what a fickle thing fate was

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what a fickle thing fate was

by [fallingforboys](#)

Summary

Fate was a fickle thing, because sometimes it gets it wrong, because sometimes it hurts the good and protects the wicked. Because sometimes it gives the happy ending to the bad guys and gives the pain and suffering to the good ones.

Notes

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

Fate was a fickle thing.

To some, it was a lifeline, something they cling onto, praying that somewhere, someday, it will grant their wishes and make their dreams come true. It was a mythical garden, filled with the golden apples of their wildest fantasies, and they spend their life searching for it, waiting for the day it finally appears before their eyes. To some, fate was a benevolent angel watching over them with undying grace.

But to some, it was their worst nightmare. It was a warning of their fears and their regrets and their mistakes. It was a dark shadow that hung over them, clouding their every move, their every step. It was a graveyard, a reminder of the death of their innocence, because the skeletons in their closet can only stay hidden for so long. To some, fate was a ruthless devil sadistically waiting for the day they fell from grace.

Fate was a fickle thing, because sometimes it gets it wrong, because sometimes it hurts the good and protects the wicked. Because sometimes it gives the happy ending to the bad guys and gives the pain and suffering to the good ones.

But sometimes, fate wasn't so fickle, because sometimes, it gets it *right*.

Theo's eyes flew open.

It took a few seconds, but the pain hit him like a train, and he let out an instinctive gasp, his chest tightening. He was lying in the preserve, surrounded by nothing but trees and fallen leaves and the bitter November air. The silence of it all screamed in his ear and Theo wished it would stop.

The wolfsbane was coursing through his bloodstream, and Theo's mind flickered back to how he ended up here. The truck getting a flat tire, the hunters ambushing him, dumping him out

here, hoping he'd be poisoned to death so they wouldn't have to deal with the body. Theo was already halfway there, so they might get what they want.

It seemed kind of fitting that he'd die out here, all alone save for the trees.

And Theo wanted to move, wanted to try and see if he could survive, because he'd made it this far, made it through the Dread Doctors, and hell, and the Ghost Riders, and the war. He made it through all of that, and he was going to die by some rogue hunters who got lucky. But there was nothing Theo could do, his body too weak to even push himself up, his breath getting shallower with every passing minute. He didn't even have his phone, couldn't even call Li–

It doesn't matter anyway.

And all Theo could do in the still woods, all he could *manage* to do was reminisce. His life wasn't good enough to reminisce, but Theo did it anyway, because what else was he supposed to do in his last minutes before death?

So Theo let himself reminisce, let himself be pulled into his memories one last time.

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Theo was a survivor, did everything he could to make sure *he* made it out alive, because what else mattered? And so Liam saying that the plan was to lure the Ghost Riders to the hospital so that they wouldn't go after Scott was a foreign concept to him, because why would Liam want to die? Why fight and fight and fight, just to give up at the end?

But it wasn't his call, and so hiding with the dead it was.

"I'm not gonna do anything for you. I'm not gonna help you. I'm not gonna save you. I'm gonna do exactly what you would do to me. I'm gonna use you as bait."

And that was fine, right? Because that's exactly what Theo had done, exactly what Theo wanted to do, because why sacrifice yourself for someone else?

And then Liam had gone and saved him. Had twisted around when he was fighting his own Ghost Rider and shot the one choking Theo, because at the end of the day, Liam couldn't do what Theo had done. Because Liam was good, and Theo was *not*.

But something had shifted right there and then in Theo. He couldn't put it in words, couldn't explain what it was, but it *did*.

"Being the bait."

And this was fine too. Because Liam had saved him, so he was saving Liam. He didn't want to owe the beta anything, *hated* to owe anyone anything. And he heard Liam banging the elevator doors after they closed, because at the end of the day, Liam was *good*.

And so he fought and fought and fought, *didn't* give up at the end, and tried to convince himself that the only reason he was fighting was to return the favor. An eye for an eye, because Liam could've died in that moment when he chose to save Theo. He *could've*, if the circumstances were different. And Theo *could've* died fighting the Ghost Riders, if the circumstances were different.

But Liam didn't die and Theo didn't either.

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Theo had to admit, being paired with Liam again made him feel… *something*.

