

Of Sound Mind

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Of Sound Mind

by [WhoopsOK](#)

Summary

The rumors of the Hale Omega being not just unruly, but outright *feral* kept him from being pursued again for many years. Mother started out with standards, only wanting an Alpha from a well-established, traditional wolf family, but after Peter savaged two more ‘*respectable*’ Alphas in spite of her ordering him to behave, she’d reached her wits end and was willing to settle for *anyone* dumb enough to try their luck.

Stiles Stilinski is far from dumb, but he makes a good show of it, if you’re not paying attention.

(Peter hates Alphas, but finds Stiles... intriguing.)

Notes

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

The first suitor Peter's mother brought to the house to claim him left—or more accurately, *was carried* off with a broken arm and a gouge torn out of his face that was sure to scar, werewolf healing be damned.

Peter was sixteen years old at the time.

Honestly, he had been intending to kill the Alpha out right, make sure the lesson really sunk in, but Talia had come barreling in at the sound of his mother's roar and knocked him off course. His fangs sunk into the man's jaw instead of his jugular. It'd taken Talia and both his older brothers to pin Peter down, even as he turned on them with claws, half-shifted and *fully* enraged, intending to finish what he'd started.

By the time he'd calmed down enough to be allowed to stand, Mother had slapped him right back to the ground, her nails raking across his cheek, her anger and disapproval cutting through him sharp as her claws. She'd screamed at him, like she'd ever raised him to be an omega, like that had ever been a safe decision for him to make. Peter had the quiet realization, dissociating and wounded by the only hand that could ever truly scar him, that his life was destined from the start to be one fight after another, after another, with no rest.

Not unless he made himself a nightmare.

The rumors of the Hale Omega being not just unruly, but outright *feral* kept him from being pursued again for many years. Mother started out with standards, only wanting an Alpha from a well-established, traditional wolf family, but after Peter savaged two more '*respectable*' Alphas in spite of her ordering him to behave, she'd reached her wits end and was willing to settle for *anyone* dumb enough to try their luck.

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Peter's continued presence has created an unspoken understanding among his family; any unbound Alpha that enters Hale territory forfeits their safety the moment they so much as insinuate that they're interested in him.

It's been the cause of more than one screaming match with his dear sister, what Peter's '*flagrant obstinance*' is doing to the Hale Pack's reputation, but he knows what happens when you start giving the enemy inches. Since Talia has claimed the Hale Matriarch mantle from his mother, she's taken up the tired, bloody duty of seeing him married off. Peter is more patient with her than he was with their mother, which isn't saying much, but to her credit, Talia isn't siccing every heavy-handed trad Alpha in the tristate area on her own blood.

Mother, older but no softer for her approaching senility, insists she's spoiling him when he's already well past his use-by date.

Talia insists that Peter is cold enough that a diplomatic approach is the only way to go.

The fact that Peter was made to overhear this conversation was very likely an intentional attempt at manipulation, but it doesn't change the fact that Talia still regularly sends him to the *meat market*. She can pretend it's for the sake of giving him more responsibilities in the pack all she wants. He knows good and damn well that she's hoping that sending him to deal with Alphas just as conniving and bloodthirsty as he is will open his legs—sorry, open *his mind* to the possibilities his status presents.

Fat fucking chance, but there has only been one broken hand since he's been, unofficially of course, named her enforcer, so maybe he can see why she's feeling hopeful.

Still, Peter's patience only extends to useful Alphas who aren't encroaching on his territory; she hasn't been fool enough to bring any strange Alphas home since he almost killed the last three. Even her children are careful about bringing home Alpha friends, often asking Peter's permission before they ask their own mother.

The fact that Cora brings Stiles home *unannounced* during her first semester at BHCC would seem like calling a hit on the poor kid, but Peter walks in to see them and doesn't quite know what to make of the situation.

Stiles is a lanky sprawl of limbs, constantly in motion and running his mouth. He smells a little like ozone, so he may have some latent magic to him, but he's not a wolf. He doesn't notice Peter stalking towards them, fully intending to snatch him up by his collar. Cora notices him, though, and looks up coiled for a fight, but silently pleading in a way that gives him pause. She's never been on her mother's side—about anything, really, but particularly not about marrying Peter off. This isn't a trap. This is Cora's friend that she trusts enough to allow in their den, even if she didn't get the all clear ahead of time.

Peter doesn't like it, but it doesn't make him want to drag Stiles' guts from his body.

Even if Stiles isn't exactly subtle in his attraction to Peter.

When he finally registers someone else is in the room, Stiles' heart rate spikes and he whips around to look at Peter with wide eyes.

A second later, Cora punches him square in the stomach when his scent swells so strongly with arousal it permeates the room, but he's... not a knot-head about it, surprisingly. Before red can take over Peter's vision, Stiles' mouth gets way ahead of his brain, yeah, but it's mostly apologies, and compliments, and cursing Cora's name. Even in his mild panic, he doesn't say anything lurid, going so far as to scramble *away* from Peter.

Peter doesn't know what to do with that, with the fact that he's... *amused* by Stiles.

With every other Alpha that has ever been interested in him, the smell of their lust has immediately preceded Peter having to commit an act of violence. This time—and every time after, once it's clear Cora intends to keep him around—it very quickly becomes a background scent that doesn't bear any real consideration.

