

And Two For Flinching (Hugs that Is)

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Summary

For a werewolf, Derek keeps a very far distance from others. Stiles can definitely understand why but also worries about how much being touch-starved can harm a werewolf.

For Febuwhump 2026!

Day 16: Touch Aversion

Derek didn't like to be touched.

Given all the things Stiles had put together about Derek and Kate Argent, it really wasn't hard to understand why, but everything Stiles learned about wolves emphasized how much they needed contact to stay sane.

As Stiles' back hit the door and Derek snarled in his face, Stiles wondered if aggression was the only time Derek could bring himself to be that close to others and resolved to fix this. How? No idea yet, but hello new hyperfixation.

Of course the alpha was Peter. How many other werewolves were running around? As Stiles fled for his life, he wondered if six years of no contact from pack had contributed to the current situation.

He wondered how much Laura had been able to keep Derek from the same deprivation and... based on the leather and the scowling.... didn't seem like very much.

Peter grabbed Stiles' wrist and a very slight shudder went through the werewolf and the little machine in Stiles' brain went **ding!**

Obviously this wasn't a particularly ideal time for experimentation and trial runs but also it wasn't like he had much else in the way of levers to use against Peter freaking Hale, creepy kidnapper and mauler of innocent teenagers.

Stiles said goodbye to personal space in favor of a hopefully higher chance of getting out of this in one piece and stepped into Peter, watching as the wolf inhaled and relaxed. Stiles tipped his head to one side while arguing and Peter *lost the thread of the conversation* for long moments as he stared at Stiles' throat.

Of course, Peter mostly looked like he wanted to eat the human rather than protect, but data was data and Stiles decided it had been a rousing success after he made it out unbitten and his heart rate dropped back into the double digits.

When Derek started biting teenagers and cruising around with Isaac and Erica with both of them getting extra handsy and completely abandoning the current best practices in personal space, Stiles had a brief hope that Derek had gotten in touch with his pack instincts. Erica seemed especially keen to plaster herself against her Alpha... but Stiles' optimism died a sad lonely death as he heard about werewolf training and the full moon horror show.

While rhythmically thumping his forehead against a wall, Stiles tried to come up with a plan to address this.

If Stiles hadn't known any better, he'd suspect the kanima of reading his notes on easing Derek back into werewolf levels of contact and trying to help. First the pool with almost two hours of Stiles in almost full body contact with Derek, then again at the police station.

If Stiles hadn't been paralyzed, he might have tried to snuggle, so it was probably for the best that his body was a limp and unresponsive noodle. This close to Derek though, Stiles couldn't help but notice how freaking good the alpha smelled.

"Stop sniffing me Stiles," Derek growled. Stiles could feel the rumble of it all down the length of their bodies.

"I'm not!" Stiles protested. His face was mashed into Derek's jaw and throat and talking made his lips move against Derek's neck. He could feel the werewolf shudder.

"Lie."

"Ok fine but you smell really good and what else am I supposed to be doing? I'd work on my next needlework project but I'm a little paralyzed! What are you doing?!" Making the letter L brought just the very very tip of his tongue in contact with Derek's skin and Stiles tried not to abuse it. Stiles definitely wasn't trying to think of innocent L-including words he might be able to slip into conversation. Absolutely not.

Derek shuddered as Stiles panted against his throat. "Just stop." The werewolf's voice had gotten deeper and gravel-ier and Stiles had a slightly hysterical notion that Derek might actually be enjoying this as much as Stiles was. Maybe... maybe Derek needed excuses to do this too.

One thing focusing on contact had shown Stiles was just how touch-starved he himself was and he wasn't even a werewolf!

Before the shooting and the death, Stiles resolved to find as many excuses to drape himself on Derek as possible.

As Gerard's fist slammed into Stiles' face, Stiles reflected that his plan for more physical contact had gone horribly horribly awry.

Stiles had headed straight back to the Argent's after dropping off Jackson and Lydia at the hospital to spin the new cover story about how he wasn't dead after all and found Chris and Allison home and looking pretty shell shocked.

"Let me into your basement," Stiles rasped. He'd zipped his hoodie all the way up to the top to cover at least some of the bruises but based on Chris' expression, it was pretty obvious to a trained eye that someone had kicked the crap out of Stiles.

