

Inner Strength

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Inner Strength

by [rowanberry_52](#)

Summary

Stiles has been beat, physically and verbally. She is now ready to take the next steps and leave Beacon Hills in the rearview mirror. It doesn't stay there though.

Derek is looking for his redemption and only Stiles can give it. He is willing to do whatever he can for her, even restarting his own life.

A story about two fools who use words before they think them fully through.

****Season 2 ending altered. Alpha Pack is not homicidal maniacs but a weird police force.****

Chapter 1

Friday March 30, 2012

The girls locker room is eerily quiet and dark. Stiles is used to that though, used to being alone in the locker room after a lacrosse game. No one cared if she wanted to celebrate, especially after Scott made first line and then co-captain. She was actually growing used to Derek sneaking into the locker room and kissing her after a game, where they could have privacy.

Now though, now Stiles is struggling to walk into the room and to her locker. There is a slight rattle coming from her chest with each breath and it hurts. Who's she kidding, everything hurts. Stiles can't take the time to catalogue everything right now, she just wants her Jeep keys and wallet and phone. She wants to go home.

Home where her dad probably is. Where questions will pour out of the Sheriff. Stiles is worried about telling him, yet an even stronger feeling is pushing her to run to him and crawl into his arms and never leave the safety of them. The last time she felt like that was when her mom died, but this time Stiles has a rage in her too.

She stumbles to her locker in the semi darkness and feebly works at the combo lock. Her fingers don't want to turn the knob, too shaky and sore to get a grip. She suspects a finger or two might actually be broken.

Finally she gets the numbers to match and wrenches the lock open. Stiles lets her lock fall to the ground while pulling her duffel out of the locker. Earlier Stiles carefully hung her clothes up, but she ignores it while pulling the clothes out and shoving them into the bag.

Stiles is trying her hardest to keep her mind away from the past few hours. If she can keep her mind away from that then she can make it home and let the panic set in. She can't let the panic come yet, she needs to focus on her objectives. She just needs to pretend she is in a video game and her house and dad are her saving point. She can make it, she has to.

The duffel hits the bench behind Stiles and she reaches for her Converse. Somewhere at the Argent house she lost her cleats and had to walk barefoot from the woods to the school.

She almost forgets about her keys and wallet in the shoes as she tries to slip the shoes on. Stiles may not have been a boy scout, but she is prepared to never forget her important things by putting them with something that is natural to use. Like shoes. It even startles a laugh out of her, which comes out sounding more like a painful groan.

Stiles throws the wallet into her duffel and slips the keys over a non-painful finger before barely slipping the beat up shoes on. She doesn't even think she can bend down to try and put them on properly. Stiles just lets her heels push the back of the shoes down, one barefoot and one socked shuffling back to the door leading to the outdoor fields.

Looking around, Stiles is relieved to see her Jeep is still the only car in the nearby parking lot, no one else is around. Stiles continues her shuffling to the Jeep, every bone aching and a dripping feeling coming down her leg. She stops immediately and looks down. A shaking hand reaches for the liquid and Stiles can just make out a sticky substance with a red tinge. She doesn't want to admit to what it is, doesn't want to think about the pain coming from the junction of her thighs. She just needs to reach her save point and then scrub herself clean in the shower.

"Fuck," Stiles gasps. She needs to focus on her shuffle. The Jeep isn't too far away anymore and as long as it starts Stiles will be home in only ten minutes. If she can last fifteen she can survive. She will survive. She will not be a victim or message that Gerard wants. She will be his undoing, Stiles swears he will pay by her hand.

The Jeep is sitting coldly in the lot, not even locked. Stiles would usually berate herself for leaving it unlock, even though there is nothing of value to steal. The only thing worth any money in the Jeep is the Jeep itself if you can actually get it started.

Stiles pulls the driver's door open and throws her bag into the passenger seat. Some clothes fall out of the bag, but Stiles doesn't care. Right now she has to try and pull her broken body up and into the Jeep. She curses that they never put the stupid new running boards on the Jeep. Stiles is only barely five foot and the Jeep is lifted, it can be difficult on a good day without injuries to climb in the car.

"Come on," Stiles whispers to herself, "you've got this. Just grab the oh shit handle and use that upper body strength. We know we have it, otherwise Derek would actually have drowned in that stupid pool."

Stiles uses her right hand and grips the handle first and her left hand reaches for the door. She barely manages to vault herself in the air long enough to sweep her body into the Jeep and close the door in one go. Stiles' ribs scream out in pain and she doubles over the steering wheel. She can swear there was a cracking sound coming from her right side and Stiles is afraid to probe at it, but with her breathing returning to normal, Stiles will wait until she makes it home to see if a rib is really broken or not.

Fumbling with the car keys Stiles shoves them into the ignition after a couple tries. The Jeep seems to be just as shaky as Stiles, taking three tries and some wishing before finally turning over. Stiles can't even contain her relief as a heavy sigh escapes her mouth and causes her ribs to hurt even more.

She takes her head off the steering wheel and begins the ten minute drive home. Stiles has taken this same route for almost two years now, seeing these homes and businesses. It is all so normal, she thinks, in a very paranormal world. They don't even know the real hell happening, they just think a psychopathic teenager and some freaky mountain lions are converging on the town. They don't know that it is turning Stiles into some hysterical teen, running around solving all of the town's problems.

Hell, if her dad didn't know what was really going on, even before Scott got bit, Stiles is pretty sure her anxiety about it all would be worse. And it is so much easier to think about

this right now instead of what just happened. It's better to think through all of the steps people have taken to get to where they are now.

Stiles gets so lost in her thoughts that she doesn't even realize pulling onto her street. She and her father don't live in the best neighborhood for looks. It is highly safe with the Sheriff living on the street, but the house all could use some love and attention. Stiles has always loved that the outside of the houses don't really show the inside, the people. Like Mrs. Howell across the street. Her house hasn't changed in over twenty years on the outside, but the inside is a colorful mess that always made Stiles' head hurt. The old woman loves color and has enlisted Stiles and her father to repaint the inside multiple times. Stiles even remembers her dad offering to finally paint the exterior only for Mrs. Howell to decline.

Stiles pulls her mind from the memory and pulls up to the curb in front of her house. Her dad's cruiser is in the driveway and Stiles knows better than to block that, ever. It has led her to being woken up at 3AM once, when he got called to some crime scene on the other side of the county.

The lights in the house are on and Stiles is very relieved. Her dad is still up and he can help her through all of this. They will find a way to stop Gerard together. The Pack is actually rather useless at it, arguing rather than figuring it out. Stiles is going to have to convince Derek to work on teambuilding exercises with the Pack, if there will be a Pack left.

Erica and Boyd may be dead. Tears slip down Stiles cheeks, making the small cuts on her face sting. All she can see is the two Betas tied up in that basement, electricity running through them. If they ever are let go, let live, they will probably never go back to Derek. Scott just doesn't like Derek and Isaac and Scott are apparently buddies now, so there really won't be a Pack. It makes Stiles' heart break for the Alpha, he already lost so much and now he is losing the little family he was trying to make on his own. It was dysfunctional, but he was trying.

Shaking away the sad thoughts, Stiles turns her Jeep off and grabs the open duffle bag. It is easier sliding out of the Jeep than it was climbing in, however the stairs leading up from the sidewalk and then the stairs on the porch just make Stiles' legs hurt. She hates that the house is on an incline, she just wants something easy to shuffle forward on. Her left knee is starting to kill her.

"Come on, Stilinski, you made it this far. Just get to your save point."

Stiles feels her spine turn to steel for a third time that night and begins her trek up all the stairs. She is panting heavily with each step, rattling her ribs and fighting through the pain that is rising in intensity. She can do it though, she can make it up these steps. She has to make it up the steps.

She just keeps telling herself to get to her save point, just like she does when she plays the PS3 with Scott. It works as Stiles makes it to her front door, finally. The old wood is staring at her, daring her to come inside and break down. She is going to listen to the dare and follow through. Stiles just wants to have a great break down, one that poets could write about. Stiles tries her best to put her house key in the lock, but she just keeps missing. She can't even get the key in the lock.

The key doesn't need to go in though. The Sheriff opens the door, still in his clothes from earlier. Stiles takes her aching body and throws it at her father, not even looking into his face yet. She just wants a hug from a man who can keep her safe, who cares about it.

"Stiles," her father whispers. The door clicks shut behind them, the lock being thrown in place. Stiles has reached her save point and can feel her legs finally give out from under her, falling to the floor wrapped in her father's arms and taking the man with her.

"Kid, where were you? What happened? The lights came back on and you were gone? I was so scared."

Sobs wrack through her body and Stiles can no longer feel the pain that was agonizing before. She only feels numb because now she has to remember everything that happened. She has to tell her father what Gerard did to her. Has to find the words, which is usually easy, but now it is like climbing a mountain without any gear or water or food.

"Daddy," Stiles cries. She hasn't used Daddy in years, not since she had to step up after her mom died. The Sheriff knows it too, especially based on the hitch in his own breathing.

"Come on, let's get off the floor," he says. Stiles lets herself be dragged up and over to the couch. She is set down and given the whole box of tissues as her tears mix with the blood on her face.

John doesn't know what to do. His daughter is beat to hell, a terrible bruise marring her right cheek. Her lip is split and the left cheek also has a small cut. And that is just what John can see, he worries about the injuries that are probably under her lacrosse gear that is torn and bloody.

The couch was the easiest place to move Stiles to, she could barely stand on her own, let alone make it up the stairs to her room right now. She can't even keep shoes on her feet. John has to kick one of the discarded and beat shoes out of the way while they move.

He sets Stiles onto the couch and crouches in front of her, passing her the box of tissues from the side table. They barely use the living room, having the TV angled into the dining room instead for when Stiles does homework or he is working on a case. It's easier.

John just wishes this could be easier. This is his kid and she is broken and beat and crying just as hard as she had when her mother died. A little piece of John is crying right along with her, but the larger part is telling him that she needs him to be strong and ready to fight for her. Stiles would call it his Sheriff Mode.

"Baby girl, you need to tell me what happened so I can help."

He waits for Stiles to calm her sobs into hiccups and raises her head. The look of utter defeat in Stiles' eyes has John's heart breaking clean apart. She isn't the lively and happy teenager anymore, Stiles is defeated. Stiles should never be defeated, she is stronger than that.

“I, I was kid, kidnapped,” Stiles stutters. “Gerard wanted information.”

Rage blasts through John at the mention of the high school principal. He used Stiles, human Stiles, because he thought she was the weak link to the wolves.

“I didn’t give it to him, Dad, I couldn’t. I couldn’t let him hurt Derek or Scott or anyone else. He already had Erica and Boyd.” John sits back on his heels, hands holding onto Stiles’ knees. It seems to help calm her down, lets her get the words out of her throat.

“He wanted me to be a message then. A message to Derek and Scott.”

Stiles takes a minute, fighting off the cries breaking through. John is worried she is about to have a panic attack. She surprises him then, the tears stopping, her broken eyes taking on the rough, jagged edge of glass. This is a look that could scare a werewolf or hunter. Stiles is about to fight and destroy.

“He raped me and said it was to prove to the Alpha that his bitch isn’t safe.”

John tries not to let his hands squeeze Stiles’ knees too tight as he processes the words that Stiles just uttered. He doesn’t want to believe it. Stiles was raped and he couldn’t stop it. She was raped because she has some weird relationship with Derek. Gerard hurt his daughter to hurt a werewolf. John is not going to let that crazy bastard live for what he has done.

The ever present magic that John has kept hidden is beginning to boil in his blood. He hasn’t used it for nearly a decade now, but it wants retribution as well. John is going to use it against Gerard, he just has to figure out how.

“Mieczysława, listen to me.” John uses his daughters real name to bring her attention back to him, back to now. They need a plan and she is good at making them. “We will make him pay, I swear. I am going to help you upstairs, you are going to get a shower and I am going to pull out some of my old books. We will work on a plan together then.”

“Can I be the one to drive the stake into his heart?”

“As long as I am holding him in place for you,” John answers.

Chapter 2

Chapter Notes

Didn't want to leave on a major cliffhanger from chapter one.... this one you just have to wait and see!

Stiles is almost afraid to remove her remaining lacrosse pads and clothes. Some of her pads are just missing or are wrapped oddly around her arm as it is, helping hide what is just underneath. She does take the deep breath and begins to try and peel it all off.

She manages to take off one elbow pad that was left and throw it onto the floor as well as slip off her remaining shoe. If the bathroom wasn't on the first floor Stiles probably would still be crying in the living room, having her dad carrying her up the stairs. The thought does bring a sardonic smile to her face though.

It falls just as she tries to take her torn jersey off. Her ribs are killing her too much to move her arms up anymore. A tear does slip and Stiles wipes furiously under her eyes. She refuses to break down anymore until Gerard is dead. She will not let the fear and pain he caused distract her.

Deciding that she does need help getting undressed for the first time since being four, Stiles yells out for her dad. He is there in about five seconds flat, a look of concern marring his aged face. It calms him down immediately at seeing Stiles just standing there, fiddling with the hem of her jersey.

"I can't get my jersey or pads off," Stiles whispers, "I think one of my ribs is broken."

"Kiddo, come here."

Stiles shuffles over to her father and lets him help get the jersey off. Pain flashes briefly on her ribs, but not as bad as if she had been taking the jersey off herself. Next he helps with the chest pads, which come off easier with his help. Stiles can actually see the hand prints on her arms from the hunters and tries not to think about where else bruises like that will show up once she is undressed.

Her father struggles to help Stiles get her tight Under Armor shirt off, eliciting a lot of painful moans. Yet, Stiles is just left standing in front of her father with her sports bra and uniform shorts on. She can tell he is taking in all the bruising and the few cuts that Stiles can actually feel bleeding after struggling to get her clothes off.

"I need help with my bra too," Stiles mentions. It seems to snap her father out of his looking because he gives her an apologetic look. This is by far the most awkward situation they have been in since Stiles got her first period. It was about three months after her mom died and she

ran crying to her dad, thinking she was dying now too. It was also when the Sheriff finally snapped out of his drinking habits and spent six hours online with Stiles learning all about feminine hygiene and the female body in general. They never talked about it again unless Stiles needed to add pads or tampons to the grocery list.

“Okay, but kid, I think it’s a lost cause. There is a cut on the back.”

Stiles tries to hide her groan, she does, because this was one of her favorite sports bras. It was comfy and matched her lacrosse uniform perfectly. Not that anyone saw it, but Stiles was confident when she wore it. That thought makes her want to never wear it again though. She wasn’t confident earlier that night. She was terrified.

“Can you just take the scissors to it? I can slip it off then.”

Stiles watches her father nod his head before just pulling his old pocket knife out. Leave it to him to actually always have it in his pocket. Stiles used to think it would open and stab his femoral artery and kill him, crying one night when she was little and having her mom try and calm her down.

“Or you can just use that old thing,” Stiles murmurs while turning her back to her dad. He slips the blade under the two straps and slices them through. She tries not to shake as he cuts the back the rest of the way. It was too easy to dismantle it and suddenly Stiles was very grateful for her pads earlier that evening.

“Thank you.”

“I’ll grab you some clothes from upstairs, kid. You get your shower.”

Stiles just stays where she is until the door clicks shut. The eerie silence is almost deafening, making every movement louder. Stiles takes it all in and just lets her bra drop to the floor. She slips the shorts and her underwear off together, trying not to bend over too much.

About two years ago Stiles convinced her father to put a floor length mirror on the back of the bathroom door, it was when Stiles was trying to figure out when the rest of her would go through puberty properly and wanted to examine herself. Now she is both grateful for the mirror and horrified when she finally looks at herself.

As predicted her torso is covered in bruises, her ribs looking almost black against her papery skin. Fingerprints cover her upper arms and her thighs. The left knee is slightly swollen and turning a deep purple color. Stiles tries to probe it without causing too much pain to herself. It doesn’t seem broken or dislocated at all so Stiles is happy to only have to be limping probably. There are small cuts all over her body where there are bruises, where knuckles actually broke the skin. None are too bad and don’t look like they will scar.

Stiles is afraid to look at the junction of her thighs though. She just stares into her own eyes for a while until finally looking at it. There is a little blood on her thighs and the general area as well as the junk Gerard let out. She doesn’t want to call it anything else. Stiles decides she needs to feel down there, make sure she isn’t torn too bad and doesn’t need hospital attention.

It is very tender but doesn't seem like there is any new blood coming out. Stiles lets out a rush of air, if it tore any she can't really feel it.

"All right, time to scrub it all off."

Stiles sets the shower all the way to hot to get the water warm. She had been taking cold showers recently because the pipes are stupid and only do cold or scalding and right now Stiles wants scalding water. She wants to burn away Gerard's touch and erase the memories by boiling her brain.

With the exhaust fan also broken, Stiles cracks the door open before stepping over the tub and into the shower, pulling the curtain closed. She just stands under the burning water, luxuriating in the feel as her muscles relax. Normally it would be nice, but it just brings all the feelings to the surface as she relaxes. Stiles decides to ignore them and squirts the shampoo into her hands.

She rubs it into her scalp and on the light brown strands. She was blessed with rather straight hair that doesn't tangle so Stiles scrubs furiously at her hair before letting the water rinse it clean. She follows it by adding some conditioner that Ms. McCall said she should use, to soak into her hair while soaping up her body. Stiles uses the same soap and shampoo as her father, just some cheap generic stuff that comes in bulk bottles. It means there is no smell to it and it doesn't irritate the small cuts. Stiles takes extra care around her womanhood, trying not to cause herself too much pain, but she wants the feeling gone.

Once the soap is rinsed off, Stiles is able to finish rinsing the conditioner out of her hair and actually turn the water to cold. She wants the evidence of her puffy eyes to disappear and the cold water should help with that.

Stiles is shivering by the time she steps out of the shower and dries herself off. At some point her father brought her a pair of her sweat pants and one of his old long sleeves and some underwear. Stiles takes care to carefully put the oversized shirt on her small frame before putting on what are usually her period panties and the gray sweats. Her hair gets wrapped up in the towel, trying to get as much water out of it as possible. She almost feels normal, a part of her brain is relishing it. She shouldn't feel better.

Managing a limping shuffle, Stiles exits the steam filled bathroom and enters the kitchen. She scopes around a cabinet before pulling out the ibuprofen they keep in there as well as a glass. She wants to stop some of the aches from going any further if she can. Maybe take the edge off.

She is downing two pills with a glass of water when a knock sounds at the front door. Stiles freezes in place while she listens for her father moving down the stairs and into the living room. Stiles can hear some mumbles from the door before her father appears in front of her.

"Lydia Martin is here, looking for you."

It's a statement and a question all rolled into one. Stiles only feels herself nodding while she straightens her spine and thinks of a logical explanation for why she has a beat up face. The

bruises on her arms are covered with her dad's shirt, but that's it. He seems to take the nod as the understanding and goes back to let Lydia in.

Stiles doesn't even move, just stays where she is with an empty glass clenched in her hand. She should move to put it in the sink, her back would be turned then, it would probably be better. So that's what Stiles does, she turns and faces the sink to set the glass down. Her hands clench on the countertop and become rigid.

"Stiles," Lydia croaks. It isn't right, Stiles thinks, for Lydia Martin to sound anything except perfect. She doesn't turn around though, just stares at the glass in the sink. "Jackson died. I don't know what is going on in this town, but you do and you need to tell me why Jackson is dead, right now."

"I owe you nothing."

Stiles is surprised by the steel in her voice. She didn't mean to, she wants to apologize but finds herself still staring at the cup.

"Yes you do. I was attacked at the winter formal when I went with you. Then at Scotts house all that weirdness occurred. You were there for both and owe me an explanation for what is going on."

Stiles finally breaks and turns around from the counter. She meets Lydia's eyes and glares her best Derek Glare. It doesn't work though, Lydia is just wracking her gaze over the entirety of Stiles' face.

"What happened?" Lydia steps forward with a hand outstretched, reaching for Stiles' face.

"Just a couple guys from the other team wanted to teach me a lesson." Stiles just shrugs it off, trying not to wince at the pain in her side. The lie comes easy because it really isn't a lie. It was Team Hunter that beat her. "Come upstairs with me, I'll try to explain. Not all of it is my secret to keep though."

Lydia only nods as she follows Stiles from the kitchen and into the living room. Stiles reaches out for her discarded duffle bag and winces. Lydia must have noticed because she picks it up for Stiles instead and lets out a sad smile. Stiles just nods and heads up the stairs, trying not to groan whenever putting too much weight on her knee.

They make it to Stiles' room and just stand awkwardly for a few moments. Lydia just looks around, taking in the boyish look Stiles has in her room. Between her best friend being a guy and always having been a tomboy, Stiles' room is basically a cleaner version of a teenage boys room with blue walls and masculine furniture. She thinks it may have been nice to have some fairy lights in here one day, but then thinks better because Derek would probably glower if she put them up.

Stiles settles herself onto the bed, taking the time to actually look at Lydia. Stiles has always had a girl crush on Lydia that in middle school turned into an actual crush. Stiles can still see the pristine goddess in front of her, but the face is broken apart by red rimmed eyes and a pink nose. Lydia has been crying but otherwise still looks perfect.

“Your bag keeps vibrating,” Lydia deadpans. Stiles only shrugs her shoulders and turns to look toward her stack of werewolf and kanima related research on her desk, trying to decide the best way to go about all this. She doesn’t even notice Lydia reaching into the bag and pulling out her beat up phone. “Stiles I think you should get this.”

“Why? Who is it?”

“Scott.”

Lydia reaches the phone out to Stiles to takes it gently from her. Stiles is actually wondering what it could be that Scott would need from her when she actually reads the texts. Scott thinks she just had a panic attack and ran off. Now he wants her help though, Jackson apparently isn’t all dead, but evolving. And they need her to bring Lydia to some warehouse because Gerard is there with Jackson.

“Lydia you are about to find out a lot of my secrets, one of which is my dad knows everything. Do not tell the others.”

Stiles meets eyes with Lydia and glares, hard. She is about to admit everything to Lydia and she and her dad have a chance at stopping Gerard that night if they do it right. Stiles just needs her dad to perform a little illusion magic and then let him be the knife driver.

“Knows what?”

“About werewolves. Now I need to grab him and then we are going to go save Jackson.”

Rushing across the hall and into her father’s room Stiles can see him flipping through an old leather journal. He is trying to find something but looks up when Stiles bursts in. She can feel the manic grin on her face and witnesses it as the same grin spreads her father’s face.

“I have a plan and I know where Gerard is.”

Chapter 3

Chapter Notes

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

The Jeep doesn't go over 60 mph on a good day, however Stiles still floors it to bust through the wooden side of the warehouse. Her eyes are closed shut as wood sails around her and the Jeep rams into kanima Jackson.

"Did I get him?" Stiles shouts.

Her question is answered as the kanima jumps onto the hood of the Jeep, scaring both Lydia and Stiles out the passenger side. Stiles reaches for Lydia, trying to pull her over toward Scott while Lydia just runs in front of an angry kanima.

Stiles watches, fascinated and horrified as Lydia holds a key up in front of Jackson. They all stare as the scales melt back into human skin and Jackson's eyes, Stiles focusing in on the connection that is starting to reform between the two lovers. Before she would have felt the jealousy, but right now she knows that it is Lydia bringing Jackson back.

Just as suddenly Derek and Peter both jump toward Jackson, claws extended. Stiles almost wants to scream as both wolves impale the front and back of Jackson. Things start moving in slow motion, Stiles can feel her own heart beating slower than she ever felt.

Looking anywhere but at Jackson, Stiles just catches Scott and Allison gripping hands in front of her. A sharp stab goes through Stiles' gut at the gesture, remember Gerard saying that Allison brought him Erica and Boyd. Allison probably knew Stiles was there too. Probably knew what exactly Gerard had planned for her.

"Where's Gerard?" Stiles scans her eyes around the warehouse at Allison's words. If he isn't inside anymore then hopefully her dad can catch him. All previous vehicles are still inside, meaning he left on foot. Stiles plots the path that he most likely took and thinks about where her father is stationed with his leather journal and a gun. There is a chance that he can catch him before anyone else.

Stiles focuses back on the crisis in front of her, noticing Jackson unmoving on the ground. Lydia is walking toward her and Stiles begins forward, ready to wrap the strawberry blonde in a much needed hug. At least until Jackson starts to get up and then Stiles hightails it behind the nearest werewolf who just happens to be Scott. She also shrinks back as Jackson lets loose a roar matched with the same glowing blue eyes Derek used to have.

Stiles catches the hazel eyes of Derek in that moment. He is somewhere between constipated and furious, a look Stiles is deciphering to be shock and caution hopefully. If not then Derek should take a laxative and calm down before Stiles even tries to tell him what happened to her. Stiles forces her eyes away and stretches the magic senses her dad taught her about years ago. She can feel the pull on the tether she shares with her father and knows he is working on something.

“What the hell were you thinking, Scott.”

Time to focus back in. Stiles notices both Allison and Chris missing and an angry Derek advancing on Scott while a scared Isaac not too far away. Stiles searches the warehouse for Peter and notices him missing as well. Lydia is just clutching onto Jackson, keeping an eye on the drama that seems to be unfolding.

“I was protecting my mom and Allison. It was them or your Pack.” That bad feeling is coming back the more Scott talks. “I did what I needed to.”

“You turned on us, sided with Gerard. And you knew his plan?”

Stiles whips her head toward her friend, trying to hide the shock on her own face. Scott couldn’t have known, he wouldn’t have done something as stupid as side with Gerard.

“If I got you to bite him, that was it. My mom and Allison were safe. That’s all I care about. You’re a shit Alpha even Erica and Boyd left your sorry ass.”

“Scott,” Stiles tries to interject. No one apparently listens as Derek just lets out a deep rumbling growl.

“You are a idiotic fool. After everything she did do you really think she will love you? Do you think you have a future with her? Allison is a hunter and they kill our kind, she was willing to kill Isaac tonight. Willing to kill all of us, including you.”

You could literally hear a pin drop as a human in the warehouse. Stiles can’t even take a deep breath or move at all. Those words froze her, but they seem to have done the opposite effect on Scott who just turns and leaves the warehouse.

Stiles is standing all on her own then, watching as everyone else shuffles out of the building except for the angry Derek. He isn’t even looking at Stiles, just staring after the retreating form of a broken Isaac. Stiles wants to reach out, but values her injured arm and has to take a second before trying to step forward. Derek’s glare stops her in her tracks though.

“You are such a selfish bitch, you know that?” Derek advances quickly on Stiles grabbing her shirt collar. “Apparently you and Scott come up with all the plans, no need to tell me anything.”

“Derek, what are-“

“You were a good fuck, Stiles, and now you can just walk away. In fact you need to run or I will rip your throat out. You are a shit person.”

Stiles is left standing alone in the warehouse as Derek walks out. She can’t move and the breath doesn’t want to come into her lungs. Panic begins seizing her chest, making her ribs scream in pain. She can’t scream though, she can’t even get a breath in. Her vision starts to get dark around the edges and blurs as her legs give out from under her. The pain starts to recede and Stiles feels herself go blank.

John runs into the warehouse once he is sure Derek is gone. He heard every word that was yelled to his daughter. His daughter who is clutching at her chest and looks beyond panicked.

“Stiles,” John yells. He is next to her in an instant, holding her softly yet firmly. He just needs to get her to try and breathe slowly while not jostling any of her injuries. “Match your breathing to mine.”