If Peter didn't know Cora to be so deeply contrary to her mother's machinations, he'd think she was in on a psy-op to get him used to musk.

"Seriously." Peter says, flat with incredulity, when he gets home a few months later and has barely entered the room before the smell of Stiles' interest swells up to greet him.

Stiles hunches down further where he's sitting, nearly twisted into a pretzel in Peter's favorite reading chair, a textbook balanced crookedly on his knees. "Yeah, yeah, what do you want from me? You're hot," he grumbles, face pink, but his embarrassment doesn't cover the smell of his vague arousal. "Me and my dick both know this, don't let it go to your head."

"Gross," Cora complains, but doesn't even sit up where she's laid out on the sofa. She bends her knees just enough for Peter to sit at her feet if he wants to. "Do *not* fuck my uncle."

"Can *he* fuck *me*?" Stiles snarks without looking up. He's too tangled in his own limbs to react in time to the pillow Cora flings at him, but Peter is the one fully paralyzed by the thought—*Stiles face down, begging and fisting his own knot while Peter fucks him*. It holds him captive for too long to dodge the kick Cora aims *square at his dick*.

It winds him, makes him lash out. He loves her, though, enough that he only squeezes his claws very slightly into the back of her neck when he growls at her, pushing her face into the sofa in reprimand.

Alpha or not, she's still his junior and will *know her fucking place*.

Cora loves *him* enough not to retaliate, just twisting her head to the side, flashing her eyes and giving him a surly growl right back.

The fact that Stiles only smells further aroused by this interaction doesn't help Peter's situation. He turns to leave before any more of his dignity can leave him, or his sister can get a whiff of where his thoughts strayed. If she got wind of the fact that Peter had even a passing interest in Stiles, she'd be insufferable.

That thought makes Peter pause with a foot hovering just at the base of the stairs, turning over his shoulder towards the sound of Stiles and Cora sassing each other companionably.

Talia would be insufferable about *anyone* Peter played nice with, to the point that he half wants to shut the thought down out of spite, but instead he considers his current options.

Of course, being an omega means he's little more than a bartering chip for the Hales, but he's made a name for himself as not being worth the trouble to court. The fact that they've permitted an unmated omega to remain in their pack for this long is causing a stir in the wider community, but much like their mother, Talia won't submit herself to the public disgrace of admitting defeat and disowning him. Similarly, Peter has no interest in going insane from losing all his pack bonds and being made a ward of the state; a state that doesn't treat weres particularly well, let alone *omega weres*.

Peter has a number of contingencies planned out for the day he manages to find the end of Talia's patience, and while they are varying degrees of unpleasant, none of them involve

letting the government assign him to anyone.

Picking an Alpha to con and likely eventually kill had always been a stage of a number of those plans, but Stiles hadn't been a factor until now. He's a bit young, for one. That's probably at least part of the reason he's so liberal and easy-going, enough so that Cora lets him around Peter even knowing that his temper often experiences catastrophic failures when strange Alphas come to their house. Nothing about Stiles trips any of Peter's homicidal urges and that's only *mostly* because, attraction aside, Stiles doesn't seem to be particularly interested in courting him. He's also just a likeable guy, which is rare for Alphas as far as Peter has come to know them.

The calculating part of Peter's brain taking over does a great deal to shove away any residual arousal and redirects his steps towards the kitchen. He comes back with a highball glass and sits on the far end of the couch, amicably accepting Cora's feet in his lap.

It's flattering the way Stiles looks more like a deer in headlights than any Alpha would usually allow when Peter fixes his attention on him. His heartbeat goes all hummingbird fast. "*What?*"

"What?" Peter parrots, smirking into the glass while holding Stile's gaze. "This *is* my living room. Can't I enjoy the view if I want?"

Cora groans and drops her face directly into the cushions. "Uncle Peter..." she pleads.

Stiles doesn't look nearly as flustered as Peter would've expected, but his eyebrows do raise sharply in surprise. His scent changes suddenly, too, the backburner arousal dampening under something distinctly magical that sets Peter's hair on end and makes Cora sneeze. Stiles jumps at the sound. "Oh, sorry." The smell fades. "I was just making sure your mom isn't here."

Cora jerks to look at him immediately. "*I'm* still here," she says warningly, like that's the important part of that sentence.

"*How*, exactly," Peter asks, looking at Stiles much more closely, "would you know something like that?"

Shrugging, Stiles dodges the question, sitting more upright in the seat. "I'm just saying, dude. Mrs. Hale can't hear you, you don't have to toy with me right now."

Peter frowns. "What makes you think I'm toying with you," he asks, "or that I would want my dear sister to overhear it?"

"Uhh, well, first, I know what I look like?" Stiles rolls his eyes, missing the way Peter's frown only deepens. "Second, you're old enough to be *my* uncle, obviously, which is—" he falters there, visibly trying to find a different end to that sentence, "is... unusual for, um..."

"An omega," Peter finishes, staring at Stiles in challenge.

Stiles shoulders draw up defensively. “Look, I’m just saying! I’m not stupid. You’re the hottest omega on the market right now, even though people who try their luck usually wind up in the hospital.”