And then the hunters didn't bring backup, and he wanted this to *work*, so he got Liam angry, and he was so *good* at it. Three broken noses wasn't exactly what Theo had been expecting,

but he guessed that's what he got for riling up the angriest werewolf in the pack.

But their plan worked, and everything was in motion again. And then Liam had gone and surprised him again.

Because who knew that the little werewolf with extreme anger issues had a history kink? And Theo couldn't do anything but stare, because Liam's eyes were bright as he talked, his voice passionate as he explained his plan, and the Greeks and *Mykonos*. And there was a small part of Theo that wanted to look down at his lips, wanted to move forward, but what good would that have done? He would not only be punched again, but Liam would probably break Scott's number one rule and kill him.
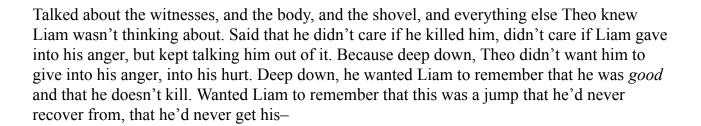
So he reeled in that urge, and said "*I'm impressed"* like an idiot because that's what he was slowly becoming when it came to this idiot.

And then Liam almost killed that hunter kid, and so Theo had to knock him out, and there was a small part of him that felt victorious, because Liam had punched him three times, and now Theo got to knock him out *five* times.

Theo knew the smile on his face when he said *five* was soft, *too* soft for him, but he couldn't help it. He wished he could, because Liam was *good*, and Theo was *not*.

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Theo hadn't planned to stop Liam from killing Gabe. In fact, killing Gabe would probably have been a good thing, but Theo knew what killing meant to the pack, to *Scott*, and so by extension, to *Liam*.

The beta would regret it the second he did it, would see his eyes turn from gold to blue in the shattered glass, and see a *monster*. And so Theo put on his most logical voice, and talked Liam down from the anger, down from the cliff he was about to jump off of.

Talked about the witnesses, and the body, and the shovel, and everything else Theo knew Liam wasn't thinking about. Said that he didn't care if he killed him, didn't care if Liam gave into his anger, but kept talking him out of it. Because deep down, Theo didn't want him to give into his anger, into his hurt. Deep down, he wanted Liam to remember that he was *good* and that he doesn't kill. Wanted Liam to remember that this was a jump that he'd never recover from, that he'd never get his–

Never get his innocence back again.

Because Theo's eyes were still gold in that mirror, but all he saw when he looked at himself was a *monster*.

And Liam told him that he would never be pack, and Theo *knew* that, because how could a pack that he had manipulated and torn apart *ever* forgive him? How could Scott and Stiles and Malia and Lydia look at him and be willing to ever let him again? So Theo knew he would never be pack, knew it like it was written in the stars, knew it like it was carved into his skin, but it still *hurt*.

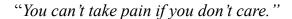He could've had it. He could've had a pack, and friends, and Liam, he could've had it *all*. But he ended up with *nothing*, because they were *good*.

And Theo was getting tired of the fact that he was *not*.

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"You can't take pain if you don't care."

Mason's words were the truth, and his heart didn't skip.

It hadn't skipped when he said that Theo would never be pack either.

"You can't take pain if you don't care."

The words were an accusation, a brutal reminder that Theo wasn't good. But Theo *wanted* to care. He *wanted* to be good, wanted to show everyone that maybe his heart wasn't his, but he could still give it up.

Because he already had, hadn't he?

And he *wanted* to care, wanted to take Mason's pain, because Mason was *good*, just like Liam was *good*, and he deserved to make it out of this alive. Deserved all the good things in life, because he was *good*.

But then Mason had grabbed his hand, and helped him sit up. They were both hurt, both struggling not to let the pain take over, both just *teenagers*. Teenagers in a *war*, because somehow, somewhere, fate had made a choice.

And so now Theo was sitting next to Mason, thinking of the heart beating in his chest that he could no longer control.

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Just like everything else in the last few months, Theo hadn't planned to go to the hospital.

He was on his way out of this hellhole, because there was nothing left in Beacon Hills for him anymore. And part of it also might've been the way his heart clenched everytime he was near a certain blue-eyed beta that would never see him the same way. But then Scott called, and Theo had stiffened when he heard that *name*, and so now he was at the hospital.

