derek's thigh. "And they fear the very thing I just asked of you."

Derek's body reacted independent of his thoughts, leaving him in a bewildered fight to tear himself away from the temple—from Stiles. "And why don't the gods?"

"The gods," Stiles softly uttered, his brow crinkling as he thought of an answer. "I'm not sure. A sign of faith—a gifting to show you that they are watching you, and wish for you to want for naught. They've ... not answered my questions about that."

"They tend to do that," Derek answered, his thoughts almost as lost as Stiles appeared. His judgment felt clouded, as if there was an unknown force pulling him to Stiles, anchoring them together. He realized that his hands had moved to settle on Stiles' hips, holding him closely.

"I've seen it—in my dreams," Stiles continued, his eyes hazed by something other than the trance that gripped him earlier. "The priests think it's a god, but every night it's *you*, son of Hale, that takes me on the altar they call my bed and lights a fire within my body. Those nights, I'm born anew—never knowing your touch but constantly craving it."

It seemed to place it all in perspective for Derek—it didn't matter how real his desire for Stiles felt, or how consenting Stiles appeared. In the end, it was just another game to the gods.

Stiles' skin was soft under the rough callouses of Derek's hands. His skin was a light alabaster tone, mimicking the marble the temple was carved from. Gooseflesh traveled across Stiles' body in wake of the soft caress of Derek's fingers daring to press against the barrier of his robes. He drew in a sharp breath when Derek's hands settled on his bare hips, hands kneading his muscles.

"When you bring back the head of Euryale, the Anthesteria will be underway," Stiles started, his voice laced with discretion. "The priests will be gone for days, partaking in the Mysteries. The eunuchs will be drunk, as they always are when the priests are absent." His tongue dashed out across his lips, thoughts racing with the hope and giddiness that Derek's relative silence meant his willing agreement to come back and finish what they nearly started.

"And you'll be left alone," Derek answered the obvious.

"I'll be left for you," Stiles specified.

"You seem confident that I will return to you," Derek replied, forcing himself to let his hands fall from Stiles' body. He realized that he already crossed a line by allowing himself to touch Stiles' bare skin. He was walking a dangerous line, one that brought him closer and closer to divine damnation.

"Not confident," Stiles countered, softly clasping his hands in front of him. "Hopeful."

"I'll bring you the head of Euryale," Derek answered, taking a step back from Stiles as he distanced himself.

Worry flickered across Stiles' face, a sudden uncertainty that Derek would not return with the intent of freeing him from his shackles. His eyebrows furrowed, dread sinking deep in his chest. "Very well," he weakly answered, taking his own calculated step away from Derek. "May the gods show grace on your journey."

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Stiles was sprawled out over the bed, looking up at the temple's ceiling. He had memorized every aspect of the painted marble lingering overhead. The canopy covering his bed offered little privacy, a mock semblance of the barrier meant to keep him unsullied by the unspoken chaos of the world. He sighed, allowing his arms to fall against the bed. He could hear the festival underway, knowing that the priests were eating and drinking their fill at the Mysteries. He wished he had the resources to sneak outside the temple, to leave behind this prison the priests constructed for him. He knew they would go after his father the second he went missing. He knew he'd never make it passed the city gates.

Stiles startled when he heard a crash from within the temple's hallway. He knew it was one of the eunuchs drunkenly stumbling around. He turned onto his side, his fingertips tracing images in the loose fabric covering his bed. He pulled at the material, thoughts drifting to his

last dream of Derek. It had felt real enough that he almost thought Derek had returned to him with more in mind than just delivering the head of Euryale.

Stiles allowed his hand to travel down the sheets, his fingertips caressing the robes barely covering his body. He nibbled down on his lip, his thoughts drifting to the phantom touch he still remembered yet never felt. He wondered if he dared to touch himself now, knowing that none but the gods would know.

Stiles turned onto his back once again, allowing his robes to fall open. He let his hands roam his bared body, shivering at the unknown touch he had been denied for so long. His thighs fell open in welcome to his hands. His legs trembled when his hands cupped himself, slowly following the same trail Derek's hands had followed in his dream. His breath hitched as his eyes slid shut, imagining what it would feel like to be held by such a man. A moan hiccupped from his chest when he pressed a finger against his rim, his body electrifying at the new feeling of being so intimately touched. But he needed more—he needed oil to prep himself, his visions from the gods teaching him as much.

Stiles arched his back, legs shaking as he trembled, a soft whimper of frustration cracking from his chest. The stretch burned too much, his touch was too inexperienced and unsure, a dry friction of skin on skin. He released an exhausted huff of air, collapsing against the bed as tears stung his eyes. He heavily panted, opening his eyes as he let his hands fall away from his body. It wasn't enough—he couldn't do it.

Stiles stared up at the ceiling, still able to tell the shapes and designs of the temple's ceiling through his collection of tears. He allowed his body to be bared to the night air as he remained sprawled out on the bed. He turned his head to the side, a chilling scare running through his body when he saw a figure standing by the doors that lead into the main area of the temple. He hastily grabbed at his discarded robes, precariously covering himself as best he could, hiding his nudity from sight. He waited for the angry words from a red faced priest, or the rough hands of a eunuch reaching for him to force him into cleaning such sins away.

Stiles was surprised when the figure didn't move. He reached an unsure hand for the canopy's sheet, pulling it back to reveal the smallest sliver of cleared vision to look through. His heart pounded loudly in his chest when he realized it was Derek.

Derek kept his gaze on Stiles, taking the smallest of steps forward, watching for a sign that he was not welcomed. He couldn't stop thinking about Stiles since parting from the temple. He thought about what Stiles had said—how electrified they both were from just the simplest of touches. It drew him back to the temple—back to Stiles.

Derek was annoyed when Boyd knowingly smirked at him. He pretended not to care that Boyd knew he was going back to the temple, drawn back to the oracle he left behind more than a few weeks ago. He had left the head of Euryale with Boyd, knowing he'd have to ceremoniously bring the head to the temple in the morning when the priests were present in the temple. But tonight, Derek was pulled to the temple and back to Stiles, and he couldn't find himself caring anymore. He slipped passed the drunken eunuchs, using the dark shadows of the hallways to easily find himself in the altar room that served as Stiles' bedroom.



Stiles pulled the sheet back, moving to kneel on the bed as he kept his gaze on Derek. He didn't bother to keep holding his robes, allowing them to fall apart. He remained completely still, waiting for Derek to make a move as he allowed his body to be on display. For the first time, he didn't feel exposed or the object of salacious desire. He felt comfortable with Derek's eyes on him—a warm feeling of safety falling over him for the first time in years, since before the priests got their hands on him.

Derek felt himself pulled closer to the bed, his fingertips idly playing with the silky material of the canopy surrounding Stiles. His breath caught in his throat when Stiles crawled closer to him, his eyes tracking the span of Stiles' pale skin that fell exposed to the night.

Stiles crawled the necessary space before moving to settle on kneeling in front of Derek. He slowly settled before Derek, his eyes scanning the demigod's body for a sign of where to begin. He had waited years to finally be afforded the opportunity to gaze upon Derek, and now he felt overwhelmed with the knowledge that he was the object of desire for such a man. He reached a steady hand out to touch Derek, his palm gently resting on Derek's chest. He stared down at his hand, focusing on the feeling of Derek's heart beating beneath his palm. He slid his hand up Derek's chest, marveling in the firmness of Derek's muscles, his thoughts curious if he could take refuge hiding behind such a force to be reckoned with. His fingers curled around the back of Derek's neck, pulling himself closer to Derek.

"You came back," Stiles softly stated, eyes looking up at Derek's. "I prayed that you would."

"I couldn't stay away," Derek admitted, however he was still unable to convince himself that he was truly worthy of laying eyes on Stiles, let alone reach out and touch him.

"And you shouldn't stay away," Stiles uttered, licking his lips in anticipation as his eyes dashed across Derek's face.

"You shouldn't have asked me to come back," Derek countered, his own eyes falling on Stiles' lips. "This is dangerous." Nothing about Derek's voice sounded as if he believed his own words.

"Are you afraid?" Stiles asked, his eyebrows furrowing in question. "Because tonight is the first night in many moons that I feel no fear."

Derek finally dared to reach a hand up to touch Stiles, his movement slow and almost unsure. His fingertips gently caressed Stiles' cheek, tracing along the sharp curve of his cheekbone before curling to a rest just under his jaw.

Stiles closed his eyes, pressing his face into Derek's hand as he welcomed to touch. It was the first touch Stiles had welcomed in a long time—it was the gentlest he had been touched since being dragged to the temple at a young age.

Derek leaned forward, his lips pressing a faint kiss into the corner of Stiles' mouth, testing just how accepting Stiles truly was. He had been hesitant, wondering if Stiles only pushed himself to be receptive at the gods' request. He didn't want an unwilling bed partner—he didn't want someone blindly following orders to gift themselves over to a stranger.

“I want this,” Stiles breathed against Derek’s lips, as if he could hear Derek’s thoughts of uncertainty. “Please. I want you,” he added, opening his eyes to look at Derek. He released a pleasantly surprised moan when Derek’s lips captured his own in a searing kiss. He pliantly fell against Derek’s body, trusting the demigod to care for him.

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Derek had felt as if time disappeared, finding it to be pure heaven between Stiles’ legs. He had settled between Stiles’ legs the moment they enthusiastically fell open with welcoming invitation. They spent countless minutes grinding against one another, finding themselves too lost in the hot pleasure of skin against skin.

Stiles trembled against Derek, almost on the brink of tears with how happy he was to be finally held by Derek—the literal man of his dreams. He grasped at Derek, his hands traveling his naked body in anticipation. He wanted to feel every part of Derek, fear of regret lingering on the outskirts of his mind as he thought of being inevitably alone once Derek parted. His nails dug into the flesh of Derek’s back, pulling Derek closer to him in a desperate need to feel more.

Derek ran his mouth along Stiles’ body, his teeth grazing along Stiles’ nipple in a teasing manner. He smiled against Stiles’ skin when he heard the sharp intake of breath come in the form of Stiles’ moan of desperation. He took his time prepping Stiles, finding a type of smug pride in taking time to enjoy having such a beauty laid bare before him. He ran his tongue along Stiles skin, swallowing down Stiles’ cock when his fingers breached him.

Stiles yelped in surprise, his hips jerking forward into the warmth of Derek’s mouth. He muttered an apology before his babbling in his native tongue took over once more. He hesitated before pressing his hands into the locks of Derek’s hair, his fingertips gentle in their caresses before yanking slightly when he felt the heat in his stomach intensify. His hips were moving on their own, his mind foggy with desire as he begged Derek to keep going, sobbing loudly when everything stopped—Derek’s hands and mouth were suddenly gone from Stiles’ body.

Derek settled between Stiles’ legs once more, their hips slotting together perfectly as his arms settled to bracketing Stiles’ body beneath him. He pressed the faintest of kisses to Stiles’ face before kissing him deeply once more, kissing Stiles as if they had known each other for centuries, not hours. Everything about Stiles felt more than right, as if Derek had found the home he had lost so many years ago.

Stiles held onto Derek’s shoulders as he opened his mouth to Derek, holding onto the man he willingly allowed to defile him in the gods’ temple. He felt alive for the first time, as if he wasn’t just waiting for his life to end on the pedestal the priests forced him to sit upon. He whispered Derek’s name when Derek pulled back long enough to look between them.

Derek reached down to pull one of Stiles’ legs up higher, hooking his arm under Stiles’ knee. He smiled down at Stiles’ brief confusion at the action, placing a soft kiss to Stiles’ lips as one hand moved to grip Stiles’ ass.

A sharp intake of breath was the only indicator that Stiles understood what was about to happen when he felt the head of Derek's cock press against his entrance. He kissed Derek's lips, releasing a faint gasp when he felt Derek press forward. His body was buzzing with excitement, a hum falling over him as his body opened up to Derek. He felt the cold bottle of oil roll to a stop against his limp thigh, curious thoughts of whether Derek would need more of the bottle's contents to smooth the friction lingered in Stiles' mind.

Stiles bit at his lip when Derek pulled out a little before pushing in further. He tried to calm his breathing, hands clutching at Derek. He smiled up at Derek, relieved that the pain of too much had begun to dull before slowly blossoming into pleasure.

They found a rhythm together, both moving back and forth in unison as they found pleasure in each other. Derek was gentle, cautious to guarantee that Stiles felt no pain. He only paused to apply more lube whenever the friction felt like too much, all under Stiles' watchful eye.

A daringness burned deep in Stiles' stomach, prompting him to pull back from Derek before uttering in a soft voice, "Wait ... please."

Derek's movements halted as soon as he heard Stiles' voice. He used the moment to catch his breath, aware of the sweat gathering at his brow. For the first time in years, he was at a loss, his whole body feeling strained in trying to please Stiles. He wanted nothing more than for Stiles to be pleased with their coupling, knowing that Stiles would likely never be allowed such pleasures after this.

"Did I hurt you?" Derek asked, his breath coming in short pants.

Stiles shook his head. "No, no," he reassuringly uttered. "I wanted to ..." He drew in a deep breath. "Can I ride you?"

Derek looked puzzled by Stiles' question. He struggled with realizing that he heard Stiles correctly. He withdrew from looming over Stiles, leaning back on his calves as his hands trailed over Stiles' hips. He reached a hand out to Stiles' hand, pulling him up into a sitting position. His arm looped around Stiles' waist, holding him close.

Stiles released a faint moan as the angle caused Derek to slide even deeper. He arranged his legs in time for Derek to shift them. He watched Derek as he moved to settle into their new position, his thighs straddling the top of Derek's hips.

Derek smiled at Stiles as he moved to rest back against the bed. His hands firmly kneaded the muscles of Stiles' hips. He smirked at the sight Stiles made above him.

Stiles placed his hands along Derek's abdomen, his nails sharply grazing Derek's skin. He experimentally rolled his hips, moaning as it shifted Derek into a perfect angle.

"As you wish," Derek uttered, moving to settle his hands on Stiles' legs. He flexed his hips, his breath catching as he watched Stiles' eyes slide shut in pleasure as he just felt the way Stiles settled around him.

Stiles started off slow, shifting his hips in small movements. He allowed the rhythm to build, a soft smile pulling at his own lips as he allowed the pleasure move throughout his body. He allowed his head to fall back as he continued to ride Derek, his movements quickening in pace as a soft mewling noise grew at the back of his throat. He gasped in pleasure, his breath moving quickly. He was thankful that Derek kept a firm grip on his hips to steady him. His mind was cloudy, his body buzzing with exhaustion as he grappled with trying to find the words. His hearing suddenly started to hum with silence, his vision blackened as his eyes rolled back into his head, losing himself.

