

Disclaimer for the story: I do not own Charmed

Summary: Wyatt wasn't the evil Chris came to stop. But he also didn't come alone and the Charmed Ones will find his fellow traveler out. Will Piper and Leo be able to realize what they are doing before they lose their youngest son forever? Sometimes perception is everything.

A/N: So this is obviously extremely AU. Time wise this would be around the same time Phoebe found out about Chris so both Richard and Jason are gone. Chris Cross didn't happen but Wyatt being kidnapped by the Order and saved by Chris did, except he never told them Wyatt was evil, or had him scanned by a demon.

Chris is 18 and Wyatt almost 20. I chose this because I want for Chris to be in that College choosing age and basically with nothing other than his family tying him to San Francisco. So his family better start wising up.

Chris does not live in the backroom of P3.

Have fun!

## **"Perception"**

**By PadyandMoony**

### **Chapter 1- The tenants**

Paige frowned at her bank statement. How could that bill be higher? It wasn't high per say, wasn't more than what she used to pay when she lived by herself but that's the point, no one was there. So yes, she had asked the super's wife to go clean every now and then and she paid the woman for that, but the rest of the time the apartment was empty, she should be paying just the minimum as she had been paying before. Did electricity go that much up? She didn't

know. Piper was the one who handled the bills here and she had to admit that since moving to the manor she had stopped paying attention to those details and she also had to admit she didn't check her bank statements that frequently, which she should, because according to these statements her electric, gas and water bill had all gone up a few months ago. Paige nodded and decided to go ask her older sister.

She purposely walked from her room to the kitchen where she found Piper, cooking, what else? And Phoebe writing in her laptop at the kitchen table.

"Piper," she started "Did the electricity, gas and water prices rise?"

Piper looked at her strangely and answered, "No, why?"

"Because my bills increased," Paige said brandishing her bank statements.

"What bills?" Piper asked bewildered. Uh, oh, Paige winced. She had forgotten the little detail that her sisters didn't know she still had her apartment.

"Hum, uh, never mind," she tried to weasel herself away and run from the kitchen but Phoebe was faster and had grabbed the bank statements.

"Since when are those bills credited in your account? They have always been in Piper's. Ever since Grams died," Phoebe frowned.

"They are," Piper agreed.

"Then what are you paying Paige?" Phoebe pointed at the statements.

"Hum, well, you see- The apartment was mine actually. I bought it with the money my parents left me. And I thought I'd rent out," Paige fidgeted a little, "and that renting out would be easier if everything was still connected but then I never got to actually looking into renting out and then, my stuff is still there, and at first I didn't know if this would work out, but I do now,"

she hastened to add firmly, "I just never got around it you know?" she winced at the end giving them a feeble smile.

"No," Piper said looking at her with that expression she uses when she's about to chew your head off. Lately that expression had been solely dedicated to their Whitelighter, and Paige had been so grateful for that, but for some reason she was staring at her that way and Paige wanted to cringe. Piper crossed her arms and Paige just whimpered.

"You kept your apartment ready to move back in?" Phoebe asked and there was a little hurt in that voice that made Paige want to whimper even more.

"Noooo," she tried to appease them, "Well, erm, yes. But just in the beginning. I mean, we were just getting to know each other then!" she defended herself. "I didn't know if this would work out and then I just kind of forgot. I don't still keep it because I think of moving out I just, I don't know- Never got around renting it out. Please you have to believe me! Put yourselves in my shoes! Would you have just moved into stranger's house with no backup plan? I love you two but let's be truthful, back then the only reason you accepted me was because I was family, and *some people*," she stressed with a significant look at Piper, "Had a hard time even with that."

Piper relented her admonishing expression as she cringed a bit and Paige felt a little safer.

"Let me see that statement," Piper said grabbing the statement and quickly changing the subject. She frowned. "Paige, this isn't right. There has to be someone living there with these costs."

"There isn't. I swear. The only person that goes there is Mrs. Smith to clean for me and that's once every two weeks. Just so my stuff doesn't get ruined with dust."

"Your stuff?" Piper asked.

“Well, it’s as if my furniture was welcome here,” Paige huffed and the other two cringed.

“Sorry,” Piper said regretfully. “Why don’t we go check this out and then maybe we can see if we can bring some of your stuff here? I mean, we could maybe use a change in décor.”

“Yeah,” Phoebe added happily as she realized that Paige was right, they hadn’t opened that much space for Paige to bring herself to the house. This could be a good way to make up for that. “We could.”

And that is how the three sisters found themselves walking to the front door of the apartment building where Paige had been living when they met her. They were going to go in and check the apartment before meeting the super but Mr. Smith had been washing the sidewalk when they came.

“Ms. Mathews!” he called. “What a wonderful surprise! The boys aren’t late with the rent are they? Because really, they have been so good to have around, I’d hate for you to lose such great tenants.”

“Er- the boys?” Paige asked bewildered but Piper decided to take over.

“Oh, no! They pay on time. We just wanted to make sure they are not causing you trouble,” she smiled widely poking Paige on the ribs.

“Yes, of course,” Paige smiled forcedly.

“No trouble at all,” Mr. Smith said. “The youngest is always at work. Don’t really know what he does but that few times I see him he is completely rung out so I think he should slow down. But I understand, poor kids. All alone in the world having to support themselves so young. What can they do? The oldest managed to get a job down at the grocers and is always doing the odd job for me here, you know? I’m not as young as I used to be and his help is welcome.”

“Of course, such good boys,” Paige said vaguely. “So, is Mrs. Smith still cleaning the apartment?”

Mr. Smith laughed heartedly, “Ms. Mathews I’m the old one here and you’re the one with memory problems. When you came to introduce me the boys you said they couldn’t afford her remember?”

Paige laughed, “Of course I do, I just thought that working so hard they might have made enough money you know?”

“Don’t worry. Mrs. Smith. Is always worried about them kids living alone, you know her, soft heart and they remind her of our boys, so she always takes some food to them and she says they keep the apartment and your furniture in pristine conditions.”

“Great!” Phoebe said. “Hum, are they home?”

“At this time?” Mr. Smith said looking at his watch. “I doubt that, Matt is still at the grocers and the youngest well, I really don’t know his schedule. Sometimes I swear I don’t hear him coming in from the door but then they come out together!”

“Imagine that!” Piper laughed. “Well, Mr. Smith. Thank you for the talk. We’ll stop by another time. Oh, but don’t tell them. We want to make a surprise check if you understand.”

“I do,” he chuckled. “But I’m telling you, there’s no need for that with those two.”

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“That is personal gain,” Leo said frowning at the girls.

“No, it’s not,” Phoebe shook her head. “The super said Paige introduced them, which means that unless Paige has an identical twin we didn’t know of, whoever is living there used magic to glamour themselves into Paige or at the very least change Mr. Smith memory. And isn’t that

too much of a coincidence? Someone using a Charmed One's apartment? So this is magical and therefore totally acceptable."

Leo frowned at her again but said nothing.

Piper huffed as she closed the book, "No useful spell here. We might need to write one."

"What are you looking for?" Leo asked.

"Well, we thought of barging in," Paige said. "Our usual MO but then we decided to be more subtle, and find out who they are and what they want. We want a spell to make us invisible and cloak in case they can sense us."

"I could do that," Leo said calmly.

"You could? Can I?" Paige asked eagerly.

"No, this is an Elder power. I can make myself invisible and cloak myself and could probably extend that to you."

Paige huffed disappointed but Phoebe nodded, "Great, that's better than a spell that might back fire. Let's go!" she said extending her hand.

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The apartment was empty when they orbed in.

"You sure they won't see us? Because I can see you," Piper asked and Leo smiled with his hands entwined at his back.

"Yes, I'm sure, you can see me because you're under my cloaking. They won't be able to see or hear us."

Paige who had been looking around and had to admit that the apartment was being well kept, at her expense no less, said as they heard a click on the door, "We're about to find out."

The door opened and a tall blond man carrying grocery bags came in shutting the door behind him with his foot.

"He's cute," Phoebe said and Piper glared at her.

"He's probably a demon," she reminded Phoebe.

"Still cute," Phoebe shrugged. "And he doesn't look like a demon."

"Neither did Cole," Paige reminded her as she glared at her "tenant". "So, do you think that's Matt or the other one we don't know the name?"

"That shirt looks familiar," Piper frowned as she looked at the way the man- boy- he looked very young, was dressing. He was well dressed, don't get her wrong, but somehow the clothes didn't seem to belong to him. A lot like someone else she knew.

Matt had just finished putting away the grocery and started preparing two peanut butter and jelly sandwiches. He left them open and had drawn smiley faces in them. He seemed quite pleased with his handy work and was in the process of sticking two candles to two cupcakes, a 1 and an 8 when Piper heard Phoebe call from the only other room in the small apartment.

"Er, you have to see this."

They went to the small room and Piper looked around. There was one bed, she figure the bed must have been Paige's and one mattress on the floor and she recognized the mattress as being that spare one that she had in the back room of P3. The sheets didn't cover the mattress fully and the whine stain she had made once was there in the exact same spot. She frowned; they were living in Paige's apartment and taking her spare mattress? She looked at where

Phoebe was pointing and gaped. The Book of Shadows and a sword that looked an awful lot like Excalibur were resting innocently inside the wardrobe.

“That book looks a lot thicker,” Paige noted.

“They stole our book,” Piper stated shocked.

“How, we had the book right under our noses just before orbiting here?” Phoebe asked.

“Be right back,” Paige said and orbed out. A few moments later she orbed back. “Book and sword right where they are supposed to be.”

“And these?” Leo asked.

“No idea.”

Piper stared at Matt and said, “I say we grab him and put him in a crystal cage now and get some answers.”

“What about the other one?” Leo asked.

Paige bit her lip and nodded, “We wait till he gets here and then we surprise them.”

They didn’t have to wait much more. Matt had arranged the sandwiches and cupcakes on the coffee table as they all decided to lean on the wall and watch him and no sooner had he finished orbs started forming and a very familiar Whitelighter materialized in front of them. At first they thought he had tracked them down but Matt wasn’t surprised. On the contrary he jumped up and cried, “HAPPY BIRTHDAY!”

Chris looked at his overexcited accomplice, because now Piper knew he was up to no good, and she also realized where she knew that shirt from, she had washed that shirt, and he smiled.

“Thanks!”

“I made us a banquet!” Matt pompously said pointing at the sandwiches and Chris burst out laughing.

“You know that your mother was an award winning chef don’t you? What would she say Wy?”

“I think she’d be immensely proud of my prowess in the kitchen, besides, made you laugh,” Matt poked Chris.

“Chris!” Paige cried. “What the hell? Why is he here? And what did he do? Come in a field trip to the past and munch of my apartment?”

“Apparently,” Leo said pleased. Absolutely sure he was going to prove Chris’s evil plan. “We should spy more. We finally have the opportunity to find out his plan.”

Matt pushed a smiley face sandwich towards Chris as they both sat down.

“Today you become a man! You become of age. You can enlist in the army and you can legally drink...in most countries. Today has to be celebrated and today there will be no talk about missions and the dreary future we come from.”

“Wy-“

“No, no, how would we be spending this day if everything hadn’t gone to hell?”

“Well,” Chris said with a wistful smile. “Mom would invite all my friends and throw me a special party. Dad would send a letter a couple of days later apologizing because of some bull business that was important came up and he couldn’t be there but next year he promises he’ll be there,” Chris snorted. “My lovely aunts would probably give me a sports car-“

“Dream on,” Matt snorted but Piper was frowning. Chris was turning eighteen? Since when did Whitelighters age? And why did he keep calling Matt Wy? She was answered soon enough with Chris cry:

“WYATT!” and she just stared at the blond boy in a new light. That was Wyatt? Her baby boy? But what was he doing with Chris? What had Chris done to him? She glared anew at Chris and Leo was copying her exact look and thoughts. He knew this was Wyatt, he sensed him and felt his little boy.

Phoebe and Paige on the other hand had other thoughts. Maybe, just maybe, if Chris was here with Wyatt, and Wyatt was so very obviously fond of Chris, he wasn't evil.

“My lovely aunts would give me a sports car, and would hug me, embarrassing me to no end in public and say how proud they were their little peanut was all grown up,” his smile faded and he continued. “Except we're not home, the world did go to hell, and they are all dead. And Piper would rather blow me up than throw me a party, unfortunately Leo is around and he likes to threaten me, and I'm not my aunts little peanut. And we do have a mission Wyatt, we can't forget that.”