The elevator doors opened and Liam had his back to him, so he grabbed and pulled. All the way back into the safety of the elevator, and Theo let himself enjoy the feeling of his arms wrapped around the beta for half a second. Because it would never happen again, because

Theo would be gone in the morning, whether because he left Beacon Hills or whether he left the world.

"I'm not dying for you."

Liar.

Theo would die for Liam in a heartbeat, in a beat of his stolen heart, because Liam was *good* and Theo was *not*, but because of something else now too.

And Theo finally understood.

He understood why they fight and fight and fight, and they give u–

No. They don't *give up* at the end, they fight *for them*. Because Theo would fight and fight and fight, just like he did against the Ghost Riders, in the same hospital, and he *wouldn't* give up. And he'd fight because it was better than watching everyone die.

Theo was getting tired of death.

And he understood *why sacrifice yourself for someone else* now. Liam was in front of him, his jaw clenched as he turned away, before saying that he'd fight with him. And Theo had said he wouldn't die for him a few seconds ago, but staring at the beta now, seeing those blue eyes, and the determination to keep everyone alive, he knew that he *would*.

Theo Raeken would die for Liam Dunbar.

And then the elevator doors opened and they *fought*. They fought with every fiber of their being, with every bone in their body, with everything in them. They pushed and pulled, like tied together by an invisible string, by a fragile thread of gold shimmering between them.

If Theo wasn't fighting for his life right now, he'd think about fate. But he was, and the thought was pushed aside, just like he pushed Liam in front of him to cover him from the bullets.

Because he *would* die for him.

And then, as suddenly as it began, it was over. The war was *over*.

Theo didn't plan on taking Gabe's pain. There was a small piece of his brain that felt sadistic, seeing the human crawling in his blood, every movement sending tremors of pain through his body. But that piece was so small, so insignificant, that Theo didn't think about it for more than a millisecond.

No, what he was thinking about instead was the fact that that had been Theo last year. That last year, *he* was the one metaphorically crawling in his own blood, not literally though, because Tara didn't give him the luxury of staying alive that long. What Theo was thinking of was that all he saw when he looked at Gabe was *himself*.

"You can't take pain if you don't care."

Theo cared now, had for a while now, and he had wanted to show it, but *couldn't*. Well, he finally could now.

The black lines snaked up his arm, and Theo couldn't help but think about how little it hurt. And that's a good thing, right? It barely hurt, and that was *good*, right? Why did Theo *want* it to hurt?

Theo wanted it to hurt, but it *didn't*.

"Does it hurt anymore?"

Gabe had shook his head, and that was *good*.

And Theo had said before that emotional pain was worse than physical pain, and it was *true*, because it didn't hurt anymore, didn't hurt at *all* when he was taking Gabe's pain, but now it *hurt*.

Because a part of Theo had died last year in hell. And another part of him had died watching Gabe die.

That could've been Theo.

That *was* Theo.

And now here he was, minutes away from death, and it really *was* Theo now. Except there was no one to help him, no one to save him, and it felt fitting.

Theo wasn't fighting for his life anymore, so he let himself think about fate.

He wondered if it was fate for him to end up here, alone in the preserve, dying because why would someone come for him after everything he did? He wondered if it was fate that Liam had been the one to bring him back from hell, if it was fate that it was him and Liam at the hospital with the Ghost Riders, if it was fate that he hadn't died then.

He wondered if it was fate that him and Liam had been at the zoo together, where Theo had gotten to see a side of the beta he hadn't before, where Theo had realized that he *cared*. He wondered if it was fate that Liam listened to him in that bathroom with Gabe, if it was fate that they ended up at the hospital together *again*, if it was fate that they worked so well together.

If it *was* fate, why was fate so kind to him?

He didn't deserve for fate to be kind to him, because he was the bad guy, and he didn't deserve a happy ending. He deserved the pain and the suffering and the torture and the *guilt*.

But fate was fickle, so it was kind to him, and it gave him Liam. It gave him the chance to *care*, gave him the chance to be *better*, a chance to be *good*.

And Theo took what fate gave him and he held on tight. Because he was the bad guy, but he still wanted a happy ending.

Too bad that sometimes, fate wasn't that fickle and still gave the pain and suffering to the bad guy. Because sometimes, fate loved to play its games, loved to push and pull, loved to tie two people together that weren't meant to be together. Because sometimes fate loved to pretend to give the bad guy a happy ending before ripping it away from him.