Cora’s eyes narrow at him. “*You* haven’t tried your luck even though we can all smell how bad you want to.”

“Yeah, ‘cause I’m still paying off the last time I was in the hospital,” Stiles replies drily. “Point is, you’d only bother flirting with me for a reason, and the only one I can imagine is that Mrs. Hale is...” He trails off.

“Fucking pushy,” Cora finishes for him at the same time Peter says, “A scheming bitch, yes.”

Peter watches as Stiles tucks his lips into his mouth, but doesn’t disagree. He rests his chin in his hand. “You don’t seem bothered,” he observes, “by my alleged *toying* with you.”

“Yeah, well, even if it’s fake it’d do wonders for my ego,” Stiles admits shamelessly. He smiles, a wide showman’s grin all confidence with no substance behind it. “The fact that you’re even taking the time to mess around with me would make me pretty fucking interesting. Once you kick me back on the market, I’ll probably have more prospects than I could ever get on my own. My charisma score isn’t very high with om’s.” He shrugs again. “As long as you don’t let Mrs. Hale kill me, I’m game.”

That is so astoundingly simplistic, Peter can only stare at Stiles for a moment.

There’s no way anyone will ever believe the Hale Omega is truly interested in *Stiles Stilinski*. The barely-grown son of a recovering-alcoholic sheriff, drowning in debt with nothing to his name but a shitty Jeep and barely controlled ADHD. A *human*. On paper, it makes so little sense as to be absurd. Then again, the point isn’t for anyone to really believe Peter’s affections are genuine. The point is just for Peter to have an Alpha, *any* Alpha, so the rest of the world keeps their hands to themselves.

While he’s not an Alpha with any notable pedigree or prestige, Stiles is still *an Alpha*.

Respect is his birthright.

The fact that he so easily extends that respect to Peter, an omega he covets—covets and *still respects*, makes him... tolerable. That’s enough for Peter.

Talia won’t like it, but she won’t have real cause to challenge it so long as they keep up appearances.

Peter smiles. “Of course not, sweetheart,” he says, voice tipped low and as sweet as he knows how to make it. Stiles smiles back at him, but Peter is delighted by the smell of Stiles’ amusement bleeding into the ever-lingering tinge of arousal. “I’d never let her lay a hand on what’s mine.”

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As Peter thought, nobody fucking buys it.

Everyone in town, and several from elsewhere, suddenly have their eyes fixed on the clumsy little Stilinski Alpha who's somehow managed to bag a Hale. Talia and Mother had been *ecstatic* when Peter had told them he'd accepted a courtship. The way their faces froze when Stiles came in wearing a painfully ill-fitting suit and carrying drug-store roses still in the cellophane had him biting back laughter. Turning that smile on Stiles who, as he always does, smelled aroused and pleased to have his attention, certainly helped sell the ruse, though. The fact that he doesn't tell a single lie the whole time, including the "*He got used to me and I got lucky*," explanation of their relationship certainly makes Stiles seem genuine.

This doesn't endear him to anyone.

Stiles takes this remarkably well, probably at least in part because human hearing isn't sharp enough to pick up on what's being said the moment he's left a room.

"I don't need to hear it," Stiles says, swinging Peter's hand back and forth in a move that is gallingly childish, but Peter allows all the same. They're getting looks and it's deeply amusing. "Blah, blah, blah, I must have money in secret," he starts, counting off on his fingers, "you're a cradle robber, I'm a patsy and you're going to kill me, I've got a *huuuuge* knot."

"Nobody has said that last one," Peter smirks, even though there has been some rather crass commentary on what Stiles must be like in bed. Peter has yet to find out.

The sentence *should* be: Peter has no intention of finding out.

Yes, Stiles is flatteringly attracted to him, but he's been remarkably self-controlled about his instinctual arousal. It seems like it should've leveled off by now, their increasing proximity giving him a chance to adjust to Peter's scent, but he's just as easy to wind up as he was the first day they met. Every time he comes to a Hale dinner, Talia and Derek both look disgusted by his blatant attraction, though the latter seems to be as begrudgingly charmed by him as Cora. The fact that Stiles *likes* his dearest-but-deeply-surly nephew certainly gets him brownie points from Peter; he doesn't even have to try to look affectionate towards him.

The fact that he's feeling any sort of warmth towards him beyond the barest tolerance of friendship is...

Peter doesn't know what to do with it. He knows Talia, at least, is familiar enough with his scent to smell the occasional interest Stiles draws out of him; when Peter has flustered him enough that his cheeks go pink, when he smiles at Peter while he's got something between his lips, when he laughs so hard his eyes squint shut and he reaches for Peter, with no intent, just to catch himself as he goes unsteady with joy.

It's... saccharine. Disgusting.

"You *actually* like him," Talia says, sounding as so baffled as to be nearly appalled.

Looking up from the drug store chocolates Stiles got him—cheap, but Peter's favorite flavor all the same—Peter doesn't give her the satisfaction of letting on that he's just as confused as

she is. Instead, he lets his irritation and her disgust curl up his lip. “If you thought I’d settle for an Alpha I found *abhorrent*, you’re more of a fool than you think he is.”

Talia’s eyes flash at him in warning, but Peter has long since numbed himself to the sting of her disapproval.

