Maybe I'm a Lion

by calicokat

Summary

Stiles Stilinski. Human Beta. Relying on a smart mouth and quick mind boils down to gambling at beating long odds. When he takes up the man most irritated by unnecessary risk on lessons in survival, he sees an avenue to clear up that another lingering issue: being the only person he knows who hasn't had sex.

Peter's not about softcore sex, but life is good for Stiles' hormones.

Maybe he should have found a way to let Derek know he's sleeping with his uncle before crashing into total disaster. Maybe, knowing Peter Hale, he should have kept a safe distance to start with.
Chapter 1

Chapter Notes

Written over the past several months, I will be posting chapters as I edit the material. Anticipated in the beginning to be a PWP one-shot, the fic grew unexpectedly. In the process of editing, I intend to expand on the plot which developed. Expect sex, sex, events, sex, and probably sex—a story.

Extended author's notes for people into those are located here. I am also maintaining a timeline of the fic as related to the series: (x)

[February 6, 2015: While, unfortunately, this work is going to remain incomplete, the published material now has an epilogue to, I hope, give it a sense of closure.]

January, 2012

The blow to Stiles shoulder strikes him clean off his feet toward the bright blue PVC cover of the padded mat underneath him, the fall adrenaline-stretches, time warping – time to choose his landing.

He hits the mat rolling. He'd feel Bruce Lee as hell getting to his feet with a kick-up when he's out of momentum...for all one second before his opponent crashes into him but stops his own momentum with one foot; throws Stiles sideways harder than he put him down – worst case scenario, the human ends up sliding down the wall.

He's out of momentum, drags his legs up, rocking backward, curved back, kicks his legs into the air, achieves liftoff. In one outcome, he flips a hundred and eight degrees and lands with his feet underneath him. Probability against him, he makes the hundred eighty degrees, does not stick any part of the landing, and collapses onto his ass, introducing splitting pain to his tailbone.

Peter cringes down at him at what Stiles assumes is as ugly a sprawl as it feels to him.

"Did you think about turning that into a second back roll or did you decide to die?"

Stiles coughs into the back of his hands. Embarrassment coupled with losing all the air in his lungs. He grimaces, himself.

"I didn't think about turning it into a second back roll."

Lying would save face. It wouldn't save him from getting kicked in the chest, a consequence the wolf refrained from providing, but Peter looks pityingly down on him.


Stiles falls off the mat onto his back, chin tucked, arms slapping the ground to distribute the impact, two things he learned to do consistently a few weeks ago.

"I do not," he snipes. "I got airtime out of a backward roll with zero recycled momentum. I'm awesome."
The other Beta, lone agent, comes to stand beside him, prodding at him with his foot. Stiles is no longer intimidated when Peter can't determine a justification for his continued existence; grins up at the wolf, a grin met with disparagement.

"Dead. You're dead. More dead than you've ever been 'awesome'."

Stiles groans until Peter tilts his head like a bird. The time his throat's been creaking reaching has reaches its terminal limit. Ceases.

"The term is 'learning 'process'," Stiles says, prolonging the next round while waiting for his shoulder to stop throbbing. "While you can, not so traditionally, beat the lessons into me, you can't beat them into me all at once."

"Get up. Otherwise, I'm going to punch you again. Same place, same force, and if you don't make it to your feet…" Peter invites. Now he's smiling. Polite. Chipper.

Stiles gets up, gritting *Don't even think about it* with more rebellion than fear. The fear's still there. He's not a fan of pain.

He yelps as Peter goes from standing indolently still to slinging a punch, cry out of synch with Stiles successfully fielding it, hurt shoulder or not. No question he's getting beaten back; not ferociously. He knocks Peter's arms aside; gets to kick him in the face although *Ow*, his groin; feels good even if it's a low metaphorical difficulty setting – even though the wolf doesn't flinch.

Standard finale. 5:30 PM: Peter beats him into the floor. So. close. versus what he could defend against.

He lies flat on the mat gasping for air, his body shaking from exertion. Peter with his stupid face, his stupid groomed facial hair, his stupid big shoulders, v-necked shirts, sturdy hands, mischievous eyes, smirk formed with an almost-imperceptible sneer, with the stupid bulge in his jeans when he's not even hard, folds of denim stretching across it, gathered and accentuating where its weight rests—recently more interesting than it already had been – squats on his toes next to him.

Stiles tries not looking at his crotch. He taunts bystanders by choosing jeans one size too small. Always. He has those thick, round thighs. Jackass.

The human lies still as the wolf clasps his arm, Stiles' breathing returning to normal while black goo pollutes Peter's veins, racing up his arm to fade away into his system.

"I knew it'd be this tedious when I decided to make you less useless," Peter confides as he takes off the pain, releasing Stiles around the fifty-fifty split. "Still tedious."

"Implying I might be a little less useless," Stiles says, ignoring the skepticism unloaded on him by Peter's expression. "...I know what I need to be able to do before next time we meet up," he adds. No questions. There used to be until he figured out the last bout of the day records his most offensive weaknesses, vulnerabilities charted by the bruises Peter leaves behind.

"I'll call that progress," Peter grudges, pulling Stiles to his feet, good cleans veins on the back of his hand, palm softer than Stiles used to categorize as 'manly'. After a few too many infinitely healing werewolves, he's over it. It's nice to be the one guy with rough man-hands.

He's not a protégé because Peter believes in him. Ha. He remembers his close run in with an actual chupacabra, hungrier than it was hideous, and it was unbelievably ugly.

Then Peter and Isaac killed it, the two closest wolves canvassing the town when he started
screaming. Stiles had never considered developing some kind of crazy ninja skills like Alison. Sure, he envied her, but she'd been training since she was a child. She just hadn't known it. Peter, covered in gore, says: Your inability to defend yourself is going to get somebody killed.

Stiles asked him how much more effective he expected him to be in a state with some of the strictest gun laws in the country. He doesn't have licensed firearms dealer to fall back on if he's pulled over with an AK-47 or AR-15 in the Jeep. Peter told him to come by his apartment. That he'd try to make him slightly less pathetic. Stiles did, after the pack ruled it made sense. The person Peter doesn't want to get killed is Peter. He's motivated. Decisively, he brawls. That's easier to pick up than ten different weapons.

Stiles made other strides today. His body behaved while sparring with Peter; saved misbehaving for right now, standing a couple feet apart, the places Peter casually touched him radiating phantom warmth. The teen's eyes get stuck on Peter's remembering a mouth coaxing his own, the heat of naked skin, and deft, firm fingers sliding into his ass, slathering on the lube like Stiles spreads suntan lotion places the sun's ever touched…

No intermission. Straight into Act II. Peter proving that, yes, it fits in Stiles' anus. Better? Peter's cock stretching him out inside until 'full' and 'filled' no longer cover it. Even taking the words' spiritual connotations, Stiles would label it something more existential than that. The abrupt collision of his physical existence with a healthy fear of letting an inhuman apex predator cover him lingers. Cover him as in give it to him up the butt. He needs to weed out some horse breeding language before he never tells anybody how virginity was removed from his inventory.

And now he's staring at Peter, future bruises stinging-fresh, knowing he harassed the Beta into sex in the first place – eighty percent of the campaigning one hundred percent hormones. Working theory that if he got a piece of Peter then the man holding him to the floor, muscles flexed, heavy body a space heater, might evoke less of a semi or actual erection. Source of frustration. It even panned out that way. His body has learned the difference between compromised positions and pressure on his crotch, and memories of thick fingers and a thicker penis forging brand new definitions of vulnerability.

No ruling out the wolf might have manipulated him into it. He's betting against. He can effortlessly annoy Peter out of his skin.

"You want a 'happy ending'," Peter says, now the exhausted one. Case in point: Irked by the lasting attention and the idea of someone pressuring him into anything. Again. Sarcasm's a bladed edge to his voice. "I hadn't realized that's part of mixed martial arts."

"What? It isn't. I don't need that. Yes, I'm horny again. When am I not horny? Never. I'm never not horny. There's always a hard on lurking in my pants waiting for the right moment to debut." See. Totally behaving. Nothing about the despair no one will just fuck him, please god. Fixed. "I'll just go somewhere else and masturbate. Ignoring the hotness of the actual width of your neck, and the Hale jaw line there, the things your eyes do, plus the smirking, and the unbelievable... insolence, that's the word, of just...your dick. Always right there. Which could be more inside me."

Annnd fail.

Peter takes a long breath in, pulling Stiles off the air – easy to tell because his eyes are on his body; detached appraisal. Until last week Peter had no problem telling him to take his friction stiffies and get out of his apartment. The hope tying up Stiles' chest leaves him short of breath. Any one element of the last time he was here bowls him over. Example: Somebody was willing to touch his naked body. Combine it all into Peter carelessly obliterating his virginity and he's reeling.
Not enough, he thinks, seeing Peter shifting from evaluation to tedium. Peter denied him communicating his intentions while he had Stiles in bed, leaving a whimpering teenager to guess what would happen to his body next. He put in all the work. Stiles had two jobs: To cope with the excitement of exposing his anus and to pour on the adoration.

When he invades the wolf's space, doing science around his next hypothesis – Peter gets himself next to nothing and that is not his natural state – he's deduced the clencher lies in convincing him he's not gonna be deadweight. Sliding thumb and fingertips down Peter's forearms, guiding with an inexpert grasp, leaving the wolf's hands on his hips – ass, and rallying himself to something do with his own mouth despite Peter's cool, disengaged reserve...

Technically? Sexual harassment.

Yes, but no, he promises himself. If Derek's uncle (things not to call someone in bed) was not into being inside him or some never-consummated foreplay he'd be smacked away. Not even smack-smacked: popped on the wrist like when he tried to touch Peter's food. Something that hurts because he's weak like pink baby mouse, the same thing Peter set out to cure.

A sexual threat he is not. Closer to a less than thrilling sex toy Peter hopes he kept the receipt for.

Five o'clock shadow scrapes him on his kiss to Peter's jaw, a tremor in the teen's hand until it rests against the opposite cheek. It's actual skin. Not the skin of a dead person, coincidentally also skin but beginning to stretch too-smooth, icy, first stink of death coming off it. All compelling arguments against necrophilia, even if Peter's technically undead, a distinction Stiles considered. (Is it losing his virginity if it's necrophilia?) The imperfect gradient between the soft skin padding his variant on lethal weapon cheekbones and the rough growth of new beard, the temperature running hot, the lingering smell of aftershave and the scent of fresh sweat bringing out thoughts more appealing, the idea Peter Hale is for sexing.

His lips go to work, slick, thin flesh dragged over stubble, coaxing kisses ending with a sound from himself Stiles mostly hears on video, thumb caressing the wolf's other cheek, his awkwardness crumbling off, range of motion freed, while the teen presses himself bodily closer, the hand left on Peter's chest getting to know the slab of muscle under the wolf's grey cotton shirt all over again.

Last encountered more nakeder.

Peter grunts annoyed acquiescence, if not leaping into motion. His grip firms up, slides underneath Stiles' not-substantial buttocks and effortlessly tucks their hips together. Not a big change distance wise, except Peter's cock's presses right up to Stiles' and, lo, it is not flaccid. Stiles makes with a happy whine and sucks some skin; more confidence – also more spit. He takes an adrenaline-shaky breaths that stretch his menagerie of new bruises; gets his hand underneath the wolf's shirt. Abs. Hell yes abs. Loose, long, curly hairs Stiles knows for a fact are blonde saying If you need help finding my penis, start above my belly button and follow them down.

"Think of all the people who'd kill to have I'm-so-seventeen trying to get them out of their clothes," he teases against Peter's jaw. Flirtation is a work in progress. Being an ass has to fill in.

Optimistically, Peter has no immunity to 'argument from exclusivity.' Or doing something illegal because.

Hands caress his ass, never letting up despite denim hanging loose. Not all people can have an apple bottom butt like Derek. Anyway, Stiles has started getting the impression Peter has a thing. Maybe because, laid out on his stomach, the other Beta stoked his glutes longer than other surface.
Peter turns his head incrementally toward Stiles, not enough to dislodge him, scowling.

"The most annoying, unbearable parts of you personality are you're seventeen."

Stiles rolls his eyes. Bites Peter with force. It's super ineffective! Gets a growl back. Not a frisky play growl, yet promising. Now that he's Alphaleess, if Peter loses his territory to Scott..**Bang.** Omega.

