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Summary: What if Chris had reacted differently to hearing his mother say that only Wyatt mattered?

A/N: This starts on the episode "Prince Charmed" when Piper is telling Chris about giving up on love.

"Your Second Child"

"I get it now. I am the mother of a very special child and that if I do my job right is going to grow up to do very special things. What could be more important than that?" Piper asked with conviction "Nothing else matters," she added and didn't understand as Chris just stared at her without a response. She thought he'd be thrilled. Wasn't he the one who was always saying that they should never put their personal lives in front of their Wiccan duties? Wasn't he always harping on about how they had to protect Wyatt? Why was he so reluctant to understand this?

After a moment of uncomfortable silence, where she could swear her usually stoic Whitelighter looked deeply hurt, he schooled his features and said stonily, "Of course. *Only* Wyatt matters. Congratulations, you and Leo are finally on the same page. Well. Good luck then," and he orbed out and Piper was left staring at the spot he vanished from. What the hell had just happened? She could swear she heard a lot of resentment in that simple word, *Only*. As if it meant more to him than she could grasp. And the good luck, seemed almost final. As if he was giving up and handing her the stick to take further. No, she must have been imagining things. She had too. She shook her head and smiled at her baby boy. Yes, only Wyatt mattered.

xx

Chris couldn't believe it. It wasn't bad enough that it was his mother's birthday, the first in six years he had with her alive and he couldn't, he couldn't make her her special breakfast and take it to bed with Wyatt. And he couldn't say it had been both of them who made it when everyone in the room knew Wyatt couldn't make toast without burning down the kitchen. And he couldn't hug and kiss her and say "Happy Birthday." No he had to hear from the one person in this world who though he mattered just as much as Wyatt that no, he didn't matter and that this time around she wasn't even going to bother conceiving him. Well, you know what; he wasn't all that sure he wanted to be conceived. To be born into this family. A family who cared nothing for him. So yes, his methods may be questionable but he had never hurt them. Quite the opposite. Leo kept accusing him of destroying his marriage when he was trying to fix it. When in his time Leo had become an Elder with the Titans and only come back for the first time on Wyatt's birthday having one last one nighter with his mom and bailing again. He kept Leo down here the only way he knew how. By making him think Chris had been deliberately trying to get rid of him. And it had been tricky. Did Leo even know how hard it was to keep such an elaborate illusion just so Leo would think Chris was capable of murdering a Valkyrie. And having to ask the supposedly "dead" Valkyries to hide until this was all over. To make sure Leo didn't find them. Stupid Leo. But that was Leo for you, stupid, egocentric bastard. Chris was used to that.

But not to this Piper. Chris had been so worried she'd know as soon as she'd set her eyes on him. After all, doesn't a mother always know? But she didn't. Even with all of his slips.

"All my life I've never seen you take the bait like that."

"If you kill her there won't be a future for us."

"They're calling you dad."

She didn't. And even though she wasn't as vocal as Leo he knew she didn't want him there. He knew she wanted nothing more than for him to disappear. Well, on Wyatt's birthday she'd get her wish and if he had only a month left to live than he wouldn't waste it. He'd do all the things he didn't get to do thanks to his psycho brother and hope Piper and the others saved Wyatt instead. He was done. It was just too much. He didn't have the energy to continue. He was tired and he knew just the place to forget about how tired he was and well, piss off his mother at the same time.

xxx

"Oh, god!" Phoebe said as she flopped down on the couch. "What a day."

"Yeah, which wasn't helped any by your little present over there," Leo huffed and glared at David, Piper's ideal man.

"Actually," Piper said calmly as she stroked Wyatt's head. They almost lost him to an Order of crazy demons who thought he was the reincarnation of their leader. Thank God they caught and vanquished them before they managed to turn him. "He helped me realize Chris was right. I can't give up on love."

"Yeah, where is Chris. I mean, huge trouble here and he's nowhere to be seen," Paige asked.

"Typical." Leo huffed.

"Actually, no, it's not," Piper said worried. "He usually is the first to show up. He was acting weird though."

"How so?" Phoebe asked.

"When we were discussing the whole giving up on love thing. He looked...I don't know, maybe I'm just crazy."

“Or maybe,” David said calmly. “Your head is finally catching up with your heart and you’re realizing that what you said did indeed hurt him, a lot.”

“What?” Paige asked bewildered. “Chris doesn’t get hurt. He bounces off.”

“Does he?” David asked.

“How do you know what I said?” Piper asked.

“Your sisters created me to know everything about you. Even what you try to hide from yourself. And you already know the truth here,” he pointed at her heart. “Even if your brain doesn’t want to admit it.”