Because now, Theo was dying alone in the preserve, and it was exactly what he deserved from fate.

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Theo was dead.

Because he heard voices, voices that sounded like Liam and Scott, and that didn't make sense because they wouldn't be here unless he was dead and this was Tara torturing him again.

"Scott, he's *dying*."

"I can *see* that, let's get him up."

"He can't *die*, Theo, you *can't die*."

"Be *careful*, he's hurt."

Theo didn't know what was happening, but he let himself enjoy hearing Liam's voice again. He hadn't really heard it since that pack meeting last week, that he was forced to join even though he wasn't pack. They still didn't know he was living in his truck though, and so if going to pack meetings kept them from finding out, he would go. Well, not anymore, obviously.

"Theo, hold on, *please*."

"Liam, call my mom, tell her we need a hospital room."

Theo drifted in and out, which didn't make sense, because when was Tara getting here? It's been a while since he died, why was Tara taking her sweet time?

"Oh my *god,* what happened to him?"

"Hunters. His truck had a flat tire, and he was just lying there in the preserve. Mom, we need a room *now*."

"Bring him here and call Dr. Geyer. I'm gonna need help."

Theo was still wondering where Tara was, but then everything stopped.

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Theo's eyes flew open.

A feeling of deja-vu washed over him when he felt the pain in his body, but he wasn't in the preserve this time.

The medicinal, sterile scent of the hospital filled his nose, and he *hated* it. He tried lifting his head, but he was still too *weak*.

And then the door slammed open, and Theo would've jumped if he was able to, but in his current state, he *wasn't*, so he flinched instead.

"Oh my *god*," was all he heard before arms were around him, almost suffocating him. But Theo didn't move, because he knew that voice, and he knew that sweater, and he knew that scent.

Liam didn't pull away for a few minutes, and it felt like he was *trembling*, and Theo wanted to talk, but he didn't know what to *say*, so he stayed silent and let Liam do what he wanted to. When the beta finally pulled away, his eyes were red.

"You're *alive*."

Theo was just as surprised. "Yeah."

Liam's eyes grew hard. "When were you going to tell us that you've been living in your truck?"

"I wasn't," Theo answered truthfully, because he couldn't control his heartbeat anymore, so why bother lying? And honestly, he was *really* tired of lying.

"*Why?* "

Theo was taken aback at the anger in the beta's voice. "Why what?"

"Why didn't you *tell* us, you… you *asshole!*" Liam practically yelled, "We would've *helped*."

"Why would you help me?" Theo asked quietly, looking down at the hospital sheet covering his body.

"Because you're *pack*," Liam said, irritated. "Because you helped us, so we would've helped you."

Oh. It was the whole eye for an eye thing again. It wasn't because they *cared*, it was because they didn't want to owe Theo anything, just like Theo hadn't wanted to owe Liam anything back then. But Theo would help Liam over and over again now, not so he wouldn't owe him anything, but because he *cared*. But it was too much to hope that the McCall pack would feel the same way, and Theo knew that.

"How'd you find me?" Theo ignored what Liam said, because acknowledging it would just hurt even more.

Liam's eyes flashed, his mouth tightening as he glared at the chimera. "The sheriff got a call about a truck with a flat tire near the preserve. It didn't take long for us to figure out it was yours, and by the time we got there, you were almost *dead*."

"Oh." Theo didn't really know *what* to say, because he had thought that he was dead. But he *wasn't*, so that meant that the voices were real. That meant that Liam had really told him that he couldn't die, pleaded with him to hold on. And Theo didn't know what to think about that.

"*Oh?* Theo, you almost *died*," Liam snarled, and Theo heard the door open. They both turned to see the whole pack in the doorway, and Theo's pulse skipped, because *why were they all here?*

And unfortunately for him, *everyone* knew, because he was hooked up to the heart monitor.

"Theo, how are you feeling?" Scott asked, and it was so *gentle,* and Theo had never heard something like that aimed at him in his *life*. "Do you want some water?"

The chimera stared for a moment before shaking his head. "I'm fine."

A sharp exhale next to him had him turning his head to see Liam's furious expression. "If you say that *one more time,* I'm gonna break your nose. I don't care that you're in the hospital, I'll still do it."