John starts to take some exaggerated breaths of his own. His mind travels to all the bruises he saw decorating Stiles’ back. His heart broke in that moment, as each layer came off showing more and more.

He comes back to his senses as Stiles finally starts to calm down. She needs him here and now, to help her pick up the pieces of her broken heart. To get the superglue out and put it all back together after everything she went through that night.

“Come on kiddo, let’s get you home.”

“Scott knew, he was working with Gerard, dad, he knew.”

Air is knocked from John’s lungs as he helps lift Stiles to her feet. She is shaking a little and seems to not be looking at anything. The blank eyes are similar to those he came across on the night Claudia finally passed. Stiles is in shock.

“Stiles-“ John tries.

“He knew and Derek doesn’t think I am worth anything. No one thinks I am worth anything.” Stiles lets out a cruel laugh. John tries not shrink back at the hate that is filling what is usually a happy laugh. “Only Gerard thought I was worth anything and isn’t that just fucked.”

“Baby girl, you are worth something to so many people, to me.”

“Gerard,” Stiles startles. John steadies his daughter and looks into her clear brown eyes now. “Did you get him? What happened?”

“I got him,” John sighs, “I got him.”

“How?”

“Let’s get you home and I will tell you there. Stiles you need to rest and we need to figure out next steps.”

Stiles only nods her head and looks around the room. John thinks that she still looks lost and it kills him. She should be showing her strength in everything she does, but she is putting that usual strength into just remaining standing and together. John only wishes he could have protected her more, told that stupid Pack what he knew and that he could have really helped.

John leads Stiles to the passenger side of her Jeep and helps her into the vehicle. She idly rubs at her sweatpants covered legs and nibbles on the uninjured side of her lips. Her mind is probably running through everything and trying to figure out the paths they can take and where she should go from this hellish March night.

Leaving his daughter to her thoughts for the moment, John quickly goes to pick up the thick branch of mountain ash from just outside the building. He wasn't expecting his magic to be so angry when he used it earlier. All it took was a strong belief that Gerard was as useless as a stick and he ended up with a giant branch of mountain ash. Usually it would be something less magical, and that is what shocks John the most.

He takes the branch and puts it in the backseat of the Jeep before reversing out of the warehouse and heading toward their home. Stiles has closed in on herself, eyes scanning the area constantly for the whole twenty minute drive. John is incredibly thankful that he rode most of the way with Lydia and Stiles before bailing out nearby. No one knew he was there except the two girls.

John makes a mental note to have Stiles have Lydia come over within the next day or two, the girl will have to be involved with whatever they decide to do. The idea that everything is going to ride on the selfish girl keeping their secrets actually frightens John, but he cannot allow himself to be afraid. He will be brave and strong and whatever else Stiles is going to need.

Stiles is silent on the whole drive to their house, never even muttering under her breath like John is used to on most car rides if she isn't shoveling food into her mouth. The eeriness of it all makes John just want to take the branch that is Gerard and chop him into pieces before throwing him into their old fireplace.

"We're home, kiddo."

Stiles pops her head to John and then out her window. Their small house looms in the night. John has been wanting to repaint the house and do up their yard that spring, but everything else has started happening. He never got around to even picking up samples for him and Stiles to pick from.

Then again, John realizes, that they haven't done any renovations on the house in a couple years, unless it was painting Stiles' walls blue. That had just been an afternoon when he was off and Stiles was having a hard time focusing again since her meds had changed dosage. It was actually quite fun for them both.

"Okay."

Stiles manages to get out of the Jeep herself while John climbed out with the branch in hand. He helped Stiles up their steps and into the house before leading her into the living room. It is a shame that this is the most sitting this room has had in a long time. Stiles just lets herself slowly drop to the couch, eyes focusing on the branch.

"Is that him?"

John lifts the branch and smiles down at his daughter. He takes pride in meeting her eyes and nodding while snapping the branch in half over his leg. At the crack that goes through the air Stiles lets off a big smile. It pulled her lip in a way that made it bloom blood, but John can see the delight in her eyes.

He should probably be worried that his daughter is loving him murdering this man, especially so close after having been raped by him and then her boyfriend breaking up with her and finding out her best friend betrayed her. They never gave him this chapter in the parenting books or any book anywhere so he is just going to go with it and look up a good therapist for Stiles.

“I’m going to finish chopping it up and then we can settle in front of the fire and plan, Stiles. We need to figure out what it is we want to do, if we want to stay or go.”

John turns his back on Stiles and works on chopping the wood into pieces small enough to fit in the fireplace. They haven’t used it since Christmas and he cleaned it right after, so as long as nothing has come down the chimney recently they should be perfectly fine.

“What kind of wood is that?”

John looks over his shoulder at Stiles and frowns. She has managed to wrap her tiny frame in one of the old knitted blankets that Mrs. Howell made for them when they first moved into the house almost thirty years ago.

“Mountain ash from what I can tell.”

Stiles makes a noncommittal noise in her throat and goes back to just watching him chop what used to be a man up. He should be more worried about how well he is handling it all himself. John should probably go see a therapist himself. He is the Sheriff and here he killed a man and is disposing of the body in his own fireplace.

“Can I light it up?” Stiles whispers as John places the last piece of wood on the hearth. He can see the tears in her eyes, no doubt reliving what had happened, what he did.

“Sure.”

Stiles slowly stands and takes the matchbook from John. He can see some of her strength return as she takes out a match and lights it up on the box. She takes a moment to stare at the flame before dropping it on the wood. She must have used a little belief as the flames grow large and unnaturally fast.

“Burn in hell, you bastard,” Stiles grits out.

John wraps his arm over Stiles’ shoulders and brings her in for a hug. They both watch as the flames eat the wood alive and both pray that this is the end of the hell the Argents will bring to this town. Chris doesn’t seem like a homicidal maniac and can probably control his daughter.

Whew, made it just in time. The new semester started this week for school and I worked hard to get a week ahead in the assignments so that I could have time to actually write each week instead of rushing. However, this week I am going to work on spring cleaning, even though it's January.... I have a lot of stuff to get through in my house that I let pile up. Gonna take a couple weeks to fully clean.

I will still post weekly though!

Hope you enjoyed!

Chapter 4

Chapter Notes

So spring cleaning is completely done!!!! Holy Moly did I have a bunch of stuff from when I was in middle school in my home. Like, I am an adult why did I still have that?! Anyway, back to just school, writing, work, and life in general. Please enjoy this chapter!

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

Saturday March 31, 2012

Stiles didn't sleep the night before. She and her father stayed up watching the fire burn and the ashes settle. Her dad fell asleep for about an hour before jumping awake when Stiles got up to go to the bathroom. They never spoke of a plan, her father just staring between her and the fire silently.

Right now Stiles' dad is in the kitchen making pancakes and eggs while Stiles sits at the dinning room table with the TV on for some Saturday morning cartoons. She isn't really paying attention, but it keeps her mind away from the darker thoughts that had prevented her from going to sleep the night before.

"Dad," Stiles calls out. Almost immediately he pops his head around the doorway, eyebrows lifted in question. "We really need to figure this out, don't we?"

"We can work on it over breakfast. You need food and it will make it easier to tell you everything."

Stiles nods as her father goes back to making the pancakes leaving Stiles with their small television. There are still some random papers scattered on the table, including one of Stiles' school notebooks and a pencil. Stiles idly pulls it forward and doodles across the back corner. A wolf head starts to take shape and Stiles stops before she can finish drawing it and goes back to trying to watch the cartoons.

She is saved by her father dropping a plate laden with pancakes and eggs in front of her with a cup of coffee. They are already covered in butter and syrup so Stiles just digs in. She didn't realize just how hungry she was until she got the first bite in her mouth. Her mind tries to remember the last time she ate which was at some point before the lacrosse game. So over twelve hours.

"Slow down, kid, I don't want you getting sick."

Stiles acknowledges her father and slows down her eating habits. With nothing better to do while eating, Stiles studies her father's face. There are dark circles under his too blue eyes.

His wrinkles are still there, maybe deeper than she remembers and a few more. The short blond hair seems to have more grey than blond in it now. He is looking older than his fifty six years now and it kills Stiles that she caused him to age faster.

“What?” he asks around a mouth of food.

“You got old fast.”

Stiles is leveled by a no nonsense look before both father and daughter go back to eating their own food and staring at nothing in particular. It goes like that for a couple seconds before Stiles finds her good leg bouncing and hitting the table. Her father doesn't say anything, focusing on his own food.

They both manage to finish their food in only a couple minutes. Stiles gets up to take her plate into the kitchen while her father has his own in hand. They work silently to wash the pans and plates and bowls, the only sound in the house coming from the sinks and the cartoons in the dinning room.

With the last plate drying, her father leads Stiles back into the dinning room and shuts the television off. He pulls the notebook from earlier forward and flips it open to a blank page. Stiles settles herself next to him, elbows resting on the table and head supported by her hands.

“All right, so I think it is going to be best for us to leave town,” her father declares.

Stiles is about to fight it. Even though she just went through hell she wants to stay. Bad things have happened and Scott needs her. Well, he needed her. Stiles can feel the fight leave her before her father even noticed she was going to fight against it. She just doesn't want to fight anymore, she had been since January and it is almost April now.

“Okay,” Stiles concedes.

“I have a place in mind, it will keep you safe. Just, well, kid, it's my hometown.”

Stiles perks at the mention of it. Her dad never spoke about where he came from or his family. He never really talked about mom though either, so Stiles is willing to take as much information as she can from this and him while he is being forthcoming.

“I'm not John Stilinski there, though,” he whispers. “I was John Stiles and your mother wasn't Claudia Stilinski she was Ada Carter.”

“Why change your names? Did you guys have to join witness protection? How were you elected Sheriff if this was a false identity? What is going on, dad?”

“Slow down, kid. Your mother was a protector, they were like hunters.” At the shock and fear on Stiles' face, her father quickly went on. “Protectors work with supernaturals to police that world and the hunters. The Carters created them centuries ago. Probably before even the Argent family became hunters. They are the ultimate good guys.”

“Mom was one?”

“Before she and I got married she was. Something bad happened, something she never told me about, and she wanted to leave that life. We met not long after she left but while she was still Ada. I had just finished college and her family was in town. My father knew who they were, he worked with them before even I was born. It was a fast and hard fall into love. After six months we were getting married at city hall.”

Stiles can feel tears welling in her eyes. She tries to blink them away thinking about her father and mother falling in love. It would also figure that her mother was involved with the supernatural, even if Stiles’ dad doesn’t really use his powers anymore.

“Ada’s father, your grandfather, wanted her and me to work as a protector team then, but your mother didn’t want to. We did use the protector network to reinvent ourselves and disappear to here. It wasn’t hard with how involved the network was, even now if we use it we can reappear in my hometown and no one would be wiser. So that is what we are going to do.”

“Dad, are you sure? You’re the Sheriff here, we both have very involved lives.”

“I thought about it all night, kid, we need to get you out of here and somewhere safe. The hunters that worked with Gerard will eventually come back and I don’t want you in the line of fire again. It is also toxic for you here. I heard them inside. Scott knew about what Gerard was doing. He isn’t a true friend anymore, Stiles, he is going to get you killed one day and I can’t let that happen.”

Stiles sits silently, staring at the wood grain of the table. Her head has since left her hands which are now fidgeting together. She focuses on the one finger that is a little swollen and painful. It is probably broken, she thinks that maybe she needs to find a way to splint it. Make sure it heals properly.

“Like, I know you are right, but dad, he was my only friend. I don’t want to believe that he could have actually done that. I know he did, but I want this all to be a dream. I want to wake up and find that I fell asleep before the lacrosse game and that none of it ever happened.”

Stiles finds herself being pulled into a hug while sobs go through her. She didn’t want to think too hard about Scott betraying everyone except Allison. Stiles used to be Scott’s best friend and they would have done anything for each other. Stiles even tried to help him not go crazy during the full moon, tried to help him date Allison even when it would inconvenience her. Scott just threw that all away.

Her dad holds her tightly through the rib burning sobs. She is having a hard time calming them down so that the pain in her chest could stop. Stiles can feel the rattling in her chest and as the pain grows she finds that it is stealing her breath away. Stiles raises a hand to her ribs and manages to make herself stop sobbing. It helps and the fear that she punctured a lung passes.

“I’ve got you, Mischief, I’ve got you.”

Stiles finally calms down to small tears at the nickname from her childhood. Her father hasn’t used it since Stiles started going by Stiles instead of Mieczysława. She finagled it out of her

father, him claiming that his father went by it as a nickname. Which, in hindsight, probably not much of an exaggeration since her last name is actually Stiles instead of Stilinski.

“When can we leave?”

The arms around her stiffen up and Stiles’ father seems to realize that Stiles is ready for whatever it is they are going to have to do. He pulls back then and looks into her eyes. Stiles was always proud that she had her mother’s features especially the caramel colored eyes.

“I need to contact their network, should hear back from them within the day. You should get some sleep and we can work on packing later. I need to work on putting in for family leave and then see if the network will send in my resignation once we are gone.”

Stiles nods and stands on weak legs. Her exhaustion has finally set in from the past day. The stairs are going to be difficult to navigate but she can do it. Since icing her knee and face the night before, Stiles doesn’t think that it will be too bad to walk up all the steps.

“Do you want help up?” Stiles turns and looks at her father, a sheepish grimace stretching her face. He is a saint though, only nodding and following her to the foyer where the stairs are. Stiles goes up first, her dad behind her to support her ascent and helping her keep the weight on her good leg for the most part.

At the top of the stairs Stiles turns and puts on a sad smile. She gets a quick and gentle hug from her father before he heads back down the stairs. Stiles isn’t sure how he is going to be contacting this network, but it probably has something to do with a phone call or email or something.

Nothing lives on the walls in the hallway upstairs in the house. Stiles can remember that when she was younger her mom used to use the space to hang up the pictures Stiles would draw and call it their art gallery. Nothing has been up on the walls since she passed, but the multiple stuffed fish that Stiles’ dad has never made it upstairs, luckily.

Ignoring the beige color, Stiles struggles into her bedroom. The blues are a little in the face, but it helps her calm down. She tries not to remember Derek sneaking into her room and hiding or just annoying her while she tried to do homework before they got down to the fun stuff between her sheets.

Stiles even remembers the last time they had fun in here. It was Thursday night. She was planning on washing the sheets over the weekend, but now she wants the sheets off. Stiles walks over to the bed and ignores the slight earthy smell that Derek would leave behind as she strips the sheets off. She throws them onto the floor and kicks them into the hallway. Her blanket follows them out and it all looks sad just lying there.

Needing new bedding, Stiles opens the hall closet and rips out an old blanket and some more sheets. Once in her room Stiles realizes that she can’t actually make the bed. She settles for just laying the top sheet down and the laying down with the blanket over top. Sleep comes surprisingly easy for her, the exhaustion apparently winning out in the end.

Chapter End Notes

I am really impressed by how much storage space I have now. Like cleared whole shelves in closets and now I feel like I have to buy junk. Don't let me buy stuff.

Chapter 5

Chapter Notes

Between having a 65 pound dog laying on me and some slight food poisoning, here it is!

With only three hours of sleep under her belt Stiles manages to wake herself up. She didn't have any dreams which she is thankful for, but the sleep didn't really do anything for her. Stiles just couldn't sleep for any longer. She managed to tweak her broken rib and it is what startled her awake in the first place.

Slowly rising from the bed Stiles is able to take stock of room. Nothing has changed except that the sheets have been removed from her doorway leading into the hall. She figures that her father probably came by and picked them up at some point.

Knowing she should fully get back up, Stiles stands and makes her way into the hallway. Her father's door just down the hall is open but he isn't inside so Stiles heads to the staircase. She hopes going down will be easier than going up was so she goes for it by herself.

The worst part is the knee as it steps down which then jostles the ribs. It comes out to be more tiring going up but more painful going down. Either way she may just camp out downstairs for however long they remain in the house.

That thought is terrifying to Stiles as she rounds into the dining room and finds her father working on an unfamiliar laptop. He has a map on the table and a notebook that has a bunch of his chicken scratch over it. He is so absorbed in his work there that he doesn't even register Stiles walking into the room.

"What are you doing?" Stiles startles him.

She didn't even notice the wire framed reading glasses that her father barely uses until he looked up at her. Stiles made him get them a few years earlier when he was always squinting at computers and needing a bunch of lights on to read anything.

"Putting everything together. We need to figure out what name you want to go by, Mieczysława is too unusual and will draw too much attention."

Stiles sits down in a chair and picks at the bowl of popcorn that has made it to the table. She never thought about full on changing her name, she loved that her name was always unique even if she didn't use it because people mispronounced it. She never wanted to permanently change it.

"You said mom's name was Ada Carter, right?" The Sheriff only nods at his daughter, grabbing a highlighter and making a mark on the map, slightly distracted. "Well, how about

Carter Stiles?”

Her father looks up and meets her eyes. A sad look flits through his blue eyes before a shy smile comes on his face. Stiles can feel the pride coming from him as she is making a permanent decision for her future. One that doesn't involve college. That thought pauses Stiles in her track. School.

“What are you going to do about my school records and stuff? I know my spring break here started, but what about transferring me to the new school?”

“So our network contact, J, has informed me that they are currently working on the required documents and background and contact points. We will not have to worry and I do not want to think about how they are doing it. He is even going to submit stuff to the school for us on Monday. We won't be in town until Thursday though.”

“When do we leave here?”

Stiles turns her head to the TV showing some fishing show. It was on mute, but reality is too much to handle without some distraction with the heavy questions.

“Between Monday night and Tuesday morning. I don't want people seeing. I have already submitted my leave of absence papers. I had to cite family reasons so if people in town ask-“

“I don't plan on going into town looking like this,” Stiles interrupts.

“Okay. Make me a list of anything you are going to want to bring with you that we don't already have here. We are only taking your Jeep for all of our stuff. We leave everything else behind, including phones and computers.”

Stiles nods her head along and brings her eyes back to the mysterious laptop her father is using. He only has a desktop at the house and the laptop Stiles has sports some stickers she and Scott stuck on them a while back. This also doesn't look like one from the Sheriff's Department.

“Whose is that?” Stiles points to the laptop in question.

“It is a secured one that I have only used twice. Once when I had to set it up and again now. It was sent to me to keep in contact so if we needed them, I could get ahold of the network. It will come with us because, apparently, it is untraceable.”

“I feel like we are in some weird spy movie and are waiting for the bad guy to come back and attack, but he was burned to ash in the fireplace last night.”

Both Stiles and her father let out small laughs. The ridiculousness of the situation is actually helping to ease the tenseness of the situation. Stiles can pretend that she is okay. She is still waiting for the truly ultimate breakdown to come once they leave, but for now she is going to get her affairs in order like an old woman making a will.

“What would you think if I wrote letters to everyone, saying goodbye? You know, for them to find once we leave if they feel like checking the house when I don't show up at school and

word breaks that you are resigning?”

Stiles pets her broken finger and looks anywhere but at her father’s face. His writing and typing have both stopped. Stiles can hear him setting his glasses onto the table before looking up at her.

“Kiddo, they could be here sooner than that. You said Boyd and Erica were there when it happened?” Stiles only nods at her father. “Well, they will probably tell the Pack what actually happened to you when they come back.”

Stiles didn’t think about that. She needs to make a plan so that no one finds out what Gerard did. So Derek doesn’t think about her being something even worse than just being a shitty ex. There is only one other person who could probably handle the truth and that could reliably lie to the Pack. Stiles straightens too fast in her seat and looks around the house for her keys.

Her father tries to grab her attention, but she is in the zone. She finds her keys on the table behind the couch and a pair of slip on Vans before looking for her wallet. Stiles’ dad is holding it up and giving her a concerned look.

“Where are you going?”

“Lydia can keep my secret, I need her to divert the Pack.”

Stiles grabs her wallet and hugs her father before trying to race out of the house. She is inhibited by her bad knee and rattling rib, however she does make it out to the Jeep on the street without much incident. Pulling herself up is a little easier today, but they will definitely put running boards on the vehicle once they get resettled.

Stiles is just standing in her pajamas on the front porch of Lydia’s house, adrenaline rushing through her veins. She is actually vibrating while standing here, running all the talking points through her head. She is probably going to cry telling Lydia some part of it, but Stiles just needs to tie everything up in Beacon Hills with a Lydia shaped bow.

The door opens to a perfectly put together Lydia who doesn’t look like she just broke down the night before. Stiles isn’t sure what time it is, but the difference between the two women is more visible now than ever before.

“Stiles, what are you doing here?” There is no malice behind Lydia’s words, only surprise. Stiles is really hoping that Jackson isn’t here, or Lydia’s parents. She just needs an hour or two and then she’ll go home and write her letters and start packing.

“I need to speak with you. About last night.”

Lydia opens the door further and invites Stiles in. She probably figures it has something to do with how Stiles looks, she is in daylight now and Stiles is sure her face looks worse now especially with the lack of sleep and lunatic vibes she is giving herself.

The door closes and Lydia leads Stiles into the large living room. Prada, Lydia's dog, is lounging on a cushion in the room and soft music is playing in the background. Stiles notices a math text laying on the coffee table, but it isn't a school one. Pulling her focus back, Stiles sits down next to Lydia on the couch, ignoring the concerned look that Lydia is showing.

"So, everything I am going to say to you, you cannot tell anyone, not even Jackson."

"Why the secrecy, Stiles? There are already werewolves."

"Because I am going to disappear. Dad and me. Last night was worse than what we let on. When I said the other team beat me up, I meant Gerard Argent."

Lydia straightens her spine in her seat, tentatively reaching a hand out to grasp onto Stiles' own hand. It is her good hand so Stiles squeezes it back before pulling her hand back and reaching for the shirt hem. She isn't wearing a bra, but Stiles needs to show someone besides her dad what happened. To tell her anything that will make the bad words go away and be replaced by the positive.

Stiles takes the shirt off and covers her breasts with it. Lydia lets out a small gasp and covers her mouth. All the bruises are on display, looking uglier than the night before. Stiles can't even bring herself to look at her body right now, instead reading the emotions flitting across Lydia's face.

"Stiles, why didn't you say something? Is anything broken? What happened?"

"Usually I'm talking with endless questions," Stiles laughs out. "But, I probably have a broken finger and a broken rib or two. Not sure what it is, but my knee is fucked too."

Stiles slips her shirt back on and fiddles with the hem. She is going to admit to another person what Gerard did. She probably needs the practice so she can admit it to her future therapist. Or she can just pretend that this is therapy and then not go and admit all of her problems that she is not ready to face yet.

"Um, I don't actually know a great way to phrase this, but, uh, Gerard, he, raped me last night. They beat me and then he raped me. And then Scott apparently knew what Gerard was going to do and then Derek said I was a shitty person and dumped me. Then dad turned Gerard into a freaking tree branch and we burned him in the fireplace."

Stiles finished her confession on a rant and long breath. Lydia is just staring at her with no reaction at the moment, absorbing all the information that Stiles has dumped on her.

"Is that why you said you're leaving?" Lydia sounds small to Stiles, she shouldn't sound small.

"If they can't trust me then I can't trust them. It's what is going to be the safest option in the long run."

"Where are you going?"

“I’m not going to tell you where or when. I need you to skirt around the truth with the Pack without actually lying.”

Stiles settles herself as comfortably as possible on the couch, trying to find the best position to sit in with her painful ribs. Lydia just sits primly there, studying Stiles’ face and making her uncomfortable.

“You aren’t telling anyone anything else? Just going to disappear?” Stiles nods at Lydia’s questions and fiddle with the hem on her dad’s shirt.

“I can’t. No one can know where we are going. I don’t even know yet. Dad is working it all through. Including new identities.”

“Stiles this is very serious. More than just disappearing, you are reinventing, hiding.”

“I know, which is why I need your help beyond just keeping this hidden. I need you to tell Erica and Boyd not to mention me if they come back. They were both down there that night, they saw everything that happened.” Stiles chokes back a sob and tries her best not to completely cry.

“Lydia, I don’t even know if they are alive or not,” Stiles whispers. She cannot control the tears as they fall. No sobs accompany it, but breathing does get quite heavy. Lydia seems to be teary eyed as well, reaching over to hug Stiles close.

“Stiles, I’m sure they are alive. I promise to tell them whatever you need me to.”

“Thank you, but there is more,” Stiles leans back. “I want to keep in touch with you. I need to know that everyone is okay, that nothing bad is happening. I know I have no right to ask this of you, but I also want to keep someone as a friend.”

“Of course, we can do that. Just tell me how you want to do this.”

Lydia switches from crying and back to business quite quickly. If Stiles didn’t feel like she needed it at the time she might be offended. As it is, Stiles needs the rigidity that is Lydia Martin when a world is imploding.

“I’ll email you sometime in April. I’ll just put my initials in the subject line, MAS. I don’t know what my new email address will be yet.”

Lydia nods her head before reaching into a side drawer of the end table. She pulls out a sticky note pad and pencil. On it she scribbles her own email address and passes it to Stiles with a wry smile.

“What about your dad coming with us last night and then disappearing before we went inside? Keep that tidbit out of all conversations?”

“If you don’t mind? And keep the whole Gerard being dead a secret. If they find out then there will be more questions and dad only just used magic for the first time in years. We don’t need that following after us.”

“Noted, but, what is your father?”

“He is called a Spark. His magic is based in belief and I have an affinity for it as well. I haven’t done any magic yet, nor do I think I want to.”

“Do you think I have magic, because I apparently brought Derek’s uncle back to life and I am terrified of that prospect.”

Stiles can only shrug her shoulders. She doesn’t have an answer to give to her friend. All she can really do is hope to research it one day in the future to try and help Lydia once Stiles is free of Beacon Hills.

“We will figure it out, Lyds.”

Chapter 6

Chapter Notes

Bam! Another one knocked out!

As to where I am going, I thought I had an idea with this story, but then I started playing Kelly Clarkson songs this week and that idea has morphed and even I don't fully understand where I am headed... except to pick up a quilt I had finished from the quilt store tomorrow.

Enjoy!

Monday April 2, 2012 (Tuesday April 3)

There are only two suitcases and two backpacks in the Jeep by Monday night and two boxes of pictures, books, and little knick knacks that belonged to Stiles' mother. The house is going to be untouched until the day comes that someone sells it off. Stiles is a little heartbroken at that idea, having grown up there. Yet, she needs to leave this life behind.

Stiles says a final goodbye to the walls and grabs one of the knit blankets off the couch and heads out the front door. The clock inside the house said it was actually a little after 2 AM on Tuesday, but Stiles just pretends that it is just Monday night. She isn't on a real sleep schedule anymore anyway.

She has spent the last couple days going through the things she wanted to take and writing letters to the Pack. She left them on top of her laptop on her desk. Next to it is her cellphone. They weren't taking any electronics except the special laptop her father had. Bills were prepaid earlier on Monday for the next two months.

"You ready?" John asks.

Stiles looks up to her father double checking everything was good to go with the old Jeep. Stiles can only smile and hide the tears threatening to fall. In one of the boxes they have her mother's ashes. Claudia Stilinski has a headstone in the cemetery, but her body was never laid to rest there.

"As I can be," Stiles manages.

Father and daughter both climb into the Jeep and get settled. Stiles was worried about money on Sunday when everything started hitting home. She was worried that they couldn't afford to disappear, until John had pulled out a bag containing thousands of dollars. He had apparently been saving it up since he first came to town just in case they ever had to leave. Stiles had been shocked and it became real to her about how her parents had just disappeared from their families and how they were now going to reappear.