“Why wouldn’t Piper want to admit the truth?” Leo sneered condescendingly to his rival.

“For the same reason you don’t want to,” David said calmly shrugging. “Admitting the truth is admitting you failed. You plan to keep your children safe,” he said looking at Piper. “Away from the fight until they are at least older than you were. And admitting the truth is admitting you didn’t manage to.”

“That’s- that makes no sense at all!” Piper said getting up and looking at David as if he was crazy.

“Doesn’t it?” he asked as the clock stroked midnight and he disappeared.

“Well, that was confusing, what do you know?” Paige asked.

“I don’t know,” Piper cried.

“Well we better find out and we need Chris for that, so let’s scry for him,” Phoebe said and Paige nodded orbiting to P3 to get something of Chris’s.

A while later they were having no luck with scrying for Chris, “Well this is great. Piper said as she kept circling the crystal over the same few blocks in the map. Can’t you sense for him?”

"I never put him on my radar, and I usually can't sense anything from him," Leo said worried.

What was Chris up to? So yes, he'd been lighter with him lately but that didn't change the fact that he knew Chris was up to something.

"At least you're having more luck than Paige and me," Phoebe said. "The crystal keeps pointing at the same area, we didn't even get that."

"Maybe we'll just have to wait. Why don't I go get Wyatt back from Sheila's?" Leo asked taking Piper's other hand to take her attention when the crystal suddenly fell on the map.

"Great!" Paige said excited. "He's at-" she looked at the map and then raised her head frowning "The competition?"

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The Charmed Ones and Leo orbed quietly to the nightclub and started looking around trying not to be spotted. The last thing Piper needed was the owner to see her and think she was spying. To her luck they spotted Chris quickly at the bar and made towards him. With his back to them Chris made no move whatsoever. Leo took her hand to stop her as when they approached the wall behind Chris they could clearly hear him.

"I want another one! Actually no! I want one of everything!" he cried tapping the bar and the slur in his words indicated he had already had quite a bit.

"Don't you think you had enough kid?" the bartender asked.

"No," Chris said slowly shaking his head. "If I'm gonna go puff I gotta try everything."

"Puff?"

"Yeah, puff," he said making a motion in the air with his hands.

"And why is that," the bartender asked clearly worried about Chris's intention.

Chris came closer to the guy and said simply, "Cause my mother hates my guts and don't want me to be born. Just like my dad, except him I always knew. My mom was a huge surprise!"

"Well, I'm sure your mother wanted you. Besides there's nothing she can do about it now and you should just let it go if she doesn't. It's not worth your life."

"Thas' the problem. I'm not worth it. I don't *matter*," he finished with a heavy emphasis on the last word and then laughed, "S' ironic. Apparently she's the world greatest liar 'cause I really thought she loved me. All those times my dad was being the egocentric, self-centered, selfish bastard that he is she said I was 'pecial. But guess what. M'not, nooooooooooooo, only m' brother matters. Just him. No one else."

Piper had a horrible feeling about what she was hearing, of why Chris was here getting hammered.

"You know why I chose this bar?" he chuckled. "Cause nothing would piss off my mom more than me getting drunk at the competition," Chris banged his hand on the counter and laid his head down, "Oh, I'm so funny." he said tiredly then he got up. And asked the bartender seriously. "How can someone be so self-centered that they leave the family without even looking back and only stay if it has to do with them?"

"Your mom left her family?"

"No," Chris said making a face. "I'm talking about my dad...the bastard...keep up. Did you know he's so, so, so, so egocentric that he named all his kids after himself."

"No."

"Hum, hum, my brother's name is my dad's last name and I'm named after his dad. How selfish is that?" Chris banged his hand on the counter again but with a little too much force this time.

"Owwie!" he said wincing.

Piper saw Leo stiffen behind her and whisper “Christopher.”

“So your brother first and last name are the same?” the bartender asked weirded out and Chris sniggered.

“No, thank God we don’t have the bastard’ last name. Oh, that’s so funny, Wyatt Wyatt, ha, I’m so gonna make fun of him when I get back,” he sighed and then looked at the bartender. “He’s the only one who gives a shit about me. I thought was my mom and him, but ’s just Wyatt. Thas’ why I’m here taking all this shit. ‘Cause I know he’d do the same for me. ‘Cause I know he thinks I matter. He even sent Bianca to get me. I miss Bianca,” he said sadly reminded of how exactly that went. He didn’t think Wyatt had killed her on purpose. Wyatt might have been evil but even evil he had always held a soft spot for Chris and that protected Bianca too. When he had lost control and hurt Chris it had surprised him to no end. Chris was used that no matter how much he defied Wyatt, Wyatt had never touched him or let one of his demons touch him. Everything was so messed up, he sighed looking down at the menu and his eyes perked at the name of a drink. “Oohh, can I have a Hara-kiri? Sounds good. Gonna need a sword though. My brother has one...to heavy though. S’easier with a smaller one.”