“Stiles,” Derek huffed, grabbing at Stiles’ hips when his pace began to intensely quicken. “Stiles, slow down,” he breathlessly uttered, his orgasm hotly building in his stomach with intensity. His back arched into Stiles’ warmth when his climax hit, his eyes slipping shut in ecstasy. His breathing was labored, his body satisfied as he relaxed into the bed.

Stiles’ rhythm hadn’t faltered, his body slamming up and down as it kept a harsh rhythm. His nails dug into Derek’s skin, almost as if he was trying to cling to something.

Something felt wrong. Derek looked up at Stiles, his hands on Stiles’ hips tried to slow his pace some. “Slow down,” he uttered in concern.

Stiles’ hands harshly grabbed at Derek’s, ripping the demigod’s hands away from his body with unknown strength. He pinned Derek’s hands above his head, his body still moving in an unrelenting rhythm.

Derek looked up at Stiles, his breath drawing in sharply when he saw the white that covered Stiles’ once amber eyes. “Stiles,” he sharply spoke, trying to snap him out of the trance that he was in. “Stiles, stop.”

“You thought he was yours,” Stiles harshly spoke, another voice echoing over his normally pleasant one. “You thought wrong, son of Hale. He belongs to us—to be fucked when we please. He will never truly be free. This mind—this body—this boy, is ours. For now, until the end of time.”

Stiles eyes slid shut, his hands pulling away from Derek’s. His back arched at a near impossible angle, his breath was labored as he let out a gasping moan when his orgasm took over, his rhythm never faltering at fucking himself on Derek’s cock.

Derek easily turned them once Stiles stilled, gently cradling Stiles’ head in his arm as he placed him against the bed. He watched as Stiles’ body limply lulled into a heap on his side. He wasn’t sure how to help Stiles after a trance, only recalling how exhausted Stiles had looked faking one. He knew the trances were a thing to fear, seeing how the priests had changed from handling Stiles with little care to bowing out of fear.

Part of Derek panicked, knowing that the gods were somehow disturbed by what transpired between them. But he couldn’t find himself caring, not when Stiles was a willing participant with him. Truthfully, he believed that he didn’t deserve Stiles, but he deeply knew that the gods deserved Stiles even less.

Stiles' eyes fluttered open in a series of blinks, his movements sluggish as he tried to gain awareness of his surroundings. "What happened?" He weakly asked as he moved to sit up. He weakly collapsed back into the bed, his muscles drained.

"You ..." Derek stopped himself, uncertain what Stiles remembered.

Stiles swallowed down the lump in his throat, his mouth dry as he turned to look for a drink of water. He felt the vial of oil pressed against his thigh, his eyes turning to look at the small ornate bottle as he recalled the events that just transpired. Bile threatened to claw up from his stomach as he remembered the sudden fear he felt when the telltale signs of a possession had prickled up his neck while in the middle of having sex with Derek.

"I'm sorry," Stiles weakly started, scared that he angered the gods by misinterpreting all the signs they had sent him in his visions of heated sex dreams with Derek. He turned his body to look at Derek, shame welling in his chest when he saw the fresh scratches he had left along Derek's body. His own body hurt from how extreme the possession had pushed him.

Stiles could feel the wet mixture of oil and Derek's cum still inside him, even the moisture of something against his thighs. Then he saw the results of their coupling, Derek's abdomen still stained with cum. He felt ill, knowing he didn't orgasm before Derek—remembering the feeling of Derek coming inside him before the possession took over. "By the gods," he weakly uttered, nearly falling out of the bed as he tried to scramble away from Derek. He could remember the distant sound of Derek's voice telling him to slow down—to stop. He had raped Derek, the gods forcing him to use Derek as nothing but an object to get off on.

"Stiles," Derek started, moving to catch him from falling off the bed. He could hear the panic in Stiles' voice—see the panic on his face. "Stiles, whatever you're thinking, that's not how it happened."

"Please, don't," Stiles nearly begged as he pulled the sheets around himself, covering his body up as he knew he should have done the moment Derek arrived. "I don't want to know what I did," he added, shunning away from Derek's attempts to touch him.

Derek halted his actions, wishing to know what Stiles had thought happened.

"You were right," Stiles uttered, pulling his legs against his chest. "This was dangerous. We shouldn't have done it," he quickly added, his heart racing.

"Stiles—"

"Please leave!" Stiles almost yelled, his voice sharp and guarded. The outcry had almost sounded like begging. He wanted to be left alone to suffer in silence for his shame. "Please," he weakly uttered, refusing to look up at Derek. "Leave me alone." He had meant it as a plea for Derek to just abandon him, not as the harsh command Derek felt it to be.

Derek pulled away from Stiles, getting off of the bed. He grabbed his discarded clothes, pausing as he looked at Stiles once more. He wanted to reach out and touch him, to stop the trembling that had taken over his body. But he knew he wasn't welcomed—that his touch would do more harm than good.

Stiles wasn't sure how long had passed, only that he stayed curled into a ball since before Derek left. He felt as if he couldn't breathe, like his chest was closing up. He hated himself, and he hated the gods. His faith was shook, not knowing why he had been treated in such a way—if he had misinterpreted their signs.

Lydia was the one that found him. She was startled by Stiles' silent nature, not knowing what had happened until she saw the stains on the sheets. She gathered Stiles into her arms, escorting Stiles to the private baths. She had collected the sheets and tossed them into the fire, knowing that the priests would somehow discover them even if she tried to clean them.

Stiles was resting in the bath, submerged beneath the steaming water. He used a small washcloth to wash his body, being rough in his actions as he tried to scrub away what happened. He stilled, turning his head to look at Lydia when he felt her legs brush against his back. He let her reach for his head, closing his eyes and leaning back into her touch as she washed his hair.

Lydia was tender in her touch, as she always had been. She took her seat on the edge of the bath, her legs brushing against the sides of Stiles' back. She ran her hands through his hair, looking down at his body as she tried to find signs of any abuse. "What happened?" She asked when she didn't find any bruises on Stiles' body.

Stiles remained silent as he curled his legs up against his chest. "It was my own fault," he softly answered.

"Who was it?" Lydia demanded, her hands pausing their movement.

Stiles was silent in answering.

"Stiles, who hurt you?" Lydia pressed.

"I hurt him," Stiles corrected her, pulling away from Lydia. He moved to dunk his head beneath the water, quickly moving to stand and exit the bath. "Please, I don't want to do this, Lydia," he sighed as he climbed out of the bath, grabbing a towel to dry himself.

"How do you expect me to accept this?" Lydia asked as she followed after him, allowing her robes to fall over her now soaked legs.

Stiles grabbed the clean robes Lydia had laid out for him, slipping into them as quickly as possible.

"It was the Son of Hale, wasn't it?" Lydia suddenly demanded.

Stiles stumbled in his steps, turning to look at Lydia.

"You invited him back here," Lydia cautiously stated. "You acted on your divine visions, but hate yourself now." She shook her head. "You gave away your divine purity for bodily pleasure."

"I wish I could give away my divine *purity*," Stiles harshly stated. "I don't want this—I never did. I asked Derek to be with me, not because it was what the gods wanted. It was what *I* wanted. I wanted him, and he wanted me." He ran his hands through his hair, trying to keep the tears from falling. "And the gods punished me for it. They took it away from me, and forced me to use Derek." He released a sharp sob, burying his face in his hands. "My mother lied. I'll be cursed to be their plaything for the rest of my life. No absence of purity could save me from this fate."

Lydia took the necessary steps forward to embrace Stiles, holding him tightly. She wished that she could shelter Stiles from the oncoming storm. She didn't know what the future held—if the gods would push further with their reprimand. She could only hope that their prayers would be answered by kinder forces.

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Derek couldn't keep his eyes from Stiles. His dreams had been haunted with thoughts of Stiles, wishing he had stayed, despite how adamant Stiles had been about him leaving. He hated how the priests roughly grabbed Stiles' arm, almost yanking Stiles off the high chair they had placed him on.

Stiles barely moved, his limbs sluggish from his restless night. He was exhausted and wanted nothing more than to sleep. He knew his day would only grow worse when the priests roused him from his bed, pulling him out to the temple's atrium with rough hands and hungover scowls. He kept his gaze downcast when he realized Derek was there to return with the head of Euryale.

The priests ignited the herbal contents in the ornate bowl, watching as the ingredients curled and burned to make a billowing smoke. The head priest shoved the bowl beneath Stiles' nostrils, annoyed when the boy pulled away from them.

Stiles clenched his eyes shut when a eunuch pushed him towards the smoke. He didn't want to go into a trance again, not with Derek watching. His body and mind were exhausted from last night, perhaps that made it easier for the trance to take hold of him.

Derek watched in building disturbance as Stiles took the gorgon's head from the priest and used the blackened blood to paint symbols on the marbled floor as gibberish fell from his lips. He didn't move as he watched Stiles crawl across the floor to him. He wanted to pull him up from the floor, demand the priests break the trance—Stiles deserved to be treated better than this.

Stiles halted before Derek, his body moving on its own as he slithered back up into a standing position. He ran his blood-covered hands down his face, trailing over his exposed throat before reaching a hand out to Derek. He grasped at Derek's tunic, easily pushing the material aside as if it offended him. His fingertips traced a symbol over Derek's heart, rubbing the blood into his skin.

"The archer," Stiles spoke, his sweet voice once again taken over by a foreign one. "Seek out the huntress in the wood. She will give you the answers you seek. Remember, Son of Hale, the wolf will be your prey, and your shepherd will guide you home."

Stiles stumbled when the god left him, his body weakened by the trance. He fell backwards, collapsing onto his side. His breathing became labored when he noticed the blood staining his hands. He shook his head, wishing the gods would just do away with him sooner instead of later.

Derek had moved to help Stiles, his reaction being based on his instincts to protect him. He was halted by the priestess—Lydia.

Lydia knelt beside Stiles, easily gathering him into her arms—the action looked simple, as if second nature for her, demonstrating a practiced talent for taking care of Stiles when the priests finished with him. “Don’t bother yourself, Son of Hale,” she sharply stated as she made a barrier between Derek and Stiles. “You’ve done enough,” she added in a clipped tone.

Derek appeared taken aback by Lydia’s harsh words. He didn’t know what Stiles had told her about the previous night, but he wanted nothing more than to correct the wrong. But he knew the truth—everything he touched crumbled, and Stiles was no exception to that.

“You have an archer to find, Son of Hale,” the head priest stated, dismissive of Derek when he turned to leave Lydia and Stiles behind. The priests never cared for Stiles as they should have, leaving his upkeep in Lydia’s hands. In truth, they didn’t trust themselves in touching Stiles, always assigning the eunuchs to care for Stiles’ basic needs.

In the end, Derek forced himself to leave. And he hated himself for it. But he had grown accustomed to abandoning those of growing importance to him, for he knew that eventually, they would only get hurt. And he was tired of seeing Stiles falling into such a routine of pain that he had allowed himself to grow accustomed to.

Stiles allowed Lydia to help him stand, his gaze looking after Derek’s departing form. He tried to imagine what manner of creature the Argents would send after Derek this time, knowing that the priests would have brokered some deal to rid the Mother of Hale of her only son. He wished he could help Derek—that he could accompany him on such a journey instead of being locked away in his gilded cage. How he longed to leave the temple and its corruption behind.

But all Stiles could remember was the ferocity of his possession last night. He knew that, even with Derek to protect him, he’d never be free of the gods. For the first time, he wondered about the cruelties the gods inflicted and how he had still had such unwavering faith before today.

What little faith Stiles had left ultimately departed with Derek.

## Chapter End Notes

The dubious consent is in reference to Stiles being unwillingly placed into a trance, possessed by a god against his will, while he is in the middle of having consensual sex with Derek. Stiles feels as if he wrongfully touched Derek in those moments.





## Chapter 2

### Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Stiles had more than his share of divine visits from the gods, mostly from the Hales. He would always listen to them, never asking questions where he felt unwelcomed. But this night was different. He wanted to yell and argue against them. He wanted to scream at them for being hypocrites.

“Why?” Stiles asked, keeping his gaze averted from looking upon the god that called out to him.

“You’re special, Stiles,” the voice answered.

“I don’t want to be,” Stiles replied. “I wanted to be happy ... I thought you wanted me to be happy.”

The voice didn’t answer.

“I like him,” Stiles pressed. “You made me believe I could have that.”

“You were meant to,” a new voice answered, calm and patient in her addressing of Stiles.

“Why make me do that to him?” Stiles almost cried out, wanting answered instead of excuses.

“That wasn’t meant to happen, Stiles,” the female voice continued to answer Stiles. “You were supposed to be free to be with Derek. This—all of this, wasn’t supposed to happen to you.”

Stiles pushed himself to look for the first time. He was surprised at what he saw—an ordinary looking woman.

The woman was middle aged, looking peaceful in her stance as she looked back at Stiles. Her hair was dark, bordering on the edge of complete blackness. Her skin was tanned and flawless, like every other part of her. Her eyes were unmistakably spirals of colors. But Stiles had seen a superior set of eyes, not that long ago. A set that nearly matched the woman’s in color, but surpassed them in complexity.

“Talía, Mother of Hale,” Stiles addressed her in amazement.

Talía faintly smiled at Stiles. “Mieczysław, Son of Stilinski,” she replied with a small bow of her head to him.

“You’re Derek’s mother,” Stiles stated in both awe and confusion.

“I am,” Talía calmly confirmed.

“Why would you make me do that to him?” Stiles almost demanded. “Why would you make me treat him like that?”

“You were supposed to be left alone, Stiles,” Talia answered, a sadness surrounding her. “It was my own fault for believing that all gods would adhere to decency and leave you alone.”

Stiles shook his head. “I don’t understand this—it was a divine trance.”

“It was,” Talia stated to reassure Stiles that she wasn’t going to argue against him. “But not a trance initiated by a Hale.”

Stiles’ eyebrows furrowed in distress, clutching a hand to his chest as he shook his head. “An Argent?”

“I don’t know who did this, or why,” Talia started in explanation. “But you and Derek were always meant to meet—to be united.”

“A gift for your son,” Stiles faintly corrected her.

“For you both,” Talia kindly countered. “My son was not an expected addition to my family. But I knew, the moment I discovered his existence, that he would need a counterpart that matched him in wit but also surpassed him in joy. I knew that Derek’s would be one of misfortune and loneliness—as is most lives of those born human under the Hale name.”

“So you created me for him?” Stiles asked in outrage. He wasn’t just an object to be handed to someone.

“No,” Talia answered. “There was something about you, the moment your spark of life was ushered into existence—you shown brighter than most, Stiles.” She faintly smiled, looking at him with pride. “There are universes, both like this one and ones greatly different, where you two meet, and it doesn’t matter how little, or how greatly you know each other. Because neither of you will ever be able to deny the undeniable. That attraction that you feel—the indescribable pull you feel towards each other—will never go away.”