In the recent weeks of what is rapidly becoming less and less of a sham, Peter has found himself genuinely defending Stiles without having to carefully step around the truth. He *does* like Stiles and, to his horror, finds he does have... *a passing interest*, he’ll admit, in finding out what he’s like in bed.

Stiles doesn’t have much money to his name, but still insists on taking Peter out for dinner every other week when his paycheck clears. Granted, it’s just to his favorite burger joint, but Peter is already rumored to be smitten; he has no reason not to indulge his darling little Alpha’s lowbrow tastes. If he actually is a fan of the apple pie at this diner, that’s between he and Stiles.

“So,” Peter starts on one such date night. “We haven’t been sleeping together.”

Expecting a spit take, Stiles’ reaction is a shockingly unbothered shrug. “I’ve been saying you’re making me wait,” he says, shoving curly fries into his mouth. “Like, of course you are, we both know who the catch is here.”

“Don’t talk about my favorite toy like that,” Peter replies, equal parts disgusted and enamored when Stiles grins at him with his mouth full. “Chew your food,” he admonishes, reaching over for Stiles’ milkshake. “I wasn’t asking out of concern about appearances just now.”

Though it takes a moment for the implication to land, when it does, it earns more of a predictable reaction. Stiles does a very entertaining impersonation of a startled chipmunk, frozen in place cheeks stuffed and eyes wide. Peter sips his stolen drink with eyebrows raised, waiting for Stiles to gather himself.

It takes a lot longer than usual. “I mean...” Stiles starts after he’s swallowed. “I wasn’t joking before.”

“I find that hard to believe,” Peter says drily, smirking when Stiles laughs some of the tension out of his shoulders.

“I mean you *could* fuck me,” Stiles says shamelessly. “I’m not...” He seems to remember they’re in public and lowers his voice slightly. “Listen, dude, I found my prostate years ago and got a P.O. box just to order something to shove against it without my dad asking questions about the package,” he explains, sending Peter’s thoughts into a heated tailspin. “I’d be happy to take you for a ride.”

Peter swallows his sudden want, but can’t suppress his scent enough to escape Stiles’ notice. He watches Stiles’ pupils blow wide immediately, a cold shard of awareness piercing through his chest. “If you try anything—”

“You know me better than that,” Stiles interrupts firmly.

And the thing is, Peter realizes in that moment, he *does* know him better than that. He’s not sure when that happened, but he absolutely knows his little Alpha would never push him in any direction he didn’t want to go.

Shaken by his own faith in this man, Peter can only stare at him in wonder. He reaches out, catching his fingers under Stiles’ chin, listening to his pulse pick up. “What a lovely little Alpha you are.”

Stiles throat bobs. “Only to you.”

“Fuck the rest,” Peter dismisses casually, pinching Stiles’ chin a little harder. “You’re coming home with me, right?”

With absolutely no hesitation, yes, Stiles comes home with him.

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There has been a pattern over the years to the sex Peter has had, largely influenced by his intense—and warranted, he’d attest—mistrust of Alphas. His mother inviting a stranger to their house to mount him as a teenager will do that to a person.

Generally, he’s passed his time—and heats—entertaining other omegas. It’s not *common* to find someone willing to risk the disgrace, but there are a few others in his little black book that will let him put them face down for a night. Given that he certainly prefers to be the one doing the mounting, he’d proceeded under the impression that omegas—or the rare beta—were his only options. If anyone would understand that wanting a plug to clamp down on isn’t an invitation to have a cock forced in him, it’d be another omega.

Stiles, as he has done since the moment he walked into Peter’s life, turns those expectations on their head.

Pliant is not how Peter ever would’ve thought to describe an Alpha, but for all that he’s fidgety to the point of being handsy, Stiles goes exactly where he’s put. He gasps and moans when Peter tugs him into the room, shoves him against the wall to press biting kisses to his mouth, down his jaw. A surge of possessiveness swells up in him when Stiles whines, tipping his head back to bare his throat to Peter’s mouth.

“Peter...” Stiles breathes, when Peter sinks his fingers in. “*Please!*” he says, *begs*, on his knees with Peter pressed in as deep as he can get, the smell of his arousal clouding Peter’s senses to the point of insanity.

Musk has never been a particularly appealing scent to him. Regardless of how his physiology reacted on occasion, the smell of another body wasn’t something that would send him out of his mind.

The state of Stiles' neck and shoulders when Peter's done with him would certainly call his control and sanity into question.

Normally, Peter only lingers around long enough as to not be coldly impolite, but tonight, he wraps himself around Stiles, kissing at the bruises on his shoulders and keeping a firm grip on his knot. He doesn't want to let him go.

Stiles doesn't seem inclined to try and leave, still shuddering in Peter's arms and sucking absently at the bicep he's resting his cheek on.

"Are you alright?" Peter asks, nosing up to the damp space behind Stiles' ear.

"Mm," Stiles nods, slurring when he continues, "You're m'favorite."

Peter snorts. "Favorite what?"

"Yeah," Stiles replies nonsensically, but Peter doesn't press, because on some level he gets it.

Stiles is his favorite, too.

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There are things Peter will never say out loud.