Stiles is wrapped in these thoughts as John drives the Jeep through Beacon Hills. He is taking them north and then they will head East. Stiles didn't ask where they were going, avoiding looking at the maps, but she will ask the next day once they are far enough away that she will be able to breath. And right now, breathing is hard as they pass the sign declaring that they are now leaving Beacon Hills. A few tears manage to leave her eyes and Stiles cuddles under the blanket she took from the house. Mrs. Howell made it for them and Stiles wants to keep a piece of the woman who treated her as a granddaughter.

"Try and go to sleep, kiddo," John says.

Stiles can only nod and lean her head against the window. There is a slight mist that night adding to the eerie affect of the woods. Stiles can only imagine Derek running around in them, playing the stupid hide and seek game she convinced him to play on an especially slow day back in February before they started sleeping together. Before Gerard showed up and before Derek bit Isaac. She still isn't sure how she convinced him to play.

Derek is probably at home in those woods, or relaxing in his stupid train depot. Maybe even sleeping with some other girl to forget about stupid Stiles. It would hurt more if Stiles didn't agree about her inadequateness. She just hopes that in the new town she will fit in better. Maybe really reinvent herself like Lydia told her to do a few days ago.

Before Stiles had left Lydia's house they sat and really talked. Lydia and Stiles spoke about the tentative friendship they always skirted around. If Stiles had been a little less lovesick they could have had a chance of being friends in middle school. In elementary school Lydia didn't like that Stiles could hang out with the boys easier and was jealous. That had made Stiles laugh until she had a hard time breathing from her rib pain.

Stiles already figured that she would wait until her birthday on April 17th to email Lydia. Give herself time to settle in and the bruises to fade some. She won't include a photo, just in case, but she does want to be able to look at herself in the mirror first. Stiles still hasn't allowed herself to look in another mirror since that first night when she checked herself over in the bathroom.

She has been opting for her dad's oversized shirts and loose pants for the past few days, forgoing the bra until her ribs weren't hurting as bad. It will still be another week before she even wants to try. She read it would take six weeks to actually heal so she is going to try a loose sports bra.

"I hear more thinking than sleeping coming from you, Sti-Carter."

Stiles smiles at her dad trying out the new name. He was going to try and retrain himself on their drive so it is more natural once they get to town. Stiles isn't sure if he will or if the many pet names he has for her are going to rear up instead. And that is fine by Stiles, she even admitted she may go by Stiles in school yet since it is their last name or by CS.

"Sorry, but I can't shut down yet. Too much to think about, but I'm sure it will eventually make me pass out."

John lets out a small huffing laugh. They both know that Stiles will actually keep thinking until her brain literally just shuts down and makes her pass out. It's how she has been found in many odd sleeping positions before.

Thursday April 5, 2012

The Perry Lake, Wisconsin welcome sign proclaims a population of just over 12,000 and a state championship high school hockey team. Stiles never really followed hockey, but she thinks she can get behind it and forget all about lacrosse. Maybe she can even learn how to play once she heals up.

It took them three days to drive from California to Wisconsin and Stiles finally had her breakdown the night before. She had a panic attack as John was driving down the road and they had to pull over for the night early. It was bad and took far too long to get Stiles to calm down. She slept in the same bed as her father that night, crying herself to sleep at the realization of everything that had happened over the course of a week.

Now, Stiles was just happy that they were almost to their final destination. John was going to take them to his father's house which was just on the outer edge of Perry Lake city limits. Stiles is just fascinated that the actual town was very prim and proper but it goes along perfectly with the farm land and doesn't feel like a small town.

Her grandfather apparently raised a couple horses in the past and ran a local general store. Stiles isn't sure if he does either anymore considering he is probably in his seventies or eighties, she never asked her dad.

The road is bumpy and jars the Jeep as they make their way around the outskirts of town. Stiles is trying to hold herself steady with each bump. Her ribs are still killing her and she just wants to be done on the road.

They pull onto a dirt path that leads up to a beautiful blue farmhouse. Stiles is struck by how nice the house looks with a yellow barn out behind. There was nothing like this around Beacon Hills and Stiles can feel a warmth here that was back at her old house. It may just be the fact that this is where her father had grown up.

The whole house seems like it is out of some painting idealizing the perfect country home. It is almost twice the size of the Stilinski home and Stiles feels like it is almost too big to live in, that there is going to be too much room for just one person and their thoughts. Maybe even too big with her dad and her there too.

"So, you sure your dad still lives here?" Stiles interrupts the silence they have had for the past three hours. The only sounds they had had was the light music coming from the radio.

"I was told he does."

Stiles sucks her lips in and takes in her surroundings. There are beautiful trees surrounding the property and two horses out grazing in the fenced in pasture. Stiles is distracted by staring

at them while her father parks the Jeep next to an older looking truck.

“Well, let’s go meet your gramps.”

Stiles follows her father out of the Jeep, careful of how she lands on her left knee. It isn’t swollen anymore, but there is some bruising that is still a purple and yellow color. If she keeps too much weight on it for too long it will start to ache. Her face still looks pretty nasty, the yellow and purple and blue bruises are healing but still there. Her lip is pretty much better as long as Stiles doesn’t pick at it too much.

John leads the way up the porch steps and knocks at the door while Stiles slowly makes her way over. The house seems even larger the closer she gets. She can also see that this house is well loved and taken care of. No peeling paint or creaky floorboards on the porch. Everything is just perfect.

While Stiles is taking everything in, the door swings open to reveal an older version of Stiles’ dad. He has the same blue eyes, but more wrinkles and all his hair is grey. Stiles is staring at the old man until his gaze locks on her then Stiles drops her head and studies the flooring of the porch. She can feel the gaze leave her and move back toward her father.

“Johnny?” The man’s voice is gruff and sounds like he has smoked a pack a day.

“Hey dad. I want you to meet your granddaughter.”

Stiles looks up at her father’s mention of her. The old man takes her in from head to toe. His eyes zero in on the bruises on her face and on the couple on her exposed arms. She wore a short sleeve that day since the other shirts were dirty and need washing.

“Hello,” Stiles waves.

“She looks like Ada, what happened to her face, Johnny?”

Stiles feels invisible, her grandfather may be looking at her but he isn’t speaking to her or acknowledging that she spoke. He is only talking with her dad.

“Can we come inside? I will explain everything. Stiles needs to rest,” Stiles is about to interject when her dad just gives her the annoyed father look. “Kid, you have been holding your bad ribs for hours now. I know you just want to lay down.”

“I admit they are sore, but-“

“No, you need to rest.” There is no room to argue and her grandfather seems to sense that something major is happening because he opens his door further and lets everyone inside. A cinnamon smell permeates the house and Stiles loves it. There is a chill in the air outside, but the inside is nice and warm.

“She can use your old room. Just up the stairs and second door on the right.”

Stiles nods at her grandfather and grabs her dad’s hand to squeeze before heading up the stairs. There are pictures lining the walls going up, showing her father growing up. There are

a few even older pictures, probably her grandparents. At the top of the stairs Stiles sees a photo of her mom and dad together, in front of a courthouse. Her mother is holding a small bouquet of flowers.

She drags her fingers down the photo, noticing her grandfather next to her dad and another older couple on the other side of her mom. It must be her parents, but Stiles can't tell for certain. She wants to ask questions, but will have to some other day.

The conversation between her dad and grandfather can be heard at the top of the stairs and Stiles finds herself listening in while her dad explains about the time while they were gone. Stiles settles onto the top step, ready to hear everything she has been too afraid to ask her dad these past few days.

Chapter 7

Chapter Notes

Ta Da!! I did it. Also just an FYI, the Jeep I have decided to fix up in the story and turn it into a version of my own dream Jeep. I had a Barbie Pink remote control Jeep as like a 5 year old and played with it with my brother and have wanted a Jeep ever since, so I just get to live vicariously with Stiles. It is going to be a few more chapters before that happens though.

It is going to happen though. I will even look for some reference photos for it too!

Enjoy!

Friday April 6, 2012

Hearing all the details of the past few months and then even further back and their lives in Beacon Hills entirely made Stiles feel small and broken. She never admitted to having a perfect life but everything since her mother's death has just made her seem like a piece of paper that was crumpled so much it started to tear.

Stiles only made it through the history lesson her father was giving before heading to bed the night before. She only got a few hours of sleep and then found herself snooping through all of her dad's old things. Stiles managed to find some old shirts she was going to steal and a record player. Nothing else is of much value to Stiles in the room, only the idea that it was her dad's once upon a time.

As she sits in the middle of the bed right now, it is sunrise and she can make out movement somewhere in the house. She already snuck around and found the bathroom so Stiles figures now is a good time to head downstairs and check out the first floor. Maybe get some food.

The house is filled with rich woods floors and they don't creak so Stiles finally feels like she can be sneaky. Well, she would have been if she didn't trip walking into the living room and topple over the back of a couch. Which is just how her grandfather found her, holding back tears and trying to press the pain of her jostled ribs away.

"That is not how you use furniture," he grumbles.

"I had planned on walking like a normal person but gravity and the bad luck that follows me had other ideas." Stiles had to take a moment to catch her breath before letting her reply snark out. Normally she wouldn't care, but the old guy didn't seem like he was joking, only disappointed.

"You know, Johnny was the same way. You'll grow out of it."

Stiles is watching the world upside down as her grandfather sits down in a worn out recliner with a cup of coffee and a smile. Maybe he was joking earlier. Stiles isn't functioning on enough sleep to be able to determine if he is or not.

"Well, are you going to get up and get some coffee? I want to get to know my granddaughter, no matter how strange she is."

"You are going to regret knowing just how strange I am. Dad did tell you I went searching in the woods for half a human body right? And that still isn't the weirdest thing I have done before really knowing about supernatural shit aside from dad."

Her grandfather only raises an eyebrow at her before taking a sip of his coffee. Deciding that he is just waiting to actually hear about her from her, Stiles pulls herself up from the couch and looks around for the opening to the kitchen. She finds two clean mugs sitting next to the pot and pours herself some coffee before heading back into the living room.

Stiles tries to mirror the smug setting of her grandfather, but only manages to almost slosh hot coffee onto her pajamas. Ignoring the small huffing laugh Stiles focuses on trying not to make a complete fool of herself.

"So, what do you want to know of the great Stiles Stilinski? Or, well, Carter Stiles now?" Stiles tries to sit still, she really does but she has been off her meds for days and is currently drinking caffeine. It is a losing battle.

"I just want to get to know you, whether or not you went through hell and that is what brought you here, I want to know the amazing kid that my kid raised. Your dad mentioned that the Jeep was yours?"

The Jeep, Stiles could talk about that for hours if given the chance, and her grandfather was about to see just how much she could talk. She is feeling normal for the first time in almost a week and Stiles is going to take advantage of it.

"Ah, yes, Roscoe. He belonged to mom, the first car she and dad bought in Beacon Hills. I love that Jeep. He breaks down a lot and I spend most of my allowance on taking him to garages to get fixed, but he is the best car ever. I want to put running boards on him though, cause I am barely five foot and he has a lift that mom put on. Mom was like tall though, so I want to figure out who I got my height from, but like I am too small to successfully climb into that car with a skirt on. I tried and was promptly laughed at by Jackass Jackson."

Stiles finally takes a breath at the end of her ramble. Her grandfather is just staring at her with wide eyes and Stiles shrinks in on herself. She talked way too much and freaked him out. He isn't going to like her as much as she was hoping he would.

"Wow, your dad wasn't kidding when he said you usually talk a lot. It is going to be nice having a blabber mouth around. My wife, your grandma, talked just as much and it was in Polish so at least now I have an easier time understanding you."

The relief literally allowed Stiles to relax back into the couch. She didn't ruin it by being to talkative.

“And about your Jeep, I think I should teach you how to fix up cars, Missy. Help you save up some money for proper teenager stuff.” Her grandfather finished his declaration on a wink. He may not show too much emotion but Stiles felt like she has a partner in crime. Not actual crime, although who would suspect the old man and the innocent, albeit, ten year old looking teenager.

“You are my favorite grandfather you know that? Like best one ever.”

“I am the only one you have met, I’m sure your other one will stop by eventually now that your dad popped back up.”

Stiles can only shrug and move the topic onto a lighter one, ranting about how unfair stereotyping a girl with a Jeep is. She doesn’t fit the classic California Jeep Girl Trope and it is offensive to even elude to it. That’s how Stiles was able to spend her morning, ranting and raving alongside her grandfather who managed to solidify his role as Gramps.

With the wind whipping around him Derek ran around the Preserve. He has been going crazy ever since Scott tricked him. Since Stiles went along with the plan. He should have known better than to trust her. She would always side with Scott instead of him. He should never have kissed her that first time after he became the Alpha. In the shadows of her backyard.

Derek has been trying to run this betrayal out of his system for a week now. He never went near the Stilinski house during this time, already seeing her smirking face in his dreams and daydreams, Derek couldn’t look at her now.

He can even remember the hurt look on Stiles’ face that night. She actually seemed surprised that he was mad at her for working against him. Derek has a right to be mad, he was truly falling for her and she just laughed in the face of that. He can’t do that to himself again.

Derek knows that Stiles will eventually wind up in the supernatural shit storm that seems to have rolled in and he will have to work with her because she is amazing at solving problems. He just wishes that she didn’t have to solve problems, that they could have just been a normal couple going on dates for ice cream or something stupid like that which would involve giving her too much sugar and then dealing with her bouncing around everywhere. He would have loved doing that with her. He would because he actually fell in love with her.

Lost in his thoughts, Derek winds up in front of his old house. It is still derelict and should be torn down. He thinks that maybe he will do that now, get his mind off a certain girl. He can’t though, because all he wants to do is build it so he could have a future with her in it. Fill it was everything that could make her happy. It’s ridiculous, she is only a teenager, not even half way done with high school and he just turned twenty one.

“Derek Hale.”

Derek spins around at the voice. It is a deep timbre and one that he is not familiar with. Just inside the tree line Derek can make out a set of glowing red eyes. His hackles rise as four

more sets of eyes begin glowing. This would be the moment Stiles would comment about the movie dramatics. Derek tries to push that thought out of his mind and focus on the threat.

“Do you know who we are?”

“No,” Derek growls out.

“We are the Alpha Pack, how about now?”

Stories start filtering into Derek’s mind. His mother used to talk about how they were like a type of werewolf court system. If they are in Beacon Hills now then he is probably about to go on trial. He honestly doesn’t blame them, even Stiles called him a failwolf a couple weeks ago after they first went after Lydia.

Derek relaxes his position, not submitting, but showing that he doesn’t see them as a threat. Once he does so, the others step from the trees. There is only one woman among them and the others men; one large guy, a set of twins, and then one with sunglasses covering his eyes.

“We are here because of all the rumors that have been circulating about Beacon Hills recently,” sunglasses starts. “We were concerned, especially since your Pack is made up of teenagers. Not the smartest choice, however I cannot fault you on trying to save them.”

“How did you-?”

“Oh, we may have rescued two very injured Betas of yours Saturday morning. Got quite an earful. We are going to do an encompassing investigation on Beacon Hills alongside a Protector. Werewolves and hunters alike are part of this. There needs to be balance.”

“I understand,” Derek concedes. “When will I get my Betas back, or have they chosen to move on to another Pack still?”

Sunglasses walks closer to Derek, reaching out and putting a hand on his shoulder. There is a slight squeeze before the hand is gone, but the meaning was there, Erica and Boyd may never come back.

“They will come back soon, we have a few questions for one human though. Stiles Stilinski is what they called her. Once we speak with her then the Betas are free to go. Do you know where she is? We have not been able to locate her at her home.”

For once the forest goes quiet. Derek can hear his own blood rushing around his head at the idea that Stiles isn’t by her house. That the Alphas haven’t been able to locate her. Stiles mentioned what a panic attack felt like once and Derek feels like he is on the verge of one himself.

“Never mind, we will ask the other human girl. Their scents twisted together most recently. Thank you for the time, Alpha Hale.”

The Alphas leave Derek in the forest, chest constricting. Stiles, he needed to find Stiles. Maybe she was with Scott. He should check there first. Scott may hate him, but Derek needed to make sure Stiles was okay. He is panicking for no reason. She is probably just

playing video games. It is their spring break. Or maybe she and the Sheriff went on a spring break trip together.

Chapter 8

Chapter Notes

So no Jeep writings yet.... not sure where I am gonna put it in yet.
The next couple weeks are going to be hectic with classes and getting ready to go on a trip, so I am going to prewrite some chapters this week while it is slow.
Enjoy!

Diners are always fun, especially ones that are quirky to a town and apparently have the local school sports photos hanging around the place. Stiles already likes Willa's Place and she only has two reasons to like it so far. The niche feel and the location in accordance to the high school. She only has to walk across the street to get to it. They haven't even sat down yet.

By lunch Gramps declared they would go out for dinner that night to one of the favorite spots for the younger crowd. He wanted to give Stiles a chance to see the people her age, especially since they are starting their spring break for the week.

Stiles was just happy to go along with it. She had no plans for the week, except maybe go to Walmart and try and replace her phone and laptop. They already picked up a phone for her dad and stopped by the school to get her schedule so Stiles was about to be bored. A bored Stiles was bad for everyone else.

"So, this place has amazing milkshakes, Missy, you are going to love it," Gramps announces.

There are plenty of tables in the diner and most are filled with people around her age decked out in the school colors. From what she learned at the school earlier there was going to be a baseball game that night so it made sense that this is where all the students are before.

"Are there curly fries?" Stiles questions. It is a valid concern of hers even though Stiles can hear her father laughing behind her.

"I think so, we'll have to ask Tina, she's my usual waitress."

Stiles nods and follows Gramps to a table in the back of the diner. She tries to keep the bad side of her face turned from her future classmates and lets a smirk come out instead. No need to give them ammunition to use against her later.

The little trio sat down together and pulled the menus from behind the condiments. Stiles pursued the whole menu before seeing a mouthwatering picture of a double cheeseburger and it had a side of curly fries. Stiles was sold, she was also going to get a second plate of fries and a strawberry shake. Since that breakfast on Saturday morning, this will be her biggest meal since before the lacrosse game and Stiles was looking forward to it.

“Dad,” Stiles calls. John looks up to his daughter over the top of his own menu, eyebrow raised.

“You can have a burger, celebrating a new beginning.”

“Why couldn’t the man have a burger? Why does Johnny need your permission?”

Stiles smiles at Gramps and then quickly shoots a nasty smile to her father. He never told his own father about his medical conditions.

“He has heart problems that I am trying to prevent from getting worse by attempting to control his diet. I have been quite successful.”

“She terrifies me,” Gramps admits from beside Stiles.

“Welcome to my world,” John grumbles.

Stiles ignores her father and grandfather, focusing on how wonderful her burger is going to be. She can practically taste it now, the fresh Wisconsin cheese melting over the patties and the fries fried to a wonderful crisp yet soft enough to be heaven. She tries her best not to drool while they wait for the waitress.

“Hey there, Stiles, how’s it going?”

Stiles jumps at the names the waitress calls. She knows it is directed at Gramps, but it is so weird for it to be called so soon after changing her own name away from that for the most part.

“Pretty good Tina, Johnny moved back to town and brought my beautiful granddaughter with him. This is Carter.”

Stiles smiles at Tina, trying to keep her bruised face turned away. She doesn’t want people to judge her yet, even the waitress at a diner. Tina smiles back at Stiles with a wink and then turns a glare on John. Stiles is almost afraid for her dad until Tina starts talking.

“John Stiles, what took you so long to come back here? Thirty years and nothing? I am ashamed to have called you a classmate.”

“Now, now, Ada and I were making lives for ourselves. I mean, we got a great kid out of leaving town here.”

“As long as you accomplished that. Now, what can I get you guys?”

Gramps rattles off an order for a chocolate milkshake and some chicken tenders. The weakling, Stiles thinks. John orders a regular cheeseburger meal and some lemonade. Stiles gleefully announces her giant order, surprising both Gramps and Tina with the sheer amount. In her haste to smile in glee, Stiles turned her head enough that her black eye came into full view. Tina blanched a bit but moved right on in writing the order down and smiling as she turned around.

Stiles slunk down in her seat a bit, turning her face more to the side and covering it with her hair. She didn't like getting stared at or pitied. On the way to Perry Lake she had gotten a few of those looks from too many different people. Stiles even had one old lady ask if she needed help getting away from her dad. It had already been a trying day so Stiles was full of mean sarcasm and scared the lady away while getting that disappointed look from her dad.

"You good, kid?" Dad asked. Stiles could only nod as she fiddled with putting all of their menus back. She was refusing to meet anyone's eyes and they knew it.

"Perfectly acceptable, nothing to not be good about. Just wanting to use my hair for shade purposes. It is quite sunny out right now and I am sitting next to the window. Should have brought in my sunglasses. Would be nice to have."

Stiles rambled, it is what she was always good at. And her dad was always good at reading in between the rambling to understand what she was really getting at. Stiles can see his reflection in the window and it is one of understanding. She can feel his hand resting on her leg, letting a few pats go before starting up a seemingly meaningless conversation with Grams to leave Stiles to her tangent filled thoughts.

With keeping her black eye hidden, Stiles took the chance to look around the room. At the counter there was a trio of girls who seemed to be pointedly ignoring the four guys sitting next to them. With all of them sporting the high school colors Stiles can discern they probably all go to the school together. They probably also know each other which makes the two very separate conversations interesting to her.

Stiles is stunned out of her stalking, she is willing to admit that was what it is, by her milkshake and two plates of food. Tina sat everything down and then looked over to where Stiles was looking, a smile stretching her face.

"You can go talk to them you know," Tina declares. "The one with the cowboy hat it my son. I assure you none of those kids bite."

"I wasn't staring." Stiles wants to slap herself for basically admitting that she was. She also wants to smack her father and grandfather for snickering at her verbal flailing. "That was an admission wasn't it? I probably didn't take my meds today, so I apologize in advance and for the past. I am way out of it. I should probably also shut up now and eat this food before dad tries to steal any of my fries."

Stiles bends her head down and shoves a handful of fries in her mouth. She ignores the small conversation going on around her and is thankful for when Tina finally leaves their table. The relief is short lived when Tina's son and his gaggle of friends come over toward the table. Stiles wants the ground to swallow her whole.

"Hey, I'm Trevor," cowboy hat says. "I was told you are new to town."

Smiling around a mouthful of fries Stiles can hear someone laughing. She doesn't feel bad about that anymore, she is used to so many people laughing at her and her appetite. Instead, Stiles lets them group of teenagers see her face in full. Only one gasp is heard and Stiles is frankly impressed that it was only one.

“The one with food in her mouth is Carter,” John says for his daughter.

A tall blonde peaks her head around Trevor and does a half wave toward Stiles. She has pretty gray eyes and a perfectly made up face. Stiles is half thinking that she should totally get a crush on this girl.

“I’m Miranda,” the blonde says. “The brunette here is Ashley and Kayley is down there at the end.”

Miranda points at each girl and Stiles can finally swallow her food and manages a real smile. It pulls at her lip and makes it sting, but it doesn’t bleed so that is a plus.

“This is Damon,” Miranda points to her right to a very large Asian guy with a big smile. He reminds Stiles of Boyd before the stupid bite. “Zane is the one with the scowl and Benny is the one who looks like a puppy.”

Benny does in fact look like a puppy with his messy blonde hair and dopey brown eyes. He is a much more convincing puppy than Scott and Stiles immediately likes Benny. It’s like Scott pre-bite, pre-asshole, pre-traitor. Zane just looks like he could be going through an emo phase and Stiles wants to peel the sad layers back.

“It’s cool to meet you guys,” Stiles finally manages.

“Are you going to the game tonight?” Benny asks. Stiles likes the happy pitch of his voice and the need to make direct eye contact. He actually looks really hopeful.

“You should go, kiddo, get to know your schoolmates before you start,” John decides for her.

“I guess I should go,” Stiles says, “but first I am going to eat all this food if you guys don’t mind.”

“Go for it, girl, we’ll be having our food at the counter,” Kayley winks and saunters away. The rest of the group follows after and Stiles lets out a deep breath she didn’t even know she was holding in.

“Did I just get pimped out by my own father to go to a baseball game with seven complete strangers?”

“I call it setting up a playdate for my daughter so she can make friends.”

“You don’t know them? One or two could be axe murderers, or worse yet, freshmen. Don’t ruin my badass fighter cred before I even start at the school, pops.”

“Stiles, even if you could beat someone up, you would never have that image. You are too tiny to be badass. You might be able to pull off terrifying if you can actually manage a proper scowl. Practice in the mirror this week.”

Stiles fully ignores her father and sets into her meal. The double cheeseburger is truly amazing and Stiles has even stuck some of her curly fries on the burger and mashed the top

bun down on top. She can feel the stare from her grandfather as she attacks her food like a werewolf who hasn't eaten any little bunnies in months.

"She is inhaling that burger, Johnny, you were wrong, she is terrifying."

Taking a small break from her delicious food Stiles flashes a predatory smile at her grandfather, taking pleasure in the disgust on his face.

"So, why'd you guys move here?" Miranda asks.

Stiles was sitting in the bleachers next to Miranda, the others in the group are down a few rows or out on the field. Miranda seems to be the only one who isn't paying attention to the game besides Stiles. Which is a relief to have someone to talk to.

"Got into a bad situation so dad decided to move us back to his hometown."

"It have something to do with your face?"

Stiles would be offended, however it is a valid question. Stiles would have the same question if she was trying to discern whether or not she could trust the new stranger with a black eye who has just shown up out of the blue. Miranda probably isn't paranoid for the same reasons that are the driving force behind Stiles' though.

"Someone thought I needed to take a beating. My face is the only part that doesn't hurt as much."

"Did you at least get in some punches?" Miranda's tone is threatening. Stiles isn't sure who it is toward.

"Oh, got my revenge on the one who did this to me." Stiles waved her hand around her face and body. "The one who broke my heart, not so much."

Stiles isn't even sure where her last sentence came from, only that she needed to vent to someone about that part. She hadn't properly done it with Lydia before she left and it isn't something she could comfortably do with her father. Or grandfather.

"Well, good riddance. I'm here to talk if you need to. Haven't been in any relationships myself, however I am an observer and have good deductive reasoning and psychology textbooks."

"Would it be weird to say that you frighten me slightly? Because it is in a good way. Like if you and my friend Lydia ever got together you guys could probably take over the world without breaking a sweat."

Miranda preens under the compliment and turns to fully face Stiles. She grabs onto Stiles' hands and bites at her own lips. Stiles is worried the girl is going to kiss her, but then Miranda actually does the unexpected and hugs her.

“We are going to be amazing friends, I can already tell. Like everyone else is already paired off into BFF pairs or just couples. Kayley and Ashley are BFFs, but Kayley is dating Trevor and Ashely is in this weird on and off relationship with Zane. Trevor is buddies with Benny and Damon is trying to be besties with Zane, but the dick makes it hard. That was a terrible phrase of words, describing Zane.”

Miranda is wincing at her own words and Stiles finds it adorable. She is usually the one putting her foot in her mouth. To say this would be an interesting friendship is going to be an understatement.

“It’s cool. I appreciate a good dick joke. I usually am the one making them.”

Both girls let out laughs at Stiles’ deadpan tone.

Chapter 9

Chapter Notes

I am a little late with this one. Midterms are just around the corner though so I am actually going to step back for a couple weeks as I am also about to go on a 10 day road trip with my dad... literally right after I complete my midterms. So I will be back to the Monday schedule on March 23. I will still post a chapter next week as I almost have one edited that can go out. That will be the last one until I get back.
So please enjoy this one!