Leo narrowed his eyes. Of course Piper wouldn't throw him a party! Why should she? He was the one responsible for breaking up their family. He glared at Chris realizing the Whitelighter had lied again, because why would he have a birthday party if he was dead? That meant he was not a Whitelighter and probably stole orbing powers from one. Which explained why he couldn't heal.

Wyatt had gotten up from his spot and sat down next to Chris pulling him close in a hug and Piper frowned. She would be talking seriously to Wyatt about the friendships he made.

“That's why we need this night out. I know they're getting to you and I don't like it.”

“Not your fault,” Chris mumbled.

“If I had my powers I could be the one there but I can't. I can't protect you from their blows but I can at least try to make you forget for a few hours. I've been saving. I know we don't have

much money," he snorted. "We have squat money and if we hadn't been living of Aunt Paige we'd be in the streets but I got enough that we can go out and have some fun."

*"What did he mean he had no powers?"* Piper and Leo thought worriedly. Did Chris steal Wyatt's powers? Had he cast a spell on Wyatt making him be so compliant?

Chris nodded and orbs started forming when the young men heard a double shout of "Stay where you are!" They looked up abruptly and instantly were on their feet in a defensive manner as in front of them, without any signs of orb-ing, the Charmed Ones and Leo materialized.

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## **Chapter 2- Busted**

"What?" Wyatt asked bewildered. "Where did you come from?"

"I noticed some bills were higher in my bank statements and we came to investigate. Leo was cloaking us," Paige said quickly before Piper or Leo could start attacking Chris. From the way they were looking at Chris she was sure they were going to, but she on the other hand had the strong feeling that was the last thing they needed to do and that they might owe him a huge apology.

"That's personal gain," Chris pointed out.

"We came and talked to Mr. Smith first," Phoebe explained. "And we noticed magic had to be involved so we kind of found a loophole. Can you please explain what Wyatt is doing here, why you didn't tell us you knew him and he was here, what do you mean by the world going to hell and why he didn't show himself up?"

"And what exactly are you?" Leo hissed at Chris "You're obviously not a Whitelighter. What did you do to the one you stole the power of orb-ing from?"

Chris bristled at the accusation and was about to retort but Wyatt beat him to it not liking at all his father's tone. "He didn't steal that power! He was born with that power! His half and half, like me and Aunt Paige," he said leaving out the part that Chris was actually half-Elder, but he knew his brother was very firm on they not finding out who he was. He said that could mess

with the future. Wyatt wanted very much to tell them, and hopefully have them groveling for forgiveness. Wyatt didn't know most of what his mother did to Chris, he just knew something was wrong but Chris never had any problem ranting about Leo. But from the way his brother came back home most of the times and the way both Piper and Leo were glaring daggers at him he knew they had both been hurting him. Not just Leo. And Wyatt couldn't stand that. But he couldn't very well yell at them for that now could he? Since he couldn't he at least could complain about them screwing up their plan:

"Anyway, why the hell were you looking at your bank statements? You never do! That was what we were counting on! That and the fact that you only went back to that apartment in two years when you decided to sell it to get money to buy the other apartment with Uncl- HEY!" Wyatt cried as Chris slapped his head.

"And that is why I'm the one there," Chris rolled his eyes at his big mouthed brother.

"Hum, Uncle what now?" Paige asked interested.

"No one," Wyatt mumbled rubbing his scalp.

"Okay," Phoebe said slowly. "So, now that we know that, why don't we all sit down, calmly," she added firmly at Piper who had raised her hand to blow up Chris when he playfully slapped Wyatt and had only been stopped by Phoebe's hand. When everyone was sitting down she asked carefully again. "Why didn't you tell us that you knew Wyatt, that you were both here and what exactly do you mean by the world going to hell?"

Wyatt felt a little as if he was five again and having to explain exactly how the couch got burned, again.

"Exactly that, demons took over. There's some new source of power that took completely over overnight after killing you," Wyatt said and at his brother's glare he shrugged. "The important

part they weren't supposed to know they already found out. Maybe this way they'll start helping, for a change," he finished with his own glare at his mother.

Chris nodded at his brother. Maybe this wouldn't be so bad. And if they managed to keep Chris's identity a secret they'd still be on the clear. After all, Wyatt had already been born. They knew about him. The son that hadn't been even conceived yet in the other hand... "We didn't tell you because there are rules, you always said: When traveling in time do not reveal the future. We had to let you know as little as possible and at the same time we had to work. You wouldn't take me serious if you knew you knew me growing up." There, Chris thought happily. That wasn't a lie, they knew him growing up after all, if they assumed that was because he was Wyatt's friend he wasn't to blame.

Wyatt continued for him as he saw that their parents were looking at Chris with suspicion, "We didn't know how far in time we'd end up. We thought we'd travel at most a few months and then, well you'd recognize us and since you're the ones who taught us the rule you wouldn't press, but when we found ourselves in this time there was a lot of quick thinking that we had to do. You didn't notice because Chris was fast, but we both came through the portal and into the attic."

"I saw Paige's statue and knew what time we were instantly, believe me the Titans was one story we knew by heart," Chris said, "So I used my orbs to cover Wyatt and send him away while I figured out what to do."

"You mean you helping us with the Titans wasn't your plan all along?" Paige asked.

"No," Chris winced. "We kind of made it up as we went. I lied to you about Paige. I figured you'd let me help and then all I did was walk you through the story I knew, of how Leo became an Elder."

“You mean you didn’t make Leo an Elder on purpose?” Piper scoffed as if she didn’t believe him.

“Even if he had manipulated the situation, which he didn’t. He didn’t change anything,” Wyatt said firmly. “Dad is the one who accepted the job. No one was pointing a gun to his head.”

“What about Valhalla?” Leo asked not willing to let Chris off the hook. Leo might have made the choice, and deep down he knew Chris was not to blame, but Chris was too much of a convenient target for his anger to let go. If he let go he might have to start looking at his own actions and Leo really didn’t want to do that.

“Once Chris started telling you what to do, I realized that that was a great opportunity for Chris to take dad’s place as your Whitelighter but dad had to stick around,” Wyatt explained wanting to let his father know that the idea had been his and not Chris’s. Chris had been reluctant, he always had a difficult relationship with his father and he didn’t want to do something else to make the Elder hate him. But Wyatt had insisted. “Back in the future, the very few good or neutral magical beings that managed to survive helped us, and told us that we could count with them wherever time we ended up in. The Valkeries were one of them. So while Chris was helping you I used a token they gave us to contact them and ask them to keep dad for a while. I figured that would make him suspicious enough to want to stick around and really, learning how to fight would do him good. The Elders were slaughtered in our time.”

“Wait a minute! how could you two be in contact while all that was happening?” Phoebe asked.

“Chris orbed me out of your sight,” Wyatt said. “Not out of the house.”

“You said you don’t have your powers,” Phoebe asked Wyatt. “What if the Valkeries had attacked you?”

“They wouldn’t,” Wyatt said shrugging. “They’re neutral and don’t kill. They take dead warriors. But anyway my active powers have been bound. I know I still have them I can feel them locked up, but I can still cast spells and wield Excalibur. I didn’t go completely unarmed.”

“Once we had that all secured we had to think what we’d do,” Chris explained to Paige, in an apologetic tone. “I mean. We had no money, we only had a couple of changes of clothes that we had managed to save and we needed somewhere to stay. I remembered that you had an apartment at this time. You see, the fact that you never told your sisters about keeping the apartment was a little sore point with them. So even though we were both little when you did tell them and sold the apartment that story is another that survived for a long time. So I er-ruffled through your stuff to find the address and we orbed here. At first we thought of just staying here without letting anyone know but right the next day Mrs. Smith walked in to clean and found Wyatt, luckily I was in the room, so I glamourised myself into you, and walked into the room pretending I was showing Wyatt the place and introduced him as Matt Wyatt. We didn’t know if you had ever said anything about your family to them but we figured that it was best to keep the true names out of that. Then I introduced him to Mr. Smith and well, you know the rest. I was here being your Whitelighter and Wyatt got some handyman job that didn’t require any documentation.”

“I told my boss and Mr. Smith that we were escaping our abusive father that worked for the IRS and that if he found us he could take Chris away because he was underage. Since Mr. Smith knows you were a social worker he figured you were helping us and hadn’t filed any paperwork either.”

“Abusive father?” Leo asked frowning.

Wyatt shrugged, “I had to tell them something, and we needed the money for groceries. I mean, mom would eventually notice the food disappearing And even though Chris has been intercepting Mrs. Smith checks, Aunt Paige is very cheap!” That got him a glare from Paige.

“Yeah, and Piper was already on my case about the amount of clothes I bring to wash,” Chris said. “But sorry, Paige doesn’t have a washing machine and we didn’t have money for the Laundromat. I mean, really, our clothes are all second hand and even so it took a while before we could buy a few spare ones. We were making do with the ones we managed to take when we ran from the manor.”

“Ran from the manor,” Piper asked. “What exactly happened?”

Chris sighed, “We still don’t know. Everything was going normal and suddenly one day there was a huge attack on our families’ homes, the Elders and Whitelighters, Magic School and a bunch of other good witches around the world. Wyatt and I were away when you called us for backup,” he told Piper, “We got there just in time...,” he seemed to be having trouble continuing, “Just in time to see them kill you. We started fighting but one of them said a word, wasn’t a spell, a potion, no was just a word and suddenly Wyatt’s powers were gone.”

“We almost didn’t make it out, Chris saved us. He managed to keep them at bay long enough for us to get the book and your b-“ he swallowed hard, “body and orbed us out. We figured the manor was a goner and we had to take the book. We orbed to the other houses, Phoebe’s and Paige’s and a few other witches’ we knew but everyone was dead. But unlike the manor, which the demons took over, they just left. We took you all to our family’s mausoleum and buried you hastily and then we went back to the apartments and took what we could carry. Potions, the Uncle’s clothes to wear, food. We managed to track a few other magical survivors but there weren’t many. The demons had taken over. They had made the mortals slaves and play toys. They took over the entire world overnight. We still don’t know how.”

“That’s when we figured we had to stop that from happening, so we looked in the book for a spell that would take us in time and space where we could find what we were looking for. We had to break into the manor because we needed to go through the attic. We did and then we

were here.” Chris explained. “We figured that that means that whoever was behind this is already getting ready.”

“I imagine, that’s- that’s a lot of organizing,” Leo said frowning. He still didn’t trust Chris wasn’t behind all of this but he trusted that Wyatt did want to stop that hell from happening

“You have no idea who is behind all this?” Paige asked.

Chris shook his head, “No, everyone knew there was a new source in power but no one knew who. He didn’t show himself to any of his minions. I think only the higher up demons knew him personally. Or at least they claimed to.”

“So, for all we know the new source could be one of them?” Piper asked having reached the same conclusion as Leo.

“We didn’t want to rule that possibility out,” Wyatt said. “But the fact stands that when they attacked they were organized as never before. All kinds of demons working together under one ruler.”

“Since we asked the spell to take us back far enough to fix this we figured that whoever this is now is still in the baby steps of their plans,” Chris continued. “I’ve been trying to find out if there is someone talking about organizing them and I found there is. But again, no one knows who. My contacts said that there are a handful of demons trying to convince the others that if they worked together they could be stronger. But they say they are encountering a lot of resistance because no demon wants to be ruled, they want to rule.”

“So, all we have to do is find them, stop them and there, we saved the world,” Phoebe said in a chirpy voice.

“Yeah, all!” Paige added sarcastically.

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For the first time since Chris had been in the past the Charmed Ones were actually helping him research. He had put both books together and was comparing them. Chris had been doing so for a while but he had to do everything mostly by what he remembered. Putting one book next to the other made it easier to compare entries.

“What exactly are you looking for?” Paige asked. Chris was bending over the dining room table studying both books. But he wouldn’t let Phoebe or Paige take a peek on the future version. Future consequences he said.

“I’m trying to figure out which demons you came in contact with between now and the time we left. You know, wouldn’t kill you people to put dates in your entries!”

Phoebe shrugged, she never even thought of that. She just went on taking notes the same way the book had been written so far. Putting new demons and adding information to the ones that were already there. And that is when she understood.

“You’re seeing which ones have new information on them, because even though they are already on the book that means we met them again.”

“Yes,” Chris said. “If you bothered to put dates here I wouldn’t have to be checking one against the other.” He huffed. “Whoever this is might have come in contact with you in the meantime. Since they keep themselves incognito there is no way to know if you met them before. And we figured this demon wouldn’t want someone else ruling the Underworld and there were quite a few attempts at becoming the new source in the next eighteen years.”

“So they might have offered their help to us in vanquishing the threat,” Paige nodded.