Stiles looked away from Talia. “How is that possible?”

Talia took the necessary steps forward, reaching a hand out to hold Stiles’ hand. “I believe it’s what some cultures call soulmates.”

“My dreams,” Stiles started, looking up at Talia. “The ones of Derek. I had them before we met. I couldn’t feel that pull if I never met him.”

“We never sent you those dreams, Stiles,” Talia explained before Stiles could voice his doubts. “Your gift allows you to see moments of the future—of what’s meant to pass.” She released a deep sigh, unable to fully voice her pity for the mortals of the world. “The dreams you have eventually come to pass in the future—sometimes in years to come.”

“The priests said that my purity is what helps me to keep my powers,” Stiles started, his limbs trembling as he dared asked the Queen of the Gods to change everything. “I’m no longer pure, but am still cursed.”

“According to the priests, you are impure now,” Talia replied. “But that impurity is a made up one. To be intimate with someone you deem worthy does not make you impure.”

“Why come here and tell me all this?” Stiles asked, uncertain what he was to take away from their conversation.

“Because you deserve the truth,” Talia answered. “You deserve to know that you were not being tricked, or used against your will when you had those dreams of Derek. You were taken advantage of, though, and I regret those events. I apologize that I could not protect you the way I promised your mother I would.”

Stiles startled at that, looking at Talia in shock. “You knew my mother?” He faintly asked.

Talia smiled at that. “I did,” she confirmed. “I was lucky enough to know your mother, even before you were born.”

Stiles wanted to know more, to ask about the person his mother was. “Was she ... was she happy?”

Talia nodded, recalling the fond memories she had of Claudia. “Very,” she added. “She had spent her time as an oracle for my family, and earned her right to her own family.” She carefully observed Stiles. “You were never meant to be pulled into this, Stiles.”

Stiles turned his gaze away from Talia. “Is there a way to escape?”

Talia answered, “That is partially what I wanted to speak to you about.”

Stiles looked to her, feeling as if it was too much to hope for.

“The walls of the temple have been corrupted,” Talia explained. “These priests are not good men. They wish to topple my family in hopes of placing Argents in charge.”

Stiles wasn’t surprised by that revelation, knowing that the priests were far more corrupt than any other person he had grown to know. “I can’t stop them.”

“You can’t,” Talia agreed. “But Derek can.”

Stiles looked at Talia in disbelief. “He won’t come back here once he finishes his final task. The priests want him to die in the woods, that’s why they sent him after a wolf.”

“Derek won’t die in the Wood,” Talia stated in reassurance. “He will return, but they will want to push him away once again.”

“What can I do to stop that?” Stiles weakly asked. “They only listen to me when a god has control of my body.”

“I need you to trust in me, once again,” Talia instructed Stiles. “I know that is a lot to ask of you, after everything that happened.”

Stiles let his head hang, wanting to tell Talia the truth: he never wanted to be touch by another god again. It hurt, every single time a god took over his body, before leaving him weak and vulnerable.

“I need you to help me convince Derek to stay,” Talia replied. “I need Derek to realize the importance of casting these priests out.”

“They’ll kill him if they get the chance,” Stiles countered.

“They won’t,” Talia answered. “They still fear me, as long as I have control of my throne. Which is why we have to act quickly. Every passing day they remain in control of this temple is a day that turns more and more people away from their faith in the gods.”

Stiles looked at Talia. “Would you sacrifice your son to stay in control?”

Talia drew in a steady breath, her eyes still focused on Stiles. “I love my family. Even after Peter brought their souls to see me.” She released an unsteady sigh. “I know that my son thinks I am heartless—that I don’t care about him, or what happened to our family. But I mourned them more than I should have. And in the end, it was Derek that suffered that neglect.”

“But would you sacrifice him?” Stiles pressed.

“No,” Talia answered. “I wouldn’t. But if the Argents succeed, and this temple crumbles, Derek will be the next target for them. He’ll be the last Child of Hale to exist, and that is a lose end they cannot afford to have.”

Stiles hesitated, knowing that Talia was correct. The priests, even the Argents that he faintly knew of, were not ones to show mercy to those they viewed as enemies. “Okay,” he finally answered. “I’ll help you.”

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Allison, a divine Daughter of Argent, called the woods outside the city her kingdom. She hunted with precision and grace, never killing senselessly. She protected the travelers and outcasts that called her woods home. She favored archery and honesty, finding herself in the company of the forest nymphs.

And in Allison’s sacred wood, wolves were considered pests. To hunt the wolves meant to pay one’s respects to Allison.

Derek had traced the arrow Stiles had painted over his heart more times than he cared to admit. He would close his eyes and replay the way Stiles’ fingertips felt against his skin. He hated himself, knowing that it was just another god that forced Stiles to touch him.

In the end, though he had not met with Allison, Derek had kept his promise to return with the head of a wolf. He had tied rope around the wolf’s head, allowing it to hang off of his horse’s saddle to dry. He didn’t want Stiles to have another painting frenzy with blood. He couldn’t

stand the way Stiles' features had twisted in fear and disgust when he realized what had happened in the trance.

The wolf had been enormous, Derek having mistaken it for a still growing bear cub at first. Its eyes were a pair of strangely golden irises that flickered off the moonlight. It was ravenous, attempting to maul Derek to death even as it staggered with blood pouring from its body. Derek had managed to give it a clean death when it finally slowed.

Derek didn't waste his time with heading back to the temple, his mind still clouded with thoughts of Stiles. He reasoned that to be the cause of his senses being dulled when a stranger happened upon him. He was startled with how simple it appeared for the stranger to sneak up on him, having prided himself in being able to detect people trying to attack him.

"Strange night to be out for a stroll in the wood," the stranger offered as he moved to sit across the fire from Derek.

Derek carefully observed the stranger before determining that he wasn't a threat. "I could say the same to you."

"I live here," the stranger replied.

"These are the Huntress's woods," Derek answered.

"I know that, I'm the one that lives here," the man simply replied.

Derek turned his sight back to the fire. "And yet you came out to see me," he noted.

The stranger smiled. "Or did you come to see me?"

Derek looked up at the stranger, a curiosity falling over him as he observed the stranger for something telling.

"You're not the sort of person who stumbles into this wood without a purpose," the stranger explained. "You seem to be more than capable of handling yourself, but you have a look about you."

Derek arched his eyebrow at the stranger.

"You look like you're thinking of someone else—someone you left behind," the stranger replied. "I know that look. It's the look of a man that is willing to leave the sanctuary where he would know peace if it meant he'd have the opportunity to see that someone again."

Derek's features fell slightly before he allowed himself to faintly nod in answer.

"I know that feeling all too well," the stranger offered.

"I doubt I'll head back there after this last time," Derek replied.

"Did you lose their favor?" The stranger asked.

Derek shook his head. “He’s better off without me,” he admitted.

“Did you hurt him?” The stranger questioned.

Derek looked at the stranger. “No, but he thinks he hurt me. He blames himself for things that aren’t his fault.”

The stranger nodded. “My wife was like that,” he offered. “She would never put blame on another, only look at herself and wonder what she could have done differently.” He faintly smiled, recalling memories of his late wife. “She always forgave even the biggest slights.”

“You could never convince her otherwise?” Derek asked.

The stranger laughed. “She was infuriatingly stubborn—something our son inherited, actually. It never mattered what I’d say, both of them would push my buttons until they finally got their way. They’d sneak around me to try and find a way to better the situation. They’d give the house away if they could get away with it.”

Derek faintly smiled at that, thoughts briefly remembering his own family. There was a time Derek thought he’d never know a moment without one of the family meddling in his affairs. He never knew he’d reach the point where he’d turn to praying if it meant he could have a moment more of Laura’s advice being uttered in a teasing voice, or Cora’s unvoiced fears disguised as subtle threats, or his father’s knowing smile that spoke volumes without a single word uttered.

“You miss them,” the stranger stated in observation.

Derek bristled, turning a distrusting look towards the stranger. “What do you know?”

The stranger appeared calm, unaffected by Derek’s sudden turn in nature. “As I told you, I know looks. And that is the look of a man who has suffered loss—it’s a look I know all too well.” He looked down at the fire, drawing in a steady breath. “Why do you think I’m out here and not in the city?”

“Change of scenery,” Derek deadpanned.

“I’ve had everything of import taken from me,” the stranger replied. “Monetary value meant nothing anymore—not to me. Out here, I know that the Lady of the Wood watches over me. And for now, until I figure things out, that’s enough for me.”

Derek turned his gaze on the stranger, his eyes catching the satchel resting on the forest floor beside his foot. “You’re traveling,” he simply commented.

“I am,” the stranger simply stated. “I’m planning on visiting my family.”

“I thought you lost everyone important to you,” Derek childishly pointed out.

“I said I had everything *taken* from me, not that I lost it,” the stranger answered. “I plan on visiting.”

Derek relaxed some, settling into his spot next to the fire. “You never told me your name,” he commented after a while.

The stranger looked at Derek, as if he was trying to recall the moment that he actually did, before realization dawned on him. “You’re right, I didn’t. My name is John.”

Derek nodded in acceptance. “My name is Derek.”

John’s face twisted into a look of recognition. “The *demigod* Derek, I imagine.”

“I dread to know what you’ve heard,” Derek answered.

John partially shrugged. “I don’t heard many things living out here on my own,” he explained. “I just know what the gossipers whisper when I’m brave enough to venture into the city. But I’ll have you know, I don’t believe in rumors.”

“Rumors have grains of truth in them,” Derek remarked. “That’s why they can be so damning.”

John released a huff of agreement, a small smirk pulling at the corner of his lips. “They say you are working to atone for what happened to your family. Is that not true?”

Derek looked away from John. “That part is true.”

John carefully watched Derek. “Then I believe the other half of that rumor to be the lie.”

“The part where I murdered them,” Derek countered as he looked back at John, wanting someone to dare utter that lie to his face.

John settled his arms against his legs, taking his time in evaluating Derek. “You didn’t murder them, but you are repenting because you feel responsible. You view their fates as a result of your own inability to act.” He barely shook his head, still holding Derek’s gaze. “I know that road well, and I can tell you that it doesn’t change a damn thing. At the end of the day, you still feel like shit, and your family is still dead.”

Derek knew John was right, but he still didn’t like it.

They spent the night in mutual silence, waiting for first light before they headed back to the city.

“Who was it that you intended to visit?” Derek questioned as he walked along side John. He held onto the reins of his horse, leading her beside him. He relished taking his time as they approached the city’s gates, realizing that the wolf head had dried enough to prevent another incident with the blood. He touched his hand to the wolf’s pelt draped over the saddle, remembering how soft the fur had felt as it brushed against his side when the wolf had lunged for him. He wondered how a ferocious creature could hold such a lonely beauty. He thought it was a fitting gift for Stiles.

“The temple,” John honestly answered. He didn’t seem surprised by Derek’s sudden pause in walking. “I figured I didn’t have to tell you until we reached the city, since we’re headed to



the same place.”

Derek tried to place John’s features. “Who are you visiting in the temple?”

“Do you honestly need me to answer?” John replied in question, turning his back to Derek as he made his way down the cobbled street.

Derek walked after John, following in his footsteps. “How long has it been since you’ve seen him?”

John was the one to pause now, his gaze focused on the pillars of the temple at the top of the acropolis. “Five hundred and forty three days,” he simply stated. “I lost count with how many days I’ve lived without my wife. I made it a point to remember my son, and every single day they stole from us.” He turned his eyes to gaze upon Derek. “So, tell me, Son of Hale, what does my son mean to you?”

Derek wasn’t sure what John was, only that he appeared to know an infinite amount more than he let on. He allowed his scowl to deepen. “Are you a god?” He finally asked, looking up at John. “Did you visit me to try and sway me away from him after tricking us into being closer? Is it not enough what he’s put through every day by the priests? Is it wrong to want him to be free of that?”

John’s expression sunk, his own features smoothing into a perplexed look. “What happened to him?”

“He’s used as a pawn,” Derek nearly hissed, tightening his grip on the horse’s reins. “Passed from god to god as a plaything.”

John’s expression darkened. “You think I would subject my child to such a thing?”

“You’d fit right in as a god for it if you did,” Derek answered.

“It’s a damn good thing I’m not then,” John countered. “I’m the farthest thing from being a god. It’s true that the Huntress gives me safe passage, but not because I hold some divine relation—I’ve been denied my family, and as compensation, *your* mother offered me a gift. I asked for a life of solitude, one where I could live in peace without the reminder of what my son was forced to do.”

Derek briefly turned his sight away from John.

“I don’t know what your mother has done to earn your hatred,” John started, allowing his anger to die when he recalled how Derek wasn’t involved in Stiles’ forced isolation. “But it appears to have infected your view of all things divine.”

“Just because gods have powers we can’t explain doesn’t make them inherently divine,” Derek replied. He looked at John once more. “Your son is blessed to have you for a father—that is the part that I envy about him. For my earlier accusation against you, I apologize. My anger was wrongly placed, and I regret that.”

“You want answers,” John replied. “Seeking answers and only ever being rejected them can lead to a great anger—*that* I can understand.”

“I want to be free from my familial ties,” Derek answered.

“No you don’t,” John answered, not surprised when Derek glared at him. “You want to be free of the guilt you have for being a demigod,” he elaborated. “You feel as if you should do more than you have—that you should have, somehow, been able to prevent the deaths of your family, even though there was no conceivable way for you to prevent it.” He released a soft sigh. “Our futures are set in stone, before we even take our first breath. The gods can’t change that course, but can often times help lessen the blow of it. To have faith in them—in your mother—isn’t to inherently break beneath what they want. It’s hoping that you can somehow alter your life’s journey in the slightest in order to find happiness.”

Derek looked away from John, gazing up at the temple.

“I think you and my son were always meant to cross paths,” John continued. “Just as we were meant to meet in the Huntress’s Wood.” He calmly started to walk again, only halting briefly to turn and look at Derek. “I can tell you care about my son—that you want what is best for him. And in the end, I can’t—and won’t—blame your mother for giving my family that gift.”

Derek watched as John turned back towards the path that lead up to the acropolis—up to the temple. He knew that John wanted nothing more than to see his son again, and part of him wondered if his mother ever felt the same. He had little memory of her, only the faintest few still lingering in his mind before she left. He remembered sitting in her lap, watching as she would reach around him to continue with her weaving. He remembered her putting him to bed as a thunderstorm roared outside, her voice humming a soft melody before she placed a kiss against his forehead. He remembered the night she left—the way she clung to him, softly calling him her “little wolf” as she brushed her fingers through his hair.