Some for obviously legal reasons, like how many pieces he left Kate Argent in for what she tried to do and how many bodies he buried beside each piece. Most are personal, though, things he rarely lets get to the front of his mind, let alone the tip of his tongue. He will never tell anyone that he'd almost given himself up, just once, to a werecoyote whose scent made him truly believe he could have the sort of peace that only exists in the desert at midnight. On darker nights, when the fire of his spite is burning at it's lowest, he won't even let himself think too hard about how if there was an Alpha strong enough to subdue him, that maybe his life would be so much simpler. He cannot, *will not* let himself tread that path. Peter knows how to keep secrets the same way he knows how to breathe; he doesn't have to think about the base parts of keeping himself alive.

Peter can never admit that he is in love with Stiles.

It's not a shock, not this far into things, but Peter still feels his heart reflexively flinching away from the feeling. He is not a man made for loving, and yet he has found himself falling faster than he can catch himself. The future doesn't look so much like dragging himself, bloodied and tired through his life when Stiles is holding his hand or sitting in his lap. There's a sharpness to him that Peter trusts more than the warmth he radiates when they're together. He's quick as a whip and that smart mouth of his often gets him in trouble, but no more than he can magic himself out of, no more than Peter can bare his teeth at and scare away.

Given Talia's determination to have him mated to someone of status who will make a proper om out of him, he has to imagine that the moment she realizes he *actually* cares for his little

Alpha, she'll...

There is no way for this story to end without heartbreak, but Peter is too selfish to pull the ripcord.

"You know he really... *likes* you," Cora says softly over breakfast one morning.

Peter ignores the way she looks at him when his heart skips a beat. He calmly sips his coffee. "My nose works quite well, yes, darling niece."

"I know it's not my business—"

"Then maybe you should—"

"But he's my *friend*, Uncle Peter," Cora finishes, sounding so upset that Peter actually looks up at her. She doesn't quite smell distressed, but there's agitation pinching her face as she stares him down. "I don't—I know this was just a game, but..." she deflates, "he'll let you keep playing with him as long as you *keep* him."

Forever presses itself up the back of Peter's throat, but he clicks his tongue, bursting the word before it can escape. It's not true, it can't be, but the thought of turning his Alpha loose, of letting some other omega have him makes him want to go feral like he hasn't since he was a teenager.

Considering he's been a cynic his entire life, planning for contingencies that allow him to keep Stiles at his side had seemed far too hopeful. That, he'll admit, is a gross oversight on his part.

"I'll have you know," Peter whispers, kissing the top of Cora's head, "this hasn't been a game for me for quite some time."

Peter is saved from having to bring it up with Stiles by the fact that Stiles doesn't actually play most things all that close to the chest. Even if he hasn't put his feelings into words, the soft smell of his love permeates Peter's clothes, lingering on him even when they're apart from how much they scent each other. Upon being allowed, Stiles is constantly pressing himself into Peter's throat, touching the insides of his wrists, like it's more important that *Stiles* smells taken than the other way around.

"Well, to be fair," Stiles says into Peter's shoulder, "you have a reputation for maiming Alphas who look at you too long. You only carry my scent for decoration."

This morning, he's sprawled on top of Peter in his bedroom, still clingy and sweet even though his knot has gone down. The Sheriff worked a night shift, which made him bold enough to let Peter stay. The Sheriff hasn't *exactly* threatened to kill him, but it's clear Stiles' affection is the only thing keeping him alive. Peter makes a point to be on his best behavior or, better yet, the fuck out of dodge before the Sheriff gets home.

"Oh, so you have a trail of pretty omegas following you around I should worry about?" Peter asks lightly.

Stiles snorts. “I think flashing those electric blues at the last girl locked that door,” he says, but doesn’t sound particularly bothered by it.

Still.

“Does it bother you?” Peter asks after a moment, scratching gently at Stiles’ back. “That they all think this is a game?”

“I mean...” Stiles pauses, “Not exactly? I do... I want everyone to know how much I love *you*,” he says like it’s easy, like it’s not the first time, like it doesn’t set Peter’s heart to racing. “It’s okay if you just think I’m cute.”

“I don’t,” Peter admits before he can catch himself, but he isn’t inclined to walk it back when Stiles laughs.

“Sure you don’t, pal,” he says, nipping playfully at Peter’s collar bone. “I’m adorable and you know it.”

“I mean,” Peter emphasizes pinching Stiles’ hip, “I don’t *just think you’re cute*.”

Stiles freezes against him for a second, his scent going tangy with shock before flooding with so much relief and love Peter wishes, genuinely for the first time, that he was an easier person to love. He holds Stiles’ gaze when he sits up to look him in the eyes, like he’s searching for the trick, for the untruth. Peter would expect it in himself, too, allows the searching.

He allows the kiss Stiles plants on him, too.

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The happiness should be a warning. Peter knows better.

Every morning Peter gets to wake up with Stiles is more peace than the fates, or his family, would ever have wanted to grant him. He’s been playing on borrowed time for months and he thought he appreciated that, but it appears he was correct in his prior cynicism.

Love has made him soft.

Peter is not unaware of his own arrogance, but he should’ve known better than to take such pleasure in his own scheming.