“Wouldn’t be the first time we made a truce for a common goal.”

“Exactly,” Chris nodded and he went back to comparing the books and taking copious notes.

For the first time Phoebe noted how tired Chris looked. Mr. Smith had been right, the kid had

to slow down. She felt guilty. She never had even bothered worrying what he did for food or shelter. Or if he was running himself down with this mission. Wyatt had wanted for him to take a break, to go celebrate his birthday. Instead they crashed his birthday and had him working, again, instead of celebrating.

And speaking of Wyatt, there he was coming from the kitchen with a frown on his face.

“We can continue this tomorrow,” he said. “You and I have a commitment tonight Chris.”

“But Wyatt-“ Chris started but Phoebe broke him off.

“He’s right. You two go and have fun. A break won’t kill you and you desperately need it.”

“You can leave the book here and we’ll continue for you,” Paige said innocently.

“Nice try Aunt Paige,” Wyatt snorted taking their book from Chris and looking back innocently at his glaring brother.

“Fine!” Chris huffed. “Since you’re all against me. I’ll go.” He finished getting up and joining his brother. He touched him and was about to orb out when Piper and Leo entered the dining room and Piper said hurriedly.

“Come back here afterwards Wyatt. I made a room for you.”

Wyatt had a horrible feeling about this but he had to ask, to make sure, “A room for us?”

Piper had the grace to look at least a little embarrassed, not much mind you.

“I’m sure Chris will rather continue with his previous accommodations,” she said politely but Wyatt could hear the snide for what it was, and most important, he could feel his brother’s trembling even if they couldn’t see how she was hurting him. Chris said nothing but Wyatt just said simply, “I rather continue with my previous accommodation too,” and turned to Chris, “Let’s go.”

Chris didn't need to be told twice, he orbed them both out.

"Was that necessary," Paige glared at her sister.

"Yes," Piper said firmly. "I want Wyatt here where he'll be safe. From everyone."

"From Chris you mean," Phoebe asked.

"For all we know," Leo said firmly "Chris is the one behind this and Wyatt is just too good to see him for what he is."

"Wyatt said Chris saved his life. Or didn't you hear that tid bit?" Paige asked annoyed.

"And that is the only reason I haven't blown him up for lying to us yet. That is," she narrowed her eyes. "If that wasn't part of his plan all along."

--

Chris and Wyatt reappeared at Paige's apartment.

"Chris," Wyatt began.

"I'm going to change."

"Chris."

"No Wy, just don't," Chris said tightly shaking his head and waving his brothers' hand away and went to their shared room.

--

### **Chapter 3- At the end of his rope**

Wyatt Mathew Halliwell was not a happy camper. It had been two weeks since they were busted by their family, it was at most two days before their parents were due to conceive Chris and if that wasn't enough to worry about his parents had been nothing but doting on him and nothing but cruel with Chris. They didn't miss one chance to make snide remarks, call Chris evil, shed doubts on his motives. They didn't miss one chance to make him feel unwelcome from small looks to big things like asking Wyatt to stay for a meal and either not inviting Chris at all or stating that he wasn't invited.

As a result Wyatt was getting furious with the people he loved and Chris was getting depressed, broken. He would go demon hunting non-stop, he slept even less than he was sleeping before, which had already been dangerously little, and eating, well, Wyatt forgot the last time Chris actually stopped to eat instead of just grabbing a cracker or some other non nutritive nonsense on his way out.

His birthday had been a total bust. Chris had not been in the mood to celebrate but had done his best to humor Wyatt. Chris's mood had lifted a little when the next day he had been presented with a new coat, because the underworld can get drafty, by his Aunts and a real cake that Phoebe had bought on her way to work. Unfortunately their aunt's good intentions had been shot down as soon as Piper had come home with baby Wyatt and made Chris feel unwelcome.

Wyatt smiled at the thought of his aunts, unlike his parents they seemed to have finally accepted that Chris was not evil and was fighting to save everyone, them included. Why his parents couldn't see the same he didn't know. Phoebe said that it wasn't Chris's fault. That they were using him as a target for their marital problems and they hadn't even stopped to actually get to know Chris. Well, Wyatt huffed, as if Chris was responsible for Leo not being able to prioritize his family. His mother never had taken her issues with Leo out on her sons. As

a matter of fact she had been a champion when defending Chris from Leo's neglect. Wyatt remembered what Phoebe said.

*"He's not family so she feels that taking her frustrations out on him is okay."*

*"But he was family,"* Wyatt thought sighing. His most inner thoughts were interrupted by the objects of his anger. Leo and Piper had just come in to the living room looking as if they had bad news.

"Wyatt, honey, can we talk?" Piper asked softly.

Wyatt was very tempted to say no but one look at his Aunts, who had been doing research with some books his father brought from Magic School, after telling them about Magic School and getting yelled for not disclosing that information earlier, made him back down. They had been asking him to be more lenient with his parents. Saying his obvious anger at them wasn't helping Chris any. So he nodded and let them sit on the coffee table in front of the couch he was seated on.

"We've been thinking honey, and we think that you and Chris shouldn't be so close," Piper said gently.

"Excuse me?" he asked slowly. His temper already starting to rise.

"I think that he isn't good company for you Wyatt and that it would be best if you two went your separate ways," Piper said and when they heard a gasp they all turned.

Chris was there and the deep hurt look he had was unbearable for Wyatt. His parents on the other hand were not moved as they got up and looked at Chris. Leo asking annoyed.

"Do you want something Chris?"

"I was going to ask your help with a lead I got but now I think I better stop imposing my presence. I'll do what you want just now," he finished tightly orbiting out.

"What the hell is the matter with you people?" Wyatt roared getting up.

"Exactly that!" Piper snapped back. "Look what he does to you! You're always angry--"

"Chris isn't the one making me angry. You are mom," Wyatt said looking straight into her eyes.

"No, scratch that, you are disappointing me. Very much," he finished, his voice just as tight as Chris had been and he stormed out banging the door close and almost running down the street, hoping he would find his brother back at the apartment.

Back at the manor Leo and Piper were not getting a better reaction from Phoebe and Paige.

"I can't believe you two," Phoebe hissed.

"We are trying to protect our son," Piper defended herself firmly.

"And hurting Chris achieves that how?" Paige asked angrily.

"He is a bad influence on Wyatt," Leo affirmed.

"How would you two know?" Paige countered. "You never bothered getting to know him."

And with a last huff she imitated her nephew followed by her sister.

They looked around and at no sign of Wyatt Phoebe asked, "What now?"

"They must have gone back to the apartment," Paige said.

"Should we follow?"

Paige sighed and looked at her, "I don't know. Wyatt can't orb so he'll take a while to get there. I think he should talk to Chris first."

“Yes,” Phoebe nodded. “Let’s get the car then. At least this way we will calm down before facing them.”

--

Wyatt found Chris in their shared room sitting on the mattress on the floor. His arms encircling his knees, his back to the wall and his face hidden in his arms. He quietly sat down next to Chris. They sat there for a while and Chris was so out of it and Wyatt so focused on his brother that neither heard the lock click, the door open and the soft click click of high heels.

“Chris,” he finally said.

“They hate me,” Chris’s voice was muffled. “They always did. They just pretended before because they had to. Or at least mum did. Leo never did.”

“She doesn’t Chris. They don’t. Mum always loved you. You were her peanut, her baby, Chris. You know that.”

“Yeah, she loved me. Because she had to. She’s my mother. But she doesn’t like me. If I wasn’t her son she’d hate me. That’s why they hate me. They don’t know I’m their son so they’re actually being honest. They can’t stand me,” Chris said tightly, furiously wiping away tears. He laughed bitterly, “She accuses me of being a liar but she was the ultimate liar. I believed her, I believed she loved me.”

“Chris, she does. They don’t hate you.”

“They do Wy, they do. But they won’t have to stand me anymore. I’ll stay away here and when we go back I’ll move away. Far away,” Chris nodded reaching a decision. “Too bad mom will have to stand me all those years,” he said bitterly. “Maybe she won’t need to. You can tell her to give me away to someone who can stand me. Grandpa seems to like me even here,” he

finished softly remembering Victor's surprise visit last week. To Piper's annoyance Victor had not only loved meeting Wyatt but had very much liked Chris.

"That's not true Chris," a soft voice came from the door and both boys turned to see Phoebe and Paige standing there tears running down their cheeks. "They don't know you," Phoebe continued. "If they knew who you are they would feel so guilty--"

"I don't want them to know!" Chris cried getting up abruptly. "I don't want their obligation love. Their fake love. Besides, maybe I'll get lucky and they won't even conceive me this time, after all I was an accident. Leo always said so."

Wyatt got up angrily and snapped, "Don't you ever say something stupid like that again!"

"Maybe it's better Wy," Chris whispered sadly and orbed away.

"I hate when he does that!" Wyatt growled. He looked at his aunts and sighed. "What are you two doing here?"

"We wanted make sure Chris was alright," Paige said.

"Yeah, but once again you found out something you shouldn't," he huffed.

"To be perfectly honest," Phoebe traded looks with Paige. "We already suspected."

"Uh?" Wyatt asked bewildered.

"You two weren't that discreet when you told us your story," Paige sighed. "And once we stopped suspecting Chris was evil and actually got to know him we noticed little stuff. Like his looks, Piper, his eyes, Leo, his temper, Piper."

"His mouth, Paige," Phoebe said and received a glare from her sister and a chuckle from Wyatt.

"Serves mom right for letting her children near Paige. Why didn't you say something?"

“We figured you two had your reasons for not saying anything,” Paige said simply. “And we weren’t a hundred percent sure, just 99.99,” she smirked.

“Who else knows?”

“No one,” Phoebe said, “We didn’t share our suspicions with anyone else. Not even your parents. We figured that either you told them or they should figure out by themselves. I love my sister but I’m not very happy with her right now.”

Wyatt nodded and sighed, “What now? I don’t know what to do. I can’t follow him. I bet his cloaking himself. And I don’t want him to be alone.”

“There’s nothing we can do there,” Phoebe said. “And maybe he needs some time to himself. We’ll be here waiting for him.”

--

“Do you think they’re right?” Piper asked worriedly.

“No,” Leo said sitting next to her on the couch. “We are protecting Wyatt and Chris is trying to pull him away from our family. Look at how distant Wyatt always is from us. Always angry.”

Piper smiled at Leo as he took her hand trying to comfort her, “We’ll bring our son back to us Piper. Don’t worry.”

“He hates us.”

“No he doesn’t. That’s Chris’s doing. But we’ll save him.”

She nodded. A little voice in her mind said that that was their doing, not Chris’s. That Wyatt was right to be angry and that Chris was not to blame for everything that went wrong in her family but she squashed that voice. Because that voice was the same one that said she should

be angry at Leo for becoming an Elder not at Chris. And she didn't want to be angry at Leo. She loved Leo. She missed Leo. How could she be angry at Leo? Leo was family. Chris wasn't. It was as simple as that.

She scooted a little closer to him. She missed that warmth and unconsciously he draped an arm over her shoulder. They really couldn't explain how their lips locked together or what happened next.

--

"In the next two days? Are you sure?" Phoebe asked.

"I can't pin point exactly when but the next forty-eight hours is the limit. Either mum and dad conceive him or we lose him."

"Why didn't you say anything sooner?" Paige huffed.

"Well, they had been separated the first time around, so I wasn't worried. But now I'm getting. I can't see those two having sex any time soon."

"We'll think of something," Paige said.

"I can't think on an empty stomach," Wyatt declared getting up.

--

Chris had been feeling lighter and lighter as the day went by. He had meant to tell his brother. That was partly why he went to the manor, that and the lead he found. When he orbed back to the apartment he had written the lead down on a letter to Wyatt that he stuffed in the fridge, his brother's favorite place, he was sure to find it. If Chris disappeared he would read the letter and know how to continue.

He had been thinking for a while that maybe his parents would be better off if he was never born. And today when he heard his mother he knew they would. He was here, just waiting to disappear. His hand had already become see through when suddenly he started feeling better and his hand solidified. He groaned.

Great! His horny parents couldn't do anything right!

He better get back to the apartment before Wyatt found the letter. He orbed back just to find out it was too late as he was faced with a livid Wyatt and two teary aunts, one of which was clutching the letter.

"What the hell were you thinking?" Wyatt hissed.

"Doesn't matter anymore. They did it," Chris said quietly looking at the floor.

Wyatt wasn't dissuaded though. He abruptly moved towards Chris. Grabbed him by the arms and cried shaking him.

"What were you thinking?"

"That everyone would be happier!" Chris cried, his eyes watering. "That mom wouldn't have to pretend!"