Derek pushed those memories into the back of his mind, determined to lock them away there. He didn’t want to remember what his life could have been if she had just stayed. He dared to wonder if the other Children of Hale roaming the world had merit to their claims—if she ever loved his father in the slightest, or just saw him as another conquest.

In the end, John was right. Derek wanted answers. And he knew that the only place he would find them were inside the temple.

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“What do you think you’re doing here?” A priest demanded upon seeing them both.

“I brought you the head of a wolf, as promised,” Derek replied, tossing the wolf head onto the floor in front of the priest. He couldn’t help the faint smirk pulling at his lips when he saw the way the priest flinched at the severed head.

“Not you, Son of Hale,” the priest snapped, turning his attention back to John as he ushered one of the eunuchs to take the wolf’s head.

“I’ve come to see my son,” John simply answered.

“You were told never to approach this temple again,” the priest replied, as if he was the correct one in barring a father from seeing his son. “After what you attempted—”

“Trying to take my son home with me is in my right as his father,” John angrily corrected the priest’s attempt to paint him as a villain. “It’s called parenting.”

“And only when a god of Hale calls upon you, shall you be allowed back inside these sacred walls,” the priest smugly stated.

“He has been,” Derek simply replied. He smiled at the priest’s glare. “A shepherd will lead you home,” he recited Stiles’ possessed words, knowing the priest couldn’t argue with divine prophecy. “The Huntress of the Wood sent him to me—leading me to the wolf before leading me home.” He arched his eyebrow at the priest when he received no answer. “Or are you saying that this temple—*my mother’s* temple, is not considered my home?”

The priest’s features soured, being backed into a corner. “The Huntress is a Daughter of Argent, not Hale.”

“My mother doesn’t bother herself with annoying little things like conversation or contact,” Derek countered. “She sends other gods to deal with the details.”

The priest’s lip quirked in irritated annoyance. “The Mother of Hale has not mentioned such an addition to your arrival.”

“If you think I can’t speak for my mother, then summon the one who can,” Derek plainly stated, his tone daring the priest to argue with him further.

The priest knew he had been artfully outwitted, baited into summoning Stiles either way.

Stiles looked exhausted, as if he hadn’t slept since Derek’s departure. His steps were sluggish and uncoordinated as he stumbled his way into the room. His eyes connected with Derek’s, a look of sorrow filling him before his eyes flickered over to John. “Dad,” he weakly uttered, his steps halting. He took an abortive step forward, halting himself before he nearly ran to his father. Worried eyes looked to Derek, curious about what was happening—why he had been summoned to meet with Derek *and* his father.

“Stiles,” the priest started in an annoyed tone. “Your visions haven’t predicted such an arrival.”

Stiles understood what the priest was getting at. “I haven’t seen anything,” he quickly stated, knowing that he would be blamed for the mockery the priest suffered in having to recant John’s banishment from the temple.

The priest carefully observed Stiles. “You haven’t been hiding things from us again, have you?”

“You know I can’t,” Stiles dared to reply. “I am under constant watch. You would know if I had a vision of this.”

“You’ve gotten good at hiding things in your dreams,” the priest countered. “You repressed your first dreams of passion with a Hale, do you not recall?”

Stiles flushed, turning his gaze away from the priest. “I was fourteen—I didn’t understand that it was a vision. I haven’t lied about my dreams since then.”

The priest took his time observing Stiles, taking a moment to circle around Stiles like a hawk.

Derek dug his nails into his palm, wanting to push down the anger and, regretfully, jealousy that he felt. He knew those dreams were of him, remembering Stiles’ words about only ever feeling passion in the dreams of them both together. He wanted to pull down every shrine ever devoted to his mother. None of the gods deserved the praise and devotion they received, not when they taunted and tortured a child for their own amusements—using images of Derek’s own appearance to torment Stiles.

The priest paused by Stiles’ side, leaning in to catch his gaze for a few moments before faintly nodding. “Perhaps you don’t speak for your mother after all,” he uttered in triumph as he looked at Derek.

Stiles looked at the priest, fear evident in his eyes. He didn’t know what the priest would do to his father, let alone Derek.

Derek was still a Son of Hale, but Stiles’ father carried no such title. And to the priests, that was all that mattered to them.

“Ask her,” Derek suddenly stated, determined to push the priest into delaying. He kept his gaze on the priest, knowing he was pushing his bounds—remembering what Stiles told him about the priests not being loyal to Hale anymore.

“As you said, your mother doesn’t bother herself with small things like conversation,” the priest countered, a smug smile falling over his features. He gestured for Stiles to be removed from the room, pleased when the eunuchs moved to grab Stiles by the arm.

An unnatural gust of wind suddenly whipped through the temple, dousing out candlelight and nearly ripping the billowing curtains from their rods.

Stiles’ head snapped to the side, his body shaking as his eyes rolled into the back of his head.

John instinctively moved forward, only to stop when Derek put his arm out to bar him from getting close to Stiles. He looked at Derek, wanting to argue that he didn’t care if it was a divine possession—he needed to protect his son.

Derek looked at John. “We don’t know which god it is,” he rationalized as he let his arm fall by his side. “If it’s an Argent, they might force him to snap your neck.”

John hesitated before faintly nodding, knowing that Derek had a point. He looked back at Stiles, wishing he could do something.

Stiles was panting heavy, his head hanging low as his body swayed some. His arm shot out quickly, inhuman strength allowing him to get a vice grip on the eunuch’s throat. His head

swayed to look at the eunuch.

“Never come near him again,” Stiles’ voice commanded, an authoritative voice echoing through the temple. “He’s not to be touched by the unworthy.” He shoved the eunuch back, his head quickly cocking to the side when the priest moved. He stared at the man. “You barely still hold a grip on your title,” he uttered.

“How could I repay such an error?” The priest asked, bowing his head slightly in respectable address.

“I want these brutes removed from my temple,” the voice demanded. “Never to enter these walls again. They are never to lay another eye on Stiles again, let alone a finger.” Stiles moved quickly, his presence threatening as he moved to stand between the others and the priest. “You allowed *my oracle* to be brutalized—mistreated.”

“Divine Mother,” the priest started.

“I’ve heard enough of your voice,” the voice snapped. “Leave my presence.”

The priest hesitated, his gaze daring to look up at Derek and John. He was desperate not to leave Stiles alone with them both. “Divine Mother,” he dared to press the matter. “The oracle shouldn’t be left alone with—”

“He won’t be left alone,” the voice stated in a dismissive tone. “Or do you think I am as incompetent as you are when it comes to protecting such a precious creature as Stiles?”

“Apologies, Divine Mother,” the priest replied, bowing his head low.

“Now leave me with his father,” the voice instructed. “And my son.”

The priest obediently made his exit, knowing that he had been outplayed. He glared at Derek and John before closing the ornate doors to leave the men alone with Stiles.

Stiles turned to look at Derek and John, his limbs still strung tight as he held his head high in observance. “I’m sorry for this,” the voice started.

“Get out of him,” Derek snapped, not waiting for the god—his *mother*—to bother explaining herself.

“I can’t leave the Nemeton,” the voice countered. “The oracle is essential to guaranteeing that a god will not go without someone to interpret their message.”

“You’re not speaking about a message, you’re using Stiles as your puppet,” Derek growled, taking a step towards Stiles.

“I had to speak with you, before the priest was able to run you away,” the voice cautioned.

“If you want to speak to me, you can do so in person,” Derek dared to demand that of her.

Stiles drew in a deep sigh, turning his attention towards John. “I’m sorry,” the voice addressed him. “For all the pain that I caused you and Claudia. For the pain that your son suffers now. But he will continue to suffer their cruelty unless you help me. Unless you both help me.”

“Don’t fucking ignore me,” Derek snapped before John could speak. “You’ve done a fine enough job of that already. But if you want my help with this, leave him this moment, or I’ll start my *penance* by ripping down every single one of your shrines I come across.”

Stiles suddenly stumbled some, his movements sluggish as he swayed unsteadily. His body collapsed forward, completely limp in his fall into unconsciousness.

John immediately moved forward, grabbing Stiles’ falling form to keep him crashing into the ground. He held Stiles against his chest, hoping that his son would wake with ease.

Derek looked at Stiles, watching as John lowered themselves to the ground. He kept looking at John as he cradled Stiles against his chest. He turned to look at where Stiles had been, seeing the standing form of an elegant woman in pristine clothes.

“Very well,” the woman stated. “Here I am, now will you listen to me?”

Derek stood his ground, observing the woman before him. He remembered the descriptions his father told him and his sisters. He marveled at how accurate his father had been in his stories. He understood how his father saw Talia in him, his features intensely mirroring hers.

“We’re all in danger as long as these priests remain in control of the temple,” Talia explained, not waiting for Derek to fill the silence. “This temple serves as a beacon of faith for many people. And those priests have been using Stiles to turn people’s faith against the gods, especially Hales. They need to be driven from here—whether with words or swords, it doesn’t matter which way, as long as they are gone.”

“And you think I care about this?” Derek demanded to know.

“I think you care enough about people in general, Derek,” Talia replied.

“I don’t care enough to have you use me for your own gain,” Derek answered.

“Your father didn’t raise a selfish child,” Talia sharply reprimanded him. “If you won’t do it for the right reasons, do it because you know your father would have.”

“How do you know what my father would have done?” Derek snapped. “Did you even know him long enough to form a bond with him?”

“Longer than you’ve known Stiles,” Talia countered. “And yet it seems you feel validated in assuming to know what Stiles wants.”

“Caring about Stiles’ wellbeing is different than me assuming to know his intricacies,” Derek partially growled.

“If you don’t do this, the Argents will flood the temples with corruption,” Talia tiredly stated. “There won’t be a god of Hale left when they are through.”

“I don’t care,” Derek stubbornly answered.

“Derek—”

“Leave, *mother*,” Derek uttered the title in a mocking tone, suggesting that he meant nothing fond or warm in the admission of their relation. “It’s what you’re good at.”

Talia drew in a deep breath before forcing out a small sigh of defeat, “Fine. Have it your way, Derek.” She watched the way Derek turned his back on her with ease, moving to check on both John and Stiles. “But I will say, do with my request as you will. In the end, it is Stiles that will be hurt by your ignorance.”

“Ignorance,” Derek echoed as he turned to look at Talia. “It’s not ignorance to know that my blood tie to you only seems to matter when *you* need it to.”

“It’s ignorance to ignore what is happening in this temple,” Talia snapped at Derek. “You think their corruption ends with their mistreatment of Stiles? Don’t be foolish, Derek. Why do you think so many people take refuge in the Huntress’s Wood?”

Derek remained silent, knowing that his mother was correct in her observation.

Talia took Derek’s silence as reluctant obedience in listening to her last words. “Lastly,” she started, keeping a careful eye on Derek’s reaction. “What happened between you and Stiles —”

“Don’t!” Derek shouted before Talia could continue, turning around to look at his mother. “Don’t you *dare* talk about that,” he angrily elaborated.

“Don’t talk to me in that manner, again,” Talia snapped at Derek. “Regardless of how you feel about me, I am still your mother, and I will—”

“Then you should have *acted* like it when it mattered,” Derek snapped back at Talia with equal passion. He shook his head, looking away from her. “Not when it’s most convenient for you,” he faintly added, as if it was a plea he wasn’t sure he wanted to utter—or if his mother even wanted to hear it.

“I am sorry, Derek,” Talia firmly answered. “You were never meant to have this life, neither was he,” she faintly gestured towards Stiles. “If you want to do the right thing by freeing Stiles and the people, than that is your choice. But don’t decide against it because of your hatred for me.”

When Derek turned to look at Talia, she was gone. He stared at the vacant spot she had been standing in before reluctantly turning away, giving his attention to a rousing Stiles.

“Dad,” Stiles weakly called as he opened his eyes, looking up at his father in wonderment.

“Hey, kiddo,” John fondly greeted him, a soft smile pulling at his lips.

“The Divine Mother,” Stiles started, trying to sit up, weakly gripping at his head when his vision spun.

“She’s gone,” Derek answered.

“Did you listen to her?” Stiles hurriedly asked, wanting to know if Derek would help them—help him.

“She wanted me to drive the priests away—kill them even,” Derek replied, sounding as if he didn’t trust or believe the words.

“And you won’t?” Stiles asked in disbelief.

“Stiles, that action is not one to take lightly,” John reasoned.

“We’re running out of time,” Stiles argued as he looked at his father. “The priests are planning on doubling their efforts. Every time Talia steps away from the Nemeton, the Argents grow bolder in an attempt to dethrone her. They’ll be setting fires throughout the acropolis before the next moon.”

Derek looked at Stiles, wondering which part of his words was true. He knew Stiles was a fierce believer, and that sometimes belief lead to blind trust. “You can’t know that, Stiles. It could be the ramblings of one god.”

Stiles turned his gaze on Derek, carefully observing him. “You of all people should know what lengths the Argents will go to.”

“Stiles,” John’s voice warned him.

“Are you ignorant, or do you just not know?” Stiles pressed.

“What are you talking about?” Derek asked.

“Your mother left you the day my mother died,” Stiles snapped, not caring that his father wanted him to keep quiet. “The Argents pushed my mother to the brink of insanity, even though she escaped being the oracle of Hale. Your mother left the Nemeton vulnerable for *years* because she spent her time with you. Your mother was growing weaker with every passing day she spent with her mortal family. And the Argents knew that. They waited until she was vulnerable enough to try and seize power. They drove my mother insane, killing her with torturous images of what was to come. Your mother left you that day because she knew she had to return to the Nemeton and keep it from being seized by the Argents.”

“The Argents are still worshiped by many,” Derek countered, not wanting to believe Stiles’ words.

“The Hunter and the Huntress are good, the only Argents that can be reasoned with,” Stiles corrected Derek. “They protect those that can’t protect themselves, mainly from the remaining evils the other Argents unleashed.” He forced himself to his feet, only swaying momentarily, even with his father’s steadying grip on his arm. “The Argents set a trap to burn your family,” he confessed as he looked at Derek.



Stiles could see the muscle in Derek's jaw twitch at the mention of the fire that took his family away. "They didn't know you wouldn't be there."

"You don't know that," Derek countered.

"I do, because I saw it before it happened," Stiles confessed.

Derek stared at Stiles, his features perplexed as he tried to understand Stiles' words of admittance.

"I told them about my dream—smoke filling my lungs and fire burning my flesh," Stiles pushed himself to explain. "But the priests didn't care. They did nothing to help you or your family. That's how I knew they were corrupt. A constant violence being part of my possession from that moment onward."

Derek pulled his eyes away from Stiles, feeling an unknown heaviness in his stomach as he processed such a revelation.