Tuesday April 17, 2012

Lyds,

So I made it in one piece. Won't tell you how long I have been here or where here is for the moment. Plausible deniability.

Any who, I am going to school like a good girl and not being a social recluse. I actually found a group of friends who are in my class. It is a nice bunch and I am really excited to say I have found my platonic soulmate in Miranda. I know it used to be you, but honestly she has my humor and rambling qualities and together we drive everyone else up the walls, but at the same time Miranda has you sense of style and charisma.

So I also managed to make friends with Kayley who is on the girl's hockey team and is dating the goalie for the boys hockey team, Trevor. They fit super well together, like you and Jackson well. It just evens out perfectly except Trevor isn't an ass and his mom is my favorite waitress at the diner.

There is also Ashley who I still haven't fully deciphered yet. She seems to be very fragile but is so confident and stunning and intimidating. She may actually be a carbon copy of you except for the dark hair and eyes. She is on and off more with her whatever he is Zane. Zane is cool though, when he isn't blasting sad music through his headphones and trying to get me to listen. He is going through an emo phase and is fully aware that everyone supports and loves him, he just wishes they would let him be without it. I plan on having a conversation with him about that this summer.

I also found Asian Boyd. God they are so similar it frightens me. He is also a little like Danny with the immediate likeability. I kinda adopted him as my big brother and he knows it and scares the would be bullies away. I am hanging out with the sporty people who do not put up with any bully and it is amazing.

Lastly there is Benny. I want to adopt Benny as a child and hide him away from all the bad things. It is a ridiculous thought, he is on the fast track to a baseball scholarship and can stand on his own, but he just has this whole puppy feel and look to him. If I was willing to date anyone ever again, aside from you, I would probably choose Benny.

As for dad, he is doing really great here. He didn't go back into law enforcement, but he is working at a hardware store as the manager. We moved in above it, the apartment has two bedrooms, a bathroom, and this really awesome closed in sunroom with amazing lighting. I am thinking of just convincing dad to let me turn it into my room so I can take art back up.

That's all I really have for now. I miss you Lydia and I wish that it didn't have to be this way, but it is what it is.

Peace out,
MAS

Stiles pressed send on the email before she could chicken out. She managed to write and send it on her birthday. She has been in school for a week now and she is having an easy time of it. The class size is small and she shares almost all of her classes with Miranda. Zane is a close second, tied with Benny.

Miranda also happens to be her new next door neighbor. Gramps offered John his hardware store and the apartment above it after a couple days, rambling about wanting to retire. John took it and now he and Stiles are going to work on fixing up the small apartment above the store in downtown Perry Lake.

Stiles is actually sitting in the apartment when she sent the email. The walls are a terrible looking tan but the floor is a really cool looking herringbone that just needs to be sanded and re-stained according to her dad. Stiles loves that the wood is throughout the whole apartment.

There is a combined kitchen, living, and dinning space with the only bathroom located off the living area. In the hall leading to the two bedrooms and sunroom there is a staircase leading to the back office of the hardware store. Stiles was either going to take the second bedroom or the sunroom since they were the same size. She really is leaning toward the sunroom.

The first time she saw it the room took her breath away. One whole wall was made up of glass windows with a bay type of window as well. It overlooks downtown and she can even see the Mississippi River from it. All the room really needs is a good paint job and new light fixture and Stiles can make it into her dream room. She even contemplates ordering an art easel online so she can really take art back up again.

"Knockity knock," Miranda calls out.

Stiles looks up to what works as the front door. Miranda lives in the building next door above an antique shop. Their front doors are in the same conjoined hallway that can only be accessed from a locked door on the street and up a flight of stairs. Miranda loved the whole thing when found out and keys were exchanged.

"Hey, Randi," Stiles waved.

“Why are you sitting in the middle of the floor?”

“Playing on my new laptop while dad went out to get us some air mattresses.”

Miranda plops herself down next to me and pulls the laptop over to her. She pulls up Pinterest and proceeds to make me an account. There is no other talking happening only Miranda creating an account for a website for me. She slides the laptop back over and then sprawls next to me on the floor, not caring that we really need to sweep.

“Uh, why?” I question.

“You need to make some design ideas. I overheard your gramps telling you and John to spend whatever you wanted. I am actually jealous, but then again your gramps is independently wealthy and I respect the spoiling process.”

“He is only acting like that because he actually didn’t know about me until we showed up on his doorstep.”

“Still, I respect the man spoiling you. It is what all good grandfathers should do.”

Stiles and Miranda fall into a comfortable silence while Stiles does create a board and starts getting ideas for the new apartment. It is going to look nicer than their house did in the past few years. Miranda will probably make sure of that too considering Gramps told Stiles to bring Miranda along for most of the shopping.

“Oh, I almost forgot. What are you doing this weekend?” Stiles ponders. She really did almost forget to ask her friend.

“I was going to binge Sailor Moon again, why? Something better going on, CS?”

“I just need another opinion on shopping for this place, you know. Gramps said I should bring you along with me and dad. It may have been a stipulation for shopping in Minneapolis with him.”

“Damn,” Miranda whistles. “A full day I take it then?”

“Hotel stay. We would drive out on Friday night and come home Sunday afternoon. You in?”

Miranda pretends to tap her jaw in thought. John had already approved it with Miranda’s mom, Sierra, so it just comes down to Miranda saying yes. It is already a sure thing in Stiles’ mind though as her new friend is very terrible at acting.

“Carter, I am so in. We can work on your shopping list in study hall this week. It’s going to be so much fun.”

Stiles is actually afraid to mention that she is also going to get to go clothing shopping. She has been loving wearing her dad’s old shirts from back home and the ones she pilfered from Gramps’ house. However both men said she should wear normal clothing and offered to actually buy her summer clothes.

Maybe Stiles will just tell Miranda that bit once they make it into Minneapolis, save herself from Kayley and Ashley coming out to make her dress more girly than she would like. Miranda at least knows Stiles will go for comfort over fashion and will keep her steered in that direction.

Knowing her dad is going to still be awhile since he was going to pick up dinner too, Stiles stretches out next to Miranda and just lets her laptop play some gaming music on YouTube. It's cool to just be relaxing with a friend without the threat of something bad happening.

Both girls are startled out of their near sleepy state by John coming into the apartment with a giant box. Stiles can see the food bag peaking over the top and is tempted to just steal the food when she also spots the two mattresses and some bedding. She totally forgot that it would be nice to actually have bedding.

"Your grandpa is dropping the rest of our stuff off in a couple hours. We are officially moving in today kiddo. I'll start the floors while you are at school tomorrow."

Stiles only nods at her dad while passing Miranda the second burger she found in the bag. There are three salads though and a crap ton of fries so Stiles doesn't feel too bad about the sad look John shoots her before angrily stabbing at a salad.

Saturday April 21, 2012

Stiles doesn't get a reply from Lydia until the following week while painting her new room. There isn't much that Lydia is reporting to Stiles about the wolves or hunters, but she does regale Stiles with life in general in Beacon Hills. Apparently a girl in the freshman class is pregnant by Greenburg. A truly appalling thought.

Fighting the urge to reply immediately, Stiles goes back to painting. Two of the non-glass walls are a grey blue that reminds Stiles of the sky right before a storm. The last wall in the room is a mural though, Stiles is working on painting the night sky with golden clouds. She even has constellations marked with glow in the dark yellow paint. John had loved the idea and even finished the floors in her room first so she could start painting.

None of her friends who stopped by helped paint, but they did keep her entertained and away from focusing too intently on the paint. Benny even opened a window for her once the paint smell got too much earlier that Saturday morning before he went off to help with his sister's little league game.

As it was now, Stiles was alone in the apartment as her dad was working downstairs with one of the three employees of the store. Stiles has met them all and is unsure how to feel about them. They are all men and range in age. The older two thought she wouldn't care or know anything about building stuff, which made John laugh and Stiles scowl. The third was probably closer to Derek's age and took a strange interest in flirting with Stiles. At the time her facial bruises were gone and except for the occasional rib pain, you wouldn't know Stiles had been injured.

Stiles just didn't like the third employee because of the flirting for the most part. He was relentless and tried to mansplain to her everything, including how to do her own algebra 2 homework. Stiles actually texted her dad to save her from the creep and he did, vowing to not let Stiles work in the store when Jeremy is there. He even had a jerk name in Stiles' opinion.

It was nearing dinnertime when Stiles finally finished painting her room. She wouldn't sleep in it until the next night while everything dried, but Stiles was very proud of her handiwork. Here she was, three weeks into Perry Lake and making it her home. Stiles likes to think her mom would be proud of her.

Thinking of her mother brings up the thoughts of meeting her other grandparents. Gramps had reached out to them and let them know about John and Stiles being in town, but the Carter family would not even be back in the US until July so Stiles just has to wait patiently. Stiles isn't patient though and has already pilfered the phone number for her Uncle Louis and has been texting him for the past week.

Uncle Louis is pretty cool. He has twins, Isabelle and Vince, who are about ten years older than Stiles and starting their own families. Uncle Louis' wife divorced him and married his best friend, but he was cool with it because he also remarried his friend's ex-wife too. Stiles didn't understand how they are able to get on without hurt feelings but she respects their adult look on things.

Her uncle has also been emailing Stiles old photos of her mom growing up. There are even some of John and Ada together before and at the wedding. Uncle Louis has even offered to help Stiles talk on video chat with his parents, but Stiles is too chicken to try it. He offers whenever he can though and Stiles finds she loves her uncle for it. Stiles does contact Isabelle and Vince though, trying to make a go of the cousin relationships. It is neither a success or failure yet.

"Looks good in here, kiddo," John says. Stiles startles at her father and then slips a big grin on her face. It has been getting easier to smile and Stiles has even started going to see a therapist in the next town over. Dr. Olivia is in on the whole supernatural world so Stiles finds it easy to talk about everything with her. Dr. Olivia even works with the protectors so she will definitely keep the real identity under wraps.

"I tried my damndest. I just can't wait to see the constellations glowing later. It is going to be so cool."

Stiles is almost vibrating with her excitement, not even caring that she is bouncing in place and managed to get paint in her hair and on her clothes. John only can roll his eyes at her antics before hugging her and looking the wall over.

When Stiles was little and her mom was alive, she begged her parents to let her have the fake glowing stars on her ceiling and they always said no. Then when Stiles came home from school on her seventh birthday she found that her mom covered her whole ceiling in constellations she painted herself. Stiles still had it on her ceiling when she and John left. It is the only thing she misses from her old room.

“We can move your bed in tomorrow. We should get the rest of the furniture delivered on Monday and can settle in over the week.”

A smile stretches across Stiles’ face. She is actually really excited to finally be settled in Wisconsin. Like her life can actually start over fully and she can just be a normal teenager with ADHD and not be chasing werewolves around the woods or worry about being used as a messaging system. She can be normal.

“Perfect,” Stiles muses. “Now, I am starving, which no surprise, so what’s for dinner, Pops?”

“Was thinking about walking down to that Tex Mex place, you in?”

“I can always go for some tacos and you for taco salad.”

Stiles laughs while her father groans. He will still get his own precious taco meat and tortilla but with his wonderful leafy greens. Stiles would even opt for it if she wasn’t hungry enough to rival four large giants.

Chapter 10

Chapter Notes

Last chapter until I get back from vacation and midterms! So not prepared for either!!! Anyway, I will be back later this month. Wish me luck I will have about a week with no internet either.

Friday May 4, 2012

For the past three hours Derek has been watching Lydia pacing around the loft he rented for himself. It wasn't much, but there were a couple mattresses for sleeping and a kitchen for meals. He would call it home for now.

Home until Stiles shows back up in his life and dictates how to begin building a home. Derek can even forgive her, he thought about it for the past month and can even recall the split lip she had. Lydia mentioned the other team beating Stiles up and now Derek cannot believe that he didn't make sure she was fine that night.

"So, what you are saying is that this Alpha Pack is going to just deposit Erica and Boyd back here. And they want to speak to me and Stiles? And you waited a whole month to mention this to anyone?"

Derek can only nod while Lydia continues to pace. He is holding in his anger at her, understanding that she is probably afraid what the Alpha Pack could want with her. They informed Derek weeks ago that they would look for Stiles and he needed to stay out of it. It didn't stop Derek from patrolling past the Stilinski house every night.

There was also the news that the Sheriff resigned and there were rumors that he shipped Stiles off to some reform school and left town in shame. Derek knows that no matter what terrible thing Stiles has done, her father loves her too much to do that.

"Lydia, just come sit down," Jackson asks.

Derek never would have pegged Jackson for being so weak to Lydia, however the newest Beta was ready to roll over for Lydia. According to Isaac something changed between Lydia and Jackson the night they saved him. Something mostly in Lydia changed.

"I will not sit down, Jackson. I am about to be questioned in a few moments by a whole gaggle of Alpha werewolves and do not even fully comprehend what they will be asking so I do not know how to properly answer."

"They are just going to ask about the last few months and what happened to Stiles," Derek states. "They think you know."

Lydia scoffs at him before pacing again. Derek almost thinks that Lydia knows something with how she has been doing this for hours, but then she is also terrified based on her scent.

“Did they speak to Scott? Allison and her father? Who all did they interrogate before me?”

In all honesty Derek is unsure why he never asked about who else was being questioned. No doubt a Protector came to question the Argents. Derek already knows all the werewolves have had a round with the Alphas except for Jackson. He was also on the list for the night, but they really wanted to speak with Lydia first.

Lydia is startled out of her pacing and Derek from his thoughts by the knock on the door. He doesn't even get up as the blind Alpha and the twins walk into the loft. Derek rises from his perch by the windows and nods to the Alphas. He is quite used to seeing them around town as of late.

“Miss Lydia Martin, how wonderful to finally meet you,” Deucalion muses. “If Alpha Hale may give us the building? This is going to be a very tricky conversation that requires privacy.”

Derek doesn't want to leave Lydia alone with the Alphas, however he also knows that if he wants to remain alive and proved innocent of whatever slight the Alphas think is happening then he needs to leave. Choosing to do the smart thing, Derek grabs Jackson by the collar and they both exit the building.

Lydia allows a very formally dressed Alpha to pull a chair up for her to sit in. She should feel bothered by it all, but there is something that was in the note in her locker earlier that day that has the feeling fleeting. They know Stiles left and where she is.

“So, how does all this work?” Lydia questions.

“What do you know about what has become of Stiles Stilinski?” Lydia snaps her head around to look at one of the twins.

“What do you know?”

“According to the two Betas we found in the woods, Miss Stilinski has been a major victim to the Argent family,” the formal man says. “Now, allow me to introduce myself. I am Deucalion, the leader of the Alphas. I am working on making sure justice is served for both the Hale family and the Stilinski family and all the others Gerard Argent has hurt over the many years.”

Lydia wants to trust the werewolf, she wants to believe that he is only searching for justice. She also knows that she needs to respect Stiles and only speak confirmations if it presents.

“Am I supposed to just start telling you about the time Stiles and I braided each others hair?”

“If it were the truth, perhaps,” Deucalion says. “However I did find some very detailed letters in her room, including one directed to you.”

All the blood in Lydia's veins run cold. She knew Stiles was going to leave letters, but she was waiting until someone else would go searching her house. No one did though, except the Alphas.

"Miss Martin, we know about the rape, her relationship to Derek Hale, and that she is gone. We just want to know if anyone else is to know and what steps she would like taken."

"She doesn't want anyone to know where she is or what actually happened to her that night. You have Erica and Boyd, be sure to tell them that Stiles wants them to remain quiet about the whole situation."

"We read as much. What of Alpha Hale?"

"He destroyed the last bit of light that was in Stiles that night. She wants him out of her life and I hope that can be respected."

Lydia adjusts her short skirt while re-crossing her legs. She is going to act on behalf of Stiles and ensure privacy. It is the least she can do for her friend. They have only been emailing for a few weeks, but Stiles seems to be settling into wherever she is and thriving with her new, normal friends.

"It can be, I assure you. In fact, I have already spoken to the two Betas who have decided to return to complete their high school years. I suspect when they graduate they will go with you to find Miss Stilinski."

A smile stretches across Lydia's face. She may not know where Stiles is at the moment, but she will one day. Lydia refuses to remain in Beacon Hills for her adult years and Stiles seems to be a good friend to have. Erica and Boyd will be a surprising addition to the future, but it will be nice for Stiles to have people around who will protect her no matter what.

"As long as we understand each other," Lydia declares.

"Also, you should know when you do finally go to see Miss Stilinski, be prepared for colder weather."

Lydia can only smile as the three Alphas leave the loft. She is a little worried about what the Alpha implied. He apparently knows where Stiles is and is keeping it secret from the other Pack members as well.

Chapter 11

Chapter Notes

I'm back!!!

So, my trip got cut short. Literally hours before my dad and I were going to be going to a hockey game that we have had tickets to since September, the NHL announced the postponement. It sucked but I get it.

I also got a new job though when our trip finished early!!! I was so pumped! My first official day was today and the only we we are required to actually close is if the governor announces a stay at home order. Perks of a medical office.

I had fun writing these next few chapters... the story is really picking up now and I actually made it a few chapters further than I thought I was going to, got really into it this weekend.

Enjoy!

Wednesday May 23, 2012

Stiles is racing through the school halls, dodging out of the way of people and being yelled at by a teacher. She has a focus though, she really needs to make it to the bathroom or she will vomit all over the floor in the hallway.

She makes it into the bathroom and into an open stall just as she manages to lose her breakfast from that morning. Stiles is going to blame this all on the email that Lydia sent her. The email that is making her incredibly nervous and excited and just all around dreading the Memorial Day weekend.

Lydia stated that she was going to fly into Minneapolis Friday evening and spend the weekend with Stiles and her new friends. She also mentioned Erica and Boyd coming back and the Pack finally caring that Stiles and the Sheriff were gone, but Lydia coming is apparently vomit worthy terrifying.

“Carter, you okay?”

Stiles looks up from the toilet into the concerned eyes of Miranda. They were sitting together during lunch when Stiles ran out after reading the email on her phone. Miranda is apparently a great friend though, she grabbed Stiles' backpack for her. Kayley and Ashley are standing by the sinks too, looking with worried eyes at Stiles. It feels good to have friends who can actually chase after you and care.

“Just peachy,” Stiles manages.

She spits into the toilet and wipes her mouth with the thin toilet paper before flushing it all down. It did nothing to get the sour taste out of her mouth. She tries wiping her mouth on the sleeve of the hoodie she stole from Benny, but it does nothing. Ashley notices and hands over a bottle of water and some minty gum. Stiles takes both with a smile before swishing some and spitting it in the sink before gulping down the whole bottle.

“What happened, CS?” Kayley prods. “You just bolted. The guys are probably pacing outside the door right now.”

Just the mental image of all the boys standing outside makes Stiles laugh. They are all concerned puppies waiting for news from the kind nurses caring for Stiles.

“So you guys remember me telling you about Lydia?” All three nod and stare expectantly at Stiles. “Well, she just told me that she is coming for the weekend. Flying in Friday.”

It was only a week ago that Stiles even told Lydia about Perry Lake in her latest email. This was also the first Stiles heard back from Lydia since then. The woman was scary and Stiles felt a turning in her stomach again, but swallowed it down and stuck a piece of gum in her mouth.

“And that’s what made you throw up?” Kayley demanded. “Girl, you have been queasy for more than just that email, you do realize that, right?”

Stiles tries to think back over the past few weeks. She has been feeling sick lately, but she just attributed it to moving and restarting all of her medications. They can make her sick sometimes especially since she also takes a sleep aid now and everything is unbalanced.

“So what?”

“Carter, when was your last period?” Miranda asks rather gently.

Even the gum isn’t helping the turning in the stomach anymore. Stiles tries to think back to her last period. It had to have been in February or March. She was pretty sure she had one around Valentines Day and used it as an excuse to not do anything with Derek because she thought period sex would be disgusting and Derek just went along with it after leaving her a giant thing of chocolate in her room.

“Fuck me,” Stiles breathes. “I don’t know. Miranda, I don’t know who-“

“Carter, it’s okay, calm down.”

“It isn’t, because I don’t know whose it could be. Like does it belong to my ex or that geriatric fucker. I can’t do this if it’s his. I probably can’t do it if it was Derek’s either. But like I can’t not do it. He only has his uncle Creeper McCreeperson. Randi? What the fuck am I going to do?”

Ashley has let all four boys into the bathroom and locked the door. Stiles is vaguely aware of Miranda holding onto her while Benny does the same. She is too busy thinking about the

possibility that Gerard could have gotten her pregnant. He didn't use a condom and Stiles isn't on birth control. The thought of that alone has Stiles crumbling to the floor.

"Carter, it's okay, we've got you."

Stiles isn't sure who is speaking, only that she is sitting on the floor having a panic attack. She can't get any breaths in and her vision is swimming. The sound of someone calling for a teacher and her dad barely make it through before Stiles is lost to the blackness.

Her attack earlier only lasted for a few minutes according to Zane who timed it just in case anyone needed to know how long. Stiles likes to know that her panic didn't last long. However it has landed her in the local clinic with a pacing father. The pacing would be annoying, but it is keeping Stiles from thinking about the cup she peed in when they first got there.

Stiles was at the nurses office after her attack stopped. Ashley had already called John and he was going to pick Stiles up from the nurses office. Miranda managed to call her mom to pick her up too so they could go with Stiles to the clinic as moral support. They were currently waiting in the lobby while Stiles was stuck sitting on a paper covered table bed thing.

A knock at the door makes John stop pacing and turn around to face a nurse and a doctor who walk in with very neutral faces. Stiles doesn't like those faces because it can only mean that she really is pregnant and they don't know if it will be taken as good news or not.

"Mr. Stiles, Carter, we have results from your urine sample," the doctor says. Stiles remembers her introducing herself as Dr. Jimenez earlier. "You are pregnant. We want to do the blood test to be sure, but based on what you told me earlier, I would say that it will also be positive."

Stiles wants to cry and is barely holding back her tears. Her dad looks just as sick as he plops into the chair off to the side. His head is in his hands and Stiles just wants to roll over and pretend none of this is happening. That she isn't doing this to her father.

"Umm, is there a way to tell when?" Stiles manages.

"I can give a rough estimate with an ultrasound, can I ask why?" Dr. Jimenez asks.

"I had a boyfriend a while back, but I was also, um, raped," Stiles can barely get her words out. Dr. Jimenez seems to realize what Stiles is wanting to know. If it was Derek's or if Gerard really did something terrible.

"If you would like, we can do an ultrasound now. Based on the size I can tell when and then we can go over your options."

Stiles finds herself nodding and reaching out a hand to John. He takes it and stands next to Stiles while the doctor and nurse get Stiles situated and the machine rolled over. A cold gel is squirted onto Stiles' stomach and the wand is waved around on it.

The doctor is pressing buttons while moving the wand around. Stiles is focusing on the lines being drawn across the screen and then the doctor turns some sound on. Stiles almost feels her heart stop, no doubt that she can hear a heartbeat.

“Carter, it looks like you are about twelve weeks along,” Dr. Jimenez says.

Stiles sighs in relief and looks up to her dad. There is no way it could be Gerard’s, but that means it does belong to Derek.

“Derek’s,” Stiles whispers to John. Her father has a relieved look on his face followed with a sad face. No doubt thinking about all the hurtful words Derek said back at the end of March.

“Now, you do still have some options. At twelve weeks you are still in the window if you want to terminate. Or we could help you look into your options if you would like to go through with the pregnancy.”

Stiles doesn’t even wait for the doctor to finish her whole spiel before shaking her head and letting a tear fall while looking at her dad.

“I want to keep it. It’s Derek’s, I can’t just,” Stiles says, “I can’t give it up either. I want to have this baby.”

“I’m here for you, kiddo, so is your Gramps. Whatever you want to do.”

Stiles squeezes her father’s hand and looks back to the doctor who has her own smile on. She turns up the sound on the monitor and Stiles looks at a little bean shaped baby. The heartbeat is steady and Stiles can’t look away from the image of her child.

“The heartbeat is strong and sounds good,” Dr. Jimenez announces. “I’m going to print out a picture for you and we can start getting you on some prenatal vitamins and change up some of your medications. The reception will also help you set up your next visits. Congratulations, Carter.”

Chapter 12

Chapter Notes

Well that was short so here is another because I am pumped today and want to give a gift for you guys in thanks for waiting for me to come back! Also I aced my midterms and had to argue about going over the "word count" by three words to properly cite a source. It was stupid and I can't believe I had to argue that in college....
So thank you! Love you guys!

Friday May 25, 2012

Stiles is pacing around in the airport, rubbing her hands around her stomach and trying not to reach for the picture in her shirt pocket. She tried to dress up in her nice plaid button up over a plain pink tank top. Miranda said it looked fine, and Stiles was going to go along with it before she started showing.

And that was something Stiles was going to have to get used to. She was going to have a baby. She is only seventeen, barely, and now she is going to be a mother come December. In less than a year her whole world was rocked and flipped.

"Calm down, Missy, you're making me dizzy."

Stiles frowns at her Gramps and sits down next to him on a bench. They told him last night over dinner and the man was very calm. It is all very upsetting to Stiles how well the men in her life are taking her werewolf pregnancy. Then again, based on the books Stiles has been snatching from her grandfather recently, there is a chance that the baby could be human or a Spark.

"Sorry, I'm just so nervous," Stiles admits. "I don't want to tell Lydia yet. My friends know not to mention anything this weekend, but I'm afraid I will end up rambling and spilling my guts. Maybe literally if I get morning sickness."

"You'll be fine, Missy, it's only a weekend."

All Stiles can do is nod along while waiting for her friend to come to the baggage claim area. She sent Lydia her phone number early that morning before school and they did some quick texts at lunch. It has made Stiles really excited about just talking to someone in the know about werewolves. And show Lydia what she has scrounged up about what Lydia might possibly be.

Even over the noise of the airport, Stiles can hear the tell tale clack of Lydia Martin in heels. Stiles looks over to see the strawberry blonde striding toward her with purpose. A flash of

jealousy forms at Lydia in her short black shorts, green blouse, and white blazer. Stiles is a little frumpy in comparison.

“Well, if you haven’t learned how to finally dress, even if you are still sporting the plaid,” Lydia chimes.

Stiles stands up and runs over to her friend, ignoring the grunts and stares from passersby. She hugs Lydia close and tries not to let any tears fall. It is good to finally hear Lydia’s voice again, to have that normalcy.

“I’m pregnant,” Stiles blurts out.

She quickly pulls back and stares widely at her friend. She did not mean to say that out loud, it just slipped out. She really wants to learn how to control her mouth more or else she is going to be in even bigger trouble if Lydia finds out who the father is. Which based on her continued silence and Lydia giving her a knowing look, Stiles needs to stop that train of thought.

“It isn’t Gerard’s, I swear. If it was I would have, well, you can guess.” Stiles waves her arms around with her words, almost smacking her grandfather in the face as he stands up behind her.

“How about discussing this later, when I do not smell like an airplane and have had time to clean myself up?”

“An excellent idea,” Gramps says.

Stiles only nods along with the two of them as her grandfather leads them out of the airport to wait for John to pull up. They took the Jeep so Stiles and Lydia will have to climb into the backseat, but it was also roomier than the truck and John hasn’t bought another car yet. Stiles is trying to convince him to buy one with a proper backseat so there can be more comfortable room for three or more people. The Jeep just is not that comfy.