“I don’t think a Hara-kiri is the best choice,” the bartender said slowly taking the menu away from Chris.

“Why not, s’better than going puff when my mom and dad don’t-“

“Oh, there you are Chris,” Paige said loudly. “Been looking for him everywhere,” she told the bartender coming forward. “How much does he owe?” she asked taking a bill from her pocket and handing it to the bartender as Chris turned to her.

“Auntie Paige! You’re here. What happened to you hair? Ooh, do they have hair salons in heaven?”

“He has a very vivid imagination when drunk,” she tried to laugh it off. “Keep the change, let’s go Chris.”

“How’s everyone doing? Can you ask mom why she changed her mind? I tried summoning her but they didn’t let me. Said I wasn’t over her dying,” he babbled on as Paige pulled him towards the others which he did not see as he turned around and hugged Paige. “I missed you Aunt Paige. Your younger self is mean just like Piper...uh-hu-she’s not like mom at all.”

“I think it’s best if we let Paige take him home and we meet them there,” Phoebe said cautiously to the shocked parents.

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“I love this couch,” Leo heard Chris say as Paige helped him to the couch and the boy turned around hugging the couch. “I don’t like the one mom bought when I was ten. You can’t jump on it well. Auntie Paige, you won’t let her will you?”

“Of course not,” Paige humored the boy who smiled satisfied and closed his eyes.

Leo couldn’t believe what had just happened. That Chris was his son, he couldn’t be. That was wrong. There was no way this boy who he had hated, who he was sure hated him was his soon, and yet, for the first time he really looked at him and saw the perfect blend of him and Piper. Yes the boy took more to Piper, but unlike Wyatt who was completely him, Chris had features that were between both parents. His hair was straight like Pipers and yet instead of her dark brown, almost black hair, his hair was a lighter brown. In between his blond and her brown. He had Piper’s eyes and eyebrow shape. That oval shape he loved so much that almost jumped out of her face, but the color was his. His green eyes. He knew the house and them, no it’s not that he knew. He was familiar, comfortable with the house and them. As if he’d been there all along and that had grated on Leo so much. His easiness in this family. And seeing him with Paige he could imagine where he learned his quick comebacks. And he couldn’t

understand why he hadn't seen it before. Was David right? Had he been so intent on proving that he couldn't possibly have failed Wyatt so much that someone else would have to come back in time to save him that he didn't see the obvious. He turned to face Piper whose eyes were locked on Chris and sighed. He and Chris had a lot to fix, but from Chris's speech he hadn't been the best dad. Piper on the other hand had been a great mom and she had been the one to drive him to give up and drink himself silly. He couldn't imagine what she was feeling.

"You're not family"

Or maybe he could, he thought as she turned around sharply and walked up the stairs.

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Piper automatically went up to the empty nursery. Of course it was empty. They had asked Sheila to watch Wyatt so they could go stalk Chris and find him up to no good. Because that's what they set out to do wasn't it? No matter what David said. No matter that that time Chris had been hit by a dark lighter arrow her heart had almost stopped. Because no, that was a normal reaction to finding a fellow human being in danger. And it was a coincidence that once Chris ate one of her peanut butter cookies and let it slip they were his favorites she made them again. He was a good Whitelighter after all. And put up with a lot. He deserved it. That was why she made them. Not because he had said his mother's cookies were his favorites. She hadn't known he was talking about her. It was a reward for being there for them. So yeah, he had lied about being a Whitelighter but when she remembered he never actually said the words. She asked, but he didn't answer and she assumed. And didn't dig further because if she had she would have seen what was staring right at her face. She never dug further because David was right. He couldn't be hers because that meant she wasn't there for him. She failed him and it had been up to him to save his family. To risk his own existence to save them all. And what thanks did he get? To hear his mother say he didn't matter.

But he did. Because she hadn't been thinking of having other children when she said that. Only of Wyatt. But she knew that if she had had other children they would matter just as much as Wyatt and more than anything else in the world. And Chris mattered.

She closed her eyes and pressed the palms of her hands to them until she saw stars. She had to fix this.

xx

Chris opened his eyes and groaned at the bright light that assaulted him.