"I'm sorry, Derek," Stiles pressed, taking a step towards Derek. "But this is about more than just you or me. We can't let them continue to hurt innocent people with their cruel intentions."

John looked from Stiles to Derek, recognizing the silent pull between them. He knew they needed more than just a moment alone. He sighed, making his presence known before he turned to head for the door the priest had exited. "I'll fetch the priestess—as far as I recall, she's not corrupt."

Stiles turned to look at his father. "Lydia's a pure soul," he uttered. "She'll be willing to help once we explain things."

John nodded, giving Stiles a look that told his son to use the allotted time wisely.

Stiles looked back at Derek as he waited for the sound of the door to shut. "I also wanted to talk to you about what happened," he began, his words small but calm.

"My mother tried that already," Derek answered. "I'm guessing you're going to tell me that what happened *wasn't* supposed to happen?" He looked up at Stiles, keeping his distance for Stiles' own sake.

"It wasn't," Stiles remarked. "I didn't lie to you when I first asked you," he started to explain. "My whole life, I've been told that if I ever allowed my body to be touched in a lustful manner, by anyone but a god, I'd lose my divine purity. And with its loss, I would lose my powers. I honestly believed it," he honestly confessed. He looked down at the ground, avoiding eye contact with Derek as he added, "Like a fool, I believed it."

Derek took in a deep breath before asking the question that had been bugging him for so long. "The dreams that the priest spoke of you hiding," he started, his words stiff and unsure. "He said ..."

Stiles looked up at Derek, his eyebrows furrowing in slight confusion.

Derek wanted to groan at how invasive he felt by the question. “Never mind. It’s none of my business.”

Stiles pursed his lips as he thought of the priest’s comments from earlier. His eyebrows raised into high arches when he figured it out. “My dreams of ... *passion*, are always of you. The first happened when I was fourteen.”

Derek cleared his throat. “You were still a child.”

Stiles looked away from Derek. “In ways, yes. But not in the dreams.”

Derek looked back at Stiles, narrowing his eyes slightly as he tried to decipher the way Stiles turned his body away from him.

“Your mother explained that my gift is different from my mother’s,” Stiles offered. “The things I see in my dreams aren’t exclusive to images the gods send me. They’re images of a future that has yet to come to pass.” His nails dug into the skin around his fingers as he tried to think of a way to explain it all. “They’re mostly the same, sometimes we’re just together—nothing sexual about it. They sometimes feel scrambled, us doing different things at different ages.” He faintly smiled as he recalled the one from last night—it had been a gift that calmed his nightmares. “The last one ...” he stopped himself, turning to look away from Derek, feeling helpless and vulnerable. If he couldn’t sway Derek to see reason for dismantling the priests’ hold on the temple, Stiles himself would never be free of it all—never be free to be with Derek.

Stiles startled to a stop when he felt Derek’s hand grab at his, allowing Derek to pull him back. He looked at Derek, feeling the soft warmth of tears collecting at the corner of his eyes. “It gave me hope,” he finally confessed, wishing he could show Derek the dream. He faintly smiled as he reached a hand up to touch the hair collecting around Derek’s temple. “Your hair had muted tones of grey in it,” he recalled, his fingertips moving to trace around the curve of Derek’s cheekbone. “You had laughter lines around your eyes.”

A small tear fell from Stiles’ eyes. He released a faint sigh when the palm of Derek’s hand cupped his cheek. He closed his eyes when Derek’s thumb brushed the tear away. “You looked happy—we were happy. That’s what I believe in, Derek. And right now, I am scared of that not happening.”

A small noise of happy surprise bubbled up from Stiles’ chest when Derek’s lips pressed against his. He wrapped his arms around Derek’s neck, pulling him in closer. He let Derek hold his weight as he pliantly fell against Derek’s chest.

Derek held Stiles close, not wanting to let him go. He didn’t want to give him back to the priests. And if it made him as selfish as a god, Derek gladly accepted his divine lineage for this one token.

Stiles startled when he heard the door open, not knowing whom it was to discover them. He relaxed a little when he realized it was Lydia and his father.

“You’re left alone with him for a few minutes, and you’re already throwing yourself at him, Son of Hale,” Lydia commented as she walked towards them.

Stiles tightened his grip on Derek, not wanting to let him go.

“We have to be quick,” Lydia started in explanation, not waiting for Derek to have a reaction to her comment. “The priests believe that the Divine Mother called for me to retrieve Stiles when she is done,” she continued. “If you want to help us restore this temple to its former glory, you’ll have to act fast. The priests are planning something for the coming moon. The Mysteries will be part of their cover.”

“We have to get Stiles out of here, Lydia,” John carefully stated, Stiles being his main priority.

“If you take Stiles away now, they’ll know something is about to happen,” Lydia countered as she looked at John. “If you want this to work, it will be another month. Stiles has survived *years* here. A month won’t be the end of him.”

“She’s right,” Stiles softly stated in agreement.

“Stiles,” John started.

“Dad, we won’t get a second chance at this,” Stiles quickly stated. “We’ll have to make sure it’s unexpected.”

John looked from Stiles to Derek, wishing he could find someone to agree with him.

Derek hesitated, the weight of Stiles still in his arms making it a difficult choice to make. “They’re right, John,” he reluctantly admitted.

“I was afraid you’d say that,” John sighed in defeat.

“I’ll be your contact inside the temple,” Lydia began, keeping her eyes on the door. “Now that Talia has banished the eunuchs from the temple, it will be much easier to slip inside and get to Stiles before anything happens.”

“My friend owns a farmhouse, just on the outskirts of the acropolis,” Derek offered. “Boyd won’t mind if we stay there.”

Lydia looked at Derek, recognition in her eyes at the name. “I know Boyd—he comes here to offer gifts in hopes the gods will cure his beloved of her involuntary seizing.”

Derek faintly nodded. “I think my mother would be more than happy to help with that once we finish here,” he offered.

Lydia nodded. “I’ve mentioned it in my prayers to the Huntress. One of the gods will bless him for his aid in this.” She paused, listening for sounds outside the door. “I’ll find you there at the farm when it’s time, but for now, I have to take Stiles back inside,” she quickly ushered at Stiles to follow her.

Stiles took a small step towards Lydia before turning back to Derek. He silently pressed into Derek once more, hugging him tightly. “I feel foolish for acting as though we’ve spent more time together than a few days,” he commented as he rested his head against Derek’s shoulder, closing his eyes to remember the feeling.

Derek released a fond chuckle, knowing it was ridiculous for their bond to feel as strong as it did. “We’ll have years to make up for it,” he promised, placing his cheek against the soft hair of Stiles’ head.

“I’ll hold you to that,” Stiles answered, knowing that the next lunar cycle was going to be a fiercely trying one. He reluctantly pushed himself away from Derek, taking Lydia’s hand as he forced himself to not look back at his father or Derek.

Derek watched as Lydia ushered Stiles further into the temple. He looked at John, a frown covering his features as guilt set in. “I’m sorry for stealing your goodbye.”

John seemed to be lost in thought, his head turning to look at Derek in slight surprise. He shook his head in response. “I’ve been living in a world where I planned out a million goodbyes with my son. But I never dreamed of one where I wouldn’t have to say goodbye to him at all. You gave me that.” He clapped an open hand on Derek’s back before turning towards the exit they had entered earlier.

Derek felt an easiness settle in his chest with John’s words, but he knew that the coming days were going to be filled with worry and uncertainty. But for the first time, he felt *hope*—for the life Stiles believed in for them.

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The nights had been sleepless.

Derek laid awake that night, his gaze focused on the night sky as his eyes traced shapes in the stars as he thought of Stiles. He found more than one cluster mirroring various groups of moles decorating Stiles’ skin. He had found himself hunting more often than not lately, knowing that he couldn’t keep himself contained being so close to the temple. He wanted to have it over with, the promise of no longer being taunted by the thoughts of Stiles at the hands of the priests.

But this night, Derek had returned to the city, resting outside Boyd’s house as he waited for the sun to rise. He barely slept these days, constantly on alert. He barely startled when he turned his head to see the source of the footsteps trailing closer to the house. He believed himself to be hallucinating when he saw that it was Lydia. He immediately sat up when he realized that she wasn’t disappearing into the night as an illusion of his sleep deprived mind.

Derek moved to stand when she was close enough, furrowing his eyebrows when she silently gestured for him to follow her. “What—”

“Sh!” Lydia harshly whispered before gesturing for him to silently follow her.

Derek hesitated before obediently following after her. When they were further away from the house, he dared to speak again. “What happened?” He asked as he moved closer to her.

“I’m a bleeding heart,” Lydia answered. “Stiles’ dreams have been coming every night. He’s miserable without you around.”

Derek halted. “You came to get me just because Stiles wants to see me?” He asked in confusion. “You said it was too dangerous to remove him from the temple, but it’s not dangerous for me to visit him?”

“I know what I said,” Lydia uttered as she turned a critical look on Derek. “But Stiles wants to see you. Are you going to deny him that?”

Derek didn’t answer her, knowing that the unfortunate truth was that he’d give Stiles whatever he wanted.

“The priests are gone to celebrate the Mysteries,” Lydia offered. “They won’t be back for days.”

Derek released a heavy sigh, knowing it was dangerous. But his longing to see Stiles was greater than his caution.

“Then follow me, Son of Hale,” Lydia stated as she continued to walk. “Your lover is lonely.”

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Derek slipped through the door with ease, looking back at Lydia as she closed the door behind him. He wanted to utter a small word of thanks to her, but she refused to meet his eyes as she shut the door. He turned his attentions back to the room, recognizing it as Stiles’ bedroom, remembering the last time he had been there. He took a small step forward, catching sight of the curtains covering Stiles’ bed.

Stiles was sprawled out on his stomach amongst the sheets, his body barely covered as his feet kicked back and forth through the air. He hummed a little as he read through one of the scrolls Lydia had been kind enough to give him after the priests left the temple. He enjoyed reading, and hated how the priests forbid it of him. He understood their deception could only work if Stiles knew little of the world. It was unfortunate for them that his mother had taught him to read, and Lydia was generous in her sympathy at Stiles’ boredom.

Stiles startled when he felt the bed dip, his body rolling to the side, for fear that it was an intruder—another crazed nonbeliever who desired to slit his throat. He stared at Derek’s fond smile in disbelief before a smile of his own crossed his lips. He practically leapt across the bed to hug him. “How? How are you here?” He practically begged, not particularly caring about the answer as much as he cared that it was real.

“Lydia,” Derek answered, wrapping his arms around Stiles.

Stiles released a fond but stressed sigh of laughter. “She told me I was being stupid for acting so forlorn,” he confessed, pulling back to look at Derek. “She kept telling me to just wait.

That these lonely nights would be my last if I could just wait.” He was pleased when Derek kissed him, pressing in to prolong it. “I missed you,” he whispered against Derek’s lips. “My dreams haven’t stopped.”

“I’ve had a few of my own,” Derek uttered as he pressed his face into the crook of Stiles’ neck, gently nipping at the cluster of moles there.

Stiles released a pleased moan. “Tell me about them,” he faintly requested.

Derek reached his hands down to Stiles’ legs, easily pulling them to settle around his hips as the action caused Stiles to tumble backwards onto the bed.

Stiles smiled up at Derek as he let his legs part for him, his hands tracing along Derek’s arms. He watched Derek slink over him, allowing the demigod to hover over him. He kissed Derek, welcoming the warm feeling of safety that fell over him.

“I’d prefer to show you them,” Derek answered Stiles’ request by planting a series of kisses along his throat, trailing his way across his beauty marks.

Stiles smiled as he leaned his head back to allow Derek further access to his throat. “I’d like that.”

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Was it foolishness or pride that caused Derek to stay? He couldn’t be certain—then again, he was certain of nothing anymore. But the faintest request from Stiles made him as obedient as a prized hound, no longer the wild wolf his legacy projected him as. Stiles’ plea for him to stay the night had Derek settling beneath the sheets with little care.

Derek woke to the soft light of the sunrise trickling through the ornate bars the temple called windows. He stopped his movements to rise from the bed when he felt the faintest stirrings coming from Stiles. He relaxed into the bed, craning his neck in order to see Stiles’ sleeping face. He smiled to himself, thoughts of waking up like this forever snuck into his mind. He allowed his fingertips to lightly caress the curve of Stiles’ spine, enjoying the warmth of Stiles’ naked body pressed against his own. He smiled down at Stiles’ disheveled hair when he heard a faint grumble coming from the oracle.

“I don’t wake up before the sun is high in the sky,” Stiles mumbled as he began to shuffle his body some.

“Normally, I don’t care for waking up early,” Derek offered as Stiles cuddled into his chest more. “But you make a pretty convincing argument for that.”

“Ugh, you’re going to be hopelessly romantic, aren’t you?” Stiles asked as he looked up at Derek, his fondness breaking through his false annoyance.

“It’s the one thing people don’t know about me,” Derek replied, the faintest smile pulling at the corner of his lips as Stiles’ chin rested against his chest.

Stiles moved to sit up, reaching an arm over Derek to lean against the mattress as he looked down at him. He didn't bother to correct the sheet as it fell down from his waist, pooling low across Derek's crotch. He used his free hand to comb his hand through Derek's hair, not caring about his own. "As long as it's something I get to know," he commented as he moved to kiss him.

Derek reached a hand up to cup Stiles' cheek, closing his eyes as he remembered the moment. He knew it would be the memory he cherished most—the moment he knew he loved Stiles.

The kiss was brief, barely a caress of their lips.

Stiles released a pained yell as a force gripped him by the hair, yanking him out of the bed and away from Derek. His feet stumbled to find footing as he fell to the cold ground, his hand grasping at the owner of the hand currently digging fingernails into his scalp.

Derek moved to sit up, halted by the familiar feel of a cold steel blade pressed against his throat. He didn't bother to look at the owner, his gaze stuck on Stiles and the person who yanked him away.

"You've made a horrendous mistake, Son of Hale," the head priest lowly growled under his breath as he tightened his hold on Stiles' hair.

## Chapter End Notes

All will be revealed in the last chapter, my darlings.

More gods to be revealed as well.

# Chapter 3

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Stiles was silent as the priests themselves touched him with their rough hands. He barely flinched at the harsh scrubbing his skin endured. He didn't protest when the robes were tightened around him, the material practically drowning him from view. He didn't look at the head priest when the veil was placed upon his head, his entire body enveloped in the black material they covered him in.

"You've given so much away," the head priest chastised in a dark tone. "You broke your vow to the gods for a night of bodily pleasures. There's no saving you from your soiled skin now."

"The gods gave me my gift," Stiles softly started to counter the priest's claim, defiantly looking up at the man. "But I am the crafter of my own destiny. I have seen the future, and my body is mine own to give, as I see fit."