Little paranoid maybe. Luck would have it, position negligible, racking up points with Scott's number one Beta is antithetical to turning over the slice he carved out of Sacramento.

Because so was 'getting sick of being endangered by Stiles lack of combat-situated coordination', already, Peter might also be taking this chance to get a foothold on emotionally manipulating Stiles. Stiles broadly isn't worried about annoyed!Peter prostituting himself. More than he is all the time.

His pushes his thumb into the wolf's belly button, digging a circle. Peter may have some issue about his asshole not-for-touching. From the wince across his brow; the droop of his eyelids, still a lot of nerves in there, but shooting a spike down from his navel to his junk's fair play. The wolf hauls up on his ass. Stiles yelps; forehead falls, pressed to Peter's, clasped there by his own hand. His thumb pushes in harder. The power in the muscles around it makes an impression with the reactionary flex of the other Beta's stomach.

"No good," Peter says. Breathy voice, using Stiles' erection as a sex aid while saying **No good** as in...declaring these things **sub par**? Stiles battles with resentment. Yeah, he's upset. He only gave his virginity to the dude.

He bites his lip.

"Cum anywhere you want, dude. Cross my heart I will not bitch for twenty minutes about getting an enema, douche, whatever – for wh eyever you want it my my ass." Possibly he had been resistant to that idea after Peter treated him like he was crazy for suggesting a condom, earlier.

Stiles' eyes are shut but he feels Peter's face go skeptical.

"'Keeping my sex life private' from your packmate's noses'. What if Scott's mom ever **finally** has sex with me?"

Never desired to hear. Would bitch about it, too. Mixed-signals!wolf still has his ass cheeks in each hand. No good? Then why in the hell is he dragging Stiles' fly against his like Stiles, just hanging tighter to him, initiated humping him, which he did not. He mutters an annoyed **Dude** when Peter pushes into him, barely-there thrusts of his hips feeling more like taking one from a battering ram.

"I don't know who's getting molested anymore," Stiles gripes, unhappy he's not getting laid. Rubbing off on Peter would've been awesome two weeks ago when his desire to do **that** achieved 'ridiculous obsession'. Now, miracle of god (or the devil), he's had sex. Goddamn it. He wants sex. "I didn't think I was that bad."

Naughty, nipple-toying, tongue bathing, dick stroking, butt fucking, tongue kissing Peter appeared pretty okay with it. Especially with that look divided between the teen's asshole and Stiles face when he finally pressed Stiles' legs wide open, Scott's Beta groaning, whimpering, wrecked with anticipation since those fingers stopped playing up getting him wet, precum leaking down his dick, Peter not saying a word, smirk saying it all.

No other memory matches up to getting penetrated. Letting Peter get inside him. Hey, there's the first ring of muscle, feels really nice when that spreads, skin parting smoothly, snug against the even softer head of Peter's uncut cock that's pressing against...Hello. Fingers seemed so innocent! Fingers
he's even tried out before in his shower! All Stiles attention rivets on a suddenly vital question. Second ring of his sphincter's freaking out like How actually big is that thing and what happens when it stops stretching?

Answer: First ring of muscle, all exulting nerves singing they had something thick, stiff, but soothingly soft and pleasurably hot to grope, kept right on exulting. Body suddenly pushed full, the more unhappily stretching muscles release, tension disappearing in a flare of liberation. That never happened the second or third time Peter slid it out to put it in, sphincter chill while Peter treated it to heavy petting from inside; Stiles unclear how to 'work it' but getting his groping on, especially when Peter guided his hands; the mouth to mouth instinctive – easy to pick up the flow.

Mixed signals. Peter turns his head a little further into Stiles', kisses his cheek. Not pecks. Makes out with. Licks. Sucks at. Erection burning through the denim alongside Stiles'.

"You were virgin. Normally? Giant hassle. You..." A tongue licks a long trail from jaw to temple. It's Peter's. His voice falls low, wistful, not-quite-sane. "All excited, obedient...trusting, letting me push you around. Now you're not a virgin. Do the math."

"Shit," Stiles rebukes, pushing his hand up Peter's abdomen between them, proud he's allowed to touch skin. "That's it? That's all? Damn it. You can push me around. As long as I can push back. I'm familiar with BDSM. I'm from the internet. Not sure about latex, and puppy play is too weird 'cause you're a werewolf, but otherwise."

Chuckling shakes the heavy body close against him.

"I'm not a big fan. 'Safe' and 'sane' I just can't work with."

He isn't as angry as he wants to keep going with this experiment called 'getting laid' he's not willing to wait another indefinite span of time for.

"I consent," he says, teeth clenched. "I volunteer as a tribute. I'll sign a waiver. An affidavit. Accept consensual. Take my full consent and get out of your clothes."

Peter kisses the corner of his mouth, nuzzles his head against him, still has his ass in both hands, grips him hard enough to pull his cheeks apart until an ache just starts. Lets him go.

"That's much too tempting, little boy," he says faux-sweet, all predator. Not as in 'sexual'. Stiles' heart beats fast; he's not correcting him. "You understand what you're saying? No silly little safewords. You come in this apartment, nothing stops because you say 'stop'." Stiles shivers. Peter pressed along him, sinuous; hungry. Little squeeze. The animal disappears. "Not to sound like a beast. Combat training's on. If you try and get on me in a fight? You'll remember not to try it twice." He pulls away from Stiles' hand. Eye contact. Veneer of civility. "You know? I actually do enjoy pretty normal sex, just not all the time."

Stiles body has a vote. More like a majority of the seats in parliament. Common sense makes a motion, but the chamber is unmoved. Counters Peter already plays his little sadist games. He's got a line on them and he is way harder than he was hard five minutes ago. His patience goes.

"Ditto. Ibid. See previous. I got it: 'Begins and ends at the front door'. Peter, I need you to do bad things to me ten minutes ago."

"Says the Beta of the most powerful Alpha on the West Coast," Peter monotones. Releases him. Steps away. There goes the shirt. The muscle, nipples, the freckles, the chest hair manly, blonde, following the depressions beneath his clavicles, following the dip of his sternum, giving extra
definition to the upper curve of his pecs; tapering off between them. And: Right. Stiles doesn't think of himself like Scott's adjunct outside of packtivities. Stiles may be too hot for Peter's body to have made a contract based on common sense, but Scott's a party to it. Not the time to argue it was all blind stupidity; zero Scott-related arrogance. There are a limited number of things he can articulate.

"You are so beautiful," Stiles says dumbly, staring at bare skin. Peter's as incredulous as he is le let the words out of his mouth, staring back. In plenty of ways Derek's 'the pretty one', but Derek left town. There's just this guy, raw weight of his incredible but not OCD shaped muscles hanging on his stockier frame: super pretty when he's doing the light, playful eyebrows, handsomer with his resolve face, other times things like 'a soulless predator' and on a bad day 'evil'.

Right now he's eyebrow guy, partly because he thinks Stiles's crazy. Stiles suddenly realizes he's not contributing, sheds his shirt; sheds his undershirt, wishes his nifty new bulk didn't look so new. Thicker arms, thicker thighs, the only anything like muscle on his calves because he doesn't just need to run, he needs to kick doors down and faces in. He kicks Peter's ass at chest hair. It's thicker. He will never part with it. It took nine million years to grow – like all his body hair. He gets the seventy-two hour shadow.

He's cool with it. Genetics gave him soft luxurious arm hair. Long, fine and weightless, lying across his forearms in one direction. Difficult to brag about in a conversation, yet he has skills. 'But my arm hair is luxurious' has ended an argument.

"Keep going," Peter prompts. He's got the enviable thighs out. The also enviable calves. He vacated his jeans. Not his briefs, which hide nothing. There's his erection, but that doesn't lie in wait for long. Peter's casual with the nudity. Produces the goods. Goods Stiles imported to his ass and will import again. Somehow his attention isn't just on the peen. He develops a brief fascination with Peter's feet. All innocuously foot like, but the base to Peter's impossible speed; his balance. They look like feet.

Peter gives up, passing to the other side of Stiles, pulling him in by the back of his jeans, hands grazing over the teen's bare waist to liberate him of his jeans himself. Stiles Oh my god and Peter's It's not like it's your personal space coincide.

He's kosher getting footwear off while Peter pushes his pants down, wondering at the fact of the erection resting against his back, laying against even more skin when his clothes are pushed off in one take. Just hanging around. Brushing him as casually as the wolf's hands. Stiles is alone in his excitement at the touch of Peter's cock. His stomach twists. He's skipping teenage sex. The fumbling. Gleeful overstimulation. Tutorial levels. Instead, pulled backward into a body, a grown man's bare flesh against his skin while his mind and eyes follow the hands sliding over his body.

He stops himself and doesn't ask What are you gonna do to me? Scrub question. Noob question. A hand combs across his chest, the other closes on his cock, moving slow, swipes of a thumb where it counts, light twisting, long strokes pulling up and smoothing down the not-so-loose skin. Stiles hasn't survived life without cut and uncut guys comparing dicks. It's California, and they're nominally Catholic. It's not a problem except imagining getting to third base and the girl not being thrilled. Nothing to get shy about when Peter's state of nature.

The motions of Peter's hand mesmerize. He's looking down his own body over muscle he's working to build that doesn't go unappreciated by roving touch with heat bleeding up into his cock to wash back in waves, his spreading excitement soothing the apprehensions he's not ready, can't match up to this. His body'll go.

"Not shabby. I can suck that," Peter decides, Stiles jumping a fraction not away from but but back into him. Habit dictates when in doubt throwing himself toward allied werewolves, although hiding behind Peter's unlikely. "What? Not now," Peter chides. Like that's the surprising part. "I hate anal,
but most guys eventually wanna put it in something."

Stiles can handle that. He can totally handle that. Imagine it? Nope. He made some assumptions about pride and control built up from the total domination of Peter, None-of-Your-Shit the martial trainer. Now he's remembering Peter doesn't have a macho image. Totally cool with oral sex. Check. Leaving Stiles wondering if he is.

Getting an arm slung around his waist, an escort to the bedroom, he figures choice and okayness won't be factors. More like 'get over it and suck'. Only that's assuming if he's eye level with Peter's penis he'd freeze up. No reason to think that. He froze when it did that swing penises do when a cock goes from tucked-in to free to obey the forces of anatomy and gravity when the pants come off. Froze momentarily except for the blaze of heat through an erection already gone through every pumping contraction, as straining-full of blood as it gets.

It looks like the bed waits in a state of readiness, even when the covers are half-heartedly thrown back over it, like now, Peter effortlessly tosses them to collapse away from the sheets. At no time when Stiles has been in his room, all but one for changing clothes reasons, has he seen Peter bothered to 'make' it, covers usually left how he left them when he woke up. Stiles would hate to produce the sweeping psychological assumptions he makes and refines about everyone all the time, but in an apartment so spotless it could only belong to a middle class meth addict with nothing else to spend energy on, the fact of the bed being left with personality says...

Peter's tired and his bed is his only friend. Stiles'd go for unthinking that, like anything else that could make him sympathetic to Peter, but it doesn't matter. Even if all he can think about is Peter, that one thought's bulldozed by the anticipation of getting with Peter; Peter touching him; Peter and lube; all the naked; the weighty erection he needs to fill some needs; a now titanically exaggerated idea of how gorgeous the man is because his dick may have the loudest voice but skin as skin is the largest organ and Stiles' craves him everywhere.

(No matter how horny, his brain fires off the thought Peter should have gone with Derek. Why didn't he go when this place is a shrine to the painful separation of dedicated stalker from tolerant stalkee?)

Question for later, pulling a guy into his personal space and progression straight to tongue kissing billboards stalker in question found a distraction. The rest of Stiles' skin really is competitively sensitive with his foreskin, the wolf knows this from round one; he can't control being noisy, gasping, rubbing on Peter if he gets the chance, but that gets him pushed away; held off. Not much to Peter fingering him, intermittent encounters between Stiles' ass and the lube, prying hand sliding inside him not a central event.

At first the other Beta's on top of him, there is nipple sucking and Stiles could come if he kept that up. Peter knows, too. He breaks off at the optimally frustrating point, leaving Stiles' nipple hard and legit throbbing right of his heart. A flip-over. Stiles unexpectedly straddles Peter. Gets annoyed at the werewolf-grade pinch that puts his hips off from thrusting. Kisses it out, doing a lot of human-grade biting the man enjoys from the quiet, satisfied sounds he makes. There's so much of Peter pressed against him, all of him warm, their skin conforming to each other's bodies, deliciously fitted together. He stops caring about retaliation even if the pinch to his hip still hurts.