"I wouldn't" Wyatt said angrily.

"You wouldn't remember me," Chris whispered.

"I'd never forget you," Wyatt said through tears. "A piece of me would be always missing."

Chris shook his head, "I just wanted to stop hurting."

Wyatt pulled him into a hug and whispered into Chris's hair. "Then let us help. Don't ever let this get this far. Please Chris. I can't live without you."

Chris nodded into Wyatt's chest and let himself be comforted by his brothers and Aunts who had joined the hug.

--

The door opened and Piper's head went up. Leo had been called Up There after they had sex. She still couldn't believe it. What were they thinking? They were separated for crying out loud! She was seeing Greg!

She quickly moved towards the parlor hoping Wyatt had changed his mind and come home. Her hopes deflated as she saw Paige come in.

"Oh," she said. "It's you."

"Yeah," Paige said not looking at Piper. She couldn't. Not after seeing how much her sister had hurt her own son. That letter had been heart wrenching. "Phoebe went to work. She had an idea for a column," more like she needed to unload what she was feeling somewhere and if she came home she would have given Piper a piece of her mind. Which Paige wasn't too far from doing either. But she had promised her nephew, and she knew that if she told Piper all would be lost. Chris would never believe Piper's love was genuine if she found out before she made amends.

Paige knew it would be. She knew her sister. She knew Piper had never seen Chris but always a punching bag for her frustrations, once she stopped and saw him she would love him. And maybe her knowing who he was and how much he was hurting would help her see him. But Chris wouldn't understand that, and right now, this was about Chris. About Chris who had seen his beloved mother get killed just to start being abused by that same mother less than a month later.

Wyatt had been right. Chris hadn't had time to mourn their family before being thrust here.

Wyatt had been away from them, so even if he had heard news about them he had not had to deal with them and had had time to process everything that had happened to them almost a year ago. He had moved on. Chris hadn't, he hadn't been allowed to.

*"I failed to protect him. I'm his big brother and for the last year he's been protecting me. He protected me at the attack; he put up his shield up. I don't know why, but Chris's shield is different from mine. He can project the shield and protect whoever he wants, but he can never be inside the shield. He shielded mom's body and me and managed to get the book before he orbed us all out. I could have fought. I had Excalibur. But he just shielded me. And when we were finally safe I couldn't even heal his injuries, and they were extensive. But they didn't stop him. Not until we found shelter with the Valkeries. That's why we took so long coming back. He had to heal. And then when we got here I couldn't protect him from our family or from the demons. And the most I can do is wait with the first aid kit for him to come home."*

Wyatt had been truly disappointed when he confessed that to them after Chris had fallen asleep on the couch with his head on Phoebe's lap. Spent from the emotional day and from feeling light all day long.

"I'm going to bed," Paige said.

"This early?"

"Piper," Paige sighed. "That's code for I don't want to fight with you so I'll just avoid you.

Please let me."

Piper nodded sadly as Paige just went towards the bedrooms.

--

Victor Bennet opened the door to his apartment to meet his youngest child's hesitant smile.

He was worried. It was late. Almost midnight, why was Phoebe showing up by surprise so late?

"Hi daddy," Phoebe said. "Can I come in?"

"Sure honey," he said receiving a hug. "Is everything okay?" he said motioning her to a couch.

Phoebe grimaced, "No. That's why I'm here. I went to work, and wrote a column, and got my thoughts in order and that's when it occurred to me that he needs someone he can talk too.

And Wyatt told me you were so close in the future, that maybe I thought--"

"This is about Wyatt?" he asked curiously.

"No," she bit her lip. "Chris."

"Ah," Victor said leaning backwards. "My other grandson."

"How do you know?" Phoebe asked gobsmacked.

"Give me some credit Phoebe," Victor snorted. "He is Piper all over."

"He is, isn't he?" she asked fondly. "I don't see how she doesn't see it."

"So, what's the problem with Chris?" Victor asked and Phoebe took a deep breath and launched into the whole sad story.

--

A/N- Thank you all for your reviews

#### **Chapter 4- What have we done?**

A week had gone by and things didn't look up for the relationship between parents and sons. Chris had made himself scarce from the manor which didn't mean he wasn't working hard. No, the research just had moved from the manor to Victor's apartment. Victor had gone and exerted his authority with his grandsons, dragging both boys to his apartment where he could make sure the boys were taken care of and where Chris wasn't allowed to live on snacks. Wyatt had to admit, Grandpa had a lot more authority than big brother.

Wyatt was avoiding his parents like the plague and the only news Piper had from her son was when Phoebe or Paige came with a message about a demon they had to go and vanquish. She had been a little mollified by the fact that at least now Wyatt was living with Victor and not alone with Chris. But she had been angry to know Victor had invited Chris too. She had let Victor know and his answer had been simple.

*"Honey, you better start doing some soul-searching before you do something you'll regret forever, if it's not too late for that."*

Piper had narrowed her eyes and wondered what was Chris planning against her family now. He had managed to turn all of her family except from Leo against her.

Leo, Piper sighed. That had been awkward. They had barely spoken and the last time she saw him was when he healed her after a vanquish two days ago. Something had happened there because as he was healing her he got this really surprised look and then couldn't get away fast enough.

They didn't mention what happened between them but that had been enough for Piper to realize that she had been kidding herself and that there was no one else for her but Leo. The next day she had talked to Greg and ended whatever they might have been starting.

She huffed as she checked the pockets of Paige's trouser before putting it in the washing machine. She huffed even more when she found a few sheets of paper. Honestly, Paige would forget her head in her clothes if she could.

Piper put the papers on top of the washing machine and continued putting clothes in the machine. Once the machine was loaded she started it and grabbed the papers, intending to give them back to Paige, when she caught the Wy written on top of the first page. She couldn't help herself, she started reading.

--

Leo sighed as he orbed into the manor. He couldn't avoid this anymore. If she found out by herself and then figured that Leo knew she'd be furious. He had stayed away because he didn't know how to feel about this new development. After all, they were separated and Piper was even seeing that fireman. He so hated that fireman.

Leo closed his eyes and sensed for her. She was in the pantry. He walked slowly there and when he found her he was shocked. She was sitting by the washing machine, crying.

"Piper," he knelt in front of her. She raised her eyes and they were dark orbs of pain.

"I'm pregnant," she whispered brokenly.

"I know," he bit his lip. "I felt the baby when I healed you." He sat down in front of her crossing his legs. "I know we are separated and we didn't plan this but we can make this work."

Piper shook her head, "No, he'll hate us."

"Piper, no he won't," he tried to soothe her, "I know things are difficult with Wyatt now, but that doesn't mean we're bad parents."

"We're horrible parents," Piper sobbed.

"No, we're not. Where is this coming from?" he asked her.

"Chris," she whispered.

Leo's blood boiled. What had Chris done now? "Look Piper, Chris will go nowhere near this baby--"

"Chris is this baby," she cried desperately putting the letter in Leo's hand. "I found this in Paige's pocket."

Leo started reading and his heart broke piece by piece as he realized how wrong they had been, how horrible they had been. "What have we done?" he asked horrified.

--

Paige orbbed into her room instantly seeing the book she was looking for. She was about to orb out when her eyes landed on her bed. Her bare bed, she worriedly looked around and her eyes rounded up. Oh, no! Piper had gone on one of her cleaning frenzies where she gets every piece of cloth out of place into the washing machine. She dropped the book and barreled downstairs just to come face to face with the crying and shocked parents.

"Letter," she called and in a flurry of blue orbs the letter left Leo's slack grip and went into her hand. "You had no right to read this," she hissed angrily.

That brought Piper out of her shock, "And you had no right to keep this from me!" she snapped back angrily getting up and stalking to her sister.

"Did you read the letter? Did you understand it? Because if you did you'll see that we did this for you and Chris. Because if you did you'll understand that there is no way now to convince him that your love is genuine. Because you managed to destroy the belief in his mother's love

Piper. A love that was immense from what Wyatt says. There was no one more important to Chris than you. And there still isn't. Maybe Wyatt gets a real close second. But now he doesn't believe you ever loved him. And now tell me Piper, how will we convince him that you are not just sorry out of obligation? That you really care for him. Because remember, once they reenter the time line the baby in you will get all of Chris's memories."

"I didn't know he was mine," Piper whispered sadly.

"That's no excuse for how you've been treating him Piper," Paige said firmly. "Think very hard on what you'll say to him before you do, because you have no idea how badly you have hurt him. And I'm not letting you hurt him anymore."

Piper nodded feeling like the enemy.

--

Chris read the information carefully. So yes the details would be different but he remembered what his advisor had told him. The program had been instituted 20 years previously, meaning, two years ago.

He never got a chance to tell his family. He had heard his mother's frantic call as he had left his advisor's office. But Chris had been offered a full scholarship to Oxford University in England. He hadn't thought of accepting after all he never had applied. The thought of moving so far away from his family had never crossed his mind before. But Oxford chose students from all over the world who they thought were worthy and they wanted in their ranks. One from each country and Chris had been chosen from all of the students in the US. That was a huge honor and a huge statement on his academic success.

He had thought he would have refused, choosing a University in the US where he could just pretend to live off campus and orb home. But lately he had been thinking seriously of

accepting. He hadn't known how to approach the subject with Wyatt though so he waited for both Victor and Wyatt to leave to use his Grandfather's computer and look up Oxford University.

The doorbell rang and he quickly closed all the windows in case Wyatt had come back home and forgotten the keys, again.

He got up and opened the door ready to tease his brother when his smile faded completely at the sight of Piper and Leo.

"Oh," he said flatly. "Victor and Wyatt aren't home," he finished swinging the door shut and going back to the computer. The doorbell rang again and he just ignored it opening back the web browser and going back to the page he was in.

He heard the jingle of orbs and sighed.

"I said," he gritted his teeth. "That Wyatt and Victor--"

"We want to talk to you," Piper said and he turned around slowly to face them.

"I have a mission to complete before I can go my separate way from your son Piper," he said flatly. His face a stony mask. "But don't worry, I'm seeing to it that you'll never have the displeasure of having to stand my presence again once we go back home." He then turned around to face the computer and ignore his parents.

"Chris, please, we want to talk to you," Leo pleaded in a soft voice that had Chris frowning. He slowly rose from his chair and faced his parents crossing his arms suspiciously. What were they up to? Did they have some spell that was going to send him away? Or was Piper just going to blow him up but couldn't do it to his back?

"What do you want?" he asked glaring at them.

Piper's heart was breaking. She knew she more than deserved this hostility but this was her baby and he hated her. He hated her because she made him hate her.

The problem was that Piper didn't understand that Chris didn't hate her. He still loved her immensely but he didn't believe her anymore. He didn't believe that the love she had for him was true and not out of some convention that made her force herself to love her son. He believed that she couldn't stand him but that his mother had pretended to love him for convention's sake, whereas Piper, who wasn't held by conventions, showed what she truly thought of Chris. And that only hurt because he loved her.

Piper on the other hand had finally realized that what her sisters were saying was true. Neither she nor Leo even knew Chris. They saw an enemy from the first second and never gave him a chance to show himself seeing only what they wanted to see.

Piper had wanted to beat herself up once she remembered the talk she had witnessed between her sons. He had said she was her son: *"Mom would throw me a party"* and then *"Piper would rather blow me up than throw me a party"*. How many hints had she missed because she didn't want to let go of her convenient punching bag?

"Snape kills Dumbledore at the end of book six. Snape is the one who told Voldemort the prophecy -"

"What?" Piper asked shocked.

"Oh, so you are there? I thought you two were just going to stare at me all day long," Chris sneered. "I've got things to do if you don't mind."

"Like research Oxford University?" Leo asked looking at the computer screen. "Do you think the demons might be British?" he asked with no amusement. When he landed his eyes on the

screen his heart stopped at the implication of what his son looking at a University across the world could mean.

“That’s none of your business,” Chris hissed angrily.

Leo didn’t back down though, “My son moving to another country is very much my business.”

“Wyatt isn’t coming with me if that’s what you are worried about.”

“We’re not talking about Wyatt,” Piper said sadly.

Chris stared at her for a whole minute before he hissed angrily “Who told you? They promised-  
“

“No one did, we found your letter,” Piper said sadly. “Chris- we didn’t know-“

“Save it Piper! I don’t want to hear your lies,” Chris said tightly. His voice hoarse and his jaw trembling slightly. It was taking all his willpower not to orb away and not have to hear his mother saying that now that she knew who he was she loved him. She believed him, because now he didn’t believe her.