"You've grown insolent," the priest replied. "No doubt Hale's doing."

"He will come for me," Stiles started, fixing the priest with a glare through his veil. "And when he does, I will be free of you."

The priest released a cruel laugh. "The Son of Hale is to be executed at morning's light."

Stiles' eyes widened in disbelief.

"He committed the highest form of sacrilege by touching you," the priest continued. "He is the cause for your participation in the Mysteries this night. His life will have to satisfy the people's need for justice in losing their oracle."

Stiles shook his head. "It won't work. He can't be killed—the gods won't allow it."

"Not all gods favor the Son of Hale," the priest countered. "Make your amends, Stiles," he gestured towards the gods' shrine. "For tonight, you'll finally be united with the gods."

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Derek yanked against his restraints, pulling the chain taut as he tried to break the shackles. He knew it was useless, having spent the entirety of the night trying to do the same thing, until exhaustion forced him to cease.

"Give it a rest," one of the guards shouted at him, dropping the playing dice in his hands as he turned to glower at Derek. "You're never getting out of those chains—doesn't matter if you're a Son of Hale or not!"

Derek glared back at the man, giving the chains one last petulant pull to annoy the man. He dared the man to come into the cell with him.



The guards stood, kicking his chair back, carelessly leaving the piece of furniture to clatter to the ground.

“Don’t,” the other guard started in warning. “Remember what happened to Marcus.”

“Marcus was an idiot,” the angered guards replied. “Let himself get too close.”

“He forced Marcus’ nose back into his head and killed him,” the guards replied, recalling the ferocity of Derek’s actions. “If you’re stupid enough to get that close to a demigod, you deserve it.”

The angered guard moved to the bars of Derek’s cell, his eyes focused on Derek’s kneeling form. He moved to crouch in front of Derek, until he was level with him—enough to stare into his eyes.

Derek glowered at the man, wishing he could tear him apart—tear any of them apart for keeping Stiles away from him.

“What? Missing the Oracle, huh?” The guard taunted, a small smirk pulling at his lips when he saw the muscle of Derek’s jaw twitch with anger. “Those eunuchs like to talk, you know? I hear his skin is the softest thing to touch,” he snickered, running his thumb along his chin as if in deep thought. “Just the thought of fucking into *that* must have made the risk worth it.”

Derek lunged his body forward some, the chains pulling tight until the hinges in the wall began to yawn. The shackles burned against Derek’s skin as they dug down into his wrists.

“For all your heroics, you’re rather tamed,” the guard uttered. “The great Son of Hale brought down because of an Oracle’s thighs.” He snorted. “Sounds like one of the great poets wrote your story out.”

“I will get out of these chains,” Derek lowly growled. “And when I do, I’m going to rip your tongue out through your throat with my bare hands.”

The guard snorted at him. “We’ll see how strong you’ll be when you hear your oracle screaming.” He smiled at Derek. “I hear they’re going to burn him—to save him from his sins.” He shook his head. “It’s a shame they’re going to burn something that beautiful. All because you thought you deserved a place to warm your cock.”

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Stiles stared down at the small shrine of Hale gods as he kept still. He didn’t dare to move his veil, knowing the priests would be on him within seconds for the slightest of actions. His words were spoken under his breath, a prayer for only the gods to hear.

Stiles had concentrated his thoughts on the gods, praying that he could be forgiven for any betrayal they suffered because of him. He prayed to Talia, begging that she save Derek from the priests and whatever wicked plans they had for him. Lastly, his thoughts went out to his father, hoping that the priests would never get their hands on him.

“Huntress,” Stiles softly spoke to Allison. “Protect my father, with your grace and strength. Save him from the pain the future holds. Please ... keep him safe.” He bowed his head, allowing his body to crumble to the ground in prostration. He pressed his forehead against the cold marble ground, his tears shedding as he allowed a sob to escape his chest. “Please,” he whispered, flattening his hands against the base of the small shrine before him as he thought of all the gods. “If you hold any pity or compassion for the years of service my mother gave you—for the life I have given you—*please*, spare him and Derek.”

~\*~

“I’m sorry,” Lydia’s voice was strained as she stood in front of the bars, looking down on Derek.

Derek refused to answer her, his gaze downcast to look at her sandals.

“Speak to me,” Lydia commanded, wanting to hear Derek’s thoughts.

Derek remained silent.

“I didn’t betray you,” Lydia answered. “And I could never betray Stiles.”

Derek finally looked up at Lydia, only to glare at her face instead of her feet.

“You’re the one that cursed him to this,” Lydia angrily huffed. “If you had kept to yourself, he wouldn’t be in danger now.”

“If you had kept being his confidant, he wouldn’t be in danger,” Derek replied with equal venom. “You’re the one that brought me to him, then lead the priests to discover us.”

“I told you, I had no part in that,” Lydia honestly answered. “I awoke in my room, hands covered in the charcoal from the message I didn’t know I had written.”

“You feign ignorance after what you did,” Derek angrily snapped.

“I know you won’t believe me, no matter what I say,” Lydia softly answered. “But I had never been under a trance before. I never knew a god would choose to do that to me.”

“You cling to the gods, yet you claim that they are the ones that took you against your will, to force you into betraying a friend.” Derek looked at Lydia. “The gods don’t care what they do to Stiles—you never cared what the gods did to Stiles.”

“I was the one that kept his body from breaking after every trance,” Lydia sharply countered. “Do not speak of things you know nothing about, Son of Hale. You may have seen Stiles being under control of your mother, and even *one* Argent. But you have never seen what some of them have made him do.”

Derek remained silent.

“I wanted to free him from it,” Lydia continued. “But I’m not strong enough to help him.”

“Call on your gods,” Derek sharply mocked. “Perhaps your prayers, for once, will not fall on deaf ears.”

“I’m not the one that needs to pray,” Lydia answered. “They await your thoughts and prayers.” She quietly moved to kneel before Derek. “If you truly care for him—if you love him, as he believes you do, swallow your pride. Accept your divine birthright, and ask your mother for her guidance.”

Derek tightened his hold on the chains restraining him. He tried not to think of how exhausted his arms were, how broken he had felt when Stiles was ripped away from him. The anger that had blossomed in his chest when the priest dared to grab at Stiles, to bend him over the bed to inspect Stiles, despite his tears, was still present. He wished he had been faster, his body moving on its own when he shoved the sword away from his throat, grabbing the priest to force him away from Stiles. His hand had been wrapped around the priest’s throat, ready to kill the man when the guard had retaliated. The wound on his back was painful, the blade having sliced through his skin when the guard startled into motion at Derek’s reaction.

Stiles was the one to save Derek’s life. He caught Derek in his arms when Derek faltered, wrapping himself around him as he yelled at the guard and priest to stop. There was fear in his voice, a terror that they were going to take Derek away from him. He pressed his face into the crook of Derek’s neck.

Derek knew Stiles was crying when he felt the warmth of tears dropping against his skin. He held Stiles close, despite the pain in his back, knowing that he couldn’t fight back with such a wound.

Stiles silenced his cry of pain when the priest yanked him away from Derek. His grip on Derek was strong, his strength only giving way when the guard hit Derek. He begged the priest to stop it all, desperate for them to let Derek go. The last thing he saw was Derek’s limp body being hauled away.

“I couldn’t save him then, and I can’t now,” Derek finally admitted.

“There is no one else, Derek,” Lydia pressed. She waited a few moments, wishing Derek would speak, that he would change his mind to help save Stiles. “Fine,” she bitterly uttered when she realized Derek wasn’t going to do anything. “For all your fame and glory, you’re nothing but a coward.”

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Stiles kept the veil covering his face, keeping his gaze downcast as the priests guided him down the temple’s steps. He focused on his steps, trying to not stumble in his movements when he realized that these were likely his last in this life. He looked up to see the countless people of the city gathered to stare at him, even with the veil protecting his face from sight. He saw looks of confusion and fear, though some seemed thrilled to finally lay eyes on the fabled oracle that was kept locked away within the prison of a temple atop the acropolis.

Stiles' steps slowed when he noticed one group in particular. He recognized the woman cradling her baby against her chest. He remembered the trance that overtook him when she asked for a sign that the gods would answer her prayers—if she would be saved from her husband's violence. He managed to spin the tale enough that the priests wouldn't try to foil any of the Hales' attempts to save the woman and her child.

In the end, Stiles had heard the news that the woman's husband had been stabbed to death in a drunken brawl. The woman and baby were taken in by the husband's brother, her newfound lover. It was the best-case scenario Stiles could have hoped for the woman to have. He felt a calm peace fall over him, knowing that he made a difference in at least one life.

Stiles stumbled when the guard pushed him from behind, forcing him forward. He turned his gaze away from the crowd once more.

Rough hands grasped Stiles' arms, forcing him to ascend the small series of steps towards the altar illuminated by torches.

"The oracle has fallen from favor," the priest began, gaining the attention of the gathered crowd as slaves worked hard to build the pyre around the altar. "He has forsaken his duty to the gods, forgoing the divine praise of purity in order to succumb to bodily pleasure."

Stiles clutched at his robes, knowing that he could do nothing but listen to his doomed fate. His prayers had gone unanswered, the gods turning deaf ears on his plight.

"He will join the gods through fire," the priest continued. "His physical body will be cleansed by fire to save him from his sins."

Stiles closed his eyes, praying against rationality that it would somehow be painless.

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Derek heard the guards laughing, knowing that they were talking about what was happening tonight. He had exhausted himself pulling at the chains, feeling weaker and weaker as time went on. The wound in his back had yet to fester completely, despite it having been ignored by the guards upon forcing Derek into the chains. His thoughts concentrated on Stiles, ignoring his own pain as he tried to fight off the crushing truth of their reality.

Derek closed his eyes, forcing his thoughts to his mother. "Please," he softly uttered. "Mother, please."

"Is it my turn to say that you're only using our relationship when it matters to you?" Talia's voice answered.

Derek opened his eyes, turning his attention towards his mother's voice. He recognized the new location, the bright light surrounding him and the tree before him. He had seen it in many of his dreams when he was a boy, finding his way here when he would cry for Talia. He looked down at his arms, his limbs free from the shackles they had been confined in.

"It's not real, so don't get used to it," Talia offered, emerging from behind the large oak tree.

“Another illusion?” Derek asked. “Like when I was a child.”

“Your dreams brought you here because you missed me,” Talia offered.

Derek looked at his mother. “You left us.”

“It’s not weakness to miss your mother, Derek,” Talia answered.

“No, but this was more important to you,” Derek replied, gesturing towards the Nemeton.

“Your godhood.”

“My godhood was never more important than any of you, Derek,” Talia corrected him. “If I stayed with your father, the Argents would have seized power. And they would have killed you.” She paused, closing her eyes as she shook her head, an attempt to keep her grief away. “It didn’t matter, though. They still found a way to hurt you.”

“Why me?” Derek asked. “Why not Laura? Cora?”

“They thought you would be there,” Talia answered. “They never intended any of you to survive their treachery.”

Derek looked away from Talia. “I came to the acropolis,” he reluctantly admitted, closing his eyes. “I came to speak to you. I wanted to know more about you—why you had left. They said that only the oracle here could reach you personally. I wanted to see you . . . I wanted you to be able to see me. To tell me you were proud.” He reluctantly opened his eyes when he felt a gentle hand cup his cheek. “I was visiting Boyd, preparing to head to the temple when I heard news.”

“That’s why you hate me,” Talia stated in understanding. “You came to see me, and the next day you woke up without a family.”

“Did you love us?” Derek pushed, wanting to know the truth.

“Of course,” Talia firmly admitted. “I love each and every one of you. I’ll never stop.” She drew Derek into a hug, holding him tightly. “The poets often times express envy for our long lives—calling them a gift. But this life is far from it.” She pulled away, pressing a faint kiss to Derek’s forehead. “I can’t help you, Derek, no matter how badly I want to. And I wish I could. We are stretched too thin, the Argents warring at all fronts. Peter can barely hold them back from overwhelming the Underworld. If I leave here, as they hope I will, the Nemeton will be lost.”

Derek looked away from his mother, believing he didn’t deserve to even ask her for help. He felt lost, knowing that he was doomed to lose Stiles this night. “He’s going to die,” he faintly uttered.

“You never needed my help, Derek,” Talia replied. “You helped more than one person on your travels, performing feats of strength unrivaled by any other mortal.”

“I’m not that person,” Derek replied, faintly shaking his head.

“You’re the only one who ever questioned whether your abilities were good enough,” Talia prompted. “You’re the truth behind the legend that spread from village to village, giving the simplest of humans hope for a better tomorrow.”

“I can’t even break the chains they put me in,” Derek countered.

Talia silently observed Derek, wondering what she could possibly tell Derek that would change anything. “You know who you are, for better or worse, Derek. I can’t tell you anything that you don’t know already. But I do know that you— your father and sisters, not one of you needed me. You were already extraordinary on your own.”

Derek looked at Talia with uncertainty.

Talia reached a hand out, her fingertips softly tucking a few stray strands of hair from his face. “Accept who you are, Derek,” Talia replied. “You’ve run from it for too long. You’ve pretended that it never existed, but it’s part of who you are. Accept it—embrace it, and there is no telling what you can do, my son.” She silently retreated, allowing Derek to slip from her embrace. “May fortune and favor follow you, my little wolf.”

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“We have to be careful,” Boyd warned again, taking lead as he approached the entrance to the fortified prison beneath the temple.

“The priests have marched Stiles to the altar already, we have to hurry,” Lydia urged. “Nobody but a handful of guards will be an obstacle for us.”

“I wasn’t saying we had to be careful around them,” Boyd replied. “It’s Derek,” he sighed, pausing briefly before looking at Lydia and John. “It’s the full moon. And Derek ... acts *differently* on the full moon. He’s angrier, prone to being more aggressive than he normally is. He keeps it in check, but if he wants, he can let it all go at once.”

“What are you talking about, Boyd?” John asked, wanting to know why they were delaying when his son’s life was held in the balance.

“Derek’s family was different than others,” Boyd replied. “The Divine Mother fell in love with Derek’s father because he too knew what it meant to be an outsider. They bonded in their shared uniqueness.”

“Are you saying that Derek’s not a true demigod?” Lydia asked in disbelief.

“In a way, he is,” Boyd carefully answered. “No matter what you hear or see remain behind me.”

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The chains rattled, a clambering echo sounding out loudly against the stone. A heavy beat of chains being pulled began to spring from the prison. The faintest sound of the brick giving way only spurred the demigod’s resolve.

“Can’t you stop!” The guard yelled in anger as he moved towards Derek’s cell.

“Don’t,” the other guard sighed in annoyance, just wanting to finish their game.

“Where is he?” Derek asked, halting his actions in pulling the chains.