"Let's play a game," Peter announces coolly, leading Stiles to believe Peter has already won, that there is no outcome but that and he may not like the 'game' very much if at all.

"Yeah?" he says, heart beating faster, part sexual excitement, part fear.

"Get up, turn around, just take a seat there in front of my penis. Go on."
Stiles feels queasy at the detachment in Peter's voice. He pushes himself off him. He goes through the motions. At first getting upset makes zero sense until his brain starts rattling off about being extraneous to his anus. He performs, but his thoughts stay in the pits.

"That's definitely your penis. Here it is," Stiles says to himself, Peter an accidental second party to the narration going through his head. The disappointment. The things the wolf wants to do to him don't include looking him in the face. Wow. How could it get more flattering than that? "Your penis. That I'm going to..."

Let into his hips? Does he bounce on it? He plays lacrosse. His thighs could handle something less ridiculous feeling. Possibly he's capable of riding it. Like, vertically. If he could just ask for ten minutes with some porn or a website for gay dudes his confidence would quadruple, even if he'd stay hurt.

"I'd try sitting on it," Peter offers behind him, all sass.

Stiles groans. He wonders if Peter makes the innocent face when nobody's looking or if it's creepy dead face and saucy taunt. Tree falling in a forest.

"You? Shut up. Unless you have an actual constructive suggestion."

The one thing he knows for sure he's doing is, or will be, sitting on Peter's erection.

A drier voice, sarcasm-desiccated, delivers Peter's second take:

"I'd try sitting on it because, believe me, I'm not hosting amateur hour on my dick."

That changes things. His game plan, and the assumption of heartless neglect. A natural assumption about a heartless individual. Stiles wets his lips. Can't be too hard. —nix that. Preferably it's super hard. He squints, reaching out, clasping it lightly, giving a squeeze. Weird now that he's having a hands-on experience with Peter Hale's junk. That the first time he's handling it he's sitting on the guy's stomach, own erection hanging beside it, penis basically in isolation. He still breathes hotter, still swallows, gets his excitement up just wrapping his hand around what's a thick piece of werewolf. Has affirmed with his grasp it's blood-tight enough it won't try to wiggle under him. Gives it a few strokes for luck or something, soft slide about to be reducing the friction on him putting it inside himself. A thing he's gonna do, now.

The owner of the erection at hand's staying patient. More importantly, quiet – besides his arms shifting on pillows and sheets and the sound of him breathing; the anticipant flex of his legs.

Stiles rises onto his knees. Thank tall. He doesn't wanna be the girl in porn who kind of has to squat and then lower herself down. Specifically because he's crazy self-conscious already thinking about his back, thinking he kinda has a pancake ass, plus his thighs haven't put on any heft in the past hour. He didn't think about any of that last time, all groping, getting groped, giving Peter enthusiastic mouth to mouth, getting worked up until he wanted it in. Now he's on show. He can't see Peter's face. Oh yeah, he still wants it in. So much. For a moment, moving over the guy, his stomach trembles, the insides of his thighs shiver, the head of the wolf's cock brushing his balls, perineum, ass. He gets his head together. He'd like control over his body being a wibbly mess.

He didn't think about any of that last time, all groping, getting groped, giving Peter enthusiastic mouth to mouth, getting worked up until he wanted it in. Now he's on show. He can't see Peter's face. Oh yeah, he still wants it in. So much. For a moment, moving over the guy, his stomach trembles, the insides of his thighs shiver, the head of the wolf's cock brushing his balls, perineum, ass. He gets his head together. He'd like control over his body being a wibbly mess.

Peter reaches down, grasps his own cock, holds it steady. Stiles thinks Thanks, Peter, but he doesn't say anything because defensive sarcasm. Head. Okay. That's where that goes. Fitting in when he presses down at the right spot. Done this, right? Exhales like he's about to take a punch, relaxing his body. The tense stretch from before. Yep. Kinda hurts. Then he parts inside, that first sensation of
fullness; his body releases – relents. He groans relief. Sinks down; hisses, too full too soon, angle off; thighs raise him back up; takes it better the second time, exhales and gets further.

His brain switches back on. He didn't know it'd gone anywhere, swept off by sensation, automatic reactions. Now it's got a few suggestions on getting through the confused expressions vying for face time and getting Peter all the way in. Total agreement from everything that he wants that more than makes sense, body spastic or not.

A few strokes of that vertical riding convinces him he doesn't have to clench up. And there he has it. Peter's cock. All however many inches. He feels them, but circumference is what's on his mind. His mind claims it feels the size of a coke can. Untrue. Maybe somewhere around a mini-can. The '100 calories!' ones. Peter can't produce that many calories. Stiles applauds himself for simultaneously wondering about the calorie content of werewolf semen and working his anus up and down the wolf's cock. In the short meanwhile, that last one got way easier.

"This could be the best view of you," Peter muses lyrically behind him.

Stiles mouth drops open, brows an interstate pileup. He starts to turn his head. Realizes Peter would benefit from any pivoting. Presses his lips together. Snaps his head forward. Scowls down the wall.

"Annd I'm done."

He needs to get off Peter's cock, first. He can make that happ—

Cue scream. Not pain screaming. Surprise? Yes. Falling? That one. Fear? Sure. Fear. His back smacks into Peter's chest. That fixes falling, even though he's next door to hyperventilating. Peter kept his dick all snug and close inside him. Pulled his legs up with his raised, spread thighs pushing Stiles' – both hooked outside Peter's – wide. He's positive he couldn't lever himself to get off Peter this way. That realization comes right before the hand slides up his throat; pushes up underneath his chin; holds him with force beneath the jaw, the teen's head pressed back over Peter's shoulder, chin tilted high next to the wolf's.

"You may hurt me," Stiles reflects; parrots, grasping that that actually means something important with his new view of the headboard and the dull pressure in the muscles of his stretched neck.

"Not impossible," Peter agrees into Stiles' ear. The teen whines; pushes his shoulders down; arches his back; accepts the first of Peter's thrusts into his stretched anus as the only response to his never-going-to-work-anyway escape ploy.

He wants the wolf to keep driving into him. Now that the surprise wore off there's amazement the glide's so smooth. He stretches his legs a little wider, pulls them a little higher, answered by Peter's body, his ankles braced on the mattress, pulled up it to hold him there. Stiles has to notice that matching set of balls hasn't tightened up; a soft, loose slap chasing every thrust. Also, he needs to murder Peter. Even if the hand holding his abdomen down, his body against the wolf's, no more bucking up, he appreciates more than the other hand. The mean hand.

"I'm other definitions of 'done','" he swears, making a lot of noises that cannot be mistaken for complaints. He makes a face. "Still mad at you."

"Nobody ever tells you how good looking you are? That's a shame, Stiles." Coaxing, soft-spoken, genuine voice. Stiles pulls a shaky breath in through his nose, punched with emotion. To question if Peter's manipulating him's meaningless – it's synonymous with Peter talking. Take off all the masks and would there be anything left? Important: A totally gorgeous man naked at his back turning his body into one span of heat and pleasure's telling him the world's just neglected to notice him. He's
hot. Pain flashes past at the thought of Heather. Shit. Was he even possibly 'the hot friend' she knew would go for her? That's not in his self-image. "I don't think you've had a real look at your ass," Peter scolds, playful, dulling the edge on the pain.

Objection! Half-hearted, distracted objection further distracted by a body independently and happily getting into the getting boned. Objection nonetheless:

"Uh, it's hard not to see my own ass. Especially in hotels because decorators' obsession with full length mirrors everywhere all the time across the country." He winces at the facts. "There is a word for me which is ectomorph. If you haven't heard it, trust me that it's an unfortunate word."

Peter's palm keeps pressure on his abdomen but rubs him appreciatively, his hips keeping steady pace, easy for somebody with Peter's strength. Stiles moans, legs fallen to the sides by now, wide open. Having Emotions aside he's researching things to do with his hands. Reach back and scratch on Peter's scalp even if the jerk is breaking his neck and he's sick of the view almost featureless modern headboard. Play around with his own nipples or chest hair. Not touch his cock because the thing it's doing with the head smacking his stomach's too great. Trail his fingertips over Peter's arm...

There's that honeyed voice again, the one he suddenly recognizes he's trapped beside:

"Personally, I was thinking 'Every time I just go the whole way in. Somebody'll have to pull me off this kid.' You're free to have your own opinion."

The thing Peter's saying? True. So he has square hips. So it's a lot like his lower back just continues on down. So it's hard to put muscle on his legs. Inside he's stretched out like a snug latex glove. Peter's balls have started drawing up but they're still bumping him. They're right up on his asshole. Extra super-available for anal sex. From Derek's smoking psychotic uncle. They will never have to 'find' a position. Everywhere is a position.

"Yours is good. Your opinion works," he swears, neck damp from the heat of Peter's palm, whole body in a sweat. Peter's, too. Less so.

Werewolf endurance for all things physical, the other Beta never has to give up impaling him. The night could pass, the clock strike six am. Peter's physically capable of keeping the thrusting up. Stiles considers the confessed dilemma. Considers having to text Scott: Dude, I need you to get Peter off me. No real worry that that one's the plan, but Peter's still executing a plan. One where walking straight's going to challenge Stiles tomorrow.

He hears his own noises getting more pathetic. He already had werewolf fists intimate with his body today. Took a couple good kicks. When Peter urges him to pull his legs up he only whines. Somehow he agrees to get a hand, then an arm, under one knee. Stiles no longer needing holding down, Peter gets the other leg because Stiles just isn't gonna – and still the hand's holding Stiles head back, cricks in his neck stuck where they're stuck.

No longer knocking his legs around translates into a brand new definition of getting his ass pounded. Nothing wrong with that. Extremely right. Especially with the couple hundred pounds of guy, fully muscled, moving beneath him. With the kaleidoscope of Peter's mind monocolor, scheming brain rapidly reduced to one primitive thought: He's gotta put his load in Stiles' ass. No need to guess when that gets done, Peter's pace broken up, a hard thrust with what has to be every streak of cum. Three big ones. Gets erratic after that.

Stiles' cock, numb from hitting his abs, can no longer tell him for certain where its edges are, and it's so, so close to orgasm from excitement. Not quite. The intellectual masturbation over the coup thrown on Peter's brain got him worked up, just not carnally.
He has to whine Peter's name a couple times to get him to stop slamming him with intermittent jerks – the guy's just fucking with him, not fucking him.

The hand disappears from beneath Stiles' jaw. He's afraid to move his head at this point. Immediately regrets doing it when he does, too, guttural, shocked sounds at the shooting aches. He gets through it. Lowers his chin. Tucks it to his chest, extending his torment, before laying it back where it was, but not stretched like getting hung. Eyes sting. Muscles wicked hurt. His legs, now free and at rest alongside the wolf's, got good and limber before any extreme stretching happened. Not so his neck.

"Those are some delicious noises," Peter croons, tongue swiping across the shell of Stiles' ear. No surprise he's all chuffed over leaving pain behind.

"Right," Stiles says, ignoring it. "Jacking off."

Even if it belongs to a serious bastard, the cock spreading him open, filling him out, feels fantastic. That's not going anywhere until he gets off. Peter creates no new problems while Stiles wraps his hand around his dick, pulling on it with fatigue at first swiftly supplanted by a huge upswing in arousal. He can't give a statement on what happened next except he shot cum up his stomach. A stomach recently featuring a muscular crease down the middle. Cum pooling. Surface tension breaks above his belly button, a little trickling in.

Disentangling takes doing. Not a lot. Peter roles Stiles and himself onto their sides, uncaring about jizz running onto his sheets. He gets out of him. When Stiles thinks he should about be out of him there is yet more cock inside him, his ass yet again an unreliable information source.

For once, because he was beat and then got banged by a werewolf, 'Focus on the present' wins. The present's full of win. He's sprawled in a really nice, as in fucking expensive, bed with an incredible hunk, if it's okay to use that word – 'of beef', delicious beef – who's in violation of the California penal code and yet…Stiles' problem, the potential damage, has zero to do with Peter being a man all over. Wait. Double, triple check that against his memory. Yeeeah. Still manly. He'd suggest the potential for harm, which is vast, has more fangs to it – plus atypical, antisocial brainmeat irrelevant to age.