Stiles' simmering resentment rose another notch when he considered just how many people in that warehouse hadn't noticed a fucking thing.

"Hello Stiles, what brings you to our doorstep at 1 am?" Chris asked with that maddening calm of his. Stiles wanted to hit him. Stiles wanted to hit a lot of things.

"Captive beta werewolves. You've got 'em. I want 'em. I'd prefer not to involve my father but if you don't let me in I will call in the cavalry," Stiles threatened. He was so done with this day. His face hurt. His ribs hurt. Plus something else completely awful had gone down in that warehouse before he got there and no one would tell him what and he was just... done.

"I let them out when I got home, we never should have-"

"Yeah, I'm going to need to look for myself," Stiles growled and lunged forward aggressively... and then staggered when Chris moved out of his way instead of blocking him.

"...how did you know they were here?" Chris asked, following along as Stiles limped toward the basement door. It hung open and Stiles paused at the top, clenching his hands into fists and staring down the stairs he'd been thrown down a few hours before.

Stiles took a deep breath and stomped down, flicking on the light and not looking at the splatters of his blood near Gerard's table of torture.

Erica and Boyd really were gone and Stiles could feel that one fear being smoothed away. *One down, about a million more to go.*

Chris loomed on the stairs when Stiles turned back toward them and Stiles went rigid with suspicion and sudden choking fear that he'd just walked back into captivity and torture.

Chris, however, was looking around the basement like he'd never seen it before, and his eyes were haunted when he looked back at Stiles. "Were you down here too?" Chris asked quietly.

Stiles sneered and stomped up the stairs, taut as a bowstring with tension as he shoved past the hunter. Chris, thankfully, gave way without hesitation, trailing after him. "What does it matter if I was?"

"How badly hurt are you? I know my father tends-" Chris swallowed hard and met Stiles' eyes. "Do you need medical supplies since you clearly don't want to go to the hospital?"

Stiles' first instinct was to storm out and refuse Chris' pity or cheap attempts at atonement but... damn him the hunter was right. Stiles could not go to the hospital with these. "Ugh. Before I admit to anything, you have to answer two questions: 1-do you know how to stitch up wounds and 2-do you have any Hunter tricks for hiding the scent of wounds from werewolves?"

Chris straightened his shoulders. "Yes and yes. I have medic training."

Stiles pinched the bridge of his nose then sighed. "...Fine yes. My attempts at bandages aren't holding up very well."

Chris mostly kept silent as he cleaned Stiles up but he did dare one question. "The betas were already down there and will report back to their alpha... what's the point in trying to hide your

injuries from the wolves?"

Stiles shrugged, feeling the tightness in the already stitched places. "That's for me to know and hopefully no one to find out."

The silence stretched on apart from the occasional hiss from Stiles at a particularly painful spot.

"...what happened at the warehouse before I got there?" Stiles glanced over his shoulder and saw the conflicted look on Chris' face before the hunter sighed.

"I don't know all of it, but Jackson had apparently died on the field on Gerard's orders and was becoming some sort of stronger kanima-"

Stiles listened in numb horror to what had happened to the rest although the scheming part of him wondered if Chris' guilt could be stretched to giving Stiles some weapons in addition to medical supplies.

With a packed duffel bag of bandages and medicines and herbs and mountain ash and tasers and tranquilizer darts (Chris had felt *extremely* guilty and Stiles refused to succumb to his own anxiety or doubts and had taken ruthless advantage for once.) Stiles returned to his room and collapsed into his bed after tucking his hunter spoils in his closet.

It took him a week to force himself back out of the house after that, still jumping at shadows but needing to check in with the pack. In his hibernation he had let his phone die and then been disappointed at the bare handful of messages from Isaac and Lydia asking where he was and if he was alright when he powered it back on. Nothing from Scott. Nothing from Derek or Erica or Boyd. Damn it he had to know they were ok and his own messages to them went unanswered.

The train depot was empty, as was the crumbling wreck of the Hale house apart from some new graffiti. Stiles just wandered listlessly around in a dissociated fugue state for a while before it occurred to him to text Isaac.