The guard cruelly laughed. “They already started the fires. They’ve probably already cleansed him.” He withdrew something from his pocket, tossing it onto the ground before Derek’s eyes.

Derek recognized it.

The ribbon was one of many fine decorative pieces worn by Stiles on the occasions Derek saw him. This one was special to Stiles, holding more value than anything else. Derek had almost foolishly ripped the ribbon when he had hurriedly pulled Stiles’ clothes from his body, Stiles’ panicked movements were the only thing to alert him that something was different about this ribbon—something beloved in the way Stiles gently removed the item.

That night, as they lay silently in the bed, Stiles’ head was resting on Derek’s chest when he admitted that his mother had given him the ribbon. It was a keepsake from Claudia’s time as the Hale Oracle, an anchor for him to have as his visions started to culminate. It was the only thing Stiles was allowed to take with him when the priests tore him from his home.

“The priests wanted you to have it,” the guard answered Derek’s silence. “They thought you should have something to remember him by, now that they’ve taken his thighs away from you.” He leaned against the bars, watching Derek for a sign that he would reach for the ribbon. “I thought you were supposed to be some great hero—the poets sing praise about your exploits, but in the end you’re brought down by an oracle begging for a fuck.”

Derek refused to answer him, remaining silent as his anger grew.

“Someone almost fucked him once—nearly got his cock in before the priestess investigated the oracle’s cry for help.”

“I remember that,” the other guard softly commented, a genuine sense of disgust in his tone.

“They disemboweled him for his slight. Hung his body before the temple for the whole city to see what happened when a mortal dared to touch what belongs to the gods.”

Derek wrapped his hands around the chains, his grip tightening as he continued to stare at the ribbon. The chains rattled slightly, alerting the guard to Derek’s movements.

The guard smiled, knowing he was finally getting to Derek. “Did you think you were the first one?” He ran his thumb over his bottom lip, only having his own imagination to create the picture the eunuchs painted of the oracle. “Those eunuchs—they used to watch him, when he thought he was by himself—they said it was their one entertainment in life now that they were missing their own cocks. They’d watch him pleasure himself, thrash and moan, begging for something. The priests would always hold him down, force him to practically perform for them. Something about him just pulls all types in—like a bitch in heat.”

Something shifted in the night, the wind dying into silence. In the distance, howls sounded from beyond the city's limits, calling out from the Huntress's Wood. The darkness of the night gave way to the moon's glowing presence.

Derek started to laugh. The sound bubbled up from deep within his chest, almost an involuntary outburst.

"You think it's funny?" The guard demanded to know.

"I think it's funny that you believe yourself to be in control," Derek answered.

"You're not going anywhere," the guard firmly stated. "But don't worry, once the Mysteries are over, you'll be reunited with your Oracle."

"Do you know why the Mysteries are held on different days every year?" Derek questioned, as his shoulders shifted, his muscles expanding to accommodate what he was asking of his body. He knew it was going to hurt—it always hurt, even as the cut on his back started to heal, the flesh knitting itself back together as it always did under the moon's light. "They follow the moon, and her phases," he simply continued. "The Mysteries take place when the moon is at her fullest, and her light strengthens those creatures of the night."

"What creatures?"

"Creatures like me," Derek answered, fangs slurring his words as he looked up for the first time.

Deep crimson eyes glowed under the lack of lighting in the cells. Claws dug into the chains that held Derek hostage. Fangs bared.

Derek didn't wait for a response, grasping hold of the chain and using his full force to rip it from the brick wall. He repeated the action again, freeing his other arm.

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Anger filled Derek's chest when he saw Lydia. His wolf was raging like a grieving animal, wanting to kill those responsible for taking Stiles away. He dropped the guard's limp body, his hands covered in blood as his claws itched with need to sink into flesh.

Boyd met Derek's rushing form halfway. "Derek, it wasn't her," he firmly stated as he shoved against Derek's chest, keeping the enraged demigod from passing by him. "It was an Argent. Possessed her the same way they force themselves onto Stiles. Would you blame him for things done under a god's control?"

Derek's features softened some, no longer pushing against Boyd to try and get to Lydia. His brow shifted, easing back into a humane appearance. His fangs slowly slipped away, changing back into his blunt human teeth. His eyes still glowed, the moon calling to his wolf, begging him to give in once more.

"You're a werewolf," John stated in disbelief as he observed Derek. "There are almost no werewolves left."



“Nearly eradicated, thanks to the Argents,” Derek answered, his voice rough.

“And now they seek to burn my son to sway the people towards them,” John angrily demanded to know if it was true—his wife had been used for her gift, and now his son was nothing but a pawn in the gods’ selfish civil war.

“Not if we can reach him before the ritual completes,” Lydia urgently replied. “They have to call forth a god to pretend to be a Hale—to demand his death. Without going through the ritual, they can’t hurt Stiles. But we’re running out of time!”

Derek turned back to the guard’s bleeding body, his eyes turning to the carnage he had left scattered across the ground. “No one’s going to hurt him again,” he stated, turning his gaze towards the others. “I can’t guarantee that you won’t get hurt doing this, but don’t get in my way, and *I* won’t hurt you.”

“I won’t turn my back on my son, no matter the dangers,” John stated.

“Stiles is my friend,” Lydia added. “I need to right this.”

Derek turned his gaze towards Boyd, a silent question.

Boyd snorted. “You’re my friend. And Stiles has always been kind to me—and to Erica. I’m gladly helping.”

Derek nodded. “One last thing,” he finally started, looking at the three of them. “The high priest—he’s mine to kill,” he lowly growled.

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Derek’s footsteps were rushed, finding purchase in his need to get to Stiles. He could smell the smoke, the fowl smell of oil feeding the flames to grow higher. He pushed his way through the shocked crowd, not caring when more than one of the bystanders recognized him.

“Stop!” Lydia cried out to the priests, knowing that she held more authority to interrupt a seemingly divine rite than Derek did. She knew she needed to serve as a distraction for Derek to get close enough to the altar. She stood proud before the others, even when the priests ushered the guards to seize those daring to interrupt. “Stay where you are!” She demanded, pointing an angry finger hand at the guards to halt them. “You’ve all been lied to—actions and deeds covered up through lies and deceit. The priests fabricated the misfortune that has befallen you. They lied to you, and abused the Oracle and his gift. Now they wish to be rid of him.”

“Silence,” the high priest snapped. “The Oracle opened his legs and bared his body to the Son of Hale, *that* is the cause for his participation in these rites.”

“The gods told the Oracle of his fate,” Lydia argued. “They informed him of his future with Derek. He and Derek were meant to be together, something you chose to try and destroy with your meddling.”

“The Son of Hale will repent for his crimes,” the high priest countered.

“My only crime was that I love him,” Derek finally announced his presence.

The gaze of the crowd turned towards him. They looked surprised by the turn of events, none foreseeing Derek’s presence at the Mysteries.

“They let you go,” the high priest seethed with anger at the guards’ inability to keep Derek locked away. “Took pity on you, after you turned the Oracle into nothing more than a whore.”

Derek silently tossed the bloody object in his hand, watching as it landed at the priest’s feet. He was glad that the priest recoiled in disgust when he saw that it was a tongue with torn flesh attached to it. “I took that from the last man who spoke about Stiles in such a manner, imagine what I’ll do to you.”

The priest took a step away from the tongue. “It doesn’t matter,” he uttered. “You’re too late. The Divine Mother will be dead before the night is over.”

“Where is he?” Derek demanded as he ignored the man’s senseless threats, taking a few steps closer to him.

“This is what is left of your precious Stiles,” the priest replied, tossing a burned veil towards Derek.

The veil flowed through the air, slowly sinking down to the ground. It furled, catching in the wind as it moved with the grace of a snake slithering through high fields. It gathered at Derek’s feet, curling to wrap around his sandaled feet. The black fabric was thin, the perfect material for a veil.

Derek bent down to inspect the veil, catching the faintest hint of Stiles’ scent still lingering on it. He turned the veil over in his clean hand as he stood, his fingers freezing when he felt the cool liquid that stained the fabric. He turned his hand to inspect the residue that covered his fingertips. Dampened red transferred to his skin, staining it to match his blood covered one.

Part of the veil had been burned, the edge charred where the fire had singed it.

“You lie,” John snapped. “Where is he?”

“The rite demanded blood,” the priest stated. “And with his blood staining the stone, the gods came for him, to pull his body through the flames. He has been burned to be with them.”

Derek’s blood boiled, pumping loudly through his veins as his claws began to tear through the fabric of the veil. He was losing control, just like the morning he heard word of his family’s deaths. He didn’t want to deal with the reality of such a world without Stiles. His wolf was grieving, like a wounded animal.

And the wolf wanted blood.

It happened quickly, the sound of the dispersing crowd evident when Lydia yelled at them to leave.

Derek's hands were buried in the priest's chest, claws tearing into his ribcage with no care for the screams that left the man. Such an evil man deserved far worse a fate than what Derek could give him.

"I want him back," Derek growled. "Bring him back."

"He's with them now—to be their *plaything*," the high priest spat. "To be their toy, until long after his body breaks."

"I will crush the air from your lungs," Derek practically roared, his claws digging into the man's flesh.

"So be it! For each breath you take is a mistake—a sin against all that is divine," the high priest gasped through his pain.

"You wish to know sin?" Derek snapped. "My *uncle* doesn't take kindly to those that harm others for their sick amusement. He does far more monstrous things than just *burn* them for their crimes. And your crimes are great."

"Your mother has fallen from her throne," the priest declared.

"My mother never left her throne," Derek seethed. "I escaped my imprisonment with the gifts my father passed on to me, *not* by the grace my mother."

"What are you?" The priest demanded through the pain.

"Something far beyond your understanding," Derek answered.

Derek only let the screams last a little while, knowing that in the end, no matter what he put the priest through, it wouldn't bring Stiles back.

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Derek knelt before the altar all night, his eyes watching the charred pieces of wood burn and fall into nothing but glowing embers. He sat silently as the moon passed him, his thoughts drifting to his mother, curious if she was successful in prevailing against the Argents.

"How long as he been like that?" Boyd asked as he approached John, his eyes carefully evaluating Derek's form. He offered John the food and water Erica had sent with him.

"All night," John answered. "Neither one of us have moved," he honestly added. "But he hasn't spoken a word, yet."

"And the priestess?" Boyd questioned.

"Praying," John replied.

Boyd nodded, taking some of the food from the carefully prepared cloth, moving towards Derek. He silently knelt beside his friend, his eyes looking at where Derek's were focused. "You should eat something."

“I’m not hungry,” Derek offered, his voice hollow and emotionless.

“You haven’t eaten in days,” Boyd countered.

“And I can go longer,” Derek corrected Boyd’s obvious concern.

“That didn’t bring back your father or your sisters,” Boyd replied. “And this won’t bring him back.”

Derek faintly shook his head. “Boyd, I can’t—”

“You can,” Boyd pushed. “You survived before, Derek.”

“I wasn’t broken before,” Derek faintly replied. “Stiles was the one that pieced me together with the faintest look. He made me feel whole—like I never lost anyone.” Tears burned his eyes, knowing that Boyd was right in his logic—Stiles was gone, likely being treated as the spoil of a war neither of them wanted anything to do with. “Stiles saw visions of a future we could have had—one that I wanted so desperately to happen. And now that’s never going to happen.”

Boyd remained silent before faintly nodding in agreement with Derek. He wasn’t going to tell Derek that he would feel better as time went on, knowing that his friend would carry the events of the previous night with him for the rest of his life—carved into his being as the defining moment that he lost all hope.

“You controlled your wolf because of him,” Boyd offered.

Derek finally looked over at Boyd.

“I’ve never seen you that sane on a full moon,” Boyd continued. “Once the wolf gets control of you, there’s usually not swaying you to let it go.”

“Stiles gave me a focus,” Derek replied. “Something to chase after.”

“Something to strive for,” Boyd corrected him. “You fought for control over your wolf, because you knew he needed you. You were able to work with it, finally accepting who you are.”

Derek closed his eyes, a heavy sigh leaving his chest. “He made me calmer—he took my fears away, and gave me back my faith in the world.”

“And that was a gift,” Boyd commented.

Derek fell silent, unsure how he could tell Boyd that he despised such a gift, and would rather be an animal than live a life knowing Stiles was still a slave.

“Huntress,” John stated in awe.

“John,” a young woman’s voice pleasantly greeted him.

Derek turned to look at the woman standing before John. He recognized her as the Huntress—Allison, a daughter of Argent. He moved to stand, uncertain what he felt towards a woman whose family was responsible for so much of his pain in life. But in the end, he merely wished that she would just leave them to their grief.

“Huntress!” Lydia’s voice cried out as she came stumbling across the stone, towards them. She had gathered the excess material of her robes in her hands as she ran to Allison. She stumbled to her knees before her, tears burning her eyes as she grasped at the goddess’s robes. “Is he safe?” She begged, wishing to know if her countless prayers were answered. “Please, is he safe?”

The Huntress reached a hand down, gently cupping Lydia’s cheek in the palm of her hand. She softly coaxed Lydia’s tears into silence with the faintest brush of her fingers. “He’s safe, I promise you. He feels no pain now.”

John’s features sunk, fear coiling tightly in his chest. “Then the high priest wasn’t lying,” he stated. “My son is dead.”

The Huntress looked up at John. Her features were calm and gave nothing away. “He would have been, had my father not taken a stand against the others. Talia was able to successfully face off the usurpation with our combined help.”

“Then where is he?” Lydia begged.

The Huntress looked down at Lydia. “He’s safe from everyone, in the company of my nymphs.”

“Then he lives?” John hurriedly asked.

“He lives,” the Huntress confirmed. “But would you bring him back into this world, that has used and abused him for so long?”

“That’s Stiles’ choice to make,” Derek finally interrupted the exchange of words.

The Huntress turned to look at Derek. “Son of Hale,” she respectfully addressed him. “You should understand the most as to why Stiles would prosper away from mortals.”

“Mortals didn’t kill my family,” Derek countered. “Mortals being manipulated by gods caused Stiles a lifetime of pain, but he never gave up on humanity or the gods. It’s his decision to make about where he lives out his life.”

“And with whom,” Allison finished Derek’s unspoken words. She turned to look at John, a careful smile covering her features. “John, you know where the nymphs call home. It’s your choice, should you want to lead anyone to his location.”

And as simple as she had appeared before them, she was gone once more.

John was silent as he turned to look down the acropolis and towards the road that led out of town. He knew where his son was, confident that he could find Stiles in less than a day if he left now. He started to move towards the steps, ready to begin his journey before he even

started to descend the steps. He paused, turning to look at the others. He looked at Derek last, knowing that the boy was hurting more than he showed over Stiles' disappearance.