He glances over his shoulder at Peter, who's (unsurprisingly) lounging. Lounging expert, Peter. Really fucking attractive with his muscles relaxed, his expression calm, his gaze wandering. Stiles scoffs, looking on appreciatively, upper body twisted to facilitate that.

Peter's not a fan of nattering so Stiles drops his voice, speaks slower, lets the vocal fry in, roughens it up. He's got around an octave on the Hales if he wants it:

"I can't believe you gave me dick. Twice, now. You actually are attracted to me to the point of getting an erection and taking it to the finish line. An erection not premised on my rude wiggling when you pin me." His chest swells at Peter's sudden full attention, the spark of surprise. Keep the voice low. Voice is sexy. Check. "I can't believe I have to drive myself home," he goes on. Amused, now. Until he realizes, groaning: "Oh, man. Shit. I actually can't believe you're gonna make me do an enema. I don't even know what you put in those to kill the smell, besides that the answer involves possibly toxic herbs I probably don't want inside me."

The bed sinks as Peter moves. Rolls back onto his side. Comes closer. Being cuddled up by Peter can be added to Stiles' list of 'Things To Do Forever', even if dragging him into his arms – getting the bulk of his upper body over him – is a dominance and control thing. Now, kissing. Stiles enthusiastically engages, eats it up, mortal fatigue or no mortal fatigue.

"I'm going to make you do an enema, yeah," Peter confesses guiltlessly when the teen's lips have
swollen. With the advance apology in the form of tongue, Stiles could also care less.

That said: Not a fan of colonic irrigation. It's not the worst thing. The worst thing would be any other werewolf making a Stile-sized dent in something, maybe the side of his so-abused Jeep, when they smelled Peter's spunk. No, he doesn't think Scott or Isaac would hurt him on purpose. Never that. Just, possibly, werewolves deal with the equivalent of peeing on a fire hydrant by ripping the fire hydrant out of the ground. He chooses to not receive any territorial reactions intended toward Peter.

Let his ass tighten up a minute, hang a liter bag up on the shower head, let Peter touch him weird and bask in his discomfort? Voila.

He gets out of there after a shower – it's not the same fluid but still questionable to rub down with the stuff Peter used to keep his scent from leaking out – and a change of clothes, way beyond too tired to try anything impure involving showers. He's had a his drawer here for a couple weeks. Not because he expected...any of this. At all. No, because busting his nose or maybe cutting his forehead like when he was eight, driving home looking like the final scene out of Carrie, might draw police attention. Not to mention get blood all over the Jeep.

In the time Stiles showered down, Peter engaged with his iPad. Stiles plants his hands on the arms of his chair and convinces him about leaving off a minute for sucking face, thank you. That wouldn't work if he intended to separate Peter and the device. Some spit swapping doesn't break his flow.

"So, I'll see you," Stiles says, stepping off; sticking his hands in his pockets; grinning. The ordinary.

"Call first. Text," Peter reminds him, glancing him over skeptically; relaxing when it's apparent Stiles has zero fresh designs on home invasion.

The teen dismisses himself, a raised hand indecisive between wave and a salute before, exhausted but ultra relaxed, he's out the door.

No appearance of shenanigans. No more than the usual shenanigans. Everybody with a stake knows Peter's giving him the Navy SEAL boot treatment.

His dad may hate he's getting a thrashing from a werewolf once or twice a week. Moreso, hate the wolf is Peter, who he hasn't met but has seen the work of. He can't pretend his son's anything but outclassed by the stuff that comes at him, or that that even remotely discourages Stiles from taking his chances. Scott, Isaac, and the twins have nothing to teach, big on instinct. Allison and Chris, frikkin ninjas. He's been promised some weapons training...as soon as he can handle himself.

And then Derek and Cora. Physically gone. Also, inferior to Peter. Fact. No question in his mind Peter can thrash Derek. Even 'boo hoo I'm back from the dead' Peter. If the guy isn't downright lying, Stiles can bet he's exaggerating. He'll always appreciate Derek throwing himself in between him and Peter, but to call that a fight would be a huge misnomer. Stiles noticed for a stalker, and possibly Derek's Beta – but that felt uncomfortable to ask about – Peter sure stayed a long way from the Alpha Pack except when unavoidable. Stiles has the paranoia to expect he has some 'extra effort' lying around for real emergencies.

Once was a diversion. Twice came with the promise of infinite repeats. Does he tell somebody about the change in situation? Peter didn't say 'don't tell'. There was vague social pressure in that direction. What would Peter really care if he did tell? As long as it's not 'the police' or 'the feds' or To Catch A Predator, which no longer exists.

He's having these thoughts continuing down that train, pros and cons, while he's driving home. Sure, he's always thinking about something, but in this case a pause in thought reminds him he just wants...
to die if he can't get in his bed immediately. He has now had enough of these thoughts to determine he's not saying anything to anybody. Less of a decision. He tricked himself into revealing it to himself. Suddenly he knows.

He's glad he solved the virginity thing. He's into Peter getting into him. The danger of being around the lone Beta hasn't increased or decreased. That'd require Peter to base his choices on rationality, and he doesn't. If something terrible will to Stiles, he has very little power to affect that. Not absolutely. Only as far as negotiating with Peter's concerned.

Hey, Stiles, he thinks, You sure went right back to a bunch of bullshitting.

Fucking brain.

He wants a slice of something for himself.

Scott has the True Alpha thing. He's wrestling with that in ways Stiles can't get in on. He doesn't have Scott's LAN line to the rest of the pack. Allison has Isaac. Lydia has Aiden, on weeks when their fiery personalities don't clash. Danny and Ethan are disgustingly adorable. His dad and Scott's dad and Melissa are doing some love triangle thing that's severely stressing him.

Plan: Make it with Peter on the DL. Good times. He's welcome there, seeing the dude's neurotically, even aggressively lonely.

The story of Peter's day to day as Stiles understands it is he works in HR at an advertising firm, on a business Master's and that charm. According to investigation – graduation records, examination of his personal items, general invasiveness – he had been preparing for a life if evil before going into a coma and entering a different life of evil. He didn't forget the skills for extracting money from humans with the least possible effort.

Shot in the dark the problem boils down to: Most people are stupid. It's too easy. He spends eight or nine hours a weekday facing that down. There are only so many ways he can fuck people over a week.

Despite actually being Catbert, which has to occasionally be a blast, the man won't talk about work. He leaves pay stubs in weird places – wherever he sets them down, which has been totally out of sync with the orderliness of the apartment – and segregates his work clothes by a foot of empty closet. Pay stubs say he's making bank. Like seventy thousand a year. Stupid money for zero past experience. So, he's stupefying good at his job. His level of interest that Stiles has investigated two pay stubs in front of him? First new hostility at household electronics, next zero reaction.


The teen's waffling about bringing that up to Derek. Derek doesn't need that. He's in New Mexico trying to get a steady job to put Cora through school. Not make her sleep in an abandoned anything. They're loose Betas only just staking out a territory. Everything could go wrong at any time. Hell, Stiles hasn't said a single thing about Peter besides he's teaching him to fight. He's kept Derek's uncle out of conversations. If Derek wants to know anything, unlike other Hales, he'll ask.

Conversations by text message became conversations through e-mail. Derek bought a laptop to keep up with job searching – the laptop Stiles told him to buy. Stiles has lots of other things to slip into conversations. Convos are already so much easier when they're not on the spot. As far as Stiles knows the single thing Derek is capable of alone is reading. Super cultured. Good for him.
Derek will game. First he has to learn to make the computer do things at all. Considering his cellphone proficiency? He has only to choose to become computer literate. He's chosen. Stiles pulled out the double edged swords, like Typer Shark. Computer proficiency aid? Yes. Game? Why, he hadn't noticed.

It'd be fantastic if Derek made friends down where he lives. Got out. Met people. Mingled. No. He made a great decision and also huge mistake leaving Peter. They cannot the social function. PTSD has that effect. So, Stiles is giving it a couple and then getting the wolf into his IRC channel of long habitation, while hoping Derek meets at least a couple people who don't stress him. There's all kinds of people Stiles chats and games with, different ages, different jobs...

A social environment minus the avalanche of information from scent. Forget visual acuity and super hearing. Stiles enjoys Derek and Peter because they have to be deduced. He could never just ask Derek Why do you never leave your mildewy apartment? or Peter Why are you in Derek's mildewy apartment when he isn't even here? That hasn't changed.

When he plots against Derek Stiles sometimes feels like a creep. Then he remembers he wants Derek to meet his friends. He wants the wolf to make friends. He wants to get him into some games, open up his interaction with moving things he's not trying to kill. He's plotting for Derek. Because they're friends. They're definitely friends. They might even be good friends. Been pret-ty emotionally intimate now.

As in: 'Hey, a second one of your Betas died but I'm here and I will be here even if you cried uncontrollably or collapsed into a fetal position' or 'I'm not going to snap the neck of this fug evil druid who used me as a booty call and who I'm probably in love with because I'm a hot mess before she can destroy my psyche in new ways but only because I'm going to help you find your dad.'

With the advent of text based communication, now they can have discussions in a halting attempt to know anything about each other without the looming weight of shared traumas intruding.

Derek ever knowing Peter's dicking him? Especially right the fuck out. Considering Stiles thinks about Peter and he just wants the D. Nothing to do with anything except getting laid. Plans to continue getting laid. Is reflectively collecting a willingness to have some freak-nasty sex if that's what's gonna happen. He's seen so, so much porn, some from a purely academic standpoint, even a psychotic werewolf may find it difficult to cross the boundaries of his suspiciously large internet-sized comfort zone.

Nobody actually wants to know their (best?) friend started banging their adult relative. Especially their mom or dad, but uncle's not a far cry. Even comparatively youngish uncle. 'cause even if Derek could handle the basic concept…

Stiles knows to give this one some time. If Peter wants to play with spreader bars or dress him as a Girl Scout or...he feels like he's not reaching far enough here...Choking happened. Urethral sounding? Spanking? Whipping? Fisting? Orgasm denial? Hopefully not vore?

That's a good medium to stop at before alternative bodily fluids. Anyway, he doubts those are kinky to a canine for whom they are both like Instagram and perpetually, more and less subtly, scentable.

Stiles has a hard time imagining Peter being into a fourth of the stuff found in porn. Probably he should put aside ideas about medical probes in his urethra, costumes, gimmicks...Unless he introduces them, himself. Control. Peter likes it, and to strip it away. Stiles's cramping throat and hard-fucked anus could be evidence he doesn't habitually consider sex aids. The sex aid, the adult
Stiles never says Bad week at work? Not a tough deduction.

Plus, this week they had some crazy with a Navajo Skinwalker sold on closing the Nemeton. Turns into anything. Swaps off scents between forms. As determined a crusader for Do The Right Thing as Scott. Downside: She's correct that Scott has the Chosen One shtick locked down when it comes to imported, arguably reckless Druid magic.

Fast forward. Once the violence died off it turned out Olivia's pretty cool when shit isn't going down. She's solitary. She's as proud of her nation as it's hard to be a Skinwalker there. She can't understand a word but is all over Bollywood movies, does triathlons, and collects collector's spoons with a not-unrelated can't miss an episode love of American Pickers. It's not her fault she got Peter back on everybody's shitlist somewhere around…

"Maybe she's right. Maybe it's safer if we stop this. What's the Nemeton brought here besides death?"

It's a room full of solemn faces. Scott's room, leaving most of them on their feet. The pack, the twins, Peter, and with them but standing apart the Skinwalker – no, Olivia, now – a thousand percent less terrifying in retail clothing Stiles dimly recognizes from Belk or Macy's.

(Once Lydia realized he bought his own clothes, versus Scott and now Isaac wearing whatever's in the bags Melissa hands them – not a lazy guys scenario; a tight budget – Stiles became an Attachment.)

Nobody has an answer for Scott. Olivia's attitude's wearing off, disarming from dangerously judgmental to beginning to relax even if Peter did savage her with some brutal claw action in one of his too-typical left-field calls. The conviction that she fights for a just cause stays fixed in place.

"I'll tell you why you're not going to," Peter says. Besides not coordinating with the other children, he doesn't come to enough shindigs for anybody to want his opinion. Hostile audience. Stiles included. The man needs to be chained down until he writes a dissertation on every piece of supernatural trivia in his braincase. "If you take the sí out of bean sí, the fairy woman in question dies. That'd be Lydia. The Nemeton's her burial mound."

Stiles recoils a quick step back, but so does Isaac. Lydia, beside them, hasn't moved. Oh boy, she's aggro. Actual temperature change; from heater-warmed to cold as the grave. Eyes furious. Expression stone.