The irony wasn’t lost on Piper. He called her a liar. She deserved that didn’t she, after all the times she called him a liar. This wasn’t going well.

--

“What? And you just let them go?”

“I wasn’t given a choice,” came the irritated voice on the phone.

“Great,” he huffed. “Come get me. I need a lift home.”

“Wyatt maybe we should let them talk alone.”

“No way I’m leaving *them* alone with my baby brother. Come now!”

--

Piper inhaled deeply, "I'm not lying. We're here to apologize," she said slowly and Chris snorted. He didn't have time to answer though as orbs formed between him and his parents and Wyatt and Paige materialized, Paige crying defensively.

"He made me!"

"What are you two doing here?" Wyatt glared at his parents.

"Wyatt," Leo said slowly. "This does not concern you."

"The hell it doesn't!" Wyatt growled crossing his arms. "I'm not letting you hurt him more!"

"I'm not a toddler!" Chris protested to his over protective brother, even though Wyatt and Paige's stance was making him feel warm inside. But it wouldn't do to let Wyatt know or he'd never let Chris out of his sight again.

"We're not going to hurt him," Piper said sadly and with a bite in her voice that said she was offended..

Wyatt's only response was to raise a skeptic eyebrow.

"Wyatt, please, we want to talk to Chris," Leo said politely but firmly. "Allow us to."

"Well, I wanted you to treat him decently before but you didn't give me what I wanted did you? So why should I?" Wyatt asked firmly.

"I've got nothing to talk to you," Chris answered sidestepping his brother and facing his parents. "I know what you're going to say and I don't want to hear." He finished firmly and orbbed away.

"He hates us," Piper sobbed.

"No, he doesn't. If he did this would be a lot easier for him," Wyatt said.

"You want him to hate us?" Leo asked.

Wyatt looked at him sadly and shook his head, "No, I don't dad. But sometimes I think you'd deserve it. You really hurt him, and the excuse that you didn't know who he was isn't a good one. He might have used questionable methods to get you to help him but he never hurt you. And he saved little me many times didn't he? Just before you found me out hadn't he just saved me from the Order? You never gave him a chance. What if he wasn't your son? Does that make the way you treated him right?"

"No," Piper shook her head.

"Then start apologizing for that," Paige said. "Don't excuse your actions with your ignorance because that won't make him believe your being genuine. Piper, trust me. I've been in his shoes. I love you, but you're not an easy person to deal with, especially if you are an outsider entering the family. And you have a tendency to take out your frustration and anger on others, innocent others. Be honest, the only reason you didn't treat me exactly like you treated Chris was because you knew I was family. And even so you were not going light with me."

"Sorry," Piper said wincing. She had often regretted how her relationship with Paige started.

"I'm not blaming you Piper. I've forgiven that a long time ago. But Chris might have a harder time forgiving that because, unlike me back then, he was used to being treated like family by you. And that is why he might have taken every blow harder than I did," she finished walking towards Piper and hugging her desolated sister. Yes, she had been furious at Piper but she didn't want to see her suffer. Unfortunately Piper and Leo had made it impossible for them and Chris not to suffer and all the rest of the family could do now was be there for all of them.

--

Chris looked at the city, his feet dangling over the highest beam of the Golden Gate Bridge. Anyone looking would think him crazy for sitting so relaxed at that height but the truth was he was anything but relaxed. His mind was racing a mile a second. He didn't know what to do. All of this time here all he wanted to hear was for Piper and Leo to apologize and trust him, but not this way. He knew this would happen if they found out his identity. They'd feel obligated to like him and he didn't want that. He wanted them to really like him.

He sighed and let his back fall on the beam and looked at the sky. What now? What should he do?

--

A/N- Thank you all for your reviews!

The program at Oxford is my creation and therefore fictional. I wanted for Chris to have an opportunity to get very far away from them if he wanted to.

A/N- So, many reviewers had doubts on this issue so I'll just explain quickly. The Oxford program was offered to Chris in the future (before the world went to hell). Chris and Wyatt came back to the past with the intention of fixing the future and then going back and continuing their lives as it was. If their life is going to be the same is still a mystery but as any person, especially such a young one as they are, they are assuming that they'll just go back and nothing from before the demons attack will have changed.

So Chris was speculating about accepting the scholarship once he goes back to his time, not in the past. Yes, as Chris said the details will be different, but who hasn't tried to check out something they wanted even though they knew the information wasn't precise? I know that I checked out the stupid map for my College about a hundred times before I went. And really, back then (12 years ago. I'm so old!) the information was minimal.

So, in his completely depressed state, Chris is making plans about what to do once he gets home so he can get as far from Piper as possible. This is just one more characterization of how much Piper screwed up.

Thanks for all the reviews!

## **Chapter 5- Going on with the mission**

Wyatt was waiting up when Chris finally decided to show up around two in the morning. After the Bridge he had gone to the Underworld. He was very close to getting to one of those demons who had been recruiting. When he orbed home Wyatt was sitting on his bed on their grandfather's spare room and staring at Chris.

"I don't want to talk about Piper and Leo, Wy."

"Okay, then let's talk about Oxford," Wyatt said slowly picking up a sheet of printed paper and reading. "Apparently there is this program where they handpick students from all over the

world and invite them to study at Oxford," he turned the print towards Chris, "You left the page open on Grandpa's computer. Now why would you be looking into this program?"

Chris sat down slowly next to Wyatt, "Remember the day everything went to hell?" Wyatt nodded. "When mom called I was coming out of Mr. Thomas's office. He had just told me they chose me."

"Wow, that's- wow," Wyatt said impressed. He always knew his brother was a nerdy braniak but wow. "Congratulations!" he thumped Chris's arm. "Too bad you're going to have to tell them you were already accepted by Harvard," Wyatt smiled but his smile faded at Chris's uncomfortable expression. "Chris, remember. There was the plan, for you to be able to go to Harvard and orb back home. England is too much of a time difference for the plan to work."

"I was thinking that maybe moving away would be a better choice," Chris said not looking at Wyatt and fiddling with the hem of his shirt.

"For who?" Wyatt asked narrowing his eyes.

"Everyone," Chris answered not lifting his eyes.

Wyatt took a slow breath to calm down, realizing that right now blowing up wouldn't do either of them any good.

"Look, I know mom and dad have been hard on you this last few weeks but--"

"It's not just these two weeks you saw Wy," Chris said lifting his eyes and meeting Wyatt's.

"I've been thinking this for while now, way before they busted us. I- I can't Wy. I just can't go back to the future and pretend we're a happy family again. Pretend I don't know."

"Chris, you don't know! They're not like that! It's like the aunts have been saying! They never saw you Chris. They decided you were evil and to blame for everything from the first second and never gave you a chance. Never got to know you."

“What if you’re wrong? What if they just didn’t like what they found?” Chris asked in a whisper.

“You’ll never know if you don’t give them a chance,” Wyatt said quietly squeezing Chris’s shoulder. Chris nodded swallowing hard.

--

Piper caressed the blond locks of the little baby in the crib and sighed sadly. How could have she been so stupid, so blind? She closed her eyes and she could picture Chris so well. His eye rolling, his mannerism, his way of talking. Everything that screamed Halliwell is so many ways and she had never seen. How many times had his face seemed to fall in pain at one of her harsh words just to immediately assume a neutral façade as if she had imagined the pain? Had she made him be like that? Had she treated him the same way in the future? Wyatt said no. That she had been a great mother. And so had Chris in his letter. And that was why Chris was so hurt by her attitude.

She opened her eyes and looked at baby Wyatt and couldn’t help but remember how Wyatt had emphasized her relationship with Chris, not mentioning Leo at all.

*“Dad would have sent a letter apologizing and promising he’d be there next year.”*

Was Leo the one who trained Chris in hiding his emotions? Was that why Chris was more hurt by her than Leo? Because he was used to Leo never being there for him?

She shook her head straightening up. She had to fix this. She had to get Chris to forgive her, because for the first time Piper realized that everyone was right and she had been horribly wrong. She looked down at her stomach and gently put her hand over it. She would fix this. She would make everything better for her baby boy, and he would stop hurting.

--

Leo observed the city from the exact same spot his son had a few hours ago, and in the exact same position. Chris hadn't known. He had been so lost in thoughts that he hadn't sensed Leo orbiting on the bridge and not wanting to scare his son away Leo cloaked himself and just observed him, sitting there lost in thoughts. Until, much later, Chris had orbed out and Leo had taken his spot.

Leo had really looked at Chris for the first time and he didn't like what he saw. He saw a broken boy. He saw a sad boy and then he saw that same boy hide all of his emotions, that he had let appear in the solitude of the bridge, behind a fierce mask before he orbed out.

Had he been fooled by that mask? He might not have seen how hurt Chris was because of the mask but no, he knew by observing Chris that the mask wasn't what had kept him from seeing who Chris was. He had been fooled by his own stubbornness and pig-head. He had been fooled by the fact that he never had wanted to know Chris, because blaming Chris with everything that was going wrong with his life was easier than acknowledging that he had been the one to accept to become an Elder without considering how that would affect his family.

But now he had to. He had to stop and think because now he was seeing everything, including the fact that Chris was hurt by Piper's actions but he almost expected Leo's. Which meant that in the future Leo was not a good father, and he did not want to become a father that breaks promises to his son's. A father from whom his son expects the worse.

He once again made a decision without consulting Piper, but this time he didn't think she would be angry at him. He orbed away.

--

Phoebe trotted down the stairs happily. So, yes, things weren't looking good but in her point of view they were looking up now that Leo and Piper knew the truth and they could start to heal the wounds they caused. It wouldn't be easy, but today things looked a lot better than

yesterday, in Phoebe's opinion. She opened the kitchen's door ready to make a fresh cup of coffee and who knows, pilfer some of those cookies Piper had baked yesterday, once she had gotten home. And everyone knows that a guilty Piper leads to loads and loads of baked goods. She stopped on her track as her eyes landed on Leo immersed in paperwork. A lot of paperwork.

He didn't seem to sense her, or hear her for that matter as she approached and peered at the papers he was putting in order.

"What are you doing?" she asked and he jumped up startled.

"Oh, hi Phoebe. Didn't hear you there," he smiled nervously and tried to unsuccessfully to cover up the papers he had been working with.

"What's all that?" she asked.

"Hum, nothing- er- just some stuff the Elders gave me as -hum- reward."

"Reward?"

"Yeah," he answered vaguely.

"For what?"

"Good service?" he answered with a nervous smile and it sounded more like a question than an answer.

Phoebe's response was to raise an eyebrow.

Leo sighed, "Look. I just need to tell Piper first. But this is good, okay. I promise."

"If you say so," Phoebe shrugged looking at him suspiciously. She was receiving some very nervous feelings from him, but she could detect a lot of hope too, and certainty. Whatever he was doing might be making him nervous but he was damn sure that he was right.

She didn't have to wait much though. As soon as she got the coffee pot Piper entered the kitchen carrying Wyatt and sitting him on his high chair. She looked at Leo and frowned.

"What's all that?"

Leo took a slow breath. Got up, took Piper's hand and led her to one of the chairs.

"Those are my documents. Birth certificate, diplomas etc. The Elders used their magic to kind of bring them up to nowadays. They're not fake or anything. If anyone goes looking in the system they will find a Leo Wyatt born in 72 and graduated in Med School. They even gave me refreshed knowledge from all the medical advances that have happened since I graduated, so I can just start practicing. And they gave me some background experience to show a future employer and all."

Piper was confused. Why would Leo need all that?

"Leo- what?"

"I quit the Elders," he said firmly. "I don't want to be a father who doesn't come to his son's birthdays. I thought a lot about this and becoming an Elder has only brought pain to our family. So I quit. I'm a mortal again. And I think I might go back to practicing medicine. I don't know yet, but most importantly I want to be here for our family. And I told them that. And they agreed and they also agreed that they owe you girls a lot and me too because of how I helped with the Titans so they helped me." He stopped talking and stared at Piper waiting for her reaction. Phoebe was frozen holding the coffee pot and just staring at both of them. She couldn't believe what she just heard.

"I- what?- you-" Piper stammered lost at word, "You quit the Elders?" Leo nodded. "You're not an Elder anymore?" Leo shook his head. "They can't jingle you anymore?" again he shook his head. "And you can't orb away?" his last shake of head was interrupted as Piper threw herself

on him. "Thank you," she whispered and then got on the tips of her toes and kissed him. Now Phoebe was hugging the coffee pot and working very hard not to coo at them, with tears in her eyes.

--

"You're kidding me?" Victor asked over breakfast.