“So, Lydia, how long have you known Carter?” Gramps says.

“Since first grade. We were both the top in the class, tied I believe.”

Nodding along while looking for the old Jeep, Stiles only partially pays attention to the conversation. Her mind is travelling to what she could tell Lydia that would sound believable. Stiles can’t claim it was just some guy, Lydia knows she isn’t that kind of person. She may have to convince Lydia that it belongs to someone here in Wisconsin, but the pregnancy would progress too quickly for that. Her only other option is to claim it was a guy she slept with after a night at Jungle. It would be possible there, maybe.

“You with us, Stiles?”

Stiles looks over to see Lydia looking at her in concern. Her dad had the Jeep pulled up already and her grandfather is waiting for Stiles and Lydia to both climb into the backseat. Stiles shakes her head clear before smiling and climbing in the back.

As they settle into the Jeep and head out to the highway, Lydia squeezes Stiles' knee with a sad smile. A smile that tells Stiles that Lydia has already guessed that the baby is going to be Derek's.

"I promise to keep this private too," Lydia whispers.

"Thank you," Stiles breathes out.

Who would have guessed that Lydia Martin would not only approve of the new wardrobe but also the design motif of the house? Stiles wasn't prepared for the approval rating even if Miranda was.

Speaking of Miranda, she is currently sitting on a window seat in Stiles' bedroom staring at Lydia who is perched delicately on the bed beside and outstretched Stiles. Miranda met them in front of the store and then promptly introduced herself to Lydia. Stiles also blurted to Miranda that she told Lydia and that is what led to the staring.

"So, the asshole ex, is he suffering?" Miranda questions.

Stiles wants to know as well, but then again she doesn't want to know. Lydia has basically kept talk of Derek out of the emails and Stiles is very thankful for that. Hearing how or who he is doing now is not going to end well.

"He doesn't show emotion, but I like to think he is suffering a fatal internal wound that is entirely self-inflicted," Lydia calmly states.

"Is it the constipated look or the someone touched my leather jacket without permission look?" Stiles asks. She tries to focus on the easel with her painting of downtown, it isn't working. She doesn't sound subtle.

"I would say the leather jacket description is correct," Lydia agrees.

"What does that mean?" Miranda sits forward, arms on her knees.

"He is still angry and cares more about his jacket than me," Stiles quips.

It isn't a strong joke, but it is the best she has at the moment. Stiles just wonders if Derek would love his child more than the jacket, he probably would. Or he may not even believe that the little baby is even his. That thought alone kills Stiles as she looks at the picture sitting in her hands. She wasn't even aware she took it out of her pocket.

"Carter," Miranda says softly, "it's going to be okay."

Stiles looks up to Miranda and tries not to cry. She will not let Derek make her cry anymore. She refuses. Stiles believes herself to be a strong, independent woman and she is kicking her love of Derek Hale to the curb and raising her little baby on her own and teaching it to be a proper human being. Or werewolf. Whichever it comes out to be needs the same basis of human functionality.

“I agree, you are stronger than anyone I know. Everyone else can go to hell.”

With the extra pump from Lydia to Stiles’ ego, she straightens up and smiles down at the picture in her hand. She only has to wait until the third of December, probably, to meet her baby. She should probably work on the list of what she will need for the baby and possible names.

“I’ve got this,” Stiles announces.

The other two young women in the room smile at the chestnut haired girl and then at each other. They are only part of Stiles’ support system, something Dr. Olivia mentioned is good to have. That thought leads Stiles to realizing that she needs to tell her therapist on Tuesday at their regular appointment the new addition to the Stiles family.

“Shit,” Stiles says.

“What?” Both Lydia and Miranda say at the same time.

“I have to tell my therapist that I’m pregnant with Derek’s kid.” Stiles flops back on her bed and buries her head under one of the many pillows.

Chapter 13

Chapter Notes

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

Wednesday May 30, 2012

Everyone is gathered at the diner after school with Stiles sitting at the center of their corner booth shoving fries in her mouth. Benny is doing similarly while everyone else in their friend group has calendars out and are just staring the two gluttons down.

“Can you two stop with the potato intake and help us plan the summer out?” Kayley grits.

“Can’t, pregnant,” Stiles says around her food.

“Can’t I have sympathy pregnancy cravings,” Benny manages.

The whole table of teenagers crack up laughing, Benny and Stiles included. Benny has taken the whole sympathy pregnancy schtick and ran with it. He is probably going to go with Stiles to the pregnancy classes too if Miranda doesn’t. Stiles even thinks he may just restrict Miranda from going to he can help Stiles instead.

“Invalid, bro, you aren’t the father so no sympathy cravings for you,” Zane says around chuckles.

“A man can try,” Benny breathes.

“For real though,” Trevor changes the subject. “We have to get our schedules worked out. There is summer sport camps, two birthdays, and work schedules to coordinate around.”

Stiles watches as Trevor organizes a bunch of papers and then distributes packets to everyone. It is very detailed dates on what is happening with all of them over the summer, except for Stiles who is pretty much open.

Seeing Tina walking by, Stiles winks at Trevor’s mom and they both roll their eyes at the antics of the boy. Stiles never would have pegged Trevor for being the organized one out of the group, yet here they were.

Wiping her hands on a napkin, Stiles pulls her own new planner out and sets out to write down all the relevant dates for everyone in different colors. Black for Zane, red for Trevor, purple for Ashley, green for Benny, Kayley has yellow, Damon is in blue, Miranda in pink, and Stiles will write her own in orange. It is a good system with a key on each calendar month.

School gets out in a week and they won’t start back up until the end of August, so Stiles will have two months of hanging with her friends, learning to fix her Jeep, and working at the store with her dad. All of which she can basically pick her own schedules on.

“So, Benny and I are doing a combined party this year,” Miranda calmly states. Everyone looks up and between the two. Stiles looks at the calendar and sees that they are only a week apart and nods along with it.

“We are going to do karaoke,” Benny nearly shouts.

Zane shushes the kid and then steals some of the fries. Stiles likes karaoke, even though she hasn’t done it since before the werewolf shit. Miranda catches Stiles’ smile and winks. She has ridden home with Stiles on multiple occasions now and knows that Stiles will sing along frequently to the radio.

“Sounds good bro,” Damon says.

“Parents and awesome Gramps are also invited,” Miranda states. “It is going to be on June 15th. I also told Lydia she should totally fly back in for it. She confirmed with me this morning on email.”

Stiles can only be stunned by the fast actions of her friend. Miranda has officially lapped everyone on the best friend circuit and is working on going for a gold medal finish. Either that or just godmother status which Stiles might just give her.

Everyone spends the next few minutes writing in all the schedules and then making plans on mutual off days. Everyone knows Stiles will be out of commission on Tuesdays for her therapy appointments and any other doctor appointments she will have for her pregnancy. Miranda mentions that she will probably come and spend the night on the heavy days for Stiles.

Just having Miranda there and not saying anything, just touching an arm or leg, has already helped Stiles. She had a bad nightmare a few weeks ago and asked Miranda to come over and just sleep in the bed with Stiles. Her friend did and rubbed her back. Stiles finally told Miranda how she was raped and that those are the focus of her current nightmares. Miranda never mentions what they talk about on nights like that to the others, but they have since guessed that what happened was really bad.

Once everything is sorted out, the whole crew pays and heads out of the diner. Benny and Miranda are riding with Stiles to downtown. Benny is hoping to get a job over the summer with John and then plans on just eating dinner with Miranda, her mom, Stiles, and John. It was also becoming commonplace when Benny wasn’t with his own family at night for dinner.

“So, CS, what are you doing this Friday?” Benny asks as they pile into the Jeep. Stiles looks in her review mirror in confusion and then looks at Miranda who just shrugs.

“Nothing as of yet, why?”

“You want to grab dinner and a movie with me?”

Stiles is truly shocked. She just didn’t expect Benny to ask her on a date. Stiles isn’t even sure if she is ready to date. Benny would be a good trial run, and maybe something more. He

was a good caring guy and Stiles would like that in her life. And he is cool with her being pregnant. So why not.

“Sure.”

Derek doesn't like being caught off guard. Especially by Scott and in his own loft. Yet, here the teenager is with a sad face and letters clutched in his hands. Derek spots his own name in Stiles' handwriting and his gut clenches, hard.

“She isn't coming back,” Scott grits.

It is hard for Derek to tell if Scott is about to start throwing things or cry. Derek himself wants to do both at the statement. Scott can only be talking about Stiles. Derek can even catch a faint whiff of her scent on the papers in Scott's hands.

“She isn't coming back and it is your fault,” Scott yells.

“How is that my fault?” Derek growls.

Funny enough, Derek does think it's his fault, he just needs Scott to confirm it. Once he does Derek can move on and cry in the forest. The Alpha Pack finished their interrogations and have left for now. The promise of the twins returning in the fall to make sure peace remains is there and Derek is fine with that. Without Stiles someone has to be here to help the pack.

“Because you started all of this,” Scott continues to yell.

Derek is aware of Isaac and Peter stepping up behind him while Jackson straightens in his own spot in the kitchen. He isn't sure where Erica and Boyd are, but they should be here soon and can hopefully help calm Scott down.

“How did he start this, Scott?” Peter snarks. “He wasn't the one to lead you into the woods.”

Derek wants to thank and punch his uncle all at the same time. He is doing nothing to calm Scott back down, he is only making the guy more angry.

“Scott, shut up,” Lydia says as she saunters into the loft.

Derek can smell Stiles faintly from Lydia as well. He immediately turns to the young woman as she pulls the letters from a shocked Scott and passes them around the room. She holds onto her own and two others that Derek can see are for Erica and Boyd as Lydia hands him his own thin envelope.

The smell of Stiles and her generic shampoo is staying in the air. Derek wants to question Lydia, but refrains in front of everyone. He doesn't want to let on how much he actually misses Stiles in front of everyone. It is bad enough that the Alphas have figured out how Derek really feels, but he doesn't need the Pack to know until Stiles comes back and he can apologize to her. If she comes back.

Derek stares down at the small handwriting on the envelope. It looks like Stiles took her time writing it, her usual messy handwriting nice and neat now. Derek knows that if Stiles took the time to write that then whatever is inside the envelope may break his heart.

“I can’t just shut up,” Scott continues. “He chased Stiles away.”

“And how did he do that, Scott?” Lydia questions as she sits on the couch, arms crossed.

Derek takes a moment to study Lydia, a girl Derek never would have pegged as someone who would care like this about Stiles and the situation. Scott just looks like a sputtering fish, trying to find something to grab onto.

“That’s what I thought. Now, I think we should all take a moment and read our letters in private. Obviously Stiles meant for that since they are individual.”

Derek finds himself staring back at his own letter, not wanting to actually read what’s inside. He figures it will be easier to read it when he is alone, just in case Stiles breaks him again.

No one is actually reading their letters, all just looking around. Most are keeping a watchful eye on Scott as the beta falls to the ground, clutching his head. You would have guessed that Stiles actually broke up with Scott over Derek.

Derek wishes it were simple like that. He wishes that these feelings weren’t actually his to have. Life would have been easier without falling for a certain brunette, it also would have been boring. Stiles wouldn’t have dragged him out to the old drive in one night just so they could watch *Cowboys & Aliens* on her laptop.

She had popcorn, candy, and everything else that made for a perfect movie date. The only thing that didn’t fit was the fact Stiles actually watched the whole movie through and kept pushing his face toward the movie instead of her. Stiles was enraptured by the movie and talked about it with him for a full day afterward.

The memory is dashed away by the loft doors opening. Derek looks up to see both Erica and Boyd walking in. Neither looks overly excited to be in the loft, let alone with everyone else there. Before Derek can even welcome them Lydia is already up and holding the letters out to them. It seems to relax the betas, especially once they are both holding their own letters.

Derek didn’t think that Stiles was that close with either of them. Then again, Stiles also wrote Jackson and Peter letters, so maybe she just takes all that she has to say in person and is funneling them into the letters.

“We’re just here to say that we’re back,” Erica says. Boyd nods along beside her, putting his letter in his back pocket. “We are both staying with Boyd’s grandma for now.”

Derek nods at his betas before rising up to welcome them back. Erica and Boyd both shy away a little at the contact, turning more toward the door. Derek finds himself nodding, dismissing the two wolves to leave. Isaac follows them out, flashing a sad smile at Derek.

Lydia grabs Jackson by the hand before following the others out as well. Jackson seems to just go along with it all, not bothering to even say goodbye to Derek. As the door shuts Derek realizes that Scott is still sitting on the floor, holding a now crumpled letter in his hands.

Peter seems to have disappeared somewhere in the loft, ignoring everyone else in favor of doing whatever it is he does. Scott doesn't even seem to have noticed that everyone else left.

"I lost my best friend. Allison and I are only talking in school and I lost my best friend."

Derek wants to feel bad for Scott. The kid had his world turned upside down in only a few short months and lost so much. From what Derek can understand from Isaac, even Scott's mom is upset by everything.

Scott suddenly stands and faces Derek, shoving his letter back into pocket. There is an edge to the younger man's face, making Derek ready for a fight. He knows that he can take Scott on, he just doesn't want to fight anymore.

"We have to find her," Scott declares before pushing past Derek and leaving the loft.

Derek takes a moment before falling onto the sofa. He is fully ready for heartbreak from the letter in his hands. It is almost too much to break the seal on the envelope, but Derek knows he has to.

He tears it open and pulls out a folded piece of lined paper. Stiles has the same nice handwriting on the paper. There is a swoop to the letters and some dried tear drops. Derek can already feel his heart breaking, there is no doubt in his mind now that he ruined something that could have been good.

Derek,

You thinking I am a shit person literally broke my heart. I was head over heels for you, still am. Obviously you didn't feel the same.

I never sided with Scott in this. He actually knew what Gerard was going to do, what happened to me. He didn't try to stop it. I never saw it coming. So while you are blaming me, just know that I would have sided with you in this.

It's pretty obvious by now that Dad and I left town, I needed to. There was no longer anyone in my corner except for Dad. I realize running is a chicken move, but when you are attacked for just dating (sleeping with, whatever) a Alpha Werewolf then it is time to leave. I wasn't going to be safe if you never trusted me.

Dad knows everything, he has known since the beginning. He stayed out of it for my sake, knowing I didn't want him hurt. I inserted myself way too early and ran head first into serious trouble. He bailed me out.

We bailed out. I admit you aren't the only reason why I am leaving, but you are the one leaving a gaping hole in my chest. Your words broke something in me that was barely

holding on. You were the push I needed to leave all the supernatural bullshit behind me. Be a normal teenage girl again.

I want to thank you for that. Breaking my heart. Pushing me.

I don't want you to regret anything, so go live your depression filled life and I can try to live mine. We both should go see some therapists.

You need to learn to be a good Alpha for your Pack. They need you to show that you care sometimes. If you don't show gentleness at all then they will never feel like they actually belong and will leave. Not everyone is power hungry, some just need love.

I needed love. I needed you to return the love I felt for you.

Sorry,

Stiles

Peter excused himself away from the emotional pool that was a room full of teenagers. There has been something off about all of them ever since that damn warehouse. Since Stiles left.

Peter could feel something special about the young girl from the start. She had something in her that would have made her powerful, a great ally. One he thought Derek had made. One that Peter thought he could smell was strong between the two.

He must have been wrong. Ever since Stiles left Peter could sense the sadness coming from his nephew, from everyone really. Everyone except Lydia. She has been acting very out of place. She threw herself into the Pack and is pulling something away from them. Peter just can't figure out what.

The letter in his hand is light, probably just the words telling him to fuck off. Peter would respect that about Stiles. She stood in front of him and lied about wanting the power he could have given her back then. She is stronger than all of them and she is giving up now.

Taking the letter out of his envelope, Peter sits on the edge of the window and uses the remaining light of the day to read the words Stiles carefully wrote out for him.

Peter

You're creepy, I know you know this. Be good to Derek. He deserves it. Don't blame him for what happened. You both are still grieving. I know how that feels to lose people you love. Would I have gone on the murder streak, probably. I am one for revenge honestly.

That's why you need Derek though. He isn't one for revenge. He wants to work through it, so let him. Don't push.

As you all know I'm gone, so he is going to need you. He is going to need a Pack.

Don't let any of them look for me either. I know you probably know who protectors are, so just know I am with them. If anyone could scare someone away from another person, aside from Lydia, it's you.

Act normal,

Stiles

Chapter End Notes

I threw Peter in just for funsies! I have been working on a couple chapters ahead and lets just say there are even bigger changes coming for Stiles and soon she and Derek will be in the same place! I am so excited for it, like I have a playlist on my phone that is narrating in my head the scenes!!!

Chapter 14

Chapter Notes

So this whole stay at home order is not as easy as you think. My new job was in the health care industry so I get to be essential personnel... Which means I am working and dealing with the insanity that is other people thinking that the stay at home order is not for them. I have actually seen more traffic on the roads now than before. This isn't even including my schooling going fully back to normal so I get the crazy work schedule and school.

I haven't really been able to edit, I am hoping I get a chance to this weekend so I can put the next chapter up for you on Monday. I only finished this edit yesterday and basically passed out. Chapters are written but I really need to edit them so please be patient with me right now.

Thursday June 14, 2012

Lydia arrived late the night before, having had to apparently dodge Jackson from asking her a million and one questions about where she was going. Stiles had an idea that Jackson was a little clingy, especially now that he is a wolf, but it still is shocking to her that Jackson could care that much about some one.

For now, Stiles is just happy to be relaxing in the morning light on her bed. Lydia is flipping through her phone beside Stiles, looking at the pictures they all took last night at El Puente down the street.

“So, you never mentioned how everyone took the letters,” Stiles starts.

Lydia had texted about two weeks ago saying Scott finally found the letters and they were distributed. Stiles has been holding back on asking about it, but figures she might as well learn now instead of later.

Lydia sets her phone on the bed between them and rolls onto her side to look at Stiles. It is a look Stiles has learned is one meaning Stiles may not like the answers and Lydia wouldn't normally tell her except she asked. It is a very weighty look.

“Erica and Boyd said they understood and would like to also email you. I was waiting to tell you that until you asked. Isaac just seemed a little more distant, but warmed up a little more to Derek. Scott was crying like a little baby, saying Derek took his favorite toy, no offense.”

Stiles probably would have taken offense in the past, not now. She knows that all she was to Scott was a toy to be played with and discarded how he felt. She is working through those emotions still, it was a long friendship.

“Jackson feels bad for having been mean to you, whatever you wrote there. No reaction from Peter, which we both expected. I can’t get any read on Derek. He is just more distant in general than before.”

A wave of sadness passes over Stiles, making her want to protect her baby from the same sadness. Stiles places her hands on her now slightly showing belly. She went to sleep in just a tank top and can see the bump easily. It’s still small enough that most of her shirts can hide it, but Stiles is finding she doesn’t want to hide. She can only hope that one day Stiles will be able to tell the baby about Derek without feeling sad.

“Go ahead and give them my email,” Stiles says as she looks away from her friend and bump.

She stares at the almost complete oil painting of downtown. For the past month Stiles has been staring out her window painting the scenery. She wants to get it right and have it hang up in the living room, maybe even in the nursery.

Stiles and her dad have been talking about how they want to set the smaller room up now. It didn’t have any furniture in it yet and only has some basic white paint on the wall. Her dad was thinking of doing something similar to what Stiles did in her room with the sky. Stiles herself isn’t sure yet.

Lydia seems to have sensed that Stiles has gone in on herself and is leaving it alone. Stiles explained that she gets a little wore out thinking about and talking about Beacon Hills. She is usually like this after some of her therapy appointments. Miranda is usually around, but Lydia has also just sat on the phone in silence with Stiles too like this. It is nothing new.

“Kayley posted some of the photos online,” Lydia muses.

Stiles looks away from her painting and back to Lydia and her phone. This time the photos are all candid, no one really paying attention to what is going. Stiles likes the one where Benny is throwing the chip at Zane who is pretending to kiss Trevor. Stiles will need to remember to have Kayley send that one to her later.

They go through the Facebook photos, laughing at each ridiculous one. Kayley tagged Lydia in a couple of the photos, each of them flattering. Knowing that Stiles’ past was complicated, the group had to swear if they tagged Lydia there would be no photos of Stiles, well Carter, online. She didn’t want people realizing where she is.

“So, you and Benny?”

Stiles looks up from the photo of Benny wearing Stiles’ oversized sunglasses while trying to be fed a taco by Miranda. Stiles was dying laughing at the time. It was some stupid joke about Benny one day becoming a major baseball celebrity and being hand fed. Stiles isn’t even sure how they got to that point.

“Sort of, it’s hard to explain.”

“Try please,” Lydia politely demands.

“Well, we went on a date and then another and we are sort of dating. He is respecting the fact that I don’t want to be physical, like he only pecked my lips for the first time last week. I don’t even know if we are dating. He almost feels like a really awesome brother half the time and the other half I want to know if he would be a good fit in my life as a romantic interest. You know?”

Lydia sets the phone back down and really looks at Stiles. She has a calculating look going on, one that would have a weaker woman hiding under the bed. Stiles is almost tempted.

“I don’t think he and I are meant for romance. I don’t think I’m ready for it.”

“There it is,” Lydia sighs. “You know you should just tell him that. Benny seems like the kind of guy who would actually respect that. If not, I’m sure Miranda would eat him alive alongside Kayley and Ashley. I’ll have to video chat in.”

Stiles lets loose a good laugh before flopping further down on the bed. She does have some pretty amazing friends now. Her life is slowly working itself out and is going on a normal track. Yeah she will be a teen mom, but she has the support system to kick ass at it.

It was just beginning to settle back down at the loft. Peter has been around a lot, trying to speak with Derek. He even talked about maybe they should go through the things Laura had put in storage to find anything that survived. Derek isn’t sure he is ready for that yet.

Everything is strange since the letters. Jackson and Isaac have both been focusing on their lessons with Derek while also growing closer to each other. Derek has been trying to show he cares as well, which is maybe helping the bond grow. It is slow going with Boyd and Erica though, which may have something to do with what drove them away in the first place.

For now Derek is just going to take a relaxing day for himself. He has checked out a novel from the library and is ready to settle in and read for the day. There is even a cup of coffee sitting on the floor beside the sofa. He isn’t expecting anyone except for Peter to disturb his solitude today.

Derek should have known it wouldn’t work though, not when Jackson comes barreling in with all the others behind him, including Scott who Derek hasn’t seen since the letters. Allison is behind him, looking sheepish and excited at the same time.

“We found Stiles,” Jackson announces.

All the air vacates Derek’s lungs. He didn’t think Jackson was even looking. The book he was reading drops into his lap, Derek’s fingers no longer wanting to hold the book. His attention is focused on the betas.

“Here,” Jackson shoves his open phone at Derek.

Derek can just make out Stiles laughing in the background behind Lydia and some other girl. Derek only focuses his vision on Stiles. She has her hair pulled up into a ponytail and has a

baseball cap on. It is hiding part of her face, but Derek can recognize that smile anywhere, those eyes anywhere.

“Where is she?” Derek growls. He doesn’t even notice his betas taking a step back. Even Scott and Allison stepped away from him.

“Some hick town in Wisconsin. Perry Lake.”

Derek shoves the phone back to Jackson before standing up to grab a bag and some clothes. He is going to go to Perry Lake and talk with Stiles. Apologize. Tell he how he really feels.

“What are you doing?” Scott asks.

“Going to speak with Stiles.”

“We’re coming with.”

Derek spins around to level Scott with a glare. Scott only returns it with his own, ready to fight again. Derek can’t blame him, this is his friend too. Derek just doesn’t want an audience when he has to grovel for forgiveness from Stiles.

“Fine,” Derek agrees.

“Great, I’ll book us all tickets,” Jackson smiles.

Before Derek can even argue he is being told to meet at the airport in four hours and everyone is leaving the loft to go pack. Derek isn’t even sure how long he will be gone, only that he will stay as long as Stiles will allow him to. As long as it takes to earn her forgiveness.

Chapter 15

Chapter Notes

Thank you guys for all the support. I am trying my best to get more done this week. So far the schedule is looking a little relaxed between work and school so here's hoping.

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

Stiles has been psyching herself up since lunch to actually walk into this salon and change her hair. She hasn't done anything drastic to it since she cut it off herself on accident when she was five. Other than a slight trim now and then, Stiles has left it the same. She wants a change.

"Are you going to go in, or stay out here all day?" Ashley asks.

Looking over to her friends Stiles takes a deep breath and steels her spine. It is time for more change, time to get rid of more of her past. The hair salon was across the street from Stiles' apartment and this is the first time she will actually be entering the building it is housed in. The second half of the first floor is for a real estate agent and the second floor belongs to a lawyer.

"Totally, I made the appointment and I am sticking with it," Stiles announces.

Lydia must not believe her as she pushes Stiles into the building with Ashley following close behind. Miranda was working a shift in the store just so Stiles could do this while Kayley is babysitting the boys for the day so no one sees just what Stiles is doing to her hair.

"Welcome," a chipper woman with black and blue hair says. She has a kinds smile and can't be older than thirty, but the tattoos and makeup may be hiding her actual age. Stiles likes her presence and has faith that someone with awesome hair like that can help her.

"I have an appointment?" Stiles tried to be confident, she really did. That wasn't meant to be a question. It was meant to be a hello and a statement. She is a little afraid though, this is going to be a big change.

"Carter?" Stiles nods to the woman and follows her over to the chair she is waving to. There doesn't look to be anyone else in the salon except for their group, which is a relief.

Stiles sits down in the chair and looks at her reflection. The same brown hair and eyes that she has always had stares back at her. Her hair has gotten down to the middle of her back and has started splitting at the ends. When the wind blows off the river it makes it all messy so Stiles is really ready to change it all up.

“I’m Livy,” the lady says. “I run the shop and based on our conversation I understand you want to do a big change?”

“Yeah, I mean I’ve had hair like this my whole life and I want something different. My life is actually starting over and I have a baby on the way and I just want to forget about the past a bit. I think going blonde will be a fun change. Plus I love the pink and purple that I’ve seen others have on TV and totally wanted to do that to the tips, like you did with the blue. Except I want to chop it off. Like I want short hair, to my shoulders. Something fun. Something new.”

Stiles takes a deep breath and meets Livy’s eyes in the mirror. She has a smile on her face while she runs her fingers through Stiles’ hair. Livy is taking it all in stride while Ashley takes up the chair to the right of Stiles with a warm smile and Lydia to the left with a magazine.

“We can totally do that for you, sweetie.”

The next two hours go by in a blur for Stiles. Alternating from the chair to the shampoo area and back to both again. She was turned around so she can’t see the final result as they blow dry and do the final cut. Stiles is actually trying very hard not to bounce in her seat as the weight of her old hair is gone. She is also very afraid that she won’t like what she sees.

Stiles has been sneaking peeks at her friends who are smiling and taking photos. They are apparently loving whatever is happening so that give Stiles the confidence she needs to spin her chair back around and look in the mirror. Livy is just smiling at Stiles, well smirking.

Spinning the chair around Stiles gets a look at herself. She ended up with platinum blonde hair with pink and purple colors decorating the bottom half of her straight, shoulder length. There are no layers and it actually looks really streamlined. Stiles is in love with it. She didn’t actually think she could pull off such a light color, but it works with her pale skin. Her eyes stand out with the pronounced whiskey coloring. All she needs is a little makeup and Stiles will rock this hair tomorrow night.

“I love it, so freaking much,” Stiles nearly shouts. “Like this is totally what I was thinking except better. Thank you Livy.”