"And you didn't tell me this months ago?"

Peter's expression probably doesn't need to ask Lydia if she's shitting him. She's not shitting him.

"You don't talk to me. You screen my phonecalls. If you want what I know, you could have asked."

"So tell me," Lydia orders, voice clipped.

Stiles processes that. Peter calls Lydia. He gets defensive. The idea of Peter harassing Lydia, the fact that he carefully meters out his knowledge on her. He's had the feeling Peter has the Lydia bug. He recognizes the signs. Difference is, one of them is a stable, boundary-respecting human being.

Peter tilts his head, looks closely at her, tips it back upright, casually imposing. He may not be an
Alpha, but his body language tells another story. He dominates an exaggerated area of any room like he's actual king of the world. It doesn't give him the advantage with Lydia. When she has her confidence she's his regal body language clone.

"Obviously you're a changeling," Peter says, like the whole idea he needs to explain this is a failing on their end. "That means the aos sí gave you up. I've never heard a story of that happening without an exchange going down. So, the Druids got you, I assume to pep up their magic tree. In exchange for what? No idea. All I cared about was you can open and close it."

Olivia stiffens, sharp eyes going yellow like an eagle's or an owl's – no glow.

"What exactly is on the other side of the Nemeton?"

Peter turns his gaze her way with a passing look of concentration.

"I assume the Otherworld. Tír na nÓg, Tír N'Aill, Valhalla, Hades – whatever you call it. There could be more than one, couldn't there?" The hostility hasn't dialed down. Peter frowns at the rest of them, he may actually be confused. "Don't look at me like you don't have the same information."

Stiles eyebrows slide up.

"Is it okay if I look at you like my life would be a hell of a lost easier knowing what parts of this stuff might be true?" And for that fucking matter— "What if somebody'd already offed you? You're dead again and rotting or we Viking funeral your ass so you can get some real rest. Olivia shows up. We might have killed Lydia."

Tension sparks between him and Peter. Not on accident. Stiles can't fight him and win, but he's still a Beta and he's been in this world going on a year. Isaac and Scott are only not holding him back from pursuing the point like werewolves do because if they can't reach an agreement on who's the dominant Beta Stiles can't make a real fight out of it. In this instant it feels strange not to know that when they've spent so much time playing pretend.

That little twitch at the very corner of Peter's eye. 'Could have killed Lydia' means more to Peter than the lone Beta would confess to. Unfortunately Stiles can't examine that. He's otherwise engaged. Posturing. Holding the stance that says Pretty sure I've got so much clout that you don't.

Peter shows his fangs, real warning growl putting all the nerves in the room on edge, he draws up. Curls his fingers like he's wielding claws he isn't. Stiles registers Scott, Isaac and the twins immediately prepared to act, because they're not throwing down he glances at the other wolves, makes a note how confused they are Peter delivered a real threat. Yeah. The older wolf knows something they don't. Like, uh, recently Stiles has gotten homicidal in his apartment with zero warning. Stiles isn't butthurt. As reasons to remind somebody you can rip them apart so fast their blood turns to fine vapor go, Peter has a valid one.

"Now you know," Peter says, tension falling away. Straight back to chronically making an ass of himself. Stiles lets his own slough off, the older man still holding his focus. He fights the shadows in his head. Peter. It's Peter. You care about Peter. You care at least a small amount about Peter. The wolf may know exactly where Stiles head went; all the more reason to distribute his attention across the assembly:

"Do you think even with the forethought I give everything it occurred to me somebody would try to destroy the Nemeton instead of take the power for theirs? It didn't. It's so far outside how I look at that is it's like somebody would have to be from the supernatural tradition of an ancient, totally non-European and Druid free culture."
Stiles believed that. He still believes it. He's the only one.

Peter, aggravated about not killing Olivia and clearly having had a bad day at work, just won the additional slap in the face of learning last of everyone, from Stiles, only minutes ago, Beacon Hills has a brand new auxiliary shifter. Living in an apartment. Nefariously working at Best Buy. Accumulating spoons. The coordinated gifting involved utensils never for eating of famous sights of Sacramento she'd get to visit.

It couldn't get more obvious Stiles had the option to tell him that before they beat each other around. Or Peter beat Stiles around and Stiles pretended Peter feels anything he does. He chose not to, the wolf keyed up a notch, itching with incentive to get a couple submission displays out of Stiles. Not bedroom fun. Not instruction. Veritable essay on who's the bigger Beta as non-negotiable, true or false.

When Stiles died, the black stain he came back to life with darkened his spirit without a pattern, the veil coming over him anytime and anywhere. In class, during lunch, in the bathrooms, on the lacrosse field, at the dinner table, doing dishes, gaming, in his dreams, at his first glimpse of the morning sun, in the mindwarping surprise of looking down at his toothbrush in disgust at the slimy chemical worm lumped on its bristles, slowly oozing between them, and before he knows it he sheared the toothpaste tube open with his razor, clenched it in his fist and in a fury watched the poisonous gunk squeezed through his fingers to land in splattered clumps on the bathroom floor.

The first time he lashed out at Peter, smashed a decorative pot on the floor and picked up a jagged shard, he moved too slow, too purposeless to use it as a weapon. On Peter. He may have tried to put it through the flatscreen television. As in, looking around the room thirsting to destruct he tried to put it through the flatscreen television. Peter saved his electronics owing to superior speed. The only things hurt were the pot and then Stiles' hand when he refused to let go of the jagged shard of porcelain, holding it so hard, so patiently waiting for a chance to put it in Peter, that Peter finally yanked it away, leaving an ugly cut.

So, they're having a problem. Not one they've talked about. Not even interpersonal. Not ignored. Peter will talk when he has a plan; at the bare minimum an idea. Laying down he'll react one step past the threat level when Stiles behavior's more and more erratic counts as a comment.

Stiles tried and he's still trying to put out of his mind that three incapacitations in he rose to his feet calm and poisonous, eye to eye with Peter, feet away and dangerously still. More bent on dealing death under the sway of the black than the sociopath across from him with a track record of mass homicide. This time, Peter didn't stand back, skipped taking an observer's stance, examining and calculating. He fought. Ugly memories of Peter's dismembered, disemboweled body haunt Stiles' head. Desires, not outcomes.

There's something still worse. Something he needs calm and distance to let himself grapple with.

After the fight, when the wolf soaked up his share of the black pain from the beat down he delivered, Stiles expected to see ichor climb to his shoulder. Got paranoid Peter, unsuspecting, could unstopper limitless black depths, trapped against Stiles' skin like a man holding a live wire, all his veins bulging with the stuff of death, pressure escalating, blood vessels bursting at the surface of his skin, foul black liquid streaming down his body and soaking his clothes, the poison riddling all the tiny blood vessels in his eyes while at the same time runny discharge streams from their corners, a parody of tears.

Stiles hadn't been under the sway of anything for that one. That had been the sight of Peter's arm, his own imagination, memories of Gerard, of Cora, and others, and fragments of nightmares. The darkness had thankfully already exhausted itself.
On the bright side of life, Peter has additional functions as a conversation partner and meaningful distraction. That's the theory. In practice, because he chose to get chatty about Olivia, the conversation went straight downhill and what Peter needs now is a distraction from him. Brilliant strategist he is, he's set on using Stiles as the only material to cut himself a break from Stiles.

The second to only material.

The makers of Gorilla Tape deserve a No Thank You letter. Whatever resemblance it should bear to tape it bears to steel mesh. Steel mesh secured with rivets. Incapable of moving a muscle, Stiles has begun to forget he has a mouth. Impossible, of course. He tries to start talking when he forgets he forgot he has a mouth, but at least part of the time he writes the whole region of his face off as featureless.

His arms, folded behind his head, have been taped with obvious disregard for his personal comfort. The kamina repeatedly paralyzed Stiles from the neck down. At the garage he experienced the same helplessness he's got going now, only with terror paired with it. He felt the same terror but not the sense of helplessness, not to the same degree, in the police station with Derek when he could still mouth off. He has some of those elements going for him now. Fear? Yes. But bone-freezing terror? No. Helplessness? Epic.

He rates himself toss-around-able, bent arms two handles to yank him by. He remembers with discomfort that this stuff has waterproof adhesive.

He'd been talking about Olivia. Trying to find bright sides. Remorseless for excluding Peter from the loop. The wolf couldn't do anything. Who gets to set up in Scott's territory is Scott's call. Was it not kinder to present the events in digest form?

Peter opened a kitchen drawer behind him, came back around the stone-topped kitchen counter slash open wall into the living room, and then Stiles, on the couch, realized a roll of black utility tape could not be good. Nothing to say about that, owing to the sudden, absolute lack of a mouth.

Peter, never completely predictable, made himself his manhandling bars, relieved Stiles of his pants – not the first time watching them be stripped off has given him a scare; he's less afraid of injury in that area as he is intimidated of weird – lugged him up by a terminally crooked elbow, threw him down in the armchair so hard Stiles decided devising a way to beg had become the plan...

Dropped to his knees, landing as hard as he'd thrown Stiles, shucked the layers of his top – loosened tie; shirt; undershirt – dragged Stiles' hips forward and, thank god, got down to sucking cock. Stiles doesn't ask whose dicks Peter sucked to learn to give awesome head. Not that sexy a question. Stiles doesn't need a roster of however many people Peter did it with before the fire…because after the fire has to be a short list. Depending on how devoted to stalking Derek he actually was, it might or might not say 'Stiles'. Sad. Like most things Hale.

Arms trapped by his weight against the back of the chair, breathing desperate to keep the oxygen coming, looking down his useless pecs, useless abs, to where somebody else's fingertips are bruising his hips, Stiles isn't just getting head. They've progressed to full on oral sex. Otherwise his balls, the full collector's set, wouldn't be in Peter's mouth, soaked in heat. Peter's an awesome fuckbuddy, ready to go for so many values of 'it', and still the malicious, sadistic manic. If Stiles suffocates under these conditions, he will not require revenge…but he won't get to send that memo.

Getting into the fellatio and then having a werewolf, as in surprise fangs at any time, get focused on his testicles, brings on the chilly edge of fear. Fear counterbalanced by Peter's attention and diligence, with his body low on air and high on close, fastidious attention he tries to put together the odds of a werewolf intentionally doing damage to his presently-overwhelmed balls. The first thought out of
Stiles' addled brain, denied articulation by tape, runs *What is your facial hair?* He's got a lot of the moustache going and the chin strip, the chin strap tapering off before the corner of his jaw gets going, but, as always, groomed in a flawless line right beneath his jawline.

Stiles vetos flipping his shit for that reason. A narcissistic man who gets up in the morning, goes into the bathroom, sculpts his face knowing someone he'll way more likely than not get laid with whose dick he may suck is coming over is thinking *What will I look like if I go down on him?*

Being inhumanly awesome at oral is the giant redeemer Peter keeps in his deck because in run of the mill sexual experimentation, for example – no matter how disoriented Stiles can vengefully remember – on a Friday in November, in fact it was the eighteenth, moon in the third quarter, headed toward new, the teenager remembers a lot of yelling along the lines of: *What the fuck you dislocated my shoulder! You son of a bitch! Put it back! Put it back in! That *did not work!*

Angry teenager, icepack, a couple hours of dick sucking, some rimming, little prostate action, and still Stiles did not forget. But he absolutely forgave.

Today he's incorrectly helpless, knows this is a bribe, an advance, that he probably doesn’t even want to know what Peter actually wants to do with his body. He still trusts Peter with his testicles. Trust takes overstimulation, nerves shocking him to move – if he could, if Peter didn't have a hold of his hips – toward a heady buzz, muscles giving in, getting weak, soaking warmth melting pleasure-stoked skin. His breathing's half under control. He's thinking favorably toward Peter. Christ he’s so damn fine with the intense grooming, the little art show framing the *hello-teabagging.*

Makes up for zero eye contact. Eye contact when the wolf's going down on him failed.

Stiles could fill a hefty volume of times and ways he's come since the advent of masturbation in his life. Chapters would be dedicated to being caught off guard. And there were Peter's eyes, all that intensity passing up his body, boring into him. He ejaculated. He did not enjoy it, 'afterglow' panic he didn't unpack until he got dressed; claimed exclusive rights to another piece of furniture. It read a lot like: *You're in another wolf's territory Scott is not here your guard's gone you can't protect yourself this Beta is gonna destroy you you're not good we're not good get the hell out of here death is coming.*

He's working on holding his ground no matter how startled he is. At this point in his life, it takes a lot to compromise him. Surprise lowers the threshold. He's not going to accept that. Until then, he still wants his damn blowjobs. Just not the knowledge oral means his thoughts are eroding at breakneck pace while Peter remains in complete control of faculties from beginning to end.