"Liam, calm down," Mason said softly, placing a hand on his best friend's shoulder. "He *just* woke up, and you're already threatening him."

"Theo," Scott began, drawing the chimera's attention away from the fuming beta, "why didn't you tell us?"

"Look, I'm *okay*," Theo said, making sure to say the last word pointedly at Liam, "and thank you for finding me and everything, but you guys don't have to stay here. I'm sure you all have other things to do."

"Goddammit, Theo!" Corey hissed from next to Mason. "You're *not* okay, and we're *not* leaving you. We're your *pack*, and you almost just *died*."

Before Theo could reply, Stiles spoke up. "How long have you been living in your truck?"

Theo angled his head at the human, who had a stoic expression on his face. He let out a sigh before closing his eyes and tilting his head back onto the pillow. "Since I came back."

There were some gasps, but the only thing Theo heard was the growl from the beta standing next to him.

"You've been homeless for *months*, and you didn't say a fucking *word?* " Liam barked, and Theo opened his eyes again to look at the werewolf.

"It's nothing something I can just *say*," Theo retorted, "I can't just walk into a pack meeting like 'hey, how was your weekend, oh by the way, I'm homeless.'"

"You *could've*," Liam snapped, and Scott murmured his name, telling him to calm down again.

"How long were you lying there, Theo?" Lydia asked suddenly, and it was so soft but so accusing at the same time that it gave Theo whiplash. "How long were you in the preserve, waiting for your death? Did you even *try?* "

"*Yes*," Theo said, because he *had*, kind of. Part of the reason he stopped trying was that his body grew too weak. The other part was that he had accepted it. "I tried until I couldn't."

Fuck. He should've quit while he was ahead, because he forgot about the heart monitor thing. Liam and Scott inhaled sharply, because that last part was a *lie*.

"Did you *want* to die?" Liam asked, his brows drawn together in anger as he glowered at the chimera. "Did you even *care?* "

"I *care!* " Theo screamed, probably too loud for a hospital, probably too loud for his still recovering body, but he was *tired* of people thinking that he didn't care. Because he *fucking* did. "I care," he repeated, lowering his voice.

Mason's eyes widened in recognition, because *he'd* been the one to tell Theo that he didn't care, all those weeks ago. "Theo…"

"Don't." Exhaustion dripped from his voice, but Theo couldn't find anything in him to care anymore. "Thank you for coming to check on me, but I'm okay, so you guys can leave."

He closed his eyes, waiting for the footsteps signaling the pack was on its way out, but they never came. He sighed in frustration. "Why are you still *here?* "

"Theo, did you think that we wouldn't care if you died?"

Scott's voice was hesitant, and Theo didn't want to tell him that he had guessed correctly. So he stayed silent, keeping his eyes closed, because he could almost pretend no one was here.

Another growl echoed in the room, and Theo reluctantly opened his eyes. So much for that plan.

"Did you think we wouldn't care if you died?" Scott pressed, his voice growing in volume.

Theo stifled another sigh. He was too tired for this. "Yes."

Scott's head dropped, and Theo could suddenly smell the guilt coming off the alpha.

"Theo, we *care*," Lydia stated, and the chimera turned to her. "You're a part of this pack as much as any of us, and we'd *care* if you died."

"You shouldn't," is what Theo said after a few moments, because they *shouldn't*.

"Theo," Liam growled, "I'm going to punch you now."

Well, at least he got a warning this time. But before his nose cracked, Liam's arms were pulled away from him, Scott holding his beta back.

"Liam, punching Theo is not the answer to everything," the alpha warned, and Liam huffed. Theo wanted to laugh despite the tense situation– it was just like a child getting scolded by their dad. Scott turned to Theo, his eyes hardening. "And you. We *care*, and we're not planning on *stopping*. You've changed, and you're a part of this pack. We don't leave pack behind, Theo. And you need to stop thinking that we will."

"Scott, I'm *not* pack," Theo said, growing frustrated. "I only show up to pack meetings because I have to, and so you guys didn't find out about my living situation. I'm not pack, and that's *fine*. You don't have to say I am just because I almost died."

"That's *not* why," Liam snarled, and he looked like he was going to punch Theo again. And the chimera couldn't even back away, because he was in the stupid hospital, trapped on this stupid bed. "How many times have you *risked your life* to save mine? You keep saving me, Theo, and you know who does that? *Pack*."