Stiles stands up and hugs her hairdresser. The woman had let Stiles talk endlessly during her appointment and only interjected when there was a true lull in conversation. It was a lot lighter than most of Stiles’ therapy sessions. It was nice.

“Glad to hear it.

John knew a change was coming for Stiles, she said she was going to cut it and color it. Except, he wasn’t expecting his daughter to walk through the general store door with nearly white hair that had pink and purple encircling the bottom. He can admit that it looks good, it just wasn’t what he was expecting on Stiles, ever.

He also wasn't expecting the scream to come from Miranda. They were both standing at the register looking over a manual on the new computer system John wanted to put in when Stiles and her friends walked in the door. The scream also alerted Jeremy who took the corner and just blatantly stared at Stiles.

"Damn, kid, big change," John whistles.

Stiles beams a megawatt smile at him and ignores Jeremy trying to compliment her. John stifles a laugh as Lydia gives him a once over and hair flip. It makes John feel even better about Stiles staying in contact with the girl. Her confidence seems to have rubbed off on Stiles some too.

"Why go small now, you know pops."

Stiles gets to the counter and sits cross legged on top. John would reprimand her, however they are only open for another hour and chances are no one is going to be coming in for home improvement needs for the night. Besides, she'll probably figure out the new system quicker than him or Miranda.

John hands the manual over to Stiles as she hums some nameless tune. John knows that even through all the tough shit that has happened, here with these people, Stiles has been happier than she has in a long time. Even before Scott got turned. He knows that she was picked on in school, but there was nothing he could do at the time without the evidence. Now, she has so many loving people around her that Stiles can just be herself.

John only wished that his wife could see the amazing young woman their daughter is turning into. He is even surprised that she has her schooling figure out in regards to her pregnancy. All that is left is to complete the paperwork later in the new school year for Stiles to switch to online classes for the second semester.

His grandkid is going to be lucky having Stiles as a mom. No matter what the kid turns out to be, whether it is a werewolf, spark, or human, Stiles can handle it. John was even complacent in helping her eradicate his father's study of some books on different supernatural creatures. They are now in her own bookcase.

"Remind me what time we need to be at the karaoke place tomorrow?" Lydia snaps John out of his thoughts and back into the present.

"Four," Stiles says.

John looks over to find his daughter already typing away on the computer, loading the new software onto the new system. She has already gotten further in a couple minutes than John and Miranda had in an hour.

"I am also picking out my own outfit, Lydia," Stiles looks up with a very pointed expression.

Everyone except Jeremy, who is creeping in the background, laughs as Lydia holds her hands up in the air in mock surrender. No doubt John will hear their bickering later on tomorrow. Either that or his own closet will be invaded by the stylish hands of Lydia Martin.

Chapter End Notes

I so want to write more from John's perspective so there may be some quick segments with just him.

Chapter 16

Chapter Notes

So unfortunately I got angry at myself this weekend and realized that I have only this chapter good to go. My other chapters that I was editing are going to be completely scrapped. The story was not going in the right direction and felt like it was going to finish before I even got to where I actually wanted this story to go.

This means that this will be the last chapter until May as I try to work out how to fix this all and get it written and edited. Plus finals, which I am actually confident about right now, so at least there's that.

So so sorry. I really am, but I don't want to give you guys a half assed story when I can take the time and work it out well and add some more dramatics.

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

Friday June 15, 2012

Derek has decided to never ride in a plane with any teenage werewolves again. All they did was comment on what they could smell and hear. Derek had tried blocking them out, but it did little good. Doesn't help that his skin was crawling with the need to get off the planes and run to get to Stiles as quickly as possible.

Now that they actually landed in Minneapolis it was only about an hour from the town Jackson said that Stiles and Lydia are in. An hour that is now going to be stuck in some rental car with half of the teenagers. Luckily Chris Argent, who volunteered to come with, is going to be riding in a car with the other half.

For now, Derek is taking solace in the fact that only Chris is technically old enough to rent a car, and apparently Jackson was able to get his parents to pull some bull crap and got him a rental as well. Derek just isn't sure he is going to let Jackson drive when Stiles is so close.

He isn't the only one who is on edge. Derek has counted Scott pacing around the small rental car area too many times. He is about to make him stand back by the elevators where Derek will not have to see him. Allison has been trying to calm the kid down so Derek is not about to readily jump on his case.

"We're set," Chris says.

Derek doesn't even give Jackson a chance to pocket the keys as they walk out the glass doors and to the parking garage. They all find the small SUVs easily enough, but Jackson does have to take the driving part back over as there is someone checking the gate. It's a pain, but at least Jackson drives like a douche and fast.

The GPS takes them through Minnesota and just over the Mississippi River and into Wisconsin. Derek has to admit to himself that it isn't that bad of a town. It's definitely small, but idyllic whereas Beacon Hills was over industrialized. This is the kind of place Derek can see himself and Stiles starting over together. He just has to grovel first, and he is sure that Stiles is going to require him to grovel.

Derek rolls his window down and takes a whiff of the air as they drive down what appears to be the main street. On one side of the road there are boats and people milling around just before old buildings come into view. There is a faint scent of the Stilinski family on the street level, like they have been walking around the area recently and Derek wants to get out and actually start tracking it properly.

"God, I can actually smell Stilinski," Jackson groans.

Derek fights the urge to punch his Beta while taking in more deep breaths of the enticing scent. It keeps getting stronger as they make it through downtown. At one corner store, a general store it looks like, Derek gets a concentrated smell of both Stiles and the Sheriff, like they spend a lot of time there.

While the light is red, Derek steps out of the vehicle and makes his way around the street area, much to the displeasure of Jackson, Boyd, and Erica. He has to figure out if Stiles is there currently or not. And where she would have gone off to.

He catches the scent of her and Lydia both, as well as the smell of the Sheriff and some other man before the scent disappears. They probably got in a car and drove off. Derek thinks about staying around the area here, waiting for Stiles, but he feels the need to find her immediately. Something is clawing at his gut to find her.

Another smell, one that has mixed with Stiles' is wafting from the building nearby. This one leads down the street and Derek figures that is his best bet on finding Stiles. He can hear his ragtag pack following behind him as he traces the scent to some dive bar. Heavy music is beating against the walls, but Derek zeroes in on the smells.

Stiles is inside. His feet pull him into the building, but he stops short. On the other side of the very poorly lit building, Derek can make out the silhouette of the Sheriff as he is laughing with an older man who looks shockingly similar. There are a few other adults around. At the table over there is a large group of teenagers, laughing and talking.

Lydia is very obvious with her red hair spilling over her shoulders, but Derek can't seem to pinpoint where Stiles is. There is an empty chair nearby, but he can't quite find the brown hair of the girl he wants. In his searching, Derek managed to make eye contact with Lydia. Her frown lasts for a millisecond before she is excusing herself from the group.

The red head saunters her way over to the pack and proceeds to give Derek a death glare that he never expected to be on the receiving end of. He isn't quite sure why she is actually mad at him, she was the one hiding Stiles.

"You need to leave," Lydia demands.

“I need to talk to Stiles,” Derek growls.

Lydia thinks it over for a moment before smiling. She taps into her phone quickly and then licks her lips. Whatever she is planning is probably going to be painful for Derek, or embarrassing.

“Then stay back and listen for a bit.”

With her last word Lydia walks back over to the table. Derek is able to get a glance of Stiles as she turns to smile at Lydia. Derek can feel his heart hit the floor. The reason he didn’t see the brown hair before was because it was now blonde and pink and purple. Just from her profile Derek is stunned by the woman he loves. She looks so confident and fairy like.

“Is that Stiles?” Scott whispers.

“CS, it’s your turn,” Benny chimes. A chorus goes up around Stiles as she stands up and take the mic from a winded Trevor. He had just finished his rendition of Back in Black.

“If you insist.”

Stiles had let Lydia and Miranda choose her song, figuring it would be some simple, girly song. She already did a duet of California Girls by Katy Perry with Lydia. However, once on stage Stiles can see the screen displaying Stronger by Kelly Clarkson. A song Stiles has been known to rock out to in the Jeep on the way around Perry Lake.

She can barely make out the faces of her friends and family in the bright lights, which makes singing in front of this crowd a bit easier. Stiles still is not great at truly being the center of attention.

The lyrics take over, urging Stiles to work the stage and strut. She wore a pair of high tops that night just so she could be comfortable. Her feet are starting to swell a bit at the end of long days.

Stiles never thought of herself as a great singer until Lydia and their new friends pointed out that Stiles actually was good at singing. Now she confidently belts out each note and ends on a long note going on even after the song ends. Cheers go up all around the karaoke bar and Stiles finds herself bowing before tossing the mic to Sierra.

She slouches down in her seat and reaches for a glass of water. She isn’t even sure whose glass it is, but Stiles feels thirsty as all get out after her wonderful rendition.

Everyone around Stiles is laughing and having a great time. She takes a moment to survey the whole scene. Stiles catches her dad and Gramps looking over the binder of songs, probably looking for the perfect embarrassing song to sing. She half hopes she can jump in and steal their thunder instead.

What Stiles isn't expecting is to see Jackson standing against the far wall looking at Lydia. It makes Stiles' stomach drop. If he is here then the others probably know where she is, or maybe Jackson is just being an overprotective douche and is only there for Lydia. He probably can't even recognize Stiles with her new hair.

Stiles is going to go with that assumption. She looks totally different now. She even has on one of Benny's many pro baseball jersey's that help swallow her frame. Stiles looks down to make sure her small bump is hidden by her jersey and the cutoff overalls she is wearing. Everything looks normal, just baggy which is good for Stiles.

"Uh, Lyds," Stiles stage whispers over the noise.

Lydia looks over and offers a tight smile. Stiles only points toward Jackson and Lydia's smile turns terse as a small nod is given. She knows and is apparently angry but not willing to let the night get ruined over the arrival of the jackass. Part of Stiles feels better knowing Jackson is going to get his ass handed to him later.

Deciding to ignore the couple dispute waiting in the woodwork, Stiles turns back to the others at the table. Miranda is recording her mom and everyone else is clapping along to the song. Stiles joins in and tries to knock her nerves away. There is still a nagging feeling of someone watching, someone staring Stiles down. She ignores it, knowing that it is probably Jackson realizing who she is.

"Stiles."

Stiles can feel all the blood drain from her face. The husky timber has shivers racing down her spine. Last time she heard that voice it was yelling at her, reminding Stiles how much of a bitch traitor she was. Her morning sickness is almost gone now, but it is making its way back around again.

Fight or flight kicks in and Stiles finds herself standing up and knocking her chair to the floor. The room doesn't go silent, but their two tables do. Fight decides to rear its head instead of the usual flight.

Stiles spins around and looks up into the eyes of a very stoic Alpha. She can't even get a read on him at the moment. Chances are he is angry about what she wrote to him, or angry that she is still living. Stiles just hopes he doesn't realize she is pregnant. Especially with his kid.

"What the fuck are you doing here?" Stiles growls. She is even proud of her growl.

Backup arrives in the form of a pissed off ex-sheriff and a supportive Gramps. Stiles can feel them come up to her side, both probably leveling Derek with the same disappointed slash pissed off expression. Stiles is thankful for the backup, making her fight actually intimidating.

"Stiles we need to talk, alone," Derek grits out.

"I don't want to talk with you, dude."

“Dammit Stiles.”

“Stiles, come on,” a voice whines.

Stiles peaks over Derek’s shoulder and catches sight of a distressed looking Scott. It makes Stiles feel happy that Benny is her new puppy friend, and not in the werewolf way. Benny never whines like Scott does.

“There is absolutely nothing to talk about. You said your piece, I wrote mine. We’re done. Everything was said, or yelled. I don’t want to be yelled at again.”

Stiles takes the chance to meet Derek’s eyes and crosses her arms over her chest. She is aware that she is mimicking Derek from days past, but she needs the power pose to work in her favor. Especially as those green, hazel eyes are staring her right back. It still makes her stomach flip in awe of the colors. She loved looking at his eyes whenever he came over before. No matter what color they would be.

“Stiles I need to apologize,” Derek starts.

“Need to? Really, that sounds like BS, Der. However, you do need to. I don’t like being called names and it being insinuated that I was only using you. Seriously, I was a freaking open book, dude, nothing-“

“Stiles shut up,” Derek barks. Stiles can feel her mouth hang open in shock. She is used to Derek occasionally yelling at her for risking her life, or jokingly telling her to stop talking, but he never sounded so angry and defeated at the same time.

“No, I won’t. You wanna talk then let’s go outside and talk. It won’t be alone though. Gramps and dad are coming with.”

Stiles takes the last word and spins around to face the door leading out of the bar. She can feel the men in her life following behind her while everyone else is sitting quietly at the tables. The rest of the pack seem to melt out of nowhere, Erica and Boyd giving her small nods.

She leads them around to the side alley, away from the tourists on the street. The sun started setting so only the lights from the nearby buildings are illuminating anything. Stiles appreciates that her vision will be obscured so Derek can’t use his good looks against her. She wants to be angry, they came for her when she told them to stay away. They are attacking and Stiles will fight back. She will not be a victim again.

Chapter End Notes

Thanks you guys for sticking around with me and continuing to read this story. I hope you all stick with me for a few weeks of silence and then I will hopefully get back to

posting chapters every week, may more than one if it all goes well.
Love the support!

Chapter 17

Hello..... I'm back.

I am so sorry for not posting and not being generally active on here for like a half year. Between work, school, and family issues it has been crazy!

Dudes I was even diagnosed with asthma in this time frame! Like it explains so much of my life growing up and my mom is super angry at the doctors I grew up seeing. I don't really blame them too much though, it was a new doctor every six months or so as I grew up a military kid so nothing was ever really constant on that front and when I got older my doctors blamed it on my weight. Little did they know I was overweight because I could not actually workout without having an asthma attack. I know now that it was an asthma attack, back then I just thought I was out of shape.

I was very lucky that those attacks did not send me to the hospital or worse. I learned too live around them. I am getting into shape now, properly with a couple different inhalers. According to my asthma/allergy doctor I have the lung capacity of a sixty-five year old at twenty-five. With the one inhaler I got my lungs down to fifty-five, so with more medication coming in the next few months hopefully I can get into my thirties! Stupid lungs.

On top of that I actually ended up catching COVID-19 just before Christmas, literally developing my symptoms on Christmas Eve night as my brother and sister-in-law came into town. We all thought we were being careful beforehand and that we were good, safe. Turns out we weren't. I thought my asthmatic lungs had bronchitis or pneumonia though because I couldn't catch my breath and had no fever. Went into an urgent care that Monday and listed a few other symptoms I had (severe chills, fatigue, and headaches) that I thought could be related to just being tired from being down a couple people at work. They rapid tested me and told me I had that mean bug.

Both of my parents tested positive but luckily my brother and his wife got away clean. We have been isolated and dealing with the local health department. I was cleared earlier this week to go back to work and so was my mother. However, my dad ended up getting bacterial pneumonia. He's got some strong medications and I got to teach my parents how to use inhalers and how to clean them. We are all doing better, just super fatigued and tired. My body has very little energy which is making my dog worried.

While in my tired state I picked my laptop up for writing once again, well reading. Okay it was my phone and AO3, but still. I started reading both of my works again and realized that I really wanted to get back to writing even though I start classes on Monday. So I am rewriting this work from the end of Chapter 16 and completely rewriting Berserk.

Oh, I forgot to tell you that I also graduated last month! Two degrees under my belt and getting started on the third now.

Anyways, thank you guys so much for reading my work! I promise to post at least twice a month! If not message me! It makes my emails ding at me and I rely on my emails for

freaking everything!

I love you all so much!

Chapter 18

Chapter Notes

Bam!

Derek can't believe the woman standing in front of him now. Her whiskey colored eyes hold sadness that shouldn't be there. He is the cause of the sadness. Derek can't blame Stiles for not forgiving him, he may not be able to forgive himself.

Right now he is barely making out their color in the low light, not even his enhanced vision is able to help. It is a little disconcerting not being able to look at her and see everything about her. There is a mountain between them, one Derek put there himself.

"You're a fucking bastard, but I am giving you a chance to say your argument and then I will conclude with the closing argument. I don't have all night, we are celebrating a couple birthdays so get going."

Derek is always amazed at the amount of words Stiles manages in one breath and how quickly her mind is able to rattle them all off. It took him a while in the beginning to keep up, but Derek finds that he hasn't lost the skill.

"Stiles, I made a mistake," Derek starts.

"No shit," the older man who followed Stiles grunts. Derek swings his face towards the man. He looks so much like the Sheriff that it throws Derek through a loop.

"A mistake that I need to apologize for if you will let me."

Stiles just raises her brows at him and leans forward a little. Her attitude would occasionally annoy Derek, but other times it was what made their time together interesting. She could throw her attitude at him just as often as he did it to her. They both never fully meant it until now.

"I should have trusted you," Derek shakes his head. "You are the woman I love, I never should have said or done the things I did to you. I was clouded, even before Scott found your letters I had wanted to beg you for your forgiveness, but you were gone. You left before I had a chance to tell you how much I love you, before we could work it out."

"I left before you got your shit together, boo hoo," Stiles whines. Derek can hear the sarcasm dripping from her tone as she takes a few steps closer until they are standing nearly chest to chest.

There is a strong aroma wafting from Stiles, a sickly sweet smell that Derek has never smelt on her before. He doesn't try to take a deeper breath, afraid of what Stiles will do or say if she notices him doing it.

"I left a toxic town to protect my family, my real family and not some pack that decided I was only good on occasion. You have to admit that that was how you felt about me too. I was there and willing to lose my virginity. It was fun while it lasted."

Derek recoils at the mention of him taking her virginity in front of the Sheriff. Under the given circumstances he could be arrested, or worse shot and suffer through the pain.

"Stiles I want to have another chance, give us another chance. I made mistakes, but I love you. You love me too, you said so in your letter."

Derek can feel himself pleading. He is actually fighting the urge to drop to his knees in front of Stiles until they can have a second chance. He doesn't want to trap her though. Knows nothing can trap Stiles.

"It's too late," Stiles bites.

"It isn't too late when this is the first chance I get," Derek grumbles.

The whiskey eyes meet Derek's own in challenge. Usually when they did that it would end in kissing or more. After a fight it would also mean they would make up.

"I was attacked that night, that was your first chance and you blew it. I was bleeding and in pain and you stomped on me."

Derek reels back into the alley wall. He had no idea that Stiles had been attacked that night. It couldn't have been right, he would have fully realized she was truly hurt. Scott would have too and something would have been said.

"No," Derek manages, "I would have, I would."

"What, know? You would have known that Gerard had his stupid goons take me from my winning lacrosse game and that I was thrown into a basement? Known that he beat and raped me in front of Erica and Boyd? Would you have known that? Or would you still have been so far up your own ass that you blamed me for something that I had nothing to do with?"

John wants to step in, but this is Stiles' fight. He taught her to use her words first and then fists when words don't work. Obviously she learned how to fight with words a little too well based on the back to back blows she just delivered. John actually feels a little bad for Derek.

Just a little, the man should have known something bad had happened to Stiles that night based on how she looked and moved. Anyone could have seen that Stiles was in a really bad place.

"He did what?"

John looks over to see a pale faced Scott. Just about every pack member except Erica and Boyd are shocked by the news. Even Allison and Chris Argent seem to be fully surprised by what their family member did.

“You heard what your plan caused, Scott,” John finds himself speaking up.

Scott was always like a son to him. For a few years he had hoped that Stiles and Scott would have ended up together because of how sweet the kid was. Now John is thankful that his daughter is stronger than any member of that pack. Stronger than anyone he ever met.

“There’s no way,” Scott whispers. “No way he did that.”

“No way he raped me? Pretty sure I know what rape is, Scott, I am a girl whose dad very thoroughly explained consent. Besides you were too busy in your own little world to really and truly worry about your supposed best friend. A plus on being oblivious.”

John can swear he hears a whine come from Scott, from some of the others too. Derek just looks murderous, his eyes focusing on Stiles in a way that makes John reach for his side holster under his shirt. He may no longer be a Sheriff, but he still carries.

“We all would have known, Erica and Boyd would have said something, right guys?” Scott looks toward the two Betas in question. They just walk from their spots beside Jackson and Isaac and over to stand by John and his father. Obviously choosing sides.

“That’s the good thing about having true friends, they actually listen to what you have to say,” Stiles barks out. “I asked them to not tell you assholes. The only one out of you sorry shits I don’t blame is Jackson, he was dealing with the world’s biggest identity crisis.”

“Stiles,” Derek starts.

It is in that moment that John is truly afraid the damage his daughter is going to inflict. He can feel the rage rolling off Stiles in waves. She is ready to skin the Alpha Werewolf in front of her. John isn’t sure if he would want to hide from her or help her. He helped once, will probably do it again.

“Don’t, you said you piece. Here’s mine.”

Stiles steps into Derek’s personal bubble, arms crossed and back as straight as it could possibly get. With Stiles’ new look she is far from the scared girl she was. John sees his daughter as the fearsome woman she has been forced to become. He is partially proud and upset that this has come to pass.

“You fucked up, took the one chance you had not to be a complete ass to me anymore and pissed on it. You lost your chance with me the moment you decided that calling me a traitorous bitch was more important than my bruising face. I will not be blamed for your lack of judgement, for your inability to emote, or hell, for the world coming crashing down around you. It was like that when I found you.”

Stiles spins away from Derek, showing only John and his father the wrecked side of herself. John can see that his daughter is just barely holding it all together, trying her best to not let the ones who hurt her see just how badly they did so.

“I think it is time for all of you to be on your way,” John’s father announces. “Perry Lake is not going to be welcoming for any of you.”

Chapter 19

Chapter Notes

Enjoy!

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

The Pack found itself flooding a local hotel with a very bored night clerk, apparently so bored that they retreated to the back office to no doubt sleep. Lydia was fine with that as the entirety of the Pack was sitting in the otherwise quiet lobby all looking at each other while Derek paced. Part of Lydia wanted to take a picture and show Stiles, show her that she won. Lydia pushed that part away, Stiles wasn't quite as bitchy as she was.

"What are you doing here?" Jackson asks.

Lydia raises a brow at her boyfriend who seems just as defeated as the others look. That is not the Jackson that who usually exudes confidence and, as Stiles puts it, jackassery.

"Erica texted me you all were here and I thought I might drop by."

She plasters on a very fake smile before perching herself on the edge of the loveseat that both Erica and Boyd were occupying. Sides are being drawn and Lydia is showing her support. She plans to represent her friend and family in this Pack meeting.

"Why would you all keep that from me?" Derek bellows out.

Lydia can feel her own hackles rising and fear trying to churn in her gut. Derek's eyes went red and swung over to the loveseat. The rest of the room shrinks in on itself at the pure rage coming off the Alpha.

"She asked us not to," Lydia says while examining her nails.

If Derek wants to be an ass that Lydia can be a bitch. It is far past time for everyone in the room to get theirs from her truly.

"Unlike you, I actually care for Stiles. You know she had a crush on me first, but saw that I was actually the only human who would care about her in return. How sad is that, the one girl who's been a bitch because she isn't gay herself turns out to be the one who hears the story in full the next day."

Lydia finds herself advancing on everyone in the room, commanding the attention. After everything she went through because of this group of people she is finally going to get her own revenge.

“Let me tell you, it was a gruesome story. I don’t even know how she was able to function, just ask Erica and Boyd. Stiles is officially the strongest person I know and I want her to have a happy life. She has real friends here, ones who will stand by her as she wades through blood and not the kind who are so wrapped up in themselves that they label her an enemy before even caring that she was hurt.”

“We didn’t know,” Scott shouts.

That was a huge mistake, Lydia turns on the werewolf, anger boiling her own blood. She can feel Jackson stirring, probably ready to defend her. Lydia doesn’t need Jackson though, she has two werewolves already showing allegiance to her own Pack with Stiles, because that is what they will all become one day, especially after the baby is born.

“Bullshit. You could see it on her fucking face, in the way she didn’t move correctly. I thought Jackson died that night and still saw that Stiles had faced something terrifying. She was bleeding. You don’t get to play that card, McCall. You knew. Stiles just suddenly went missing after winning the game and didn’t respond to texts and you had no clue? Bullshit.”

Something started stirring inside Lydia with each word. A growing need to just shout at Scott and the others. Lydia pushes that feeling down and advances toward Derek. It’s time he realized just how fucked he is.

“And you, do you have any idea how hard it has been for me to sit there while you throw yourself a pity party? You did that to yourself. You chose to blame Stiles for your actions. You lost one of the greatest gifts in the world in that girl. You even still have the audacity to come here and try to beg for her forgiveness. Believe me, it will take so much more than that.”

“I think you are going too far,” Allison chirps.

“Really? Was it too far when you kidnapped two people in this room? Was it too far when your own grandfather had Stiles taken and then raped her? Because if you think this is too far than all of that certainly was.”

“I thought,” Allison tried.

“Boo hoo, poor Allison. Your mother died and you thought it was all the fault of a Werewolf. Newsflash, it was all the fault of your grandfather and aunt. Stiles lost her mother and she didn’t go insane. Boyd only has his grandmother, still a good apple. You allowed yourself to be manipulated, you willingly went along with it instead of listening to that voice in your head that said you were in love with Scott.”

“That’s enough,” Chris interrupts. “You do not get to speak to my daughter that way.”

“Really, I don’t? Why because it hurts her feelings? How do you think Stiles fucking feels. You all show up here and expect her to forgive you and go back to like how it was before. You are all still blaming her for what happened to her.”

Saying it felt true. They all were blaming Stiles for what happened to her and the reaction she took when they turned against her. Lydia could not be in the same room as them anymore. She turns around, giving a pointed look to both Boyd and Erica before walking out of the hotel.

Stiles' Gramps let Lydia borrow his truck to come and pick up the two wolves following Lydia out of the building. She just left out the part where she was going to attain surveillance on just how they all were reacting. Part of Lydia had been hoping that they were all truly sorry for what had happened. Honestly it only looked like Derek may have been.

Lydia arrived at the farmhouse with Boyd and Erica in the truck alongside her. Stiles didn't want to go to the apartment that night, she wanted to be somewhere else. Somewhere secluded without someone next door who was so concerned when Stiles walked into the bar again with tears silently spilling down her cheeks.

John had suggested having the two werewolves coming over as well, giving Stiles comfort again. Stiles can't say she doesn't agree. Something felt right about having the two Werewolves and Lydia with her and her family at the moment. She read in one of her Gramps' books about a human needing Pack around her while pregnant with a Werewolf. Guess it turns out she may be having a baby wolf after all.

"How'd it go?" Stiles asks from her seat on the porch steps.

She was still wearing her outfit from earlier in the night, just without the shoes and eyeliner and mascara streaking down her face. Lydia didn't comment on the appearance only smiled and sauntered up the stairs and into the house. Stiles was left looking to the couple for answers.

"Lydia ripped them a new one," Boyd announced.

"Pretty sure Lydia only left smoking ash behind," Erica stated.

Stiles felt both relief and guilt at that. Then anger followed. She does not want to feel guilty for making any one of those jerks feel bad. Her feelings should not be dictated by those who sought to hurt her or make her out to be the bad guy. She is her own person and her feelings of pain are valid.

From what Stiles understands, her Gramps has luckily called Dr. Olivia once they got to the house. There will be quite a bit of talking in the morning and possibly some breathing exercises that will starve off any impending anxiety attacks that will also follow in the coming days. Stiles knows her mind will bring them on and she is so not looking forward to the shitty PTSD dreams that will come either.