Dinner with their extended family only happens once a year and requires them all to put on their finest and do their best not to embarrass Talia. Peter, of course, always starts at a disadvantage in said goal, even if he dresses to the nines every time. He usually spends the evening being as cuttngly polite as he can get away with until nobody but Cora will suffer his presence.

Tonight, he doesn’t put in the effort to entertain anyone but Stiles.

The suit is brand new, because Peter wanted to see him in it more than he wanted the Hales to balk at his usual stolen rental. He looks good enough to eat, and Peter is enjoying communicating that with his hands, just for the pleasure of his aunts' distaste and Stiles' elevated pulse. For his part, Stiles is in fine form. He manages to ride the line between charming and annoying carefully enough that nobody quite knows what to make of Peter's little lap dog.

Stiles *has* been fully seated in his lap most of the evening, which is decidedly against decorum, so of course Peter has been reveling in the tension around Talia's mouth.

It's also why he notices when Stiles starts to overheat.

At first, he chocks it up to being a reaction to having his inseam toyed with under the table, but even once Stiles is seated in his own chair to eat, Peter can *smell* his arousal cresting.

Peter turns to him, frowning at the sweat gathering at his brow. "Sweetheart?" he asks softly.

Stiles blinks, shaking his head as though to clear it, but the motion just makes his brow cave down. "I don't feel..." He lifts his hands like he means to push back from the table, but the movement is uncoordinated enough to make Peter's heart stutter.

"*Stiles*," he says, reaching out to press the back of his hand against Stiles' forehead. He's not just a little warm anymore, he's *burning up*.

Worse, his pupils are blown wide when he turns to face Peter "I need—" he chokes, "Peter, something's—" He cuts off, wheezing like he's been hit in the diaphragm.

Standing, Peter is already seven steps ahead, at the hospital, the specialists, the *witch doctors*, when Talia says calmly, "It'd be safer for him if you didn't leave."

Cold dread sweeps through Peter as he forces his tunnel vision off Stiles to look towards his sister. Most of the party looks confused, but there are several older family members who look... too dispassionate. Mother looks *relieved*.

Peter's heart sinks.

"What?" Cora exclaims, launching to her feet. "Mom, what does that *mean*?"

"*Peter*," Stiles exclaims before Talia can grace them with an answer, one hand flying up to clutch desperately at Peter's lapel, dragging Peter's attention back to him. He meets Stiles' frantic gaze, but can see perfectly clearly when Stiles' hand shoots down between his legs, clutching his *bulge*. "Fuck, it *hurts!*"

Peter turns away from him just long enough to grab Stiles' glass, upending it on the table before looking inside. Poison he would've smelled, of course; they all would have. Casting a spell, Stiles certainly would've noticed, maybe even have been able to counter.

The fine, spiderweb-thin hex hidden in the pattern of the glass would've been imperceptible through his wine.

“You cursed him...” he says, feeling like he’s outside his own body as he drops the glass to catch Stiles when he staggers to his feet, stumbling towards him.

“I can’t—My Spark won’t—” Stiles wheezes, face twisted with pain as the scent of his magic fills the air around them, but doesn’t seem to do whatever he was hoping for. “What did she—?”

“You didn’t leave us much choice, Peter,” Talia speaks over him calmly. “It won’t kill him, you won’t let it come to that.” Her gaze is cool on his, like Stiles isn’t trying to climb him so urgently, if Peter weren’t a werewolf he’d have knocked them both to the ground. “Once he’s mated you, *both* of your problems will be solved.”

“You didn’t...” Derek breathes, aghast, because he’s always been more convinced of his mother’s capacity for kindness than was ever really warranted.

To be fair, it’s the same reflexive denial Peter felt for less than a split second before he remembered that their ruthlessness has always been a shared trait and *yes, she absolutely did*.

Denial fades when rage burns through him so sharply that Stiles grip on him is the only thing that keeps him from severing Talia’s head from her shoulders. Their bond snapping is so sharp and final he feels the shock of it echo through the rest of the family before he’s numb to anything they’re feeling at all except Cora and Derek’s horror.

Talia’s hand flies to her chest, eyes wide like she has any right to be surprised.

Mother looks more alert than she has in years. “Peter—” she starts, alarmed.

“*Peter—*” Stiles says, more importantly. His voice cuts off on a gasp when Peter’s hand clamps on the back of his neck. He meant to draw the pain out, but even when he finds he *can’t*, apparently the touch grounds Stiles enough that he goes limp in Peter’s grip.

Peter tries to focus on every ounce of love Stiles has ever made him feel instead of the fury and hatred about to drive him rabid.

“I’ve got you,” he says through gritted teeth. When Stiles whimpers, Peter hisses in a breath, leaning closer to settle himself in Stiles’ scent as he tries again. “I’ll take care of you, sweetheart,” he assures him more gently, if shakily. He guides Stiles away from the table, bearing most of his weight. “Do as I tell you, alright?”

Stiles nods urgently. “I’ll be *so* good, please—*please, make it stop.*”

“You’d give up your pack for *that*—” Mother doesn’t finish, because Cora has gone over the table at her from the sound of things. Peter can’t be bothered to keep track of the outcome of that fight just now.