"Morning sunshine," Paige's voice assaulted his delicate ears and he croaked.

"Did anyone get the plate of the truck?"

"Oh, it was called alcohol," Paige said mouthing the word carefully and then smirking as she sat down on the couch next to him and handed him what looked like the most disgusting smoothie on the planet. "Trust me, you'll thank me later," she winked at him and got up too perkily for his taste. He would never drink again in his life. He didn't know what people were talking about. It was awful. First and last time. Not that there was much available in the future anyway. Or that he had that much time left to get drunk again.

"So," Paige asked casually. "How did you end up at the competition?"

Chris looked at her suspiciously. How and why had they found him? He didn't remember much. He remembered deciding to go to the club that currently was posing as his mother's most threatening competition and get smashed, as they say. He was indiscriminate. He took the drinks menu and started asking for them alphabetically. Considering he had never had a drop of alcohol in his life he had gotten tipsy quite quickly and most of the night was a blur. The beer Leo decided to buy him after the whole time portal incident had been non-alcoholic. "Whitelighters aren't allowed to drink," Leo had said. Pft. Leo and his rules.

But looking at Page's eager face he was worried he might have let something slip so he tried to gauge her. He shrugged nonchalantly. "Leo thinks Whitelighters can't drink."

"So you decided to go where he wouldn't find you?"

Chris just shrugged, "How did you find me?"

"We were worried. We had a bit of a problem yesterday and noticed you weren't around. Which is not typical of you and so we scryed for you."

"Uh," that didn't say much. They scryed, they found him and what? He decided to be blunt maybe she'd say what he might have said. "I don't remember you arriving."

"Yeah," Paige looked amused. "You were pretty smashed. Don't worry," she patted his knee fondly. "You didn't do anything you'll regret." And then she winked at him before she left and Chris was left horrified. What did she mean by that? She or her other completely horny and perverted sister hadn't taken advantage of him, had they? No, they couldn't have, he was pretty sure that it was impossible for him to get that drunk. No, he'd go into an alcoholic coma before he ever even thought about that. But why had she winked, oh, he was going to be sick? He quickly orbed to the bathroom upstairs in the nick of time.

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"Chris, honey? Are you okay in there?" Piper asked worried. She had been going to the bathroom when she saw Chris orb in and the door swung shut. And from the sounds coming inside she was pretty sure he was not okay. She bit her lips worriedly and pondered if she should just blow the door down and take him to a hospital. Where was Leo when she needed him? He could just heal her baby.

"I don't think so," Paige said and Piper jumped startled looking at her grinning sister. "It's part of the ritual."

"I don't know what you're talking about," Piper tried to act cool.

"You were wondering if you should call Leo. No, it's not a sister thing. You actually mumbled it," she finished raising her hands. "Now come here," she pulled Piper away and to her room closing the door.

"What?"

"He doesn't remember.'

"Excuse-me."

Paige rolled her eyes, "Last night, telling us, calling me Aunt Paige. He doesn't remember."

Piper looked at her sister and twisted her hands nervously. He didn't remember spilling who he was. Dealing with this would have been hard enough with him realizing what he'd done but now, how did she go about letting him know they knew. How do you tell your son who has obviously tried everything, and she meant everything, to not let his secret out that he did by accident. Thinking back there had been so many opportunities, and even more slips of the lip from Chris.

"You guys keep this stuff forever."

"I'm half-and half, like Paige," wasn't that the best time?

"If you kill her there won't be a future for us to go back to," because he'd disappear with her.

Why hadn't he said so?

"In all my life I never saw you take the bait like that."

"All your life, you've known us for two months." But that was two months ago. For four months he had kept his secret. She never managed a couple of hours and he managed four months.

Four months of their suspicion at everything he did, four months of living in a rundown couch

in the backroom of a noisy club, four months of them trying to pry his secrets out of him and not noticing when he did slip.

How did she tell him? How did she even start apologizing for everything?

xxx

Chris opened the bathroom door and came face to face with Phoebe who had a goofy smile on her face as she looked at him. He got even more worried as he saw that. Phoebe was worse than Paige, she had actually hit on him on several scarring and disturbed occasions. He just hoped she had a little of good sense to realize she should not take advantage of her drunken nephew.

“Hey Chris, how are you doing?” she asked sweetly and Chris whimpered a little. Her face turned from happy to worried and she asked. “Are you okay? Are you hurt?” she moved forward and Chris cried:

“I’m fine!” and he orbbed away from her as fast as he could. Phoebe just looked shocked.