He saves feeling each other out for situations of mutual disarmament. When they're both aroused, or only Peter, they can make with the eye sex whenever they want.

His balls tingle straight through, electrified. Safe to say, right now, Peter *pleases* them. Lapped; rolled; one testicle teased out alone on his tongue and stroked; wolf taking his sack in deeper; letting it slide out of his mouth to capture it again – not always. A little nursing on the right, a little on the left. The electricity spreads through his body. Across his skin. Deeper, into muscle. *(That's not *just* his arms going numb.)*

This thing happening down in his balls, this pressure, not just an ache, that's something Peter builds on. A guarantee he’s gonna come like a missile launch, like the freaking space shuttle leaving through his dick on one more mission past the stratosphere. Stiles’ balls pull up even with a deterred-by-nothing mouth keeping them hot. And that is still no deterrent, tongue pressing in, sweeping between them. Peter tilts his head *just* enough to cover Stiles, get his sack back into his mouth.
The teen sets the part where he doesn't want to come out of mind. If he could this for a few hours. If Peter took some time to cool off from ambitiously immobilizing him. Not happening, so he better enjoy what he's got.

His erection doubles down on hard from stiff to adamantium; cum rises into it, rise of magma searing right up the middle. If the wolf kept on sucking, Stiles would blast a serious load. He's way more ambitious, pulls Stiles' hips in the same time he pushes forward. His tongue that sweeps up from right above Stiles' asshole along that raised line of open skin, drags the skin of his sack up from underneath.

Stiles can't piece it all together afterward. Peter got his tongue on his perineum. A bead of semen leaked out onto the precum-soaked head of his dick. His body, one huge erogenous zone any day of the week, had the sexual arousal hot on him everywhere nerves exist. What happened when he shot obliterated self-awareness. Stiles has no concept of the muscle contractions that gripped him besides that Peter gets to clean off the semen that missed Stiles' own body and splattered on the chair, maybe the floor, and that his constricted shoulders ache like hell.

That performance the other Beta watched like Cinemax, Peter sitting back with this appreciative look looking not so much at Stiles as a partner as as his own work. For Stiles' part, Peter's free to bask in self-congratulation as long as he wants. If he wanted to be around somebody who gave a shit, he would not be here.

The human's vision's swimming as he works on getting oxygen down through his nose. No chance the tape's going anywhere, but he's flushed so unholy full of sex hormones he can't care about the tape. Cares more about the small ways he can rub himself on the fabric of the armchair and that that'll put him under as sure as oxygen deprivation.

If he passes out, naturally he'll wake up to Peter – probably somewhere else in the apartment. Low chance of getting sexed up unless he goes from unconscious to asleep. Bored, sexually frustrated werewolf quickie with Stiles at least semi responsive counting incoherent sleep-nonsense.

He can read Peter plenty well, has a sense, an intuition built up of little cues that the man wants to get hands on with him, and that right now. But. The wolf has an aversion to sex without mind games. Playful mind games. Cruel, mean mind games. Unhinged mind games. Stiles lost the fear of blacking out around him. He's got the trump card: Apartment door. He just never comes back. Peter's aware he's got insurance on that – and insurance against being murdered.

It's called Scott ripping Peter's head off his body.

His vision dims a series of times, but he stays conscious. A relief? Not so much a relief? His gloriously intoxicated body can think no evil of its benefactor. He enjoys that while it lasts, chasing memories of arousal. Pangs echo through his hips.

The wolf sits in wait, attentive, head cocked in study, expressionless but not empty. No knowing what he's thinking. He's probably not thinking anything. As little as Stiles can grasp, the life of a werewolf means constant immersion in scent and sound.

Existential realization and the concurrent amazement follow from total, boneless bliss. He's not even in the same dimension as Peter, not now, not here in front of him wearing blatant, sticky, drying physical evidence that sometimes their experiences coincide. Stiles lazily wonders what he smells like in that surreal parallel world – besides sex. He feels like sex. Not just sexy. Like a liquid orgasm, boneless and muscleless, bounded only where the tape maintains its relentless hold.

Peter's drifting eyes lock on. Trouble. Vulnerability smashes into his high like a meteor. He too
clearly needs to look at his life and his choices. As scared as he is of Peter in the in-between times, he thrills at the explosion of possibilities.

As disappointed as the Sassy Gay Friend would be, he's super unlikely to do any serious reflecting on something with Bad Idea inscribed on its face. Bad idea before he came over, bad idea now, will be a bad idea in retrospect, and on its real live face stretches a malice-laced smile.

He liked the shirt the wolf rips off him. Now more accurately 'the shredded rag'. Yanked stumbling to his uncertain feet by the crook of his elbow and spun around, the teen develops a new relationship with the coffee table. Pushed to sit down, ends up on his back, dragged across lengthwise by his conjoined arms, miscellanea falling off around him, he thinks, ha, possibly he's on a fel altar but he can never be a virgin sacrifice.

Suddenly pouncing werewolf. Not wolfed out werewolf. Peter landing weightlessly and soundlessly over Stiles when all the teen last saw was Peter touch his fingertips to the table. Peter doesn't stay gracefully poised for long.

It becomes unmistakeable that Peter has no plan. A plan, which there is not, would be a godsend. The Beta wants power, and to fornicate. Plays at holding all of one, chases his way toward the other. Stiles foresees sporting bruises before he starts collecting bruises, cum licked off in exchange for so many hickies his stomach's gonna look like he threw down with a giant octopus and lost, nipple twisted until he manages a mouthless approximation of screaming, is, in his opinion, gnawed on – it stops being kissing when there's only teeth, while hands work his muscles with a sliver too much force.

He capitulated to his comparative helplessness before he ever fought it. Hurts all over the surface of his body, pains both dull and sharp. He just let a werewolf definition of ravish it. All the bullshit over, he wonders about the mechanics of Stockholm syndrome because he's passing through thrill seeking into feeling close to Peter. There's something he hasn't latched onto yet. That he's missing. Something his mind's teasing out. And when he has it…

Search Stiles. No idea.

The only thing he has is a killer boner in the wake of Peter leaving off the aggression and threat and making out with his face. Being licked, kissed, nipped at on the tough layer of tape, fingers in his hair, thumb caressing his temple, Peter making it personal, or else there's no mind-anything, leaving Stiles with zero doubts for those moments Peter's only concern reads What'll make Stiles want more? Feeding off that cranks up Stiles' self-esteem. A second dose of chemical bliss. What heroin might feel like coming on from inside.

The way Peter operates there's not a single difference between 'wanting him' and 'wanting something from him'. If he wants to lock in having a suffering victim to manipulate – although SCIENCE! would be required for Stiles to determine if Peter ever does – then the werewolf better be on the clock with putting out.

Putting out becomes the operative phrasal verb, despite some semantic uncertainty which one of not both of them will be verbing.

Peter has lube.

Lube deserves not one but several odes. There should be a whole canon of artistic media dedicated to personal lubricant. Stiles discovered lube is the shit when he was thirteen. He has a very easy time acquiring most things, but after hearing a guy talking about finding his older brother's he walked into the gas station three blocks down from the sheriff's station and set the box down on the counter.
The clerk glanced at it and asked, while picking up the item scanner, Stiles, you're not sexually active are you, honey? He shook his head, producing: No, ma'am. He knew she'd be cool because he knew she got the tattoo on her left forearm during the years she spent following the Grateful Dead. (A story he got out of her when he was nine.) Lubricant acquired, masturbation escalated in awesome.

Peter gets pickier than Stiles guessed over his entire genital area. Handle with care. Dry clean only. Better be slicked up, but besides that Stiles can get rough with a hand-job. He can use some teeth if he's in the mood to suck dick. From there down is an intensifying gradient of nope. Flighty about Stiles handing his balls. Doesn't just hate anal. Do not touch his asshole. Force of will keeping him stationary versus snarling werewolf versus Peter trying to flinch a foot away? Some moments are priceless. Many priceless moments only happen once.

No biggie. The man knows at any time Stiles can bring up the delicate fucking special snowflake that's Peter's anus. Barely has to psychologize that one. If the guy has an inherently hard time thinking around the assumption Stiles would want to do back to his butt what he does? If Stiles wasn't Stiles he'd be nervy about it, too.

Peter wouldn't survive an hour in Stiles' body. After ten minutes he'd find all those other places that get him squirming, even make him scream, do it because they're fully competitive. If he didn't have this thing for getting blasted – extreme overstimulation, kids, not drugs – he definitely would not be here. Just brushing his thumb gently over his inner left wrist hits a hardline to a place in his gut, keep it up and it sends pulses shooting to his cock. Why? The fuck knows. Okay, actual hypersensitivity. He hasn't managed to come using that one but he gave it a couple tries.

So, Peter, as long as he has a choice, will not do anal without lube. Win-win. Stiles liked playing with his ass before Peter came along. (See under: Playing with his everything.) That other aversion of Peter's, the one to boundaries, wouldn't hold up versus anal tearing. No fucking way.

He's drawing looks from the man, but he will not stop the moaning while a hand is playing with his anus. He has zero physical control over that. At the utmost, he'd make choked noises, strained and creaky.

"There are so many places people'd line up to fingerbang you," Peter mutters to himself, seeing Stiles has rudely been deprived of the power of speech. He frowns, thinking thinky thoughts a court could bury him for while he coaxes him open with the kneading of two fingers. "I'd like to see that." he muses on, a step removed from his fantasy, leaving Stiles with the unsettling thought they're both listeners at a performance. "You working a crowd. —a crowd working you." Vicious, winning smile. "They might find me aggressive if they wanted anything more than, but if they wanna cut me a break, it's criminal the work I do to get you off." Peter withdraws his fingers, relating coolly: "Not just 'against the law'." Shrugs. "I like it, Stiles, but maybe I need plastic covers for my furniture."

Eighty-seven percent of what Stiles comes away with is hearing Peter say his name like that. Stiles. Filthy as hell. As the bathroom floor at the dive bar in Peter's head. When did that get appealing? Sometime after it became clear he works effects he can't follow on Peter's senses. Point: Somebody wants his jizz to get hang time. Has made that a personal goal. He needs a diary so he can diary that. Today somebody sucked my balls so I'd rain cum. Wants apartment to smell like my semen. Gonna forever smell my semen until chair is thrown out. Have won at life.

A guy could ask for more and that guy would be a greedy undeserving ass. He has no intention to stay with Peter beyond whatever's cooking between them now. No reduction to his appreciation his first sex partner models the idea bodies come as a whole package with nothing a couple minutes for hygiene can't turn around. Even though 'nothing breaking' defines safe sex here.

Rapidly changing events. Stomach drops. Getting hauled and pushed around by a werewolf again.
His body reacts naturally, sending out unanswered prompts to his arms to help it balance. Definitely both writing these Gorilla people and switching from Duck Tape. His muscles achieve zilch. He's past sick of the way his arms got bound together, too. How they were yanked behind his head, wolf sitting on his back. No attention paid to arrangement. Peter could care less. Even with the relentless cramping he cannot miss happening.

Stiles wishes to amend that. Peter's happy with the cramping and the suffering. There's a hovering thing going on, wolf checking out his own work. If Stiles could say something...he'd bitch full out for the next three hours. Not seeing the physical despair of being denied his voice and his sarcasm alleviated until he's finished.

He's standing in front of the bed, expecting to get bent over it. Definitely gonna get shoved over it after Peter turns on the bedside lamp. And then claws shred the tape like slicing through paper. Stiles lowers his arms, difficulty level: hardcore. He turns around when he runs up against no interference; puts his aching, tape covered limbs out when he's so sweetly beckoned; shuts his eyes; inwardly confesses he's impressed how Peter finesses the tape off when it's like rubber galvanized to his arms. His arm hair's not ripped completely off despite the sting.

(Giant bastard asshole.)

Peter lays his hands on Stiles' hips. The teen alerts, looking at him to get a read; calms when he sees the guy chill, eyes soft, voice saccharine:

"I know I am a horrible man that loves you helpless. And in pain." Wistful pause. "I do like to hear you scream." Pause much too long. Stiles gets all that. Yeah. Has even been entertained by a few questionable solo experiments since he started having potentially life threatening sex...but Peter doesn't need to get ideas.