Limping up too many flights of stairs had not been on the docket for today but Isaac pulled the heavy door open with gratifying enthusiasm when Stiles finally made it to the top floor.

"Hi! I hadn't... are you ok?" Isaac stared at the bundled up human in a full hoodie and scarf and gloves and long pants in June.

"Fine," Stiles said quietly, wandering into the large loft. "The pack moved?"

"Yeah! More defensible or something? Fewer rats at least." Isaac shoved his hands into his pockets and smiled sheepishly. "Peter moved in too and it's... it's been nice. Jackson and Lydia have come over a few times too."

"And Erica and Boyd?"

Isaac stared at him and Stiles felt his stomach twist. "They left almost two weeks ago? They heard another pack and-"

"No!" Stiles shouted, then slapped a hand over his own mouth in shock at the noise. "No. No they got.. Argents-"

"Argents?" Derek snarled from upstairs and Stiles heard the thud and turned to see the werewolf stalking toward him, apparently having leapt down from the second story.

Stiles swallowed hard, sweat prickling on his back and stinging in the healing cuts that hopefully wolf noses wouldn't be able to detect. "They got captured. And tortured by Gerard... Chris let them go after the warehouse and I thought..." Stiles swallowed hard and winced. "I thought they'd come back here."

Derek and Isaac stared at him.

"No they... they left," Isaac repeated.

Stiles could hear his own heart pounding and wondered what it sounded like to the wolves. "And you haven't been looking?"

"...they asked to leave and I let them break from the pack," Derek said gruffly, folding his arms defensively over his chest.

Stiles tried to make sense of it. "Chris said they were heading back to you..."

"Then they didn't make it," Derek said grimly. "I guess they changed their minds. Or lied. Like Scott." Derek's expression was full of disgust.

"I'm s-sorry for what he did to you... if I'd known..." Stiles shook his head, clenching his hands into fists in his hoodie pocket. "...I wouldn't have let you walk into that blind... he.. he shouldn't have done that."

Derek blinked at him, looking stunned. "You weren't... I assumed it was your plan... I didn't think Scott could come up with something like that on his own."

"Deaton. Apparently," Stiles grumbled. "And he didn't keep me informed because I 'should stay out of werewolf business' because I'm 'just a human.'" Stiles couldn't help but make air quotes, even if both wolves looked at his gloves in confusion. "Personally I think he either just didn't think to include me or Deaton told him not to and apparently Deaton knows best and is the only person to trust even though his fucking plan was just murder. Cancer patient murder."

"...Deaton should know better about pack. I had human siblings."

Stiles nodded. "Yeah, everything I've read says humans can be integral to packs.. wait... if Boyd and Erica didn't come back... are you ok with only one beta?"

Derek stared at him then shook his head. "I've got Isaac and Peter and Jackson... and a little bit Lydia. I'm.. it's better."

Stiles hesitated, but forced himself to meet Derek's eyes. "...do you have room for another?"

Derek froze. "Are you offering?"

"Yeah... yes."

Derek continued to stare at him then let out a long breath. "You knew nothing about Scott's plans?"

"Not one thing," Stiles said, knowing the wolves would hear the truth... and the bitterness. "He didn't even warn me that I might be in the crossfire, he just cared that it let him be near Allison again."

Derek glanced down at the gloves and the layers. "If you're serious about joining the pack-"

"I am," Stiles insisted, taking a deep breath and reaching up to unzip his hoodie a little and unwind his scarf. Isaac sucked in a breath at the revealed bruises and Derek's eyes went red.

Stiles tried to keep himself calm as he bared his throat to the alpha, tipping his head away.

Derek made a hungry sound and Stiles felt hot breath on his neck as the Alpha leaned in, pressing fangs against Stiles' throat for long moments.

Stiles took a chance and leaned into the werewolf, burying his face against Derek's chest and just trying to feel safe again. Hesitant arms came up around him and Stiles sighed, closing his eyes.

"You planning on telling me who strangled you," Derek asked quietly.

"Shh, hugging time now," Stiles said. "All the books say pack hugs are very crucial for new betas."

"What, really?" Isaac asked.

Derek grumbled but didn't let go of Stiles. "I already regret this."

"Good," Stiles said, hugging him back.

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