"I wasn't doing that for the good of the pack," Theo snapped. "You just keep putting yourself into stupid situations because you have a fucking matryr complex."

"What does that say about you, then?" Stiles asked quietly, looking up at the chimera, "If Liam has a martyr complex, what does it say about you that you keep saving him?"

"That I–" Theo faltered, because he knew what he *could* say, but he knew that he wouldn't. "That I'm tired of watching people die."

And that was true. He *was* tired of watching people die, but he had conveniently left out that he *couldn't* watch Liam die. That even thinking about the beta dying *hurt* him.

"And if you weren't doing it for the good of the pack, what were you doing it for then?" Stiles continued, his eyes searing into Theo. Like he could see through all the walls the chimera had built up, could see the truth that he was desperately hiding in the depths of his heart.

"For…" Theo trailed off, because the only options he had were tell the truth or say nothing at all, and the second option looked a lot better than the first. "Is this interrogation really necessary? I just woke up after almost dying."

"You're *fine*," Malia, who hadn't said anything this entire time, declared. Theo gave her an incredulous look.

"You're really using my own words against me?" the chimera asked dryly, and Malia bared her teeth.

"Answer the question, Theo," Lydia pressed gently, "You're trying to hide something that we already know."

Theo froze. His eyes flickered through the pack, and sure enough, it was obvious that they knew what he was hiding. Scott had a reassuring look on his face, coaxing Theo to admit it out loud. Malia had her arms crossed, like she didn't want to believe it, but had grudgingly accepted it. Stiles and Mason were both a little amused, the latter far more obvious in his glee. Corey had a hesitant smile on his face, but it widened slightly when he noticed Theo's gaze. And then there was Liam. The beta looked a little flushed, but he was trying to cover it up with a glare aimed at the chimera.

"If you all know, why do I need to say it?"

Scott let out a deep breath, rubbing his temples and it was clear that he was getting tired of Theo's antics. *Theo* was getting tired of his own antics, but this wasn't easy. After everything, this pack had no reason to trust him, and revealing his secrets to them seemed like a risky move. They could use it to hurt him, just like *he* had done last year. Well actually, maybe he *should*, so that he'd get what he deserved. "It's been *weeks* since the war, Theo. We all know you've changed, we all know you took Gabe's pain. We all know you *care*. You don't have to put on this… this *mask* around us."

"And what about when I do something that makes you lose your trust in me?" Theo pressed, because even though he wasn't going to actually do anything, he still wanted to ask. Because there was no way they *actually* trusted him right now.

"Are you planning on doing something that would make you lose our trust?" Scott asked, raising his eyebrow in a way that made it obvious that he knew Theo was just playing devil's advocate.

Theo was quiet as he returned the alpha's stare. "No."

And his heart was steady, his chemosignals weren't being controlled anymore, because Theo was fucking *done* putting on a show.

"Well, there you go," Stiles cut in, gesturing his arm in emphasis. "We forgive you, Theo. Yeah, yeah," the human rolled his eyes at Theo's skeptical look, "I'm the last person you thought would say this, but it's *true*. We've seen how you are now, Theo. You care about the pack, about being a better person, about Li–"

Stiles broke off with a smirk as both Liam and Theo blushed, because what the *fuck*, Stiles, why would you *say* that? "Well, now that you've finally got it in your head that you're pack, we'll leave you alone to rest. Or not, judging by Liam's eyes."

Theo's cheeks darkened even more, and the pack snickered as they left, Scott giving Theo one final smile, and it felt *comforting*. Mason held back for a moment, clearly debating through something in his mind. The human finally looked at Theo with determination in his eyes.

"I should've said this at the hospital that day, and I didn't because everything was so crazy, and then you left, and–" Mason cut off his rambling with a deep breath. "You care, and I'm sorry that I implied differently that day. You couldn't take my pain, but I could still see that you were trying to, and that you were frustrated that you couldn't. You were trying, Theo, and that's what mattered."

Theo was taken aback. He hadn't expected an *apology*. "Mason, you shouldn't be apologizing for that."

"Even if I meant it then," the human said softly, "I shouldn't have said it. You've changed Theo, and you've *been* changing, even back when we were in the tunnels. And what you did at the hospital proved that."