Tape ripped off his mouth. Stiles barely realizes it's happening before it's gone. He doesn't care what his face feels like because sweet air. he keeps his attention on patient, expectant Peter through the deep breathing. He doesn't know what his game is, but trying to guess ahead of time appeals more than going off does.

That's a pleased looking werewolf he has in front of him. Who blows his expectations off the chess board chastely requesting: "Seduce me."

The first things that fly through Stiles' head he keeps to himself, like Oh my god, you fucking lunatic, what kind of stamina do you think I have because human. Throw me somewhere and fuck me okay?! First: That's backing down. Either Stiles can pull it off, or Peter's totally throwing him down and fucking him. That one's never not an option, so Stiles appreciates the finesse to the psychological torment. He swallows. Tries to clear his head. Nobody knows he sucks at this more intimately than Peter.

Man. He's seventeen. He goes to high school. He has a backpack. Peter, reluctantly or not, has a briefcase. The rift disappears when they're physical. Natural extension of fighting for survival together being the whole basis of their relationship. Stiles is used to knowing more, being responsible for more, seeing more trauma than the adults he interfaces with; protects. Wearing shy kid could be more uncomfortable – and embarrassing – only if they were in public. Peter's handsome, he's mature, as in transparently physically mature, and mature in that maddeningly understanding, calmly expectant way he's looking at him.

He lays his hands on the wolf's chest. No tape to blame for any lightheadedness. He doesn't need permission to drive the car if the car is Peter, not a car. He has a preference for being driven – only because what Peter likes is a Japanese puzzle box. That isn't necessarily fulfilling for Peter when he
thinks about it that way. He deserves nice things. Things Stiles doesn't think he is or can produce. He focuses on the great chest; sloping shoulders. Takes a step in, hands sliding inches up. Kisses him, light and brief, lips firm.

Deep voice. Advantage. Muscles all worn out could pass for languor, for pretend. There's right and wrong pressure for talking. This? Unproductive pressure. Staying a hesitant length away without actually retreating to arm's length.

"I still can't believe you want me." Good start. He could have said something complimentary, and then he opened his mouth. Take two, now with babbling: "You could have anybody. Actually anybody. You're confident, you've got this body that is...Nobody is ever gonna complain about." One he has his hands on. One he can bring a hand down, because, following his touch with his eyes. Underneath his palm's enough raw power to demolish a building. Punch through stone. Punch through steel. "I still don't get that I'm allowed to even touch it," he admits, voice kept down but eyes widening.

When he looks up Peter's gaze has changed to studious. Not annoyed. Key. And yet, Stiles could not be more on his own.

Seduce him. That means he needs to convince the man he wants to become sexual with his body. Positive those last few expressions of panic were not sexy. Plus, when he tries to do sexy he does Zoolander. Yep. So, remove the face. Maybe someday. Today he steps in, gains some confidence when Peter's hands shift to not-irresistibly hold his hips in, grasp attaching to forming bruises, at a distance but invited to stay where they're at. Stiles leans in until their faces are side by side. Peter shuts his eyes. Listening-ears configuration. Thank god. That's so freaking liberating.

"I've got this body, and it's all over the place. I know it's gawky. I fall. The whole thing gets startled, people think I'm totally spastic, and then you get your hands on me, you know where to touch me, I do exactly what you want. I'd kill to have you on me, always on me, me up on you, god it's unbelievable I'm enough for you to come. I need that. I need..." He almost doesn't; grins; why not? He heard that crazy sex is supposed to be fun. "—your fat cock in my ass." He's gonna take that nasal laugh as a road sign. Has not failed. Energy comes on. "I love it. We can get totally crazy and, whoa, there are things I do not want you to do that you take to eleven, but you end up inside me. That's the best. And I am so wet right now. I need you to bone me. You're killing me."

He catches Peter smirking. Delights at it. Shuts his own eyes. Ignores that he's blushing. Imagines he's Peter just for a second. Nope. He lacks the range. If he wants to keep it personal. Like, chipper, not melodramatic.


He makes good on it, as needy as relieved when Peter turns his head in, meets his lips, and shares his mouth. He's gentle. As in still forceful while dealing Stiles a legitimate kiss. Romantic or dashing or another adjective Stiles can't physically replicate but's no less glad to have put on him. His hands move uninhibited over Peter's body, lingering at features of interest. Getting the action he gets deprives him of the full capacity to appreciate he has a smoking hot sex buddy. Not a lot of body worship, seeing they only steal so many hours. Too bad, seeing it's a law of nature Hales have bodies that deserve some worship.
When he moves backward, tugging, Peter corrals and guides him toward the bed without a break in the action. Reckless, Stiles gets pushy, puts Peter on his back – resists his guidance, does a little shoving; the wolf takes instruction really well, known fact, pack animal, just Stiles doesn't usually know what to do with him when he had him. An overabundance of naked grown man.

He refuses not to make something happen. Too important, too much to prove to himself, annnnnnnd if he backs out placated but showy, contented-narcissist Peter will be jilted Peter. Forget probably violent sex versus a worn out body running on adrenaline. Jilting the guy Stiles has held in reserve for when Peter inevitably pisses him off that much.

His brain prompts him it's getting late. He dismisses the concern. He has freckles to count. With his tongue. Nipples that factually go undertouched and beyond undersucked. He's only so quality but he can still thought-that-counts massage some shoulders. He's not categorically inept, because Peter's mouth's fallen open that little bit. If Stiles focuses on that he's got a week to spend.

"I gotta call my dad," he admits when twilight passed into the depths of night, like, awhile ago. Not a sexy thing to say. A fact. One that doesn't rouse a basking werewolf Stiles has started mourning his inability to give hickies as Peter's appear on his skin. No teenage embarrassment this time. His father has infinite reasons to get concerned he might be dead when he doesn't check in.

"Tell him you're staying out," Peter says. As if he can just say that. Like he's ever said that. Apparently resident to a world where Stiles can more than gape incoherently at his lounging body until he makes sense of the idea a living, sentient creature wants to fuck him all night.

He wants the phone bad. Badly enough he falls off the bed. No problem. Totally cool with it. Equally cool with lying like a pro, that he's outside Jungle and is crashing with a gay instead of making the drive home from downtown. He is offended by the insinuation he is drunk. (Ha. Not yet. He's hitting the liquor cabinet like...not hard, more like he will never drink the nice shit Peter has under other circumstances.)

"That's Martell XO," Peter informs him lazily without opening his eyes when Stiles makes his return.

Stiles looks down at the glass in his hands, back up to naked guy with the fantastic body he's actually. sleeping. with.

"I know, right? In a snifter. Snifter. A great word Stiles doesn't get to say ever. Snifter!"

Peter scowls in concern. Just not so much concern he otherwise moves at all.

"You do not have permission to get sloppy."

Stiles stops. Sips on the brandy. Appreciates Peter's nudity – his hands folded on his chest, rising and falling as all the muscle's moved – while trying to remember when that rule…This is Fight Club.

"I don't think I asked for permission but, no, I did not shoot a glass before this one."

Taking a second to determine he can't argue that, the werewolf exhales, another step in his effort to be one with the mattress.

"Bring your body over where it belongs. I'm not getting up to put it here."

Stiles looks wide-eyed from the snifter of whiskey to the bed. He wants this thing that is happening, bad, and still manages to, one more sip, set the drink on the bedside table and achieve the bed in a way that does not result in collisions of falls.
Under Peter now. No clue how that happened. Instants where the brush of fingers moves his whole body leave Stiles wondering how he's expected to kill one of these people ever, no matter how much Peter shows him.

He's not handling this. There is no handling this. There is a man he is in bed with leaning over him, supported by an arm. He's got the bedroom eyes on. In the bedroom. On the bed. Stiles even doubts he'll be banished to the couch when Peter's done with him.

The wolf slowly raises his eyebrows which Stiles, dazzled, catches onto a beat late.

"I'm having adult relations. With, uh, an adult, if anyone who knows you would call you that. More like with a beasin' hot guy for reasons I, stated at length, haven't caught. Kinda a big damn deal."

Peter kisses him. That means 'shut up', but not in a way that overshadows the same-page, slow burn arousal. Or the hand stroking Stiles' side, placed on hip, leisurely traveling up his skin. One of these rare times in his life he did something so right, ranking up there with standing on the lacrosse field and realizing he already had the skills to put the ball into the back of the goal. He slides his hand to the nape of Peter's neck; holds him loosely but presses up into the mouth plumbing his.

Seeing his bare arm alongside Peter's in a slow make out fascinates him. He's vanity-flexed in the mirror exactly the number of times everyone would expect since the numbers on the scale started climbing. His upper arm is as thick as Peter's. Bold. Underline. Exclamation point. Thirty point font. Actual chance he is sexy. Holy shit. Comparative anatomy. He has pecs. Actual size. Knew that, saw it in exclusion, miscalculated versus an extra-intimate comparison.

That's in-fucking-credible. That and tentatively but in all optimism suspecting he has something on the table to offer besides 'available'. What does he love about Peter's body? He gets to break himself off a piece of that, that's what. And what's buffing up if he can't protect his pack? Support his team? Get a shitty series of events off Peter's mind?

Stamp of success: The shit eating grin on Peter's smarmy face when Stiles gets hot in the face because he stops and pulls up the covers, an act not previously featured in Stiles' sex life. He looks off askance, thinks he doesn't get any cigarettes but what's left of a glass holding twenty dollars' worth of cognac is pretty good. When he's over dying from being treated like a human being and not a Kong toy with a treat inside, can look Peter – who has all the time in the world if he's enjoying Stiles' embarrassment – in the eyes, he spreads his legs underneath him. Underneath the sheets.

Unfamiliar, again, like he hasn't been having sex with the same man for going on three months. Whatever 'feeling like a virgin' describes, he skipped that experience. He intended to get laid. He achieved and he enjoyed getting laid.

The clues snap together as Peter rocks into him, as his face broadcasts his surprise and breathlessness, Peter's curiosity for it devouring. He let him make it personal. It could mean more. Peter could give a shit about him. He likes Peter…and one person who's not going to stand in the way of that is Peter.

He groans at the stretch, but that thick, oil based anal lube Peter uses doesn't dry. Score one for barebacking. The wolf's smug smile's pretty cute, honest to god. Stiles hangs his arms over his shoulders, grinning, still feeling kinda crazy, kinda shy, but now he's got Peter's cock where he wants it and he may be confusing himself with a god.

(So, what a day in Peter's head's usually like.)

"You horror flick bondaged me, sucked my balls, almost tore my chest off, and from the depths of
my certainty I'd go home with a concussion we're role playing real people. There an award I can
nominate you for?"

The man in and on him settles into a comfortable pace, fingers passing from one purpling hickie to
the next, alternately enjoying his own handwork with that look he's considering adding to it and
being flirty with his stupid – yeah, yeah, adorable – face.

"Don't bother. I reward myself. I haven't murdered anybody this week. I get a body to play with all
night."

About half of Stiles' noise is related to the thing Peter said. The other half's because he has hold of
his body, moving his hips under and around him until the strokes are that much sweeter. Breath of
relief. Plays annoyed.

"That'd be so dehumanizing and offensive if I didn't know that sadistic desire to dehumanize me
hinges on your inability."

Sad werewolf.

"I've tried very hard. You know what?" Head pulls back, brow perplexed; answer's fresh to both of
them. "I don't think about it anymore." He chuckles, not a sweet or happy chuckle. Followed by
enough kissing, by the steady thrusting, by some naughty wandering fingers, taken together
outweighing the predation in the sound. "I don't want to break you," he says, too caught up in the
grind, in sharing touch, in being social with his tongue to fake emoting. "I told you. I only want to
hurt you." Stiles groans a groan of total capitulation and pulls Peter down with both hands to kiss
him until he can't remember if it's a reward for honesty or because he can't stop and bang his head on
a wall.

Peter makes the sweet eyes, which means he's got zero idea what he got kissed about, either.
Autocorrect kicked in and assumed his own routine motive of silencing Stiles, because he concedes:
"You're right. I haven't managed to victimize you. And I like it."

"I wanna say something equally romantic, but I'm seriously only participating to get at your penis,"
Stiles says, self-confidence and cheek. "—no, I'm kidding. You're killer with your mouth, too.
Getting sucked on and sucked off is way up there."