"Let's head inside," Stiles murmurs.

It is going to be a very long night for her.

Chapter End Notes

Next chapter will be posted in about 2 weeks or so, gives me time for work, school, and editing!

Chapter 20

Chapter Notes

This is a shorter chapter, but the plan is to have another one uploaded later this week as well.

Had a small setback with my Covid recovery. Ended up having some complications with my lungs so I have had a few doctor's appointments and am now being referred to a Pulminologist. Asthma kinda sucks, especially when you get this disease and are trying to figure out how further damaged your lungs are because you can't even walk across your house without being out of breath.

The voices carried throughout the hotel, mostly because Derek was listening for them all. He wanted to know what all the others had to say about the outburst from Lydia. Everyone is having a different reaction to it, including Derek the more he listens to everyone.

Jackson seems to be looking at everything through the eyes of Lydia and wanting to take her side if the phone call he is having with her is any indication. Derek can't quite make out what Lydia is saying, but he can tell that Lydia is still really angry about it all based on the tone of Jackson's voice.

Isaac isn't saying much to anyone. He locked himself in the room he and Boyd were going to use and is just watching some late night infomercial. Derek can tell that his curly haired Beta is processing everything that happened and is trying to figure out if he should stay with Scott or not.

Derek can hear the Argents arguing between themselves and with Scott. All three of them are trying to place the blame elsewhere except where it really should sit. It makes Derek sick to his stomach to think that they would even go so far as to say that Stiles is just being too dramatic and should forgive them.

The thought that Stiles would ever forgive any of them is ridiculous. They all turned on her that night, on the night she needed them the most. Stiles gave her all and they took it without giving anything except cruelty in return.

Derek grabs his bag and roots around for the letter Stiles wrote him. He finds it buried underneath his other shirts, the envelope folded over. He pulls the paper out from inside and looks it over again when it hits home.

Scott knew. He knew that Stiles was in danger that night and chose to do nothing. Not even tell Derek. She was Scott's best friend and Scott tricked them all. Gerard won against Stiles because Scott just didn't care. Derek was led to believe the worst about the person he loves

because Scott decided he was more important than the girl who would put herself in danger for everyone else.

Rage boiled inside Derek at the audacity of the people just a couple rooms down. They willingly went along with a plan that ended with Stiles being attacked and didn't give a shit. He could feel the red taking over his eyes, but held himself back from charging down the hall and into the other room to tear the three to pieces.

Anger may have been Derek's anchor before, but Stiles found a way to slip in and take over. Derek has to find a way to make it up to her if it is the last thing he does. And it might just be if Derek pisses Stiles off any further. He'll need to combat that and it may just take working alongside Jackson and hopefully Isaac to find a way back into the good graces of Stiles, and what appears to be her Pack now.

Taking his newfound objective, Derek waits until Jackson is off the phone and heads to round up the two Betas who may be able to help him at least become friends with Stiles again, to be in her life without her pain creating hatred.

Derek knocks on Isaac's door and finds the lanky teen still completely dressed. It was always hard for Isaac to settle down at night, it only got worse after they saved Jackson. Isaac takes a few hours to settle down at night and feel comfortable enough to let himself relax at all. Hence infomercials.

"We're going," Derek grits out.

It takes only a second for Isaac to register that Derek is very serious about whatever it is they are about to do. They head to Jackson's room and find the guy already heading out of the room, raising an eyebrow at them.

"I assume this has something to do with helping Stilinski? I can't believe I am going to say this, but, I'm in."

Derek can feel hope blooming in his chest that his two Betas are willing to follow him to help his mate.

That thought stops Derek in his tracks.

Mate.

Stiles is his mate and he needs to do whatever possible to bring a smile back to her face and joy back into her life. He needs to protect her and make sure nothing bad ever happens to her again. Derek would die trying and he will never let his anger overtake Stiles. She is more important than that.

A simple text message from his nephew contained all the information that Peter needed to know that some major shit is about to go down. Derek found Stiles and now the Pack has

been divided. Peter would find some joy in the fact that his nephew is failing, except that something about this feels completely wrong.

Stiles was a piece of the puzzle that Peter knew would make a Pack. Peter knew that Derek would need Stiles, knew it from the start. The two just fit together, even when they were trying to stop him. Of course that was a main reason for asking Stiles if she wanted the bite.

It was a sad night overall when she declined and then took part in Peter's death. He is strangely proud of the human, knowing a leader of a Pack when he sees it. From the text Peter can tell that Stiles has pilfered the important parts of the Pack and is leading it all on her own.

Perhaps Peter will just have to head to Wisconsin on his own to see the power that Stiles holds as a human. She can hold a grudge just as hard as Peter and maybe even more fearsome. She has the brains to back up her words and knows how to use others for action and if that fails throws herself into the action.

Now that he thinks on it more, it makes sense that Stiles acts the way she does. Her father was a Sheriff and they apparently have some sort of connection to Protectors. If Stiles ever became a Hunter or Protector no one would stand a chance against her, especially with the loyalty she seems to have from a Pack of wolves.

With her and Derek leading the Pack Peter may just stick around, and maybe even listen. They are reminding Peter of his sister and brother-in-law, except for the facts that Derek is a bit more aggressive and hostile and Stiles a little more conniving and snarkier. A new generation Peter supposes, a new world they are all living in and suffering through.

Chapter 21

Chapter Notes

Bam! Enjoy.

Saturday June 16, 2012

Stiles could not sleep the night before, afraid of the potential dreams that would chase after her. She did take solace in the fact that both Erica and Lydia held her while they slept. To be honest, Stiles isn't even sure that Lydia slept. She was fairly angry after getting off the phone with Jackson. All she told Stiles was that they would discuss it in the morning once Lydia had a chance to calm down.

That's just how Lydia is though, she needs to work through some of her emotions on her own and then talk about them afterward. Stiles seems to be the one that Lydia is willing to do that with, aside from Jackson.

As for now, Stiles is trying to extract herself from the grips of her friends so that she can head to the bathroom. Her bladder is already seeming to shrink in size as her pregnancy continues. It is something that she is just going to have to get used to, and maybe invest in those pads women use for bladder leaks. Might be worth it once school starts back up.

Stiles steps around the sleeping forms on the living room floor while heading to the downstairs bathroom. It's probably her favorite bathroom in the house because Gramps left the pink and yellow tiles. You can just tell that her grandmother was the one to decorate it back in the day. It still has the ruffly pink curtains too that her dad has been making fun of her Gramps for. Stiles has stuck with her Gramps on that one.

Just thinking about something other than the terrible out of town guests brings a little ease for Stiles. She doesn't have to worry what other people think about her for a little while. She can just reminisce about their weird little family and the great people in Wisconsin that actually care about her.

It doesn't take long for Stiles to finish her business and head out onto the front porch. The sun hasn't risen yet and Stiles finds that it is calming, seeing the little bit of light peaking over the distant hills. Also wrapped up in the oversized Badgers hoodie that Stiles stole from her Gramps makes Stiles feel like nothing in the world could touch her again.

Except there is a strong feeling of someone watching Stiles. She can feel the eyes on her and it is not coming from inside the house. The past few months have honed Stiles' skill of discerning when she is being watched and right now she is being stalked.

Stiles has also developed a skill of looking around her without giving away that she was looking around. Her friends still haven't realized that Stiles knows all about the Google searches about pregnancy and PTSD and secret conversations about how to help Stiles. So she deploys her new skill of discreetly looking around to find the source of the stalking.

It seems to be coming from the wood line across from the house. Stiles feigns looking toward the sunrise which gives her a view of the trees. She can just make out a pair of red, glowing eyes and a couple sets of amber eyes. Expecting something like this, Stiles doesn't feel her anxiety or heart rate pick up. She does however feel her anger returning.

Anger toward all the wolves, anger toward Derek, and anger toward herself. None of this would have ever happened if she had just stayed out of the woods at the start of the year. She should have just stayed in her room and played Portal 2. That would have made everything much more relaxed, for her at least.

For everyone else, well, Peter would probably have been a truly evil villain and werewolves would probably have killed all the Argent's. If Stiles were being honest with herself, she would not have minded that scenario. What she probably would have minded is Derek siding with Peter back then, or probably dying. Just the thought of Derek being killed makes Stiles' stomach twist uncomfortably. All she can think about is what if she hadn't been there when Derek had been shot by Kate. He would be lying dead somewhere with no one.

Guilt wraps its hands around Stiles' throat, constricting her breathing. She is taking another person away from Derek, a person he doesn't even know is going to exist yet.

That panic attack Stiles was fighting against since she saw Derek yesterday has come on in full force. Intense pain courses through Stiles' chest while breathing becomes truly difficult to accomplish. Her mind is yelling at her that she is just as large a monster as Gerard.

Stiles' vision swims into darkness as her mind delves into the darkest parts of her brain, yelling at her for being such a horrible person. She shouldn't even be allowed to raise the child she is growing. She isn't going to be able to raise a Werewolf, hell she won't even be able to raise a human.

A soothing hand starts pulling Stiles from her thoughts as it brushes through her shorter hair. A whisper is telling her to take deep breaths and to open her eyes. Stiles fights the urge to listen, her mind screaming to ignore this other person and focus on the darkness that wants to consume her. There is a light in that darkness, a warm pink glow. Stiles reaches for that warmth, using it to pull herself from the darkness.

She opens her eyes and finds that the hand stroking her hair belongs to a very concerned looking Alpha. Derek is squatted on the ground next to her, studying her face. A few months ago Stiles would have loved this sort of attention, and right now a part of her still is. She can't help but think that the pink light, that warmth, was Derek pulling her from the panic. She'd read more about Werewolves and it is possible that it was Derek using some weird Werewolf mojo to help her. That would mean he thinks of Stiles as Pack, though.

"Stiles, are you okay?" Derek whispers.

His eyes meet hers, swirling between green, gray, and blue. Even with everything that had happened Stiles just wants to fall into Derek's arm and cry about everything. She never got the chance to use him as pure comfort before, too afraid he would leave her because of her messy emotions. Things are messier now thanks to hormones, but something Stiles sees in Derek tells her that he would hold her for eternity if he had to.

The betrayal pain stabs at Stiles' heart, making tears well in her eyes. Where was this Derek when she was bleeding, reeling from her attack. He was yelling at her, calling her a bitch.

Stiles steels her spine and pulls away from the Alpha, wiping the tears from her face. She tries to level her best annoyed face at Derek. Whatever face she shows makes the man wince. Good, he should suffer like Stiles is. She is going through so much and a good chunk of it is his fault.

"Why are you here? How are you here?" Stiles struggles to find a stable voice and fails. There was a quiver to her questions.

"I followed the scents from Erica and Boyd," Derek starts. "I needed to make sure you were safe."

Stiles raises her eyebrows and gets ready to open her mouth only for Derek to stand and level her with a frown that was perfected back in Beacon Hills.

"No, I get to say my piece now," Derek growls and Stiles finds she isn't afraid, just curious about what Derek could possibly have to say now. "I royally fucked up, I know that now. If anything that has made me want to be even closer to you, make sure I don't miss anything again. All I want to do is protect you, keep you away from danger and wrapped up in blankets with hot chocolate and marshmallows."

"It's summer," Stiles mumbles, not being able to refrain from making a sarcastic comment. Derek notices and shoots her a classic Sourwolf eyebrow raise. Something in her stomach flips at that. She didn't think she would ever get to see the playfully annoyed Derek again.

"Still stands, Stiles. I was up all night just thinking that I missed so much, that I wasn't paying enough attention. I refuse to go back to how everything was a week ago, I refuse to let things distract me from keeping the woman I love safe. I was an idiot before."

"Still are," Stiles chimes.

"Maybe, but I plan on sticking around."

The world tilts and if Stiles wasn't sitting she would be in a heap of limbs on the ground. Derek is not only in Perry Lake, but he sounds like he is going to stay.

"I'm sorry, repeat that," Stiles grits out.

"I am moving here, Stiles."

This time the morning sickness comes out in full force and Stiles finds herself throwing up the very little contents of her stomach onto the Alpha Werewolf followed with a little dry

heaving. A very concerned Derek doesn't seem to mind that he is now covered in last night's dinner as he helps Stiles hold her hair back while rubbing her back.

"Stiles, are you okay?" There seems to be an emphasis on the okay part this time around.

"Peachy," Stiles groans.

"What's going on? Are you sick? Is this an symptom from your anxiety attack?"

Stiles pulls away from Derek again, scrunching her face at the man. She really hopes that he doesn't suspect anything else, doesn't smell anything else. Based on the books she read, a Werewolf should be able to tell that Stiles is pregnant now, her scent should be more pronounced, sweeter.

"What the hell are you doing here, Hale?"

Stiles looks up to see her father standing in the front doorway with her Gramps just behind him, shotgun at the ready.

Chapter 22

Chapter Notes

So sorry I have been away for so long. Health issues got real weird real quick. Had some heart issues that seem to have been caused from when I was sick. My resting pulse rate was seriously high, like 120/130 high. We are now into the 90s which is amazing.

However my anxiety got super bad because of the heart issues and I am now on some serious dosage of anti-anxiety meds. Having been on those it has reduced my anxiety by a lot and pulled out some underlying things that I have had my whole life, mostly seen when I was little before the anxiety kicked in.

Right now we are suspecting ADHD, which, based on what I am writing here for you all, is really making me laugh at myself. Also if what I have been told is true then there is a big chance my brother also has ADHD as well as my dad, we are all just presenting with different aspects of it. Right now we are finding my biggest issue is hyper-focusing. Spent 24+ hours reading, forgetting I needed to eat, drink, and use the facilities. Not the first time, but I do know to now set alarms. Also spent about half a day super pumped but then doing nothing because I couldn't decide what to do. I would like to thank the anxiety meds for bringing this part of me back to the front and center. I thought I had gotten rid of this bitch, turned out anxiety just locked her up and now my dr released her. Don't appreciate it.

Also I have been collecting A issues:

Asthma

Anxiety

Atopic (the type of eczema I have)

ADHD

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

Derek wasn't expecting to approach Stiles right away, he only wanted to make sure she was fine and protected. A very obvious panic attack had Derek running from the woods and onto the porch of the old farmhouse.

In the terrifying moments Derek was holding Stiles, trying to calm her back down, he came to the full realization that he cannot just leave her. Derek's instincts are screaming that he needs to protect his mate, to not leave her vulnerable like this. Hence his declaration, one that apparently caused Stiles to violently throw up all over him.

Stiles being sick is still scarier than the two men standing behind her with a shotgun. Something is wrong with Stiles and it is starting to become obvious that her father and grandfather know what it is. Lydia probably knows too.

"Hello Sheriff," Derek grunts.

“I’m not the Sheriff here, I’m just a man standing his ground against a trespasser. Now, what are you doing here?” John questions.

“I came to check on Stiles, something is wrong.”

Derek can hear Stiles snorting from her perch on the ground of the porch. Instead of shooting a questioning glare at Stiles, Derek opts to keep an eye on the men with the weapons. They could very easily incapacitate him with a correctly placed shot.

“Yeah, it’s called you,” Stiles’ grandfather growls.

Derek can feel just how protective the man is of his granddaughter. It reminds him of his own family before the Argents came around and destroyed the happiness. A happiness that Derek wonders if he would have been able to share with Stiles. She’s his mate so obviously they would have ended up together at some point, maybe once Stiles was in college.

Then again, Stiles feels like the type of girl who would have left Beacon Hills behind for something far greater, never letting herself meet Derek or give him the time of day when something bigger was calling out for her.

“Sir, with respect, I am trying to apologize and I want to try and make up for what I did. Ultimately it is up to Stiles whether she forgives me or not, but I am really hoping you will.” Derek directs the last part of his statement to Stiles who is looking paler than usual.

“I don’t think I can,” Stiles mumbles.

“Just give me a chance, Stiles, just one. Let me prove what you really mean to me, to my pack.”

Derek drops to his knees beside Stiles, reaching for her shaking hand and draining some unknown pain from Stiles. He is aware of his two Betas walking out of their spots in the woods, but the pain Stiles has is more concerning. He is trying to pinpoint what it could be and realizes that it is coming from her stomach area. Stiles must actually be sick if she is feeling pain there.

“What are you doing to me?” Stiles whispers while looking into Derek’s eyes.

“Taking away the pain you are apparently in.”

“What pain, kiddo?”

Derek breaks the eye contact with Stiles and looks to the concerned face of John. He has also knelt down beside Stiles, reaching a hand out to her shoulder. Something passes between the father and daughter, something that Derek is not quite understanding.

“It’s nothing, just the usual cramping, I swear. I am not that stressed out to cause an issue like I know you are thinking. Like, I would literally be a total mess and screaming right now if it was what you are thinking it is. Believe me, I read the same books you have read about it. I may have even read a few more than you, Pops.”

Derek struggles to follow Stiles as she rambles her words out quickly. He focuses on the cramping. He knows Stiles always had bad cramps on her period, hence how he figured out her favorite chocolate is actually dark chocolate, yet this seems far from the type of cramping she had before.

Deciding to try and figure out if Stiles is just experiencing a new version of her cycle for his own future sanity Derek takes a deep breath. He is hit with a sweet scent that is clinging to Stiles' usual scent. It's a scent Derek remembers from his own childhood, one that would come around just before his mother would announce that there would be another family member.

All the air rushes out of Derek at once. Stiles wearing too large clothes, the vomiting, the concern over cramps, and the smell. And how hurt Stiles is.

"Are you pregnant?" Derek breathes.

Chapter End Notes

So I plan on updating a couple days a week right now. I edited a bunch of chapters that I wrote, so they are ready to go. I am making up for all the weeks that I missed.

Chapter 23

If you would ask Stiles later how she ended up hiding in a closet in her dad's old bedroom, she wouldn't remember. All that is playing through her head is Derek's words.

He figured it out and now Stiles is hiding from him. She knows she isn't really hiding from him because she can hear him breathing on the other side of the slated door. His own spicy scent is overwhelming the small room and slipping into the closet.

Stiles is grateful that Derek hasn't said anything since they both ended up in these positions. It has probably been about an hour or more since Stiles came into the closet, hiding from reality.

"How did you figure?" Stiles asks through the door.

"Your actions and the memory of the pregnancy scent."

Stiles can feel herself nodding. She figured werewolves would be able to smell it on her. There is no effective way for hiding it. Add in her morning sickness and it would be a dead giveaway, especially for a born wolf.

There is a levity to Derek realizing what was going on, to him wanting to stick around. This is his kid, probably will be a werewolf too. He can be in the life of the baby and help them. Stiles isn't afraid of that idea because Derek is right. She isn't giving him a chance to make up to her.

"Stiles, I am so sorry. What happened to you, what's going on, I promise that I won't judge you for keeping the baby."

Stiles snaps. That comment took the little happy feeling that was forming in her heart and tore it apart. Derek won't judge her for keeping their baby. Like he is ashamed that she is going to be the mother to his kid.

Pushing the door open and standing up tall, Stiles looks at Derek sitting on the floor, a constipated look on his face. She really wants to just smack it off his face, and decides to do just that.

The slap is loud in the small room and nowhere near as satisfying as Stiles would have liked. Derek just looks really pissed off now, like Stiles slapping him is the straw breaking his favorite camel's back.

"How can you say that about me? Am I not worthy of having this kid? Am I not worthy of raising a possible werewolf? Or am I not worthy of having your baby, Derek? Tell me, which is it?"

Stiles watches as the anger drains from Derek's face and is replaced by awe and confusion. It's an expression that makes Stiles realize what Derek was thinking earlier. He thought the

baby was Gerard's, not his. Stiles almost wants to smack herself now. She has been letting her own emotions control her way too much. She needs to start thinking again instead of acting.

"Stiles, I thought," Derek starts.

"Yeah, I just figured out what you thought."

"It's mine?"

"Yep, I am almost sixteen weeks now, I think. Based on when we were doing it in February, it wasn't long after our very uneventful Valentine's night. Thanks again for the chocolate. Damn, I want some right now. Anyway, I am super sure, definitely not the bastards. I wouldn't be wearing the oversized shirts right now if it were."

Before Stiles can even begin her next train of thought, Derek has her wrapped in a hug. A very tight hug that reminds Stiles of the good times they shared, and realizes that this is actually a good time. Stiles just told Derek they are having a baby and he is hugging her.

Taking advantage of the moment, pretending that things are okay for now, Stiles hugs Derek back. He is still rock solid and warm, but there is a softness in the way that he is holding her, making her feel protected and loved. Which, if Derek is to be fully believed, he does love her.

"I swear to protect you and our baby for the rest of my life, Stiles. I promise you that I won't abandon you again."

The word again has Stiles pulling away as if ice water was dropped over her head. She is allowing herself to go back to someone who treated her poorly. She refuses to allow her heart to be broken by Derek. She will let him be in their child's life, but he will not be a romantic part in hers.

"Stiles?"

"Derek, you broke something inside me that night, something that I don't think can be fixed. Our romantic relationship is over, but I would be willing to still be a friend for the sake of this baby."

This time is Derek's turn to have ice water thrown on him. Stiles could see his hope for a future together disappearing. His open face began shutting down, hiding his real emotions. Stiles hates when he does that, but at the same time she knows that she cannot be privy to that side of him anymore. She is sure he will eventually find someone, probably his mate.

"I understand."

Derek moves from his position by the closet doors and heads for the door to the room. He turns around to look at Stiles with a sad smile before heading out the door and away from her. Stiles feels her knees give out, all her energy draining away as the reality of what just happened seeps in.

Stiles still loves Derek and she told him to go away. Tears silently fall from Stiles eyes as she hears the door downstairs open and close. She is vaguely aware of Lydia coming into the room and bringing her into an embrace. There is way too much emotional turmoil happening at once for Stiles to deal with.

“You will get through all of this, Stiles, you are the strongest of us all,” Lydia declares.

Stiles only wishes what her friend was saying was the truth.

Chapter 24

Monday June 18, 2012

The room where Dr. Olivia conducts her sessions with patients is pretty relaxing considering that there are figurines of paranormal creatures on the shelves and a giant painting of a rainbow. Nothing seems to go together, but that is what makes it feel comfortable, lived in.

For Stiles she doesn't have to put on airs in the room, she can just say whatever comes to mind about what is going on in her head and in life. Like she did about her very eventful weekend, including the closet breakdown. Dr. Olivia just listened in while Stiles let everything out, taking in everything Stiles is saying about her feelings.

"So yeah, I am still in love with that stupid Sourwolf, I think. Right? I mean it breaks my heart to see his breaking. I mean mine is still only held together with some tape and pressure, but I still want to cry when I think about how distant Derek is going to be from me."

"Carter, take a breath between sentences," Dr. Olivia says. "I want you to remember what we said about assuming what a person is thinking. You don't actually know all the time what Derek was and is thinking. You need to have open conversations with him."

Stiles finds herself nodding along and pulling at the loose threads on her jean shorts. In a previous session they discussed that Stiles was really good at deductions, but that didn't give her mind reading powers. She can never fully tell what another person is thinking and really shouldn't make assumptions.

"If you want to have a good relationship of any sort with Derek, I want you to have conversations with him. You can make your ultimate decision once you have information to figure out what type of life you want to have with him. It may be not having Derek with you or it could be as a friend, or it could be more."

"How is talking supposed to help me figure that out? So far all it has done is make me more confused."

"From what you have said, it sounds like it has been arguing and not openly speaking. Try holding a conversation with Derek in an environment where you feel safe and comfortable, where you don't feel like you need to be defensive with him."

All that runs through Stiles' head is the fact that Stiles has to use her logical brain instead of her emotional one when speaking with a certain werewolf. It won't be easy, her emotional brain always takes over with Derek, even when she first saw the guy in the woods.

A cellphone should not be as heavy as it is in Stiles' hand, yet here it was. A five ton brick. Stiles doesn't want to keep holding it in her hand so she sets it on the register counter. She

wanted to work the register after her session to have something structured to keep her from doing something really stupid.

Like staring at a five ton brick cellphone. Isn't really helping considering it is a very slow Monday. Jeremy is also making it difficult to even exist. He keeps glancing toward Stiles throughout the afternoon, making her longing for his shift to be over.

She really shouldn't wish for things though, the universe likes to play weird tricks on her. Like having Peter Hale walking through the door and beelining straight to Stiles, ignoring Jeremy asking how he can help.

"The fuck," Stiles grunts.

"Very nasty language there, thought you had class," Peter chimes.

"Yeah, except it's summer vacation and an asshole just walked into the building."

"Is that any way for you to speak to someone who you asked a favor of? Truly, I am hurt."

"Well you failed at the job anyway, so why should I bother with niceties?"

"I offer my congratulations?"

The quick turn of conversation has Stiles tilting her head. Peter does the same and makes a pointed look to her stomach. He has been in the same room as her for less than five minutes and figured it out while Derek took a day. Impressive. Creepy.

"Thanks, try saying that to Derek instead of hello. Do it while I'm around though. I kinda want to see you get gutted."

A smile passes over Peter's lips while he takes a few steps closer to the register. Jeremy is watching them both carefully, probably trying to figure out how the two know each other. Pete is taking in Jeremy too while not looking directly at the guy,

"He is very attracted to you," Peter whispers.

"I know," Stiles groans.

"Obviously you do not like that attention. Shall I do something about it, we are family now."

Stiles finds herself cringing back at that notion. She almost forgot that her kid is going to be related to Peter. And between Stiles being a devious person half the time and Peter being, well, Creeperwolf, this kid may turn out to be a little murderous.

"Appreciate the offer, gonna decline. I don't think we have the same idea about what to actually do about that situation."

Peter shrugs and turns his full attention onto Jeremy with a wicked smile. A laugh bubbles up from Stiles' throat at the immediate retreat of Jeremy who turned pale. It is very possible that Peter flashed his eyes at Jeremy to send him running.

“Now, what do I need to know about is what does my nephew knows and what do I need to do?”

“Now someone wants to listen to my plan,” Stiles snarks. “Currently I am working up the nerve to call Derek and have him come over so we can talk like the adults that we both have to be now. However I am more afraid of that phone than I ever was of you.”

“Would you like me to do it?”

Stiles quickly snatches her phone up from the counter and slips it into her shorts pocket. Peter is not going to touch her phone, ever. That seems to be enough for Peter. He turns around out of the store and leaves.

“Are you okay?” Jeremy says.

The jump that Stiles did was not because Jeremy just appeared behind her, it was because Peter stopped outside the door and winked at her. Though, Jeremy could also have been the cause, if it weren't for a certain Creeperwolf.

“Just peachy,” Stiles says as she pulls out her phone and calls Derek.

Chapter 25

Tuesday June 19, 2012

The glass door of the general store looms in front of Derek. Stiles told him to meet her in the store and they would go to her place so that they can talk. Part of him is excited that Stiles wants to talk with him, the other part is fearful that the friendship that Stiles said she wanted is also about to go off the table after all.

Derek pulls the air of confidence forward, easier to do with the Alpha power now, and walks up and through the door into the store. He is immediately greeted by John who is putting items back onto shelves. Both men only manage a nod at each other before Derek scans the store, looking for Stiles.

It doesn't take long to find her, at least not for Derek. He can hear her mumbling song lyrics to herself from across the store. Making his way over to her, Derek spots Stiles sitting with her back to him on top of cooler with headphones on and a clipboard in hand. She is bobbing her head along to Lady Gaga while counting things on the shelf.