"You once said that I was to be your shepherd and lead you home," John carefully recalled the first time they met. "I don't believe I was meant to lead you back to the temple, or anywhere else my son wasn't residing."

"Seek out the huntress in the wood," Lydia softly recalled Stiles' words during his possession. "She will give you the answers you seek."

"Stiles wasn't talking about then," Derek commented in realization.

"The wolf will be your prey," Lydia stated. "You're no longer a complete slave to your other form."

*And your shepherd will guide you home.*

Home. Home was always meant to be Stiles.

## Chapter End Notes

I added in another chapter. Next chapter is a short epilogue about Stiles and Derek being reunited. And Stiles in a flower crown--because reasons.

Hope you enjoyed it, darlings. It was a fun chapter to write.

# Chapter 4

## Chapter Notes

I hope you enjoy this, darlings! Thanks for reading and for all the comments, kudos, and love.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Stiles laughed as he watched the nymphs pettily splash each other. He hugged his legs to his chest, watching in contentment of such a free place. He had long since dreamed of spending time in the woods, away from the temple and their harsh ways. He wished he had been afforded the choice of staying with his father and away from the city.

Stiles' thoughts drifted to the other night, recalling the fear he had felt when the priest touched the blade to his throat. The priest barely nicked his skin when the fire erupted in loud crackling and a thunderous roar of intensity. He could see the outline of a woman standing among the flames, her hand outstretched to Stiles.

"Take my hand, Stiles," the woman's voice called out.

Stiles' features softened with realization at hearing the familiar voice. "Mom," he barely whispered as he pulled the veil from his face, practically clawing at the material as he struggled to get free.

"My sweet boy," Claudia's voice echoed as an ethereal hand reached out to him. "Take my hand."

Stiles reached out, taking hold of Claudia's hand with ease as he pulled himself up onto the altar and into the fire, unafraid.

It didn't burn, not how Stiles thought it would. He felt safe, wrapped in a safe blanket of warmth as he felt his body floating. He didn't know what happened, only that the fire was slowly slipping away before a small spring surrounded by trees completely surrounded him. He stumbled with uncertainty, wanting to know where his mother had gone.

"Easy," a male voice warned when Stiles tripped over a giant tree root.

Stiles braced for impact against the ground, surprised when he didn't crash into dirt. He turned to look at his rescuer, puzzled with who the strange man was.

"I don't think my nephew would like the idea of us saving you, just to have you smash your own brains out by accident," the man stated with a charming smile.

"Why ... who are you?" Stiles demanded to know, squirming to get out of the man's hold.

The man released Stiles, allowing him to fall to the ground.

“Peter,” a woman reprimanded him.

Peter merely shrugged, turning to face the woman who spoke. He wore armor accompanied by a cape, much like many of the generals in the armies fashioned themselves in. A silver circlet lay adorning his head. “You did your part to help my sister, I appreciate you returning the favor here,” he motioned towards Stiles.

“He’ll be safe here,” the woman stated with a soft smile as she looked at Stiles.

Stiles did recognize her, even before taking in her own ceremonial robes and armor. He could have told that she was the Huntress, even if she had been robbed of her bow.

“My mother,” Stiles interrupted them, realizing that Peter must have been none other than Talia’s brother and Derek’s uncle—the King of the Dead, Divine Brother. “I heard her voice, she called out to me,” he pressed for answers.

Peter turned his attention towards Stiles. “Teleporting a human is next to impossible,” he offered with little explanation.

“Your mother helped us to make a stronger connection with you,” Allison elaborated.

Stiles’ features fell. “Then it wasn’t real.”

“No, it was,” Peter corrected him. “I asked for your mother’s help, and she happily agreed.” He watched as Stiles quizzically arched an eyebrow at him. “I summoned her spirit. She was powerful enough to draw up a connection to anyone, but her bond with you is stronger than anything else.”

“Then, what she said ... that was her speaking,” Stiles faintly asked.

“A mother’s love reaches beyond even death,” Peter answered.

Stiles turned to look around them, wishing he could catch a glimpse of his mother one last time. He frowned, knowing deep down that it was a gift to see her even for those few seconds.

“She’s safe,” Peter offered, recognizing Stiles’ disappointment. “And willing to wait for you and your father.”

“Thank you,” Stiles answered, looking at both Peter and the woman.

The woman was young, adorned in armor with a cape mirroring Peter’s. Her cape, however, was crafted of opposing material, detailed in silver opposed to the black and gold trim of Peter’s. It was the telling sign that she belonged to the House of Argent.

“Huntress,” Stiles softly addressed the young woman.

Allison turned her attentions towards Stiles, a soft smile pulling across her lips.



“Is my father safe?” Stiles pressed, wishing to know if his prayers were heard—if they had been granted.

“He is,” Allison replied. “John has always been good at protecting himself from malicious forces.”

“I don’t understand why you have deemed me worthy of you both interfering on my behalf,” Stiles honestly admitted.

Peter looked to Allison, releasing an exasperated sigh. “My nephew reached out to his mother and begged for her help in saving you,” he explained as he turned to look at Stiles. “He was convinced that he couldn’t save you, regardless of his own powers.”

“When the tides turned in her favor, Talia asked that I answer the priests call for an Argent to accept your sacrifice,” Allison added.

“The people will think I’m dead,” Stiles replied. “They’ll think the worst of the Hales.”

“She wanted the people to believe you were gone from the mortal world,” Peter explained. “She didn’t want you being a puppet on her behalf, anymore.”

Stiles’ eyebrows furrowed in confusion. “Then they won.”

“Far from that,” Allison answered.

“Derek should be breaking his chains any moment,” Peter offered. “Which means he won’t let the priests get away with anything.”

Stiles’ eyes widened. “He’ll think I’m dead—my father will think I’m dead.”

Peter turned a cautious eye towards Allison. “I dare say we didn’t think of that.”

Allison softly bit her lip. “I was positive Derek knew.”

“How would he know?” Peter asked in an agitated tone.

“Could one of you go to him?” Stiles cut in, hoping to gain one of the gods’ attentions.

Peter crossed his arms over his chest, pondering Stiles’ statement. “I’ve been away from the underworld for longer than I should,” he started.

Allison winced, pressing her fingertips to her forehead in an attempt to ease the sharpness of the prayer she was overhearing. “Lydia’s ... praying to me,” she softly informed both Stiles and Peter. “She’s asking for word of Stiles—begging me for my help.”

“Perhaps it’s time your priestess knew more than just her one-sided conversations with you,” Peter replied.

Allison softly glared at Peter, wanting to tell him to mind his own business.

“Huntress, please,” Stiles gently begged, gaining her attention. “If I can’t go back to the city, please reach out to them and let them know I’m alive.”

Allison looked at Stiles, faintly nodding in acceptance. “My nymphs here will keep you safe,” she replied to Stiles.

Stiles nodded in acceptance. And just as quickly as he had been introduced to the gods, he was left alone.

That was how Stiles found himself among the nymphs, being looked after by the young and childish godlings. They were gentle with Stiles, offering him new robes after practically dumping him into the small pond they called home. They placed an intricately crafted crown made of flowers upon Stiles’ head, joyfully giggling whenever Stiles allowed them to play dress up with him.

Stiles was busy watching them dance amongst the water lilies when he heard people approaching the pond. He was startled by the nymphs’ defensive actions, how quickly they moved around him, ushering him away from his spot out in the open.

“We don’t mean you any harm,” a familiar voice called out to the nymphs, wishing to placate the creatures from their tense stance.

“Dad?” Stiles called out, recognizing his father’s voice.

“Stiles?” John’s voice answered.

“Dad!” Stiles called out, moving to get by the nymphs and to follow after his father’s voice.

John emerged from among the trees, his feet stumbling from the clumped roots of the trees, desperate as he rushed to reunite with Stiles. He felt as if he couldn’t believe his luck, being able to hold his son again after the sinking terror that he had lost him.

The nymphs were riled up, completely on edge until they realized Stiles was willingly running to the older man. They were buzzing with uncertainty as they watched others approach, not knowing if they were meant to drive these intruders away, as the Huntress had instructed them to.

“I was so worried,” Stiles uttered as he pulled away from his father to observe him. “I didn’t know what would happen.”

“I thought I lost you,” John answered, cupping Stiles’ face in his hands.

Stiles faintly smiled, closing his eyes as he let his father bow his head and press a faint kiss to his forehead.

“I never thought I’d see you again,” John uttered, taking in the sight of his son once more.

“I’m glad we were both wrong,” Stiles answered, opening his eyes.

“Stiles!” Lydia called in excitement when she saw him. She rushed forward, making her way through the foliage until she was able to hug Stiles.

Stiles smiled, a soft laugh bubbling from his chest when Lydia fell against him, pulling him into her arms.

“I prayed,” Lydia uttered, refusing to let go of Stiles. “I prayed to so many gods, I thought I would go mad.”

“For once, I would say that their answer is easily received,” Stiles offered.

“I swear to you, I had nothing to do with what happened,” Lydia started. “I promise you, I couldn’t control what was happening. A Daughter of Argent, I don’t know which one, but she wanted you both caught—”

“I believe you,” Stiles honestly answered, releasing his hold on Lydia in order to look at her. “I trust you, Lydia—always have and always will. I knew something must have happened.”

Lydia released a watery laugh, moving to hug Stiles once more. “I’m so glad you’re alright,” she uttered, burying her face into his shoulder. “I’d never be able to forgive my faith.”

Stiles hugged Lydia back, holding her tightly. He looked over her shoulder, eyes scanning the forest before them. His intake of breath was quick when he saw Derek moving through the trees towards them.

Derek’s steps halted when he saw Stiles with Lydia and John. He was overjoyed with the realization that Stiles was alive—that the gods weren’t just teasing them with the possibility that they weren’t too late.

A crown of flowers was settled across Stiles’ head, lighting up his pale skin in the evening sunlight. He was wearing white robes that were the complete opposite of the black veil the priest had thrown at Derek’s feet—the veil Derek still held, the shimmery fabric wrapped partially around his wrist as a memento, Stiles’ scent still covering it.

Lydia was the one that pulled back, turning to look at Derek. She released Stiles from her hold, not wanting to stay in their ways.

Stiles took an unsteady step forward, almost unsure of what was to happen—if he truly had Derek back again. He released a breath of shaky joy when a faint smile pulled at Derek’s lips. He practically ran as fast as he could the moment Derek started to move towards him. He wrapped his arms around Derek’s neck, pressing his face into the curve of his shoulder.

“I thought ...” Derek stopped himself, closing his eyes as he memorized Stiles’ scent, grounding himself in the reality that Stiles was still alive.

“I was terrified they killed you,” Stiles stated. “I feared you wouldn’t escape.”

Derek dreaded the idea of telling Stiles, but ultimately knew that he would have to confess the truth. Lydia and John now knew what he was, and it was only befitting that Stiles too learned the truth.

~\*~

“I know,” Stiles simply stated, as if Derek wasn’t telling him the impossible.

“You ... know?” Derek quizzically echoed Stiles.

“Yes,” Stiles faintly offered, unsure what Derek expected of him.

“But how?” Derek asked.

Stiles leaned away from his resting place, moving closer to Derek. “My dreams,” he explained. “I’ve seen myself comforting you during the full moon, hugging you closely as you settle the wolf’s urge to shift.”

Derek seemed impressed, but slightly taken aback. “You never said anything.”

Stiles’ lips twisted in displeasure. “My dreams of you are my own to keep from others, especially the priests.”

Derek looked at Stiles. “And you aren’t repulsed by this?”

Stiles blankly observed Derek. “Why would I be? You’ve always been a wolf—this doesn’t change who you are.”

“Sane people would run,” Derek reasoned.

“It’s a good thing neither of us are sane,” Stiles countered with a smile.

Derek released a heavy breath, his chest suddenly feeling lighter. “What happens now?”

Stiles looked at Derek. “Now, we live out our lives—blissfully, with each other.”

Derek faintly laughed. “That sounds too perfect.”

Stiles shrugged. “I think we deserve a little *too* perfect.”

~\*~

Decades passed, years spent in their own private solitude from the dramas of the world. Stiles took a pride in the garden he had maintained over the years, laughing to no end whenever Derek showed contempt for the garden that had rejected him as their caretaker.

Derek had, as Stiles foretold, grown muted tones of grey throughout his hair and beard, the softest formation of laughter lines gathered around his eyes. He still hunted, even in their older ages and much to Stiles’ dislike. He promised to avoid the predators, for Stiles’ sake.

They lived good, happy lives.

It was a warm summer night, the two of them resting as the moon shown brightly in the sky. The woods were quiet, only the softest sounds of creatures stirring could be heard.

“Do you believe it?” Stiles restlessly asked, his voice soft in the darkness of night.

“Hm?” Derek barely hummed, his eyes shut as he rested.

“What your mother said,” Stiles elaborated, turning his head against Derek’s chest in order to look up at him. “About us meeting, in every life.”

Derek opened his eyes, looking down at Stiles. He observed the way Stiles stared at him in anticipation. He knew Stiles was desperate for an answer to his worries—that this life wouldn’t be it for them. “You know that I’ve always had my doubt about everything,” he honestly started, knowing that Stiles could call his bluff easier than anyone else. “But this is different. I don’t fully understand what it is that we have—I don’t think my mother even understands it.” His fingertips trailed along Stiles’ back, softly caressing his naked spine in a doting manner. “But it’s something that surpassed the divine laws. I *know* that I was destined to meet you, Stiles. Just as I know that this life won’t be our only together.”

Stiles leaned closer to Derek, pressing a kiss to his lips. “I love you,” he murmured against Derek’s lips.

“And I love you,” Derek answered back, tightening his hold on Stiles.

Stiles placed his head back on Derek’s chest, closing his eyes as he listened to Derek’s heartbeat. He promised himself he wouldn’t cry, not when Peter promised it would be a peaceful passing.

Stiles buried Derek with his family. He knew his time would come, the gods gifting him with the knowledge that he wouldn’t have to live long without Derek. He plotted out a thousand different scenarios, curious how he would meet Derek again. Every situation left him more excited than the last, making him happy when Peter finally received him.

“We won’t be separated?” Stiles asked in curiosity.

“It’s your choice,” Peter answered. “Both yours and Derek’s, should you wish to journey through life again. Most people want a second chance at things they missed—some wish to relive their life nearly the same as before.”

Stiles accepted the knowledge Peter offered. He was indescribably happy when Derek was the first to greet him.

~\*~

It didn’t matter when or where, they always found one another.

~\*~

*“This is private property.”*

I hope this delivered some happy feels. I got a bit emotional at the end there, but I like to think of it as a nicely bittersweet ending, to an otherwise angst-induced trip.

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