Theo's eyes flickered to Liam, who was staring at him with a look in his eyes that Theo couldn't place. He turned back to Mason, who had a weird expression of amusement and guilt on his face. "Thank you," Theo said, and Mason nodded as he moved towards the door.

"I know you guys are both a little wound up after everything that happened, but don't forget that you're still in a hospital," the human teased, and Theo's ears turned pink.

Liam scoffed. "I *know* you and Corey do things in the hospital that would probably get you *arrested*, Mason, you have no right to talk."

Mason was laughing as he closed the door behind him, and the room suddenly felt *too* small. Theo's eyes moved to Liam, who was already looking at him. The werewolf moved to sit on the bed, and Theo was already sitting up, so that left only inches between them. Liam's left thigh brushed Theo's right one, and the chimera unconsciously pushed into the touch.

"If you weren't doing it for the good of the pack, why were you doing it?" Liam repeated Stiles' question, his voice quiet. Theo knew that Liam knew the answer. But the beta wanted Theo to say it out loud, put it in words, because the second the truth came out of his mouth, Theo wouldn't be able to deny it or hide it anymore.

"Because I couldn't watch *you* die."

Theo's voice was barely above a whisper, but the words were still deafening in the silent hospital room. Liam's face softened, and he grabbed Theo's hand, intertwining their fingers.

"That's how I felt when I saw you there in the preserve," the beta said gingerly, his thumb running over Theo's knuckles. "I thought you were dead."

The raw anguish in his voice made Theo's heart stutter, and he lifted his other hand to push a lock of Liam's hair that had fallen on his face behind his ear. "I'm sorry."

Liam leaned in slightly, but not all the way, like he was waiting for Theo's permission. The chimera's eyes flitted across Liam's face, taking in the pain and the remorse, but also the *longing*.

So, Theo took a leap of faith, and closed the gap.

It wasn't hard, wasn't desperate, wasn't needy, despite how long both of them had been waiting for this moment. Theo's lips brushed Liam's, giving the werewolf one last chance to back out, but the beta angled his head, and pushed deeper into the kiss.

They moved together, slowly, Theo's eyes drifting closed as his senses became overwhelmed with Liam. Their hands were still intertwined, but Theo moved his other hand to cup the back of Liam's neck, pulling him closer. Liam's other hand was on the chimera's chest, and by coincidence– or maybe not, because Liam was smarter than people gave him credit for– it was right above Theo's heart.

He could feel it pounding in his chest, and he knew that Liam could *feel*, not hear, it too. But he didn't care, didn't care that he was vulnerable, didn't care that he wasn't in control. Liam gently pulled back, their lips brushing again because he didn't move far. The beta looked at Theo for a few moments, not saying anything, just staring.

Theo was about to ask what was wrong, when Liam pushed Theo softly, until his back was pressed against the bed firmly. The werewolf twisted so that he was completely on the bed now, and leaned in again, taking Theo's bottom lip between his.

It was so *quiet* in the room, but Theo couldn't focus on anything but Liam. And when Liam shifted again so that he was practically on Theo's lap, he lost all ability to think. Their kisses were still slow, and Theo let himself get lost in them, get lost in Liam.

———————————————————

Fate was a fickle thing.

Because to some, it was a lifeline, their *anchor* in the violent sea of life. But to some, *fate* was the violent sea. To some, fate was everything they dreamed of, and to some, fate was everything they saw in their nightmares.

Fate was fickle, because it was wrong sometimes, because even fate wasn't perfect. Sometimes, it tied an invisible string between people that don't belong together, but if it was fate, didn't that mean they *did?*

Fate was fickle, because after everything, after separating the good and the bad, after *all of it*, it didn't matter.

Because there was no good. And there was no bad. Fate was a flimsy thread, intertwining lives in its ethereal way. Intertwining people with a thread so *fragile*, one wrong move would snap it. Good and bad had no place when it came to fate, because fate didn't paint in black and white.

It painted in the shades of grey of the moon, painted in *gold*.

So maybe to some, fate was fickle, but really, when it came down to it, fate was what you made of it.

End Notes

I think all of the kissing scenes I've written between Theo and Liam have ALL been rough, desperate ones, and I wanted to change that. Because Theo and Liam deserve the soft, slow ones too.

thank you for reading!!

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