The mumbling of Edge of Glory takes Derek back to Stiles just full on singing in her room while Derek was trying to relax while she did her schoolwork. She always needed to listen to fast music if she needed to study for a long period of time. It helped her brain focus on what she was working on. Derek smiles thinking about all the times Stiles wasn't even aware she was singing along to the music.

Wanting to stay in the happy moment, but knowing they need to get on with whatever talk Stiles wanted to have, Derek taps Stiles' shoulder and catches her as she flails herself off the cooler. Her cheeks redden as she hastily removes her headphones and rights herself, offering Derek a tight smile.

"Hey, big man," Stiles cheerily says. "I would say what brings you here, except I was the one that called you yesterday. Sorry about the abruptness. Like, I know I was really kind of called out of the blue and told you what to do. I am literally not trying to tell you what to do, that is the opposite of why I wanted to talk with you."

Derek fights back his grin, knowing that Stiles doesn't need to see how she is making him happy with just her usual rambles and overall flustered self around him. Instead, he narrows his face and nods along with her.

"I don't think you wanted to talk here," Derek says while crossing his arms.

"Right, right," Stiles says. "Follow me."

Stiles leads Derek to a back office in the store and up a flight of stairs. It leads into a very cozy looking apartment. Stiles seems incredibly comfortable in this environment as she just plops herself onto the couch and tosses her headphones and phone onto the coffee table.

Derek follows her lead and sits down on the same couch, pulling a leg up so he can face Stiles more head on.

They just sit there, staring at each other for a few minutes. It is probably the most still Derek has ever seen Stiles, she doesn't even sleep without moving all around. It is a little disconcerting for Derek to see her so still and completely unmoving. She isn't even fidgeting and picking at her nails.

"What did you want to speak with me about, Stiles?"

"I don't really know," Stiles whispers.

Derek can feel his eyebrows rising and a scowl forming. Stiles looks embarrassed and ends up standing and pacing around the small living room. She is pulling her hair up into a ponytail and growling to herself. Ever since she got more comfortable around Derek, Stiles started growling instead of groaning. It was actually cute sounding coming from her.

"So, just listen to this and help me figure it out, okay?" Stiles spins around.

"Okay."

"Dr. Olivia, my brain doctor mental person, told me that I need to have conversations with you so I can figure out where you and I will fit into each other's lives. I know we will both be parents to the little wolfie, but I need to figure out what we actually are to each other."

"And we need to have conversations to do that?"

Stiles spins around on Derek and throws her hands up in the air. She makes her way back to the couch and clumsily climbs over the top to sit close to Derek. It reminds him so much of how they used to be, it is easy to forget the trauma she went through, except it is written in all the changes she has made to herself.

"Right? I have no clue what we really need to be talking about. She just said you and I need to have these conversations. I have absolutely no clue and I don't like that. She wants us to evaluate our emotions during these talks. Can you believe that?"

Derek sits back on the couch and processes just what Stiles' doctor wants them to do. His sister had him talk a lot right after they moved to New York. It was helping him some, but there were a few things that he just could not speak with anyone about, like what Kate did. The only person he opened up to about that is sitting in front of him now. There is help in talking.

"I think I understand," Derek starts. "We need to get to know each other again, meet each other for the first time without danger lurking around the corner."

"Your uncle is the only thing lurking now," Stiles whispers.

Derek is immediately put on edge. As far as he knows Peter is still in Beacon Hills. He shouldn't be anywhere near Stiles again, at least nowhere that would her the feeling that he was lurking.

“What do you mean?”

“Creepy was in here yesterday. He actually gave me the confidence to call you. I really hate him, but the guy is useful and I know he knows it and I hate it for that reason.”

Derek can feel his anger coming forward. Peter was supposed to stay in California, instead he brought himself all the way out here. No doubt he also figured out Stiles is pregnant. Hopefully the ass doesn't think it belongs to Argent.

“What?”

“He just came by, congratulated me, and you. Really he understands how my brain works and that is just creepy. I also know how his works, creepier.”

Derek can feel the relief wash over him. Stiles is safe. Their baby is safe. Peter is just being nosy. Like he was before, just with a dash of sinister.

“Stiles,” Derek starts.

“Call me either C.S. or Carter, please. It's who I am now. Carter Stiles.”

“Carter.” It feels foreign on Derek's tongue. Something about it fits her though. Especially now with the blonde hair. “I think this is how we start. I was never fully open with you, that's my fault. I need to get to know the new you, we are actually introducing ourselves now.”

“See that's the weird part to me, because I think I already have you figured out.”

Reclining back onto the couch, Derek smiles at Stiles. She really does think she can figure out how the world works, and maybe she can. Yet, she has a hard time understanding emotions of others when she is just trying to process behavior and actions. It's time to put that knowledge to the test.

“Really? Then what's the reason I don't like sushi?”

Chapter 26

Friday June 22, 2012

The past few days were weird. Apparently everyone except for Derek and Peter went back to Beacon Hills and are under the watchful eyes of the Alpha Pack. Stiles is both relieved and a little sad that everyone left. She is only sad about Lydia and Erica and Boyd leaving, everyone else is a relief.

It's also been weird because she has been doing the awkward get to know you dance with Derek. They have been talking every day, just about little things that make no real sense, except to know each other. Stiles hates the fact that Derek is a fan of basketball. She can barely sit through a game, yet the man loves it. Luckily he likes baseball, so it's not a complete loss.

What is a pain is that Derek asked Stiles to go with him to look for a place to live. Naturally, not wanting to be on that sort of intimate scale yet, Stiles has invited her grandfather along. Also he is a nosy man, Stiles and her dad had to get it from somewhere.

So now Stiles is riding in Derek's rental car with him and her grandfather to look at a house for rent not too far from the high school. There aren't too many places to rent that would be suitable for a werewolf in Perry Lake, apparently. They have a total of 3 places to look at.

"So, Derek," Gramps begins, "you planning on moving here permanently?"

Stiles tries her best not to roll her eyes. Leave it to Gramps to interrogate Derek. It's pretty obvious that Derek doesn't plan on being away from his kid and that kid will be wherever Stiles is. Just fact.

"Yes sir, I do. Just need a place for now until I can find a more permanent situation."

Stiles feels a warm feeling in her gut. Based on what Derek has been treating their conversations as, he is looking to find something not just for himself, but for Stiles too. There is something really sweet in that, but also possessive if you think about it. Though, from what Stiles has read on werewolves, that is just par for the course. They are possessive, especially an Alpha. Especially with their offspring and mates.

"I suggest you head up about thirty minutes north of here then, introduce yourself to the local pack."

Stiles freezes at that. Derek would too if he wasn't currently driving the car. This is the first that Stiles has heard of a pack living so close by. It would make sense though as there is so much supernatural activity in the world.

"Will do."

“Hold up, Gramps,” Stiles chimes in. “There is a pack nearby? Why didn’t you say anything? That seems like something I would like to know.”

“You needed distance for a bit. Once we knew what the baby was going to be, your dad and I were going to tell you.”

The car no longer feels comfortable, for anyone. Stiles is fuming. They were going to keep a secret from her on the basis that if she had a human kid then she probably would never actually have to find out there is another pack. And one so close that her friends probably go over there for games during the respective sports seasons.

Part of that has the ring of sweetness, the other part is full of deceit. Stiles will admit to herself that she was in bad shape when she got here, that being near werewolves would have been a bad thing, but not knowing is worse. She could have invertedly put herself in danger by not knowing. That is how trying to find a body in the woods led to what it led to.

Not knowing is dangerous. Stiles needs all the facts, to not be left in the dark when it comes to things. Being in the dark is what created a situation that still replays in her head frequently. She is at a point where it is not playing every day. Instead, some of her happier memories are playing of her and Derek.

“You had no right,” Stiles whispers.

Stiles can see Derek gripping the steering wheel tighter. She knows that she is exuding some pretty harsh emotions, ones that are super easy for a werewolf to scent in such a small place.

“You had no right to dictate what I should and should not know.”

“Baby girl, we did it to protect you.”

“Derek pull the car over.”

“We are only a minute from the first place,” Derek grumbles.

“Pull over.”

Derek pulls into the parking lot of some preschool that was closed for the day. Stiles gets out of the car and proceeds to open the door for her grandfather to get out as well. He does so, watching Stiles carefully.

“If you have learned anything about me in the past few months it is that I do not need to be coddled. I am working through trauma, yes, but that does not mean that you get to decide what I should and should not know.”

“You are still a kid,” Gramps starts.

“And I am about to be a mother in nearly six months. Things change and as things change how you look at me should too. Since coming to Perry Lake I have been changing and growing. I have been healing.”

Stiles adjusts the cutoff overalls she is wearing before fulling squaring herself up against her newly beloved Gramps. She knows he was coming from a place of love and protection, it doesn't change the fact that it hurts.

“Now, we are going to have a very long conversation later in regards to what else has been kept from me and until then we are going to look at these three houses for Derek and help him find the best option.”

Both grandfather and granddaughter get back into the vehicle. Stiles nods her head at Derek and clicks her seatbelt into place. He meets her eyes in the mirror before putting the car into drive and pulling back into traffic and down the road to the first house.

Chapter 27

Everything has been lackluster. Derek is not impressed by the first two options, both of which looked liked they had heavy drug use in them, they also smelled that way. Derek should have figured the places that he found on month to month leases would be less than impressive.

It also did not stop Stiles from making comments about how each place was actually less attractive and safe than the train depot and his burned out house. She even mentioned that just living in the Preserve would have been better than the first two rentals.

Everything has been tense too, ever since the reveal of another pack. Derek isn't too sure about what this will mean for his own pack wanting to come to Perry Lake in a few years. It could mean that they won't be able to. Most packs don't like being that close to each other.

For now Derek is putting that on the backburner until he and Stiles can talk it all over. She is for sure going to have questions and ideas of her own as to what they should do in the situation. They are going to have to go over all the etiquette and hope they are not questioned too much about what has happened.

They have reached the third house and Derek can already tell that he is going to have to live in a hotel until he can buy a house. Just pulling up to the front Derek can see that the house could use a lot of work. The photos online are obviously old. There is even a suspicious looking patch on the roof that looks like the owner purposefully used a completely different color of shingles to fix.

"I think for safety," Stiles interjects, "I should remain in the car with the keys. You know, to drive away quickly."

"You are not driving my rental," Derek grunts while climbing out of the car.

"Fine, but you are responsible if that roof caves in on my head."

"I promise to be your human shield."

"Dude, you are not human."

"Shield for a human, better? Also, don't call me dude or I go back to calling you Stiles."

Derek can just feel Stiles pouting behind him while they walk up to the house. Her Gramps is leading the way up and grunting as he steps onto the porch. He has been rather silent for the tours of the different houses. Derek wasn't even sure he wanted him to come, but Stiles wanted him to be there and Derek can respect that she wants a buffer.

Though Derek may have just discovered why there was a grunt, he almost steps through the porch. The boards are so weak and rotted. He immediately spins around and holds a hand up to stop Stiles from walking up the steps. Her incredulous face is enough to make Derek want to laugh. She tends to scrunch up her nose at him while furrowing her brows.

“I can already tell that this is a no so we might as well all head back to the car,” Derek announces.

“You know, boy, I don’t think you will be able to find a place to rent around here,” Gramps says.

“So pessimistic,” Stiles whispers.

“I am thinking that too. Just going to have to find a place to buy right away.”

“Not necessarily.”

Derek looks over to find Gramps walking down the steps. He looks like your typical farming grandpa, overalls that match Stiles’ and all. He takes the Wisconsin ballcap off and meets Derek eye to eye.

“I need some help on my property and have a spare room. You can stay with me until you find a place to buy so long as you help out. I’m getting old and could really use the help.”

This is an option that Derek did not think could exist. It is obviously one that Stiles hadn’t thought of as viable either as she has literally frozen while walking. Derek, if being honest, likes the idea of being somewhere living that Stiles spends almost half her time. She told him the other day that she works on the Jeep over at her Gramps’ place every week, trying to make it perfectly drivable. She really wants it to be in great condition for when she has the baby, including making it easier for reaching the backseat for a car seat.

It’s just like Derek looking into safe vehicle options himself now. He needs something that can work on wooded roads as well as being entirely safe for a baby and Stiles and anyone else he needs to protect in the future. His top contender at the moment is a 4-Runner.

The money for all these purchases won’t be an issue, which is something that Stiles was confused by until Derek explained the family inheritance and insurance payout. From there she was just very quiet for a few hours, which was concerning until Derek received a college savings plan for the baby. Then he understood where her brain had traveled to.

“Are you sure?” Derek asks.

“If I wasn’t I wouldn’t be asking. You are about to be a part of this family and the Stiles family looks out for each other.”

Derek is questioning whether or not he could be considered family by the man in front of him. Just a week ago he was threatening Derek and now he is being kind. It is a confusing journey to be on, but it is going to bring Derek closer to the woman who is his mate. He is going to be closer to being able to admit to her just what she means to him aside from loving her.

“I would appreciate that,” Derek says.

The older man steps down the porch and walks over to shake Derek’s hand before walking back to the car and climbing in. He seems super relaxed, even his scent is not stressed or

anything else, just relaxed and confident.

“What just happened?” Stiles asks.

Derek looks over to find the blonde looking after her grandfather, hand idling resting on her slightly protruding stomach. She seems to do that a lot whenever there is a strong emotion floating around here, Derek isn't even sure Stiles realizes that she is doing it.

“I think I just became roommates with your grandpa,” Derek replies.

“Why was hell freezing over not reported in the papers this morning? I swear first another pack that we have to deal with and now Gramps is being nice to you. I am uncontrollably confused. Today is a day I wish I had the brain altering meds because let me tell you it is taking me on a journey now and I would like to stop.”

Stiles fully turns to shoot pleading eyes at Derek before spinning and walking back to the car. No doubt he and her are going to have an interesting phone conversation that night after Stiles gets the low down from her dad everything that they both missed.

“By the way, you're coming to family dinner. I need a co-sleuth and Miranda doesn't know anything about werewolves, so you are the Booth to my Brennen.”

Meaning no phone call for Derek because he is going to have to try and stay on top of everything that Stiles is saying and thinking for the remainder of the night while they question the two men responsible for that side in Stiles.

Chapter 28

Chapter Notes

Hello all, it has been awhile..... Promise to explain at the end!

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

John wasn't sure what he was expecting to walk through his front door, but it was not Stiles, his father, and Derek all together. Nor did he expect Derek to receive a shoulder pat from his father. He also was not expecting to see his daughter zero her eyes in on him and raise a brow. She somehow perfected the upset and questioning parent look already when it took John a couple years on the force to master.

This does not bode well for him.

He keeps a loose eye on Stiles while she walks into the kitchen and rifles through the drawer filled with takeout menus. Between the two of them, they only order out once a week now, trying to both stay super healthy. However they have menus for every place in town because Stiles likes to have choices, many choices.

For now the young woman is mumbling under her breath about the amount of pizza they are going to need and how it better not upset the baby because she herself needs the over intake of cheese. John can tell that everyone in the room is in some sort of trouble with Stiles and once she gets food squared away they are all going to hear it. John really wishes he would have kept some sort of whiskey in the house, all the men seem to need it.

John looks around the small living room area and finds his father flipping through channels on the television while Derek hovers near, but not too near, to Stiles in the kitchen area. He seems very closed off, hands stuffed in his pockets and not wanting to really look anywhere except where Stiles who is using her cellphone to call and place a large order and putting it on his credit card from his wallet that was sitting on the counter while shooting him a "try me" look.

Based on everything else that has happened, John is having a hard time figuring out why Stiles is upset with him. He isn't being mean to Derek, though a large part of him wants to just punch the man square in the jaw. John made a promise to Stiles not to be mean to Derek while she is trying to figure out where he belongs in her life. John doesn't have to like it, but he has to go along with it considering Derek will be in their lives for the rest of it.

"Derek, why don't you grab something to drink and take a seat," Stiles announces once she gets off the phone. "You too, dad."

John finds himself walking over to the couch with Derek trailing. His father is already sitting in the single armchair they have, leaving John and Derek to sit together on the couch. Stiles

follows behind and grabs the television remote from her grandfather and shutting it off, choosing to stand in front of the television with her arms crossed and resting on her slowly growing stomach.

“Two of you are in major trouble,” Stiles growls.

“What?” John questions.

“I am sure you can piece it together based on secrets you have kept from me since moving here.”

It takes a moment for the secret Stiles is referencing to reach John’s brain. It is the only one he has kept from Stiles since they made it to his father’s house. Both agreed that after everything it was best not to tell Stiles, keep her from getting involved in something that dangerous again.

“Huntingdon Pack,” John nods. “I knew I eventually had to tell you.”

“Really? And when would that have been, father dearest? Once the baby started sporting glowing eyes, maybe some claws? Or, and I think the real reason is, that you weren’t going to tell me.”

“I swear we were,” John’s father breaks in.

“You can shut it after the weird offer thing.”

“How is it weird that I offered a young man a place to stay as long as he works for me? Seems like an honest thing to do.”

John can feel his jaw drop open. His father offered to allow Derek to stay with him. His father was the largest proponent for kicking Derek out of Perry Lake and trying to convince the Protectors to actually eliminate the man. Now he is offering a place for him to stay?

“Seems like a suspicious thing to do,” Stiles counters. “You were just telling me just yesterday that Derek wasn’t worth my time, not the amount I have been giving him.”

“The boy changed my mind today.”

Stiles lets out a rough growl screech noise before turning toward John and giving him her annoyed look.

“We are off topic. Huntingdon Pack? What do Derek and I, mostly me, need to know about them.”

John scratches at his head, trying to remember everything he can from growing up with the Pack. Things have probably changed since John last saw them. Probably a lot considering it has been a few decades.

“Last I heard, they are probably the same caliber level as the Hale Pack was back in the day, except maybe a bit larger. It is not just family, they tended to help others, taking in rogues and

helping them find their place again.”

Stiles nods along, glancing occasionally toward Derek who seems to be trying to read the closed off body language of Stiles. John only knows a little about the relationship between the two, from his understanding Derek is able to read a little bit off of Stiles, not a whole lot though. He supposes that eventually Derek could become the one to know his daughter the best. That is a thought that terrifies him.

“Things have changed in the structure, Johnny. Malcom is the new Alpha, took over when his uncle stepped down a couple years ago.”

John thinks back to Malcom. He went to the rival high school and John was fortunate enough to have been somewhat friends with the guy. They played against each other in sports, but they got along great. Supernatural creatures sticking together. It also helped that John’s father worked alongside the pack when there was an especially troubling rogue.

“Does he know we came here?” John questions his father.

“I called him about a week after, once I saw you were staying and not just dropping by. Told him to wait for you to reach out.”

“Did you tell him what happened?” Stiles interjects with a deadly tone.

“Not my secret to share there, sweetheart. That is your story.”

Stiles visibly slumps before dropping herself onto the coffee table. John can see all the different scenarios that Stiles is playing through her head. No doubt trying to figure out if she should admit to what happened, how she would, and how to explain Derek fully. It is all a complicated mess.

“I need to introduce myself, since I am an Alpha,” Derek says. “I just have to try and remember the correct way to do so. My mother usually handled the political affairs.”

“I’m sure if I explain some of the situation, Malcom won’t care. He is very friendly and doesn’t like too much political bullshit. Hell, he even comes to me sometimes instead of his Emissary.”

John whips his head over to his father. There is no reason for Malcom to go to his father instead of Alisha. She is Malcom’s mate, has been since the two were in middle school. Nothing could tear the witch from her wolf. John even tried before he fell for Stiles’ mom.

“Why?”

“Some things are too dangerous for an Alpha to expect his mate to complete. Let me tell you, witnessing those fights put the fear of Alisha into me, Johnny. She has nothing on Carter though.”

John faces his fearsome daughter. In the short months that his father has known Stiles he can already tell just how intelligent Stiles is and has seen how she can use that intelligence for her

own plotting. She's the reason that John's father is now eating fewer burgers and more vegetables. There were threats involved using legitimate weapons.

"So, when should I meet them?" Derek asks.

"Well, they are holding a big celebration for the Fourth, I always get invited so I'll just let Malcom know that you'll be coming."

Derek nods along and stands, heading over to the front door and pulling his wallet out of his pocket. John tilts his head and watches while Derek waits for there to be a knock at the door. He should have figured that the werewolf could hear the pizza guy coming. What John doesn't expect is for the pizza delivery guy to be Zane.

He can tell Stiles sees her friend too and is looking for a quick escape. She hasn't told the Wisconsin friends that she is trying to have some type of relationship with Derek, though John suspects that Miranda knows based on the looks she shoots Stiles whenever the two hang out. John is waiting for Miranda to just outright ask him in the very near future.

"C.S., what's this guy doing here?"

Chapter End Notes

So over the summer of 2021 I managed to get fairly sick and then work and classes crashed down around me once I was better. Come October I managed to break my foot and then re-broke it at New Years. At some point in there they discovered that I had an autoimmune disease. It has been an adventure from there. We managed to get a couple symptoms under control, however those symptoms were masking others which now we get to figure out. Including a severe vitamin deficiency that is going to take months to reverse and we have no real cause for it. Everything is all better now, kinda. Got a plate and some screws in my foot along with a gnarly scare and funny story. Surprisingly it was not that painful, considering I was walking on that foot for 3 days before my surgeon told me it was broken.

It also took 6 months before I got said surgeon to admit I was weird at my final post op. I get to see him in another year or so to get the hardware out of my foot and I am so looking forward to bringing him cookies that look like broken feet.

Chapter 29

Sunday June 24, 2012

There are quite a few people sitting in the barn of Stiles' grandfather. She had everyone meet there to introduce them to Derek and to answer questions that they all may have. So far all that has happened is Zane and Damon giving Derek the evil eye that Derek is giving right back. Miranda, Ashley, and Kayley are all ignoring Derek, acting like he is not even sitting in the stifling barn with them. Benny and Trevor at least look like they have open minds.

"So, this is Derek," Stiles waves toward the Sourwolf sitting next to her on top of the hood of her, currently broken, Jeep. "He is the very sour father of baby boo."

"Why is he here?" Trevor calmly asks.

Stiles can tell there is malice behind the words, just very carefully hidden by the nice guy that Trevor is. He is trying for Stiles.

"Derek, would you care to answer?"

Stiles turns to Derek and gives exaggerated, imploring eyes. She can feel her eyebrows going higher and higher on her face. If Derek can speak with eyebrows, so can she.

"I was here to apologize to Carter," Derek says.

Stiles can hear that Derek is still not used to calling her Carter. Each time he does it something just sounds very off. She doesn't want to respond to him when he does it, but will to just about everyone else. It is something she is going to have to file into the category of why does Derek make her feel this way.

"Now I am here to be here. She told me about our child and I plan to be a parent to that child."

"What makes you think that things will just smooth over between you and C.S.?" Kayley shouts.

"I don't," Derek calmly states. "I royally fucked up. I can see all of it now. I let my own emotions I was feeling at the time overtake my logical brain. I didn't want to see it."

Stiles can feel her jaw drop. Derek just admitted to being Alpha-blinded. It is something she read about in one of the old books, that how when Alpha's feel strong emotions they physically cannot see things that would further upset them. She needs to also file that away, read more about it before approaching Derek or trying to understand just what the man's brain was doing at the time.

"Doesn't change what you did," Miranda rages. "You left her a broken, crying mess. Right after hell happened to her. And now you expect her to just pick up where you left off before

all the bad stuff?”

“I don’t,” Derek shrugs. “This past week has made me see that she is different from what I thought, that I’m different than what she thought.”

“We are meeting each other again. Trying to figure out who we should be to each other.”

All eyes focus on Stiles. This may have been the meekest she has been since meeting this particular group of friends. She doesn’t want to feel their judgement, doesn’t want to be seen as less of a person for letting Derek back into her life in some way.

“I think you do need to do this,” Benny says. “Emotionally, I think you need the understanding. As friends we should support you and this decision.”

There are some grumbles in the crowd, reluctant agreement. Stiles can actually feel the support coming from her friends. It wraps around her life a warm hug, She can tell that they still don’t like Derek, but they love her. That warm feeling gives Stiles a bit more confidence in what she is going to say next.

“Derek is also moving in with Gramps,” Stiles cheerily adds.

The eyerolls are unanimous, even Benny gives one. Some seem like they think Stiles is joking and others are just resigned with her behavior.

“Seriously, he is going back to California tomorrow to get his stuff and drive back.”

There were about two hours worth of questions, some just stupid and repetitive from Stiles’ friends. Derek isn’t even quite sure how he made it through it all without snapping at everyone. When he really thinks about it though, Derek knows it is because of the pure happiness that Stiles was giving off.

After the first tense thirty minutes, Stiles was just sunshine. She smelled so happy and when you mix it with the pregnancy smell, Derek had a hard time not wanting to wrap her in his arms and share in that happiness.

Instead he sat there while being interrogated by a group of teenagers who seemed closer than Derek’s new pack is. He will need to study how this groups of teenagers work better than his did. Maybe there is a secret trick they have that Derek can employ.

Perhaps he should plant some seeds with the group while he grabs his things back in Beacon Hills. He is flying out in the morning and then driving back in the Camaro and plans on dropping hints to his pack about moving to Wisconsin once they finish high school. Maybe sooner for Isaac.

Derek already knows that Erica and Boyd will be here as soon as they can. Lydia is more than likely looking into the schools in the area for her and Jackson for college. Derek could give less than a fuck what Peter wants to do at this point. Though he did mention that he will be watching over Stiles, protecting her until Derek can get back. He seemed sincere too.

However, Derek already discreetly mentioned it to John so he is going to keep an eye on Peter in return. Nothing should happen in the four days that Derek is going to be away, but he is not going to take any chances. Stiles has already guessed it all too as she has been shooting random glares at Derek whenever any mention of protection comes up on the cop show they are watching.

Derek is barely paying attention to the show, opting for looking through a book about werewolves that Stiles dumped in his lap once they went into her Gramps' house. She mumbled something about how Derek should read it and then turned on her show. Right now he is just flipping through, looking to see if there is any information that could help him figure out what to do with the fledgling pack he started.

"So, whatcha think?"

Looking over to Stiles Derek can see her barely contained curiosity. She changed into leggings and an old oversized tee shirt earlier and pulled her hair up into a messy ponytail. She looks far from put together like she did earlier and Derek knows that this is his favorite side of the young woman. She is truly herself, curious to a fault and doesn't care what someone else thinks. Stiles is just being open and comfortable.

"Most of what is in here I learned while growing up," Derek admits.

"Yeah, but what about that chapter on Alphas and their emotions?"

"Well," Derek falters, he skipped that section.

"Derek Eugene Hale."

"Stop making up random middle names."

"You should totally read the emotion sections considering you are sometimes, almost always, occasionally emotionally stunted."

Derek just looks at Stiles with an eyebrow raised. She never pulls her punches with him and sometimes it can be a very honest truth.

"I meant it in a way that could help you, since, you know, that you want to be more open with your feelings and stuff."

Stiles mumbles off at the end, quickly turning back to watch some new channel. Derek can't fault her, he did mention wanting to get control over how he feels, figure out how to fully do that especially with the alpha power surging through him. It is even tougher to figure out some emotions now.

"I'll read over it on the plane tomorrow, deal?"

The joy radiating off Stiles gives Derek butterflies in his stomach. Just something as simple as reading a book is making Stiles lose her shit. It also brings to Derek's mind the fact that the blonde and pink and purple hair has not changed the true plotting nature of the woman he loves. Some things just cannot change about Stiles.

“Deal.”

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