"Nope," Wyatt shook his head. "Aunt Phoebe just called with the gossip. He quit the Elders last night. Now he's a common mortal, no powers. He thinks he might go back to being a doctor but doesn't know yet."

"Wow, that's- wow," was all Victor could say as Wyatt stole a glance at his baby brother who was doing a very poor job of pretending he wasn't interested in the news.

Chris cleared his throat and looking at his plate he frowned, "We should go tell the sisters what I found out."

"Of course, we should," Wyatt agreed happily. Especially since that fated day when his parents had practically ran him off the manor Chris had not once volunteered to go anywhere near the couple. Wyatt didn't miss his grandfather smirk either.

--

Chris orbbed himself and Wyatt to the empty living room of the manor. Or almost empty. Baby Wyatt was playing and babbling with some soft toys.

"Oh, look. You're drooling," Chris remarked happily pointing at the baby who was munching on a toy.

"Very funny!" Wyatt glared at Chris.

"Here you go Wyatt," Piper's voice came accompanied by the woman who was bringing another toy and had stopped dead on her track as she spotted her grown up sons.

"Hey," she said awkwardly. Chris nodded jerkily avoiding Piper's gaze and Wyatt answered.

"Hi- er- we have news- demon-wise."

"Oh," Piper said dazed. "I'll call the others."

Soon after, they were all sitting in the living room and all that Chris could say was that that had been the tensest meeting of his life as he told them everything he had found out and his parents stared at him as if they could X-ray him with their eyes.

"So they are low level demons?" Phoebe asked.

Chris nodded, "At least the ones doing the recruiting. They go around demon bars trying to spread their philosophy. That the only reason good is always winning is because they are fractioned and we're not."

"They do have a point," Paige nodded. "I mean, even though we don't work together with other witches we do all the work "under" the Elders orders and we have Magic School to help. We are more organized. And we're not always trying to kill each other."

"And that's exactly where they attacked. They attacked our points of organization, The Elders and Magic School and the most prominent forces of good. The ones who could have rallied any magical being left together," Chris added. "We are starting to think that the demons in power were low level demons. That they just used a figure of a source but there was none. And by always talking in this source's name they managed to get the upper level ones to listen to them."

"That would be quite ingenious actually," Leo nodded appreciatively.

“Yes, but that also means that getting rid of them only won’t work,” Wyatt said. “What if someone they talked to decides to take their project forward? We need to stamp down their idea.”

“We need to make them think it didn’t work,” Phoebe said lighting up.

“How? They all know your Whitelighter from the future came back because the future is grim,” Chris asked.

Paige raised an eyebrow, “What if you hadn’t? What if you just said that but you came back to stop only one death? What if the demons didn’t get what they wanted and all they managed to do was incur one of the Charmed ones progeny’s wrath?” and she finished looking at Piper.

“What now?” she asked dazed.

“She’s right,” Leo nodded. “Right now every demon thinks that breaking the Power of 3 is enough but in the future killing one of the Charmed Ones might not be, after all, there are your kids,” he nodded at Phoebe and Paige, “and Wyatt and Chris. All we have to do is make them think they failed spectacularly. That you first crushed them there and then came back to crush them before they could kill Piper.”

“And why come so far behind?” Wyatt asked.

“Because Chris didn’t want to be recognized by the family and stopped from breaking the rules,” Leo said simply. “So he told us something that would be enough to allow the rule breaking. Which only his mother’s death wouldn’t. And he had to come to before he was conceived, so we wouldn’t recognize or suspect who he was. They don’t need to know you’re here too Wyatt.”

“And how do you explain my investigation? If I already knew who they were?” Chris asked.

“You knew who they were, but not where they were,” Piper said simply. “But you didn’t want to scare them away so you pretended you knew nothing.”

Chris traded looks with his brother. He saw the logic in this but he couldn’t help but notice the irony of them coming up with such a lie so quickly after they berated Chris for doing the same.

--

“You’re on the right path dad,” Wyatt said smiling when he found his father organizing his paperwork and looking up the local hospitals and clinics.

Leo looked up from the kitchen’s table and nodded seriously, “I want to be a good father.”

“I never said you were a bad father,” Wyatt shrugged taking a seat. “You were a good one to me. The best. Now you just have to remember you have two sons, not just one. Because sometimes, being the best father to one son and the worst to the other is worst than being a bad father all around. Hurts more. Hurts everyone. Hurts the neglected child, hurts the cherished child because he wants the same for his brother and hurts the mother who is trying to protect both her children. So concentrate in being a good one for both of us and leave the best title to whoever might want it.”

“Is that why he hides his emotions?”

“To spare me and mom? And maybe even himself?” Wyatt asked and Leo nodded. “Yes, he didn’t want us angry at you so he started pretending you missing his birthdays, games, etc, after promising to be there didn’t matter. After a while he stopped asking you to come. I think that when you died you wouldn’t have been able to tell which grade Chris was on, much less know the Colleges he had been accepted to.”

“I won’t be like that,” Leo said firmly.

Wyatt smiled. “I hope not.”

--

Piper found Chris sprawled on the attic's floor taking copious notes from both Book of Shadow. She was a little nervous, she really didn't know how to approach him. To Chris it seemed as if nothing had changed, he just went on with his mission. She overheard Wyatt telling Leo of how Chris used indifference as a coping mechanism and decided that, apparently, thanks to Leo, she was going to have to be the one to breach the gap between them because Chris would just go on as they are.

But the problem was, she really didn't know how to. She had to admit, Chris had taken after her, she wasn't one to start heartfelt conversations either. She remembered something Chris said and decided to break the ice with that. She sat down in front of the books and he didn't even notice.

"It's not true that Snape kills Dumbledore right? You were joking right?"

"He does, Dumbledore asked him to," Chris said distractedly, then apparently something clicked in his head and his head snapped up, "HEY! Those books aren't out yet! Stop weaseling out information!"

"Why would Dumbledore ask him to?" Piper asked, not only curious, because let's face it, she had scorned Paige when she started reading a children's book but Paige managed to get everyone in the family hooked on the Harry Potter Series, but she also wanted to continue talking to Chris.

"You're going to have to wait and see," Chris said huffing. "No, regard for future consequences at all," he mumbled as he went back to his notes.

"I really don't see what that is going to change my future that much," she protested.

"You never know," Chris said. "You might end up doing something you weren't supposed to because you were reading the book the first time around but this time since you know the ending you won't."

"Believe me, I'll be reading the book anyway. Unless you have a copy of the last two with you," she asked hopefully.

"Yes, because we really thought that the Harry Potter books were essential for our survival when we were packing to flee the demons," Chris drawled.

"Sarcasm is not appreciated here young man," Piper huffed.

Chris stared at her for a while and he almost, almost bit his lip. He seemed to realize what he was about to do and stopped, then he ducked his head back to the books and mumbled.

"We took our cousins backpacks to pack with stuff, one of them was into writing Harry Potter fanfiction and Aunt Paige had given them a special collection with all the books in light paper so they could carry them around. We didn't really empty the bags well because we were kind of in a rush and only realized later, and then, I know it was stupid, it was added weight but- it was the only personal thing from anyone in the family that we had, so we kind of didn't throw it away."

Piper's head came up and her heart squeezed, she couldn't imagine not having anything to remember her loved ones by. I mean, just look at the attic, they kept everything. He continued.

"The last three books were on the bag," he continued. "If you're good, and promise, promise not to utter a word to anyone before they come out, I'll talk to Wyatt about letting you read them."

She smiled to herself, he might be hurt by her, and she had a long way to go but at least he wasn't orbiting away anymore and even if this seemed impersonal, talking about a book, he was willing to break the rules for her. He still loved her, even after all she did. "I promise," she nodded seriously.

Chris nodded and ducked his head once again back to reading and taking notes. Piper wanted to sigh. There went her thread of light conversation.

She took a deep breath and said, "You never let me apologize."

The hand with the pen stopped moving but Chris didn't look up.

"You see," she continued. "I figured you might already know this but I have a bit of a temper," she heard him snort. "I was angry. I blamed you for Leo becoming an Elder and our marriage ending because you were an easy target. I couldn't take it out on Leo, I love him, or my sisters, they weren't at fault--"

"Neither was I," he said tightly.

"I know, but you weren't family- I mean, I know you were but I didn't know then, and I thought you might be a threat and you were there for me to vent on and I just could, and I know that was wrong but I just did. I took the easy way out, I blamed you because blaming you meant I didn't have to really look at what Leo and I were doing wrong. And because of that I only saw in you what I wanted. You said in your letter that you didn't know if you could believe in your mother's love. That she might not have liked you because I don't, but the truth is Chris, she knew you, I don't. I don't know you so I can't know if I like who you are. Don't doubt her love because of the two of us she was the one being honest. Not me."

In all her speech Chris never looked up but he had moved both his hands to under his chest and Piper could see how tense his jaw was.

“Give me a chance to get to know you Chris, to love you. Please. I know what I did was unforgivable but I am asking just that from you. Forgive me,” he didn’t answer and she realized she should let him think on everything she said. “I’ll leave you alone to your work now,” she said quietly and slowly got up leaving the attic. She hovered at the door and her heart broke when she heard his muffled sobs.

## Chapter 6- Parents

The next morning, Piper couldn't believe what she just read. She was goggling at the book.

How could he do that? To the only one who ever trusted him? She jumped startled as Paige's voice came behind her.

"What are you reading that has had you holed up in here every chance you get since yesterday?" Paige asked staring suspiciously at Piper, who had gotten up from the loveseat she had been sprawled on and was unsuccessfully hiding the book behind her back.

"Nothing," she said vaguely

"Uh hu- book," Paige finished extending her hand and when the book landed on her hand her eyes went wide. "How did you get this? Oh my God, I want to read it!" she started leafing through the book and simultaneously dancing around Piper who was trying to get it back.

"Give that back! I promised Chris not to tell anyone!"

"Chris gave this to you?" Paige asked shocked. "Mr. Future Consequences handed to you a book that isn't coming out in-" she stopped to see the releasing date in the first page, "two years, over two years!"

"The last one too," Piper said smugly pointing at the little table where another book was sitting innocently.

Paige smiled, "You do realize what this means right?" she asked and Piper nodded. "That not all is lost and apparently, he's still a mamma's boy. He didn't offer me this," she huffed at the end.

"But he still won't let me in," Piper said sadly.

“I think he did, even if just a little. Be patient,” she said and she started walking away with the book.

“Hey! Give that back!”

“I wanna read it!”

“I haven’t finished!”

--

Phoebe came into the kitchen where Wyatt was shamelessly robbing chocolate frosting and crossed her arms scowling at him. He was at a loss and just stared at her with the chocolate spoon dangling from his mouth.

“Wha’?” he asked defensively.

“How come Piper gets to read Harry Potter and I don’t?”

“Chris asked me to let her. He was very firm on assuring me he was not doing that because he forgave her but because he didn’t want to be annoyed and I pretended to believe him.”

“Where is he?”

“Underworld, trying to find out exactly who those demons are. Where’s Aunt Paige?”

“Last I saw she was waiting eagerly for Piper to finish the last chapter, why?”

“Because I think dad should coach her on healing, now that he can’t.”

--

“Come on, just one tiny cut,” Leo said extending his hand to Phoebe.

“Why can’t you do it?”

“Because Paige won’t be allowed to heal self inflicted injuries. Get that knife and cut me!” he ordered more firmly and Phoebe closed her eyes and made a small cut on Leo’s hand over the dining room table. Leo then turned the hand towards Paige.

“Now close your eyes, it will help the first few times, and sense for the wound. Just like when you’re sensing for one of us except you need to focus on wanting to know what’s wrong and then you need to will it back right.”

“How will I know what’s right? I’m not a doctor,” Paige said.

“Your magic will know. You just need to want me to heal.”

Paige hovered her hand over the small wound and tried concentrating on sensing Leo, she found him and sensed him. There was something missing from how she usually felt him and she realized that must have been his magic. She tried to sense for what was wrong and she could picture the wound and she willed the wound to close and go back to the way the hand should be. She felt the wound closing, the skin merging back together and the blood vessel closing. She opened her eyes just in time to see her hand stop glowing on top of the unblemished skin.

“I did it!” she cried happily and Phoebe nodded with her.

“Again,” Leo said turning his hand to Phoebe.

“But she did it,” Phoebe protested, not a fan of cutting Leo up.

“She has to get used to that feeling so she can do it naturally or she won’t be able to heal the serious wounds. A little bigger this time.”