“What’s up with that?”

xxx

Piper walked to the closed door purposely. She had to talk to him. She had tried calling Leo so they could do this together but the man had disappeared since last night. Well she wasn’t going to wait or pretend she didn’t know. She was going to fix this. She opened the door to the backroom of P3 not bothering to knock. That would just give Chris the chance to orb out. Why did she have to go and marry a Whitelighter?

Chris was there at the desk immersed in a bunch of paperwork that he quickly tried to hide as she entered.

“Er, Piper, ever heard of knocking?”

“What’s that?” she asked.

He looked at her and rubbed his temple and she worried that he wasn’t feeling well.

“It’s a list, of probable demons that may want to hurt Wyatt, but I can’t show it to you because it has information on the future and you can’t-“

“Learn about the future. It’s dangerous. I get it.”

He turned tired eyes on her, “Do you? Do you really get that I’m trying to save your son without erasing anyone else. That if I change too much I might erase people, I might erase future children you and your sisters had in my time and I don’t want that?” he asked frustrated getting up and slamming the papers inside a drawer. “Because I don’t think you realize how dangerous meddling with time is! I don’t think you people realize that I wouldn’t be here if I had any other choice!”

For the first time she really thought of what Chris was telling her. Maybe it was because she realized that he himself was risking never existing last night and that thought devastated her, but this was the first time she realized that he was right. If he changed too much he might erase the very people he is here to save. And she also realized that this was stressing Chris more than ever. That everything was getting to him. The loss of Bianca, his life on the balance and whatever he was here to stop. Because she had never seen him loose his calm that way. She realized that yesterday she delivered the last straw that broke the camel’s back. She hadn’t realized it even with him drunk. She had attributed his candor to the alcohol, but it wasn’t. He was here sober and he still looked like he was about to break and she was ashamed of never thinking he could. Of always thinking that Chris just bounced back. She shouldn’t have.

“I do,” she answered. “I didn’t before but I do now.”

“Oh really, what changed?” he snorted.

“I found out my son risked his very own existence to save his big brother,” she said simply and looking straight at him. “And I think he might have understood wrong something I said to him. Because he thinks he doesn’t matter but he does, just as much as his brother. When I said it I hadn’t known I’d have more kids. I thought I wouldn’t but that doesn’t mean I didn’t want them, just that I thought I’d be denied that and I was referring to everything else but never, never to another child I might have.”

From the moment the word son came out of her mouth Chris had been staring hard at her as if she had no right to be saying those things. But she didn’t falter, she needed him to understand. To understand that he was important and that she’d do anything for him just as she would for Wyatt.

“How did you-“

“You said it, when you were drunk. You were talking to the bartender and you let out that you were Wyatt’s brother.”

Chris was breathing fast now and he started pacing as he clenched and unclenched his fists. Every now and then he looked angrily at Piper with his teeth clenched. He opened his mouth a few times but said nothing until finally, “You weren’t supposed to know! Do you realize that? You weren’t-“

“Why?” she challenged.

“Because you’re not to, just that! Because I was going to fix everything and you need never know what happened! It’s not pretty! I didn’t want you to-“

"I'm your mother Chris," she walked towards him stopping his pacing by grabbing both his arms and making him face her. "I protect you, not the other way around."

"Really, really? You really want to know that someone turns your little baby angel evil. That my big brother who I adored and admired rules the world by fear, kills, tortures?" he asked angrily and Piper was shaking her head.

"No, that can't--"

"That is! Someone turned him and everyone's dead except Leo who is useless! And you didn't need to know it because I wasn't going to let that happen! You never needed--" his voice was breaking and his rant was interrupted by Piper pulling him into a hug. He stayed stiffly without knowing what to do, his arms hanging by his sides.

"You're not alone," she said firmly. "Together we'll fix it, we won't let it happen."

"No, we won't," came another voice from behind Piper. Piper didn't let go of Chris as she felt stiffen even more at hearing Leo. "And I don't know what I did in the future but you can be sure that I won't be doing it again. I won't leave my family again." he finished putting a hand on Chris's shoulder. Chris was shaking his head in denial but Leo didn't take that into account and embraced both Piper and Chris. "Your mother is right. You're not alone. You have your family and we'll make you believe in that even if you don't now."

"I--"

"You don't Chris but you will," he said firmly not letting the boy talk and Piper smiled. Yes they would. They would save their boys and be a family. She had no idea how but she just knew they would.

xxx

The end

A/N- I hope you liked it. I actually thought this would be a long story but in the end I think a one shot just about their family worked better than having the whole story told. You can assume that they did manage to save Wyatt and unfortunately Gideon killed Chris and well, you know how that goes.

Thanks for reading!