Bearing witness to a bonding is an archaic practice Peter has always hated on principle, but he imagines that’s why Talia waited until more family members were around to execute her plan. Even if Peter were to protest after the fact, having the family legally legitimize the bond would tie his hands quite neatly. Hell, he wouldn’t be surprised if Talia had dragged a

breeding bench in from somewhere, but Peter won't give her the satisfaction of seeing him bent over it or anything else. Still, given the way Stiles' heartbeat is escalating proportionally to the pain in his scent, Peter doesn't try to get him out of the house.

The living room is only a wall away from the chaos with no door to close between them, but Stiles is well beyond caring one way or another, coming out of his clothes like they're on fire. Peter's heart jolts when Stiles goes for his throat, but he doesn't bite down, just nuzzles, scenting himself like he always does.

It touches Peter somewhere tender and soft that Stiles, even half-crazed with an induced rut, is still so genuinely, deeply the man Peter trusts with his whole heart.

For the first time in many, *many* years Peter feels like he may still be capable of crying.

Talia may have correctly concluded that Peter would never seriously hurt Stiles, even to preserve his own principles, but she has fully misread what it means to Stiles to be an Alpha. He would never, even writhing in pain, take Peter or anyone else against their will. He doesn't even care to be on *top*.

Case in point, relief starts to break apart the pain on his face when Peter shoves him to the ground, stepping up to stand over him.

"You're always so good for me, sweetheart," he whispers over Stiles' frantic whimpering as he stuffs his face into Peter's crotch, breathing deeply and clutching his own cock. Peter quickly undresses. "You saved that knot for me, too, right?"

"Yeah, Petey, only you," Stiles agrees, laying down flat when Peter kneels over him.

Though he could hardly imagine anything less arousing than Stiles being *forced* to take him, Peter's body responds eagerly enough when he grinds himself down against Stiles' cock. Stiles thrusts up sharply, but a second later digs his nails into the rug, trembling but holding himself stiff as a board.

"Sorry, *sorry*—"

"It's alright," Peter says, because he only needs to get wet enough for this not to chafe and he's nearly sodden already. Artificial or not, he will always be swayed by the smell of Stiles wanting him. He pins Stiles down by the chest. "Be still for me."

Peter may not have ever let any Alpha near enough to even dream of mounting him, but he isn't prone to lying to himself in the moment. In the privacy of his own mind, Peter acknowledges Stiles' cock feels *good* as it slips into him. It doesn't feel like anything he wants to make a habit of, but he's at least glad it doesn't turn his stomach too much to tolerate. This whole experience is traumatizing enough without it *physically* disgusting him.

Stiles' eyes roll back in his head when Peter sinks down on him, easing his way over the bulge of his already swelling knot.

“Good boy,” Peter coos at him, claws coming out slightly as he holds Stiles’ down while he rides him and the knife’s edge of pleasure teasing his spine. “You’re doing so well for me.”

Stiles seems to be a little beyond words at this point, face painfully flushed and breathing in huge bellows. More concerned with Stiles making it through this in one piece than preserving any of his own modesty, Peter ignores his own cock bobbing and drooling between them. Stiles’ doesn’t smell nearly as pained now, heart slowing down to the normal hummingbird pace of their lovemaking. Experimentally, Peter clenches down on his arousal and feels a jolt of pleasure rocket through him when Stiles’ legs thrash and he shouts unabashedly up at the ceiling.

“Better?” Peter asks, feeling a fission of relief in his chest when Stiles nods frantically, eyes slitting open to meet his. “Good,” he says, leaning down to kiss him. Stiles whines, kissing him back but ultimately turning away to bare his throat. Peter chuckles lowly, laving his tongue over his scent glands as he continues to ride Stiles’ arousal.

Given that the dining room is still a riot behind them, shouting and breaking furniture, Peter... feels honesty pressing up the back of his throat. Maybe it’s just mawkish sentiment, or maybe there truly is some hormone changing his base brain chemistry because this is the first knot he’s sat on, but he scrapes his teeth over Stiles’ throat and whispers, “It feels like you were made for me, *my love*.”

The words clearly do *something* for Stiles’ hindbrain, too, his breath coming out on an almost agonized wail as his knot flares to fullness inside Peter.

It... *does* feel like Peter goes a little insane, then.

They’re the wrong way round, in one of the worst possible situations for their bond to form, but Peter can’t help himself anymore than Stiles can, apparently. His teeth are sinking into Stiles’ scent gland, the taste of his blood bursting sharp and heady over his tongue before he can control the impulse.

Peter hadn’t known bonds could feel like this.

Of course, he’s only ever felt bonds tie him to a family he feels far more obligation to than love for, his nibblings aside. The Hale bond is strong, of course; blood-borne over centuries of loyalty and rooted so deeply in who Peter is as a person he’s never considered what life would feel like without it. When he’d severed it, he’d been too filled with rage to recognize the gouge losing it had torn out of him.

Mating with Stiles makes him realize bonds don’t have to feel like a weight.

Peter’s wolf howls with wild joy as Stiles bond fills them with light, pure and warm as a full harvest moon.