--

Leo, Paige and Phoebe spent the whole day practicing, while Piper had already gone through most of the last Harry Potter Book, Chris did get the bookworm gene from someone after all, and Chris had been investigating in the Underworld, which had left Wyatt with the very strange task of babysitting his baby self. Not that he didn't have practice. He and Chris had babysat for Billie and her husband before. Billie used to joke that since she had babysat them it was their turn now. But changing your own diaper was just weird.

Wyatt was coming down from putting baby Wyatt to sleep when he saw orbs forming in the parlor, "Hey." He called.

"Hey," was the exhausted answer his brother gave him.

"Any news?"

Chris only shook his head, "No, but one of my contacts told me that there is going to be a meeting in two weeks in one of the bars. They are spreading the word that they will expose more of the plan that day. I might go undercover that day and get a chance to see at least one of them." Wyatt nodded but he was not comfortable with the idea of his brother going into a demon bar all by himself.

They walked into the dining room and where about to ask how the practicing was going when Piper came into the room crying.

"Mom!" Wyatt cried while all the others cried.

"Piper!"

Piper grabbed Wyatt in a hug and started babbling, "He loved her!"

"Uh?" Wyatt answered patting Piper's back a little uncomfortably, not being good with crying women.

“And poor Teddy! All alone!” realizing what was going on Wyatt and Chris rolled their eyes.

“Who’s Teddy?” Phoebe asked.

“No one. Hopefully the lack of pregnancy won’t give you two the same reaction,” Chris said annoyed.

“And Dobby!”

“Aunt Phoebe might,” Wyatt winced.

“What is going on here?” Leo asked but Phoebe and Paige, who had understood, ran to the conservatory and you could hear from the distance, “No, it’s my turn!”

“Don’t you have to go look for a future husband?”

“Not now!”

“You can read out loud!” Chris called out.

“This is about a book?” Leo asked bewildered.

“It’s so sad!” Piper sniffed. “Poor Teddy!”

Wyatt winced, yeah maybe letting his mother, who was always fighting, read about a couple who died fighting leaving their infant son orphan might not have been a good idea. Not only on her pregnant state but on her current emotional state with said child she was bearing. Wyatt looked at Chris and saw he was shuffling his feet uncomfortably.

“Sorry. I shouldn’t have let you read the book,” he mumbled.

“That’s not your fault Chris,” Leo said comfortably. “She would have cried when the book was released anyway,” he finished trying to put a hand on Chris’s shoulder but Chris backed away almost instinctively and Leo brought his hand back in a fist to his side nodding sadly.

"I'm going home. Have a shower and all," Chris said awkwardly and before anyone could say anything he orbed out.

Wyatt squeezed his hug on Piper, who looked forlorn, and said, "Give him time. It may not look like it but you've made huge progress."

--

Chris dropped on the bed heavily. He turned to the side and brought his knees to his chest. He missed her, but at the same time he didn't want to open up again and get hurt. His mother had always been the most important person in his life together with Wyatt. He loved the rest of his family to bits but they were the two top ones. She had something special. She would always smile at him when he got home from school, or a friend's, or wherever he'd been as if he had just made her day by being there. Piper on the other hand always looked at him as if he was the worst part of her day, with disgust and even hatred. She would be smiling and when her eyes landed on him her smile just faded. The opposite of what happened with his mother. And every time she did that, every time she barked at him angrily she stole one little piece of good memory he had from his mother, because when he tried to remember his mother's voice, he heard Piper's angry one, when he tried to remember her smile he saw Piper's glare and his memories of his mother was all he had, and at times he hated Piper for stealing that away. Because she just killed his mother a little bit more every time.

And what if they were all wrong, what if Piper had seen him and hadn't liked what she saw, hadn't liked the person Chris was? What if his mother hadn't liked either but since she was his mother she forced herself to, or to at least pretend? How could he ever know? And could he live with not knowing?

And Leo, he didn't even know where to start there. Yes, Leo seemed to be making an effort, but would that effort last or would he revert to the father that only cared for Wyatt? How

many times had Leo promised he'd change just to forget about Chris again? Chris didn't think he could handle being let down by his father again. He buried his face on the pillow and groaned.

That was how Victor found his grandson a little while later. He quietly sat by the bed and gently poked him, "Want to talk?" Chris shrugged turning his head a little so he was facing his grandfather. "Can I talk then?" another shrug. "You love your mom don't you?" Chris nodded. "I know this might come as a shock to you, but she isn't perfect," Chris smiled a little at that. "And she most certainly isn't yet the woman you're used to. The Piper you know has eighteen years of experience in fighting demons, raising two sons and of dealing with an absentee husband--"

"Ex. Mom and dad never got back together in our time," Chris corrected.

"Even worst, she had experience in raising two sons alone. This Piper hasn't. She's still a new mom. Wyatt is a baby and she might know how to deal with diaper changing but not with tumbling emotions. She might have been dealing with demons for six years but when you compare it to your mom, that's quite little time. But even that being little time it already brought a lot of pain to her, so her first reaction is going into defensive mode, and to Piper, the best defense is to attack. This Piper will make a lot more mistakes than your mother, not that your mother didn't make them, you just were too little to remember her making them. So you need to be a lot more patient with Piper than you would have been with your mother. Give her more leeway. I'm not saying not to let her know how she hurt you, but give her a chance. Go tell her how she hurt you. Rant and yell and cry with her and then forgive her if you can, because right now you're both hurting and I don't like that."

Chris turned his eyes to stare at the wall. Could he?

## Chapter 7- Families

Chris inhaled deeply and entered the kitchen. She was cooking. How many times had he come to that exact same scene in his life? He cleared his throat and she looked up.

“Can we talk?”

Piper nodded and put the bowl down. She wiped her hands and walked slowly to one of the chairs. Chris sat down on the other one facing her.

He stayed silent for a while and she didn't know what to think.

“I can't remember her,” he said quietly and Piper didn't know what he was talking about.

“Her?” she asked.

“My mom. I can't remember what she sounded like, what she looked like when she was looking at me. When I close my eyes and try to remember I see you. I see you angry at me, throwing me out of the house, saying I'm lying. The images blur together. And I know I had to separate you, you are not the same. You're not her yet, but you sound, you walk you talk like her and I didn't manage to. I didn't manage not see my mother sneering at me. Yelling at me. Hating me. And it hurt, because if there was one thing I was sure of in this world was that my mother loved me. That she had wanted me. And that was important to me because with the same certainty I had that she had wanted me I knew my father hadn't. And she was what made Leo being a jerk all my life tolerable. She's the reason I managed to decide that if he didn't want me then I didn't need him.”

Piper nodded sadly but said nothing. She had the feeling that if she stopped him he would run and never come back.

“But when you hated me I started doubting that. I started wondering how could she love me and you hate me? How was that possible? I was the same person, even if I didn’t tell you who I was. You said you didn’t see me, and ... I...I want to believe you, I really do. But it’s hard, it’s hard to forget everything you said, everything you did.” The two sat in silence for a moment before he added. “But I want to try to. I want to try to forgive you. Even if I can’t forget.”

“That’s all I am asking for,” she whispered and she wanted to hug him but she knew she couldn’t. He nodded and got up. He left the kitchen. Arms came from behind her and hugged her.

“You heard?”

“I was in the pantry. I want him. I’ll make sure he knows it this time,” Leo said quietly resting his chin on her shoulder.

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The next couple of weeks were awkward to say the least. Chris still wasn’t comfortable around Piper but he was making an effort to be there instead of just sending messages as he had been doing before they found out he was their son. Piper on the other hand was doing her best to try to win Chris back, from cooking all of his favorite dishes, which she had gotten from Wyatt. Though by the way Wyatt was happy at having lasagna while Chris just treated it like a normal dish she was starting to suspect Wyatt may have been less than honest. To trying to talk to him, get to know him. Ask him about school and friends. He had been reluctant at first but when she brought Oxford up he had talked non-stop. She had been at the same time incredibly proud and terrified. England was across the ocean for crying out loud! Her baby had been selected from all the seniors in the US! He was a genius!

With Leo the situation wasn’t going that well though. Chris was usually short and to the point with him. He stated what he needed and gave him no opening whatsoever. Leo, though,

wasn't giving up and he imposed himself on every bit of research possible just for a chance to talk to Chris.

Finally the day for Chris to go undercover had come and Wyatt wasn't very happy.

"I think I better go with you," Wyatt said and then nodded agreeing with himself. Chris just stared at his brother.

"Are you nuts? You have no powers. You'll be a liability," Chris said seriously.

"You'll be surrounded by demons! All alone," Wyatt said just as emphatically.

"Who will think I'm one of the. Look Wy, I promise to orb out if there s trouble. But we need to do this."

"Fine." Wyatt huffed, crossed his arms and dropped on the couch. Chris rolled his eyes and orbbed out. Piper soon came with baby Wyatt and seeing her son's face asked.

"What?"

"Chris went to the meeting."

"Paige!" Piper cried. Orbs formed.

"What?"

"I want you on standby. Chris went to the meeting."

--

Chris looked warily at his dirty glass of liquor wondering how many diseases he'd get from drinking. The turnout wasn't that big. Just a few demons but he hoped that wouldn't disappoint the ones he was looking for.

“Gather round! Gather round!” a young man, dressed in black, “*Obviously,*” Chris thought snorting, said getting up on one of the lower stools. Apparently they weren’t disappointed. They few disgruntled demons in the bar took chairs around the man. Chris just turned around on his stool and laid backwards resting his back on the bench and crossing his arms. He didn’t want to seem too interested.

He studied the man on the stool. He didn’t have the usual dirty demon look. Chris could have mistaken him for a College student had he not been in an underworld bar.

The man started talking, telling them much of what Chris had already heard. How good always won because they were organized, how evil had to be the same, yada, yada, yada. Nothing new. Not that Chris thought he’d get anything new. No what he was interested in was in after the meeting. Was in where that man would take him.

Chris opened all his Elder senses and zeroed them on that man. He was surprised to realize he was all human. Chris tagged him, and after the meeting following him was easy. Cloaked and invisible, he reappeared in what looked like a very normal house, not unlike Halliwell manor. The man walked into the kitchen and grabbing an apple in what looked as too much of a normal attitude for Chris’s comfort, he took a bite. Someone shimmered in and another young man smirked.

“So?”

“Six, seven if you count one that didn’t look that interested.”

“More than I expected,” the other man shrugged. “Doesn’t matter. Patience brings perfection,” he said taking a seat.

Chris was definitely intrigued.

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"They are not demons. They're warlocks. A little family of six united in wanting to rule the world," Chris said when he orbed back home. He had spent the whole afternoon trailing the warlocks and found a lot of their plan out.

"Warlocks are demons," Paige said.

"Not exactly," Chris said making a face. "They're bad witches. Which is what makes them different from your average demon. They are versed in the same kind of magic as us, except dark magic, and in our way of life. You wouldn't know them from an innocent by passing them in the street. They go to school, shop, work, just like we do. Even though these ones are not that powerful they managed to manipulate the demons and bind Wyatt's powers by giving him a binding potion that would be triggered only years later by the trigger word. That's what had us most confused. How they had bound his powers. Now we know."

"And they are human. Which explains why they are so intent on having their way up here and not only in the underworld," Piper said.

"And they are patient. They didn't care they had to wait 18 years to get what they wanted," Phoebe pointed out.

"They're not stupid. They knew they needed the whole underworld by their side for this to work. Any disagreement there and everything would have been lost. That's why they waited so long. But I don't think they were that worried about how long they were waiting," Chris said.

"Their sons are not much older than me and Wyatt, which means they'll be fairly young still to enjoy their reign. And that's what the parents are aiming for," and he added, "Them being warlocks also explains how they got to Wyatt. They plan on waiting for him to enter school and slip the potion in his food."

“So what do we do?” Paige asked.

“We have to vanquish, wipe out the whole family,” Leo said firmly. “And do it in a way that demons know about it and know why we did it.”

“The whole family?” Piper asked.

“Leaving one behind is just asking for being attacked by someone seeking revenge, look at Richard’s family feud.” Paige answered.

“Yes, but they are human,” Phoebe argued.

“They are evil, magical evil and we destroy magical evil. That’s our job,” Paige said firmly.

## Chapter 8- Plan put in action

Leo found his son in the kitchen brewing the potions they would need. He wasn't stupid. They found the warlocks. Tomorrow Chris and the girls would finish them off and then Wyatt and Chris would leave. He wouldn't have more time to make things right with Chris. He needed to talk to him now. He had tried showing through actions that he was sorry and that he would change. He would be there for him. But sometimes just actions weren't enough.

He approached the bench where Chris was preparing ingredients and cleared his throat, "May we talk?"

"I'm busy," was the short answer.

"This won't take long. Please," Leo said motioning to the table. Chris sighed, dropped the knife on the counter, walked around the counter and sat on one of the stools facing Leo. Leo understood the defiance of not going to where Leo was pointing and he took a stool.

"I haven't said this before but I am sorry for how I acted. It was wrong and I really don't have any other excuse than using you as a scapegoat to blame for my actions."

Leo looked at Chris but Chris remained silent, his arms crossed just staring at Leo. Leo took a deep breath and said:

"I know my future self wasn't the best father," Chris snorted. "Okay, I heard he was the worst. But I promise you that will change. I won't be that man and I hope you can look past what he did and give me a chance. I hope you don't make the same mistake I made. I didn't see you. I saw an enemy. But you're not seeing me either. You're seeing the man who raised you. And I'm not him yet and hopefully will never be."

Chris sighed and observed Leo. He rubbed his forehead. He hated to admit but Leo was right. Chris's anger at him was for what his father had done in the future. Not what Leo had done in

the past. Yes, Leo had been wrong but Chris had hardly ever let what Leo said affect him. He expected the worst from him and let it bounce. No, what he was holding against Leo were missed birthdays, broken promises. And Leo was right. That was the same thing he and Piper had been doing. Chris inhaled deeply.

"I- I can't just forgive 18 years of neglect Leo. I can't forgive him. What I can do is accept that in this time you made a mistake and are sorry about how you treated me and forgive that. And what I can do when I get back is judge you by what you did, not what my Leo did. That you're not him. So how our relationship will be in the future will depend on you."

Leo nodded swallowing a lump, "That's all I'm asking for."

Chris nodded jerkily and got up to continue the potions. Leo stood and silently started helping Chris.

--

"Grandpa, I'm leaving," Chris called the next day opening his grandfather's bedroom door quietly. His eyes widened at what he saw and he quickly shut the door hoping he hadn'tt woken the slumbering couple. He orbbed away.

--

"All set?' Wyatt asked as his brother orbbed into the manor's kitchen.

"Yes, I already talked to them."

"Good."

"Okay. Gotta tell you something," and Chris was positively giddy. "Before I left. I saw grandpa--"

"All set?" came Phoebe's voice as she entered the kitchen.

"Yes!" Chris moaned.

“Good. Piper and Paige are coming down and then we’re ready to go.”

“Okay. But before Grandpa and-“

“Ready,” Piper and Paige arrived. “Let’s go.”

“But I have to tell about grandpa!” Chris whined.

“When we come back you tell us. Let’s go and deal with this once and forever,” Piper said firmly. Chris huffed but grabbed her hand.

--

The family of six had been having lunch as demons shimmered in and looked around disgusted.

“You were followed,” the father seethed at his sons as the family positioned themselves for a possible fight.

“No, I swear,” one of the sons shook his head violently.

“So, that’s what you want warlocks? What do you think? That we’ll be your slaves?” one of the demons sneered and the patriarch recognized him as a fairly upper level demons with a lot of influence.

“We only want our kind, evil, to rule where we belong,” the father answered. “Up here. Like we should have always been. If I may ask how did you find us?”

The demon smirked, “Apparently your plan fails. Spectacularly. We’re here for the show,” he finished simply with a raised eyebrow. And as he and his companions moved back four people appeared from thin air.

“Now,” the youngest man of the group said. “That would have been me who followed you.

And that would have been 18 years from now, when you first tried, and I do emphasize the tried, to gain control. This should be fun again,” he said turning to the oldest woman.

She smirked at him, "You see," she finished turning to the mother of of the evil clan. "My son here doesn't appreciate people hurting me," she caressed his cheek fondly. "And he let you know that."

Chris shrugged, "But then I thought. Why not get the annoyance out of the way early on?" and he sent the youngest son flying towards the wall. A battle of potions and powers started between the two magical families while the demons just watched. Delighted.

The father of the clan had already perished when the mother sent Paige crashing on a wall effectively knocking her out. Seeing this Chris blew the mother up. And the four sons, enraged with grief, renewed their attack on the Halliwells. Piper blew one up as Phoebe stabbed the other with an athame killing them both instantly. Neither saw when the youngest son took a gun from one of the drawers and pointed it at Piper. The shot never arrived though as Chris threw himself towards her knocking her out of the way.

"NO!" was Piper's horrified cry as she saw the blood seeping from her son's back and she immediately blew the son with the gun up and gently turned Chris around. "Chris, baby. Stay with me. PAIGE!"

Phoebe was trying to rise Paige with no success and she hadn't seen the last son. Chris, in his weakened state did, and with his last strength sent a jet of lightning towards him finishing of the family.

The demons, looking satisfied, looked down at the stricken mother. "Well done Halliwells. I think you've proved your point. The next time we cross paths we won't be just spectators," the leader said and they shimmered away.

Piper didn't listen though, as she desperately caressed Chris's face. "Hold on baby, I love you, I love you so much, hold on," she begged as Phoebe kept shaking Paige.

“Love you mom,” Chris whispered with his last breath and closed his eyes. Piper kissed his forehead in tears. Blue orbs formed and Leo and Wyatt appeared. They both ran to Chris and Wyatt’s hand started glowing but faded instantly.

“NO! I have my powers back!”

“You can’t heal the dead,” Leo choked out as Chris’s body vanished leaving behind a stricken family.

“Chris, no!” Wyatt sobbed as his mother grabbed him in a hug and mingled her tears with his. Leo joined the hug and hid his face in Piper’s hair damping it with his own tears. Next to Paige’s unconscious but breathing body, Phoebe sank to the floor not able to process what her eyes were telling her. Her nephew was dead.

## Chapter 9- Farewells

The wind was blowing but none of the people in the bridge noticed. They were looking down as each said their farewell to the member of the family who gave his life to save their future.

It had been Leo's idea to have this ceremony here. To throw flowers to the wind in Chris's honor. From his favorite thinking place.

Paige had been healed by Wyatt and Wyatt's powers coming back proved they had succeeded. The demons they chose to spread around their version of what had happened believed them and let the others know. They had chosen them specifically for being well respected, i.e. feared, in the underworld. Chris had gone and contacted them saying he was feeling benevolent and that he would only attack the heads of the plan, this time. He made it sound as if in the future he had exterminated every demon that had dared participate.

Wyatt had orbed as soon as he had felt his powers and had felt his brother's pain. But they had come back too late. He had orbed too late, and now he couldn't bare the pain he was feeling. As if a piece of him had died with Chris. Even with his powers blocked to him he had never stopped feeling Chris's presence, their brotherly bond as strong as ever. But now that bond was mute and he could feel nothing. Just an empty space. His parents and aunts tried reassuring him that Chris would be there when he got back to his time. They would make sure of that, but he wouldn't be the same. He wouldn't remember everything they lived together. And that was why they were saying goodbye to the Chris they knew so they could welcome the new one without regrets.

Leo looked at the distance remembering the day he found out who Chris was, the hours he spent observing his son in this very bridge. He hadn't been able to become a father to that boy. Too much hurt, past and future. But Chris had been his boy, his son, even if he hadn't forgiven Leo, Leo loved him. He looked at Piper's still flat stomach and wished he could still

sense his boy there. But he knew he was there and he vowed to be a good father, to keep his promise. This time Chris wouldn't feel the need to hide his emotions. He would know he was loved.

Piper caressed her flat stomach sadly and pictured her boy's smiles. They were rare but they were there. She remembered the one and only time he called her mom. He had been working on forgiving her but he had never called her mom before his last breath, and she never got to tell him that she really loved him, that she could now honestly say she liked who he was, she was very proud of who he was and she loved him. But she would. She would let him know and she wouldn't let any harm come to him or Wyatt again.

Phoebe smiled sadly as she remembered all the times she had begged him for a normal life, for him to give them a break on their duty and his speeches of how their duty came first. What she wouldn't give for one of those speeches now. She smiled and said her goodbyes.

Paige remembered every time Chris's sharp tongue tried a sarcastic joke and her sisters didn't understand. The times Chris moaned she was the only one who understood him and how frustrating to insult people who didn't get it. She giggled sadly as she remembered one particular instance, before they found out who he was, where Piper might not have got the insult, but she did get his whining, and how she had glared at both the half-witches for laughing at her expense. She would make sure to always be there to understand and coach her nephew.

Victor couldn't process this well. He was in a place he never thought he'd come to to say goodbye to his grandson. That wasn't right. Grandsons should not be buried, as shouldn't daughters. But Victor did, didn't he? He closed his eyes and hoped he helped his grandson, even if just a little, in this too little time they had together.

Wyatt wasn't paying attention. Leo said something, about his regrets for all he had done to Chris and of how he would keep his promise. Piper professed her love for her baby and how she would protect him and let no harm come to him. Phoebe said she would miss his neurotic's ways and Paige assured him she would teach him her ways once again. For him not to worry. Victor said something about help. Wyatt didn't much hear each speech, lost in his thoughts. He closed his eyes and remembered his brother. He opened his hands and eyes and watched as the wind blew away the white petals he had brought.

It was time to go home.

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Wyatt stepped through the portal after saying his farewells to his family. He felt the familiar sensation of travelling through time but felt no companion next to him. He stepped once again in the attic and was shocked to come face to face with himself. Both Wyatts glowed and an invisible force pulled them together until they became one. His whole life starting running through his mind as he fell on an unconscious hip on the floor.

--

Wyatt opened his eyes and found himself lying on his bed at the manor. The first thing he saw were his brothers green eyes.

"Finally!" Chris cried with a grin. "Do you know how long I've been waiting for you? Thought you'd never get back. Now, I really need to tell you what I saw - OI!" Chris protested as Wyatt pulled him into a hug. His brother was alive! Of course a part of him knew that, the part that had lived this new life and knew that while growing up Chris had always gotten his memories from his old life at night while he slept. A part of him knew why Chris was ecstatic to finally

have someone who would really know what he went through, even though his parents had tried to help him all they could.

Poor Chris had been very confused when he was little and he would wake up angry or sad at their father. Now that he had the whole perspective Wyatt could appreciate how his father had to work hard to make up for his past and other life's mistakes, as he had to constantly reassure Chris's doubts instead of just receiving a son that had already decided to let bygones be bygones.

The most terrifying time had been the day Chris remembered the attack. His cries could be heard throughout the house and no matter what they tried they could not rouse him. Last year had been hard as Chris remembered all of what his family had put him through and how he had felt. His parents made a point of having talking through any new memory he got every morning, so he could understand how they had felt at the time and how guilty they had been when they realized what they had done. It had been hard but they had gotten through it as a family.

In the end Chris had taken the scholarship in Oxford not to escape his family but because of the opportunity it presented. He orbbed back home every day and they managed to work around the time difference to at least see each other every day, even if just a little. That had shown most of all how committed his parents were. Chris would wake them up before going to class, five hours earlier than they usually would wake up and they would talk, sometimes his parents went back to sleep, sometimes the talk was too emotional for them to and Wyatt would find that one or both of them had come back in the middle of the day for a nap.

In the end his dad never went back to practicing medicine. He got offered a job at Magic School and went there to teach what he had learned in all his years as a Whitelighter. Chris and Wyatt often grumbled about having a father and an Aunt as teachers, especially when Gideon offered for Leo to become Headmaster so he could go back to his Elder duties. But his

father as Headmaster brought a very different change to magic school. Having had the same discussions as in their other life with Piper about normal schooling, which the first time had ended up with Chris and Wyatt attending both schools and having quite a heavy load, Leo had the idea of finding a way to merge both in magic school, and he did. It had been a little tricky, especially considering the paperwork to make a school in another plane show up as a normal school in the American system but it had worked, and now magical children could attend magic school and have a full magical and mortal education. Without worrying about exposing magic with accidents in their normal schools.

Wyatt finally let go of his brother, "Don't worry Wy. I'm okay, hurt like a bitch, both times, who'd imagine a dream would hurt, but I'm okay. Missed you though and I still have to tell you about catching grandpa and Mrs. Finnegan in bed--"

"They've been married for fourteen years--"

"But when I saw them they weren't even together to our knowledge!"

"Still old gossip."

"But was fresh when I saw them. Not my fault you didn't have time to hear it eighteen years ago!" Chris whined and Wyatt laughed, glad to be able to laugh with his brother again.

The end

An- Well, since I posted 4 chapters I'm forgiven for some being smaller right? He, he.

Sorry for killing Chris but I wanted for Piper and especially Leo to have to work harder for his forgiveness. And this way they had to. Besides, he didn't really die, now did he?

I hope you all had fun and I absolutely adored all your reviews. Thanks for reading and reviewing!