The pleasure they share in that moment is so blindingly intense, Peter forgets, for a moment of free fall, what it feels like to do anything but love Stiles. Stiles hands fly up, fingers clawing into Peter’s shoulders. Not pushing him away, but clinging like Peter might think for even a singular, ridiculous moment to try to escape him. The ecstasy of being able to feel

Stiles' love for him flow through him like blood, to *be* so loved is nothing he will ever be able to describe. It's made an addict of him at first taste. He snarls, holding on with his teeth as Stiles breathlessly sobs, his submission and acceptance so clear and complete Peter nearly *hears* him scream out *yes!* with his whole soul.

At least, until Peter pulls back to lick steadily over their bond mark, the wound healing beneath his tongue from the strength of their union. Until the floorboards creak and Stiles' clings to him when Peter turns, snarling open mouthed at the intruder.

Derek and Cora aren't even facing them. They've trusted their uncle with their back, standing shoulder to shoulder in the doorway to the living room, bloodied and disheveled, facing off against their mother who looks much the same.

Talia's face is contorted with horror, looking between her children and her brother like she's never seen any of them before.

Peter's eyes are still shining blue and he means that threat with every fiber of his being, but he forces his mouth to form human speech around his fangs. "If you're still here by the time his knot goes down, I will *kill you myself*."

It's the sound of Peter's voice, maybe, or the reminder of how they got here in the first place that lets Stiles' right mind reassert itself. Whatever cask had been containing his awareness bursts all at once and he freezes, breath stalling in his chest when Peter's eyes snap back down to meet his gaze. Guilt *floods* him, sweeping away the roaring elation from just moments ago. His eyes are wide with horror as he jerks his hands away from where they'd adoringly gouged into Peter's flesh.

The loss of the touch turns Peter's stomach for the first time tonight. "Stiles—"

"I'm so—I'm *sorry*," Stiles blurts, eyes welling with tears. "I didn't realize the wine—" His gaze jerks frantically over to the doorway, the table beyond where his cursed glass lays. He shakes his head, breath rushing away from him. "I never would've—" His knot pulses absently and steals both their breaths, which Stiles couldn't afford to lose. He squeaks in gasps, but the the sound turns around and comes back out on a sob.

"I know," Peter tries to assure him, but he's not overly used to being comforting and Stiles mounting panic is clawing at the edge of his awareness, too. "Stiles—"

"I didn't *mean to*," Stiles sobs, "I'd never—I love—"

Peter kisses him. Over and over again, only pulling back enough to shush him directly against his mouth. "*Hush*, darling, I know you didn't," he promises gently, trying to center them both on their love. Whatever else may have happened, that is an immutable part of them. "It's going to be okay. You're mine, right?" he punctuates the question with a nip that makes Stiles' whole body shudder. "You want to be mine, don't you?"

"Yours, yours," Stiles agrees, nodding frantically, "Please don't make me leave, I don't—*Please, daddy*—" He cuts off when Peter bites him again over the still tender spot of their bondmark. His hands come back up to Peter's sides, a touch that settles both of them.

“I would *never*,” Peter promises vehemently. “Never, sweet boy, just breathe for me, alright? I’ll get you through this, okay?”

It takes a while for Stiles to gather himself, longer than it takes his knot to go down, but thankfully Talia seemed to hear the truth in his threat. By the time Peter is able to slip Stiles free, the house has cleared out of everyone save Derek and Cora. The siblings are kneeling in a heap of misery and anger, very nearly respectively, at the edge of the room. Though Peter could do with never being seen in this state by *anyone*, let alone his juniors, he can feel their need as acutely as he feels Stiles. The last remnants of his pack, hitching their wagons to him. He lifts his gaze from licking the tears off Stiles’ face to regard them carefully.

Derek bears his throat immediately, face twitching and wet with tears.

Cora lowers her gaze in her own tired submission, but manages to whisper, “*Please.*”

The word makes Stiles start to cry again, turning to croak her name so hesitantly it brings tears to her eyes.

Before they were all locked into this hurt little pack, Stiles and Cora were best friends. And Peter, a matriarch now, it seems, would deny his beloveds nothing. He lifts his arm towards his nibblings and they scramble forward. Derek is keening when he presses his face into Peter’s throat, but other than an acknowledging lick to his chin, Cora zeros in on Stiles. Her first tears that escape her fall on his face as she cries against his temple when he turns to her.

Pressing his nose into Derek’s hair, Peter breathes in his shock and grief and disgust and—holds it. He holds onto the smell of family meaning people who are disgusted *for* him instead of *by* him for a change. He breathes in the smell of his pack, his *true* pack, hurting and scared and bloody, but here within his arms.

Where they’re going to *stay*.

In a moment, when Stiles can breathe a little deeper and Peter is a little more certain his knees won’t buckle, he’s going to get up. He’s going to get up and gather the remnants of his pack with as much dignity as he can muster and take them home. This violation can’t be allowed to stand, of course; Talia won’t understand the terror Peter is about to rain down on her life until it’s far too late to beg for an umbrella, but that won’t happen tonight.

Peter is not orchestrating a single other nightmare before his pack is allowed at least one night to dream.

End Notes

thank you for reading...may you be loved and respected in equal measure

...Hmmm the braid I was weaving here gets a little loosey goosey at the end, but that's all she wrote! This was in my bunny hutch for over a year, I'm glad to free it. I'm caught between the thought that "Peter secretly got himself fixed years ago" and "Peter is just as vicious and conniving as ever, even heavily pregnant" so, hm. What do you think?

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