Peter blinks; runs through that one a second time. Looks impressed.

"That's actually dehumanizing and offensive. I'm proud of you."

He has a hand on the wolf's waist, other arm left lying to the side seeing Peter hooked his under that
shoulder. They swiftly pack away mental chess, skin too alive, sheets starting to cling to damp
bodies. Stiles keeps track of himself. Tries putting in extra but has no way to compare it to leaving
himself over to un-self-conscious physicality. Something's right. He found the volume setting. That
brings it up to maybe forty percent. Guy has a habit to break about keeping it down.

(Nowhere is a private place to have sex around werewolves.)

Peter brings that reality-tunneling moment down on him, the feeling of taking the force of his thrusts
hard on his pelvis when Peter drives up and Stiles knows he's coming.

It's zero like porn when he gets a great orgasm face out of him, but it's victory. Somebody as fake as
Peter seized by this physical authenticity changing up his brow, his eyes shut tight or, better, when
they're open, because he looks at Stiles like for that split second he has no idea how Stiles got here,
and then the gaping and the gasping and all the different ways he comes down. Incapacitated
werewolf sociopath. Achievement unlocked.

He's actively opposed to coming anywhere around the same time as Peter. Takes his kisses; rubs his waist; soaks up his wind down. Seeing Stiles crazy came earlier, he's good with guiding Peter's hand to his cock; getting noisy for him coming underneath him, Peter doing some humping that might be mostly involuntary. He's got his fake back on. No telling anything.

Post orgasm his body wants to sleep. Full stop. But then he's got a partner who knows it prodding him through the allure of the chemical lullaby. Who slips down and bites the edge of his pec. Shit Yes He Is Awake. He makes himself sit up against the pillows before a somebody finds another nerve. Peter sits up. They share the cognac. There are covers being used to closely related verb them. Obviously nothing before this counts as in bed together. They had sex on the bed, and they had sex in other places.

"I accept and condone you may do some freaky stuff to my semi-conscious body," Stiles reasons when he sets the empty snifter aside. That would neither be new nor unwelcome. Drowsy tones everything down.

"It depends," Peter thinks aloud. Stiles could swear he hears gears whirring behind those contemplatively narrowed eyes. "There's a lot of potential with you coming in and out of awake. Potential I've explored. I think..." Sleepy hallucination of the gears clicking into place. Punch the glass. Hit the red Oh crap button. "I'm going to take advantage of the natural terror of six stories up on the porch. Your muscle fatigue doubles as a safety feature."

Those are the eyebrows of surveying a prospect, not the eyebrows of asking permission.

Stiles stares back at him like he's the person who he is.

"That...is going to happen to me. Got it. I have no doubt you and your unnatural balance can sit on that railing. Not my problem what your neighbors think about you, but I'm warning you right now I'm gonna go into cardiac arrest."

Peter glances away. Hitches a one-shouldered shrug. Meets his eyes congenially.

"Noted. Not a consideration."

Stiles puffs up at him. Does not look bigger enough for effect.

"When you're done with me I better get fucking cuddled," he says, nine hundred percent sulky teenager. "I don't care. I'm attaching myself to your body."

He wishes Peter didn't welcome that so he could get him somehow. Not that he welcomes it. He doesn't light up or anything. He concedes 'fair' without giving it much thought.

"I do a lot of genital grooming for you. It's going to be hard, but I'll survive the physical intimacy with my callousness intact." Stiles gets his hair ruffled. Not alright. He fails to dodge it, just tilts his head away; squints the near eye shut; tries to shoot him a scowl with the other. That brightens Peter up. "You call it cuddling, I call it groping. Everybody goes to sleep happy."

He can no longer manage the same degree of sulking. Not even knowing it's below fifty outside, and then he's in a high-rise, and then the wind chill. Trying to burrow inside Peter like Luke into a dead tauntaun could be quality recreation.

Hell yes he's going to sleep happy.
Early January, 2012

The forest changed after Laura died. It changed again after his pack died to the Nemeton. Scott only sees it when the contrast hits blindingly obvious. In his childhood nature had never been a friend to his asthma, and only now has telling oak from ash from yew and knowing every berry bush by scent become survival knowledge. Each tree has its own strain of draíocht. ‘Druidness’. Magic.

No one had an easy time talking about ‘magic’ with a straight face. They took a vote. Other candidates included ‘mana’ and ‘vim’.

When Scott thinks magic he thinks classic shots from Disney movies. A homely grandmother, in theory a fairy – so not – sends glitter swirling around Cinderella. Peter Pan shakes fairy dust onto the Darling children. If he had to pinpoint any one specific association it’d be sparkles.

Lydia, fairy, superficially associates with glitter. When she unloads draíocht, she doesn't sparkle. At angriest Scott ever saw her, her eyes sank into her face, sockets black pits nauseating to stare into like getting motion sickness, like the featureless depths hosted a riot of motion close and far away; her hair rose around her, not a Hollywood invisible wind, strands moving like living things but dull and dry, gone from healthy shine to a century in the grave. Her ears fell off which, his Beta or not, shook him. If he tried to draw the deformities her body took on first he'd need artistic talent, then a clear memory.

Looking at her meant tuning out the distortion to his vision. He can't say what he saw. He remembers Lydia's unhallowed shriek, and the spectral victims of their spite-killer manifesting, themselves deformed with rage, possessing the werewolf in turns until the female Omega subject to her wrath tore herself apart.

No glitter anywhere. Mostly organs. Chunks of flesh. Gore. Scattered teeth. Maybe worst of all the eyeball flung close to him. She jammed her hand into her skull, splintering all the bones, and ripped it out with a closed hand.

After the wrath he tried to get an explanation out of Stiles, at least he asked What happened? The rest was added emphasis via eye talking. Stiles made repeated zipped lips motions; a lot of looking at Scott like he's insane along with headshaking and 'begone' gestures. So, he texted Peter and got back what Stiles clamped down on: What do you expect? She's a hag.

The phone all but disappeared from his hand…until he realized he was talking to Peter and asked if the guy could bring them a trash bag, maybe bleach, and some advice on how to make the body go away. It takes a lot to get the man to show up for the action. Meanwhile he's chillingly useful minimizing the evidence of werewolf on werewolf violence and other, grimmer aftermaths. It's his hide on the front line in that sense. 'Hale' doubles as a target painted on his life.

Like spirit queen of the woods, like woods. Scott's still searching to understand what it means in the long term he and his pack are growing a deep, dark forest. That universal feature across legend and lore. Draíochta. Magical. Front and center it means the pack feels safe here. The twins, too, and even Olivia. He found her once when, restless during the waxing moon, he disappeared into the trees at night. Technically, she found him, diving as an owl to become woman again out of the silent beating of wings stopping her fall. They walked awhile, talked about their human lives. After it weighed too heavy on her she wondered How many places used to have this power? There's so few of my kind now and we're so isolated. I'm not welcome at the remaining places of power at home, but I've snuck close enough to know they have a different ambience. I didn't understand places like this used to exist, or if they still did I would have haunted one my whole life.

Scott got a promise that if that train of thought led her to any sudden revelations she'd let him know.
He has no clue what she's feeling but he has the gist, because he's feeling it, too. They're just humans with a little extra oomph, right? Not some kind of refugees from somewhere else totally. Scott's extra unclear how he could be a refugee from somewhere else totally, like, say, Tir n'Aill, when obviously the draíocht's a late addition by way of Peter.

The pack buddying up to walk their territory a few nights a week has to do with identifying incursions and getting on resolving them, or convincing humans don't really want to be out here. In real time, tonight, Stiles' too-slow, carelessly uneven rendition of "The Teddy Bear's Picnic," now on its third repetition, has Scott convinced in a skin-crawling way they've come out here to be the kids murdered in the horror movie, no longer the horror movie, themselves.

"If you wanted to stop singing..." He aims for blandness; doesn't root out all the nerves.

Stiles trails off on 'Beneath the trees where nobody sees', Scott's indoctrinated brain filling in They'll hide and seek as long as they please, eyes skirting the treeline.

"Seriously Scott?" Stiles sounds two things he isn't: confused and innocent. "I know it's a little first grade..."

Scott needs a second both to chase off the last of his paranoia and prepare to deal with Stiles making a butt of himself.

"I don't remember 'If you go down to the woods today you'll never come home alive' anywhere in that song," he points out, sending the Beta a smile. That? Only the beginning of the altered lyrics.

Stiles throws his hands out, begging for pity, or camaraderie, or a little appreciation.

"You're shitting me. It's the best version." Verdict in. Stiles Stilinski: Severely unimpressed with Scott McCall. "Dude, if my Alpha can't protect me from a gang of flesh devouring teddy bears, I'm in real trouble."

Stiles has been changing, too. He's slowly packing on muscle and eats like a teenager doing exactly that. From eyeing it, Scott feels like the gain's a little uneven. Mastering coordination and control's as or more important than muscle mass, but he wishes Stiles would think about talking to Coach about getting enough and the right calories and not just reading the internet. Or listening to Peter, who's never eaten a human diet in his life.

Real issue on the table: It's not just the song but the smell of blood leaving a Scott edgy.

The progress Stiles has made so far in self-defense pays for itself, but Peter gets too freaking carried away sometimes.

He turns around, reaching out to make with securing Stiles, movement broadcast, not surprised Stiles strikes his hand away effectively enough to smart. The opening he wanted. Now Scott works the sweet sad eyes. No, he's not his brother in every way that counts with a face like Silly Putty. He has a few standbys in his arsenal.

Stiles hauls back, taking a look up and down Scott, who isn't pretending he's after anything besides the injury he smells, eyes trailing the way of the scent a couple times before his Beta accepts he's caught. Stiles leans in, looking shocked, dropping his voice to a whisper:

"Are we getting down in the woods? Do you want me naked? Asking's step one."

Scott keeps a firm grasp on his patience.
"Yeah." Yeah, right. "I want your body naked. Take your shirt off."

The moment Stiles considers it stretches out as long as he can stretch it before Scott prompts him to produce.

"...annnnd 'No'. But I'm flattered," he says, looking sincere, more importantly not launching into a different pretense. Scott optimistically counts him successfully disarmed – that they can talk like two people, Stiles saving the mental gymnastics for someone who could be dissuaded by them.

"There's dried blood. You're oozing. Lemme see your shoulder."

"Fine. Alright." As huffy as he gets Stiles pulls his arm out of his jacket, lets it fall to hang off his back, unbuttoning his shirt and pulling his undershirt down over one shoulder. He looks importantly toward Scott. "See? The impression of human dentition. In my flesh. That's all. Uh, compared to like huge, fang-induced puncture wounds. Peter bites. Look, it's not deep. Just like you said: oozy with the white blood cells. I swear I'm keeping it clean."

Scott knows that's not the blood he's smelling. The injury's exposed, isolating it; he smells more.

"How about the rest?"

The undershirt's tugged back over and Stiles' shirt buttoned up. Scott thinks twice about making him strip in the cold and waits on the verbal account.

"Contusions. Couple scrapes. Itchy claw scratches. No stiff joints, nothing pulled, and nothing broken." He screws his face up, picking up his leg and dragging his pants leg up his calf, showing off what looks like a kick to the shin. Nighttime under the trees cuts down on moonlight, his color vision's negligible, but Scott can figure out it's old and a couple different shades. "I look disgusting," Stiles goes on. "I look diseased. I'm not you're sideshow performance."

Scott moves forward to arm folding – because he's such an authority figure and everything.

"That doesn't sound rehearsed."

"It should sound rehearsed. I rehearsed it." Eyes roll. No authority is coming across from Scott's authority pose. "When a werewolf punches me all my tiny, delicate blood vessels explode. The first seven times that happened I was shocked that it was just like getting hit by anything else, but after twenty-eight or twenty-nine times, aka 'Day One'…"

Scott flinches, sideswiped by emotional. Stiles stops. The Alpha stands in a familiar headspace where he's looking at more-than-his-brother standing in front of him, into the mirror. When there's no getting some distance from how much he loves him because there's too much there. Where it ends in him it starts in Stiles. It's always been like that. Now it's more.

Scott hasn't forgotten the times Peter's been inside his head – turned on the rage by force of will, once; put his claws into him, too. He has little moments that breach the divide between himself and his Betas. Those got him through the sudden insane pressure of being an Alpha instantaneously in accord with four Betas, the intensification of their bond simultaneous with the long-building power fully manifesting inside him. They're not little moments with Stiles. He's not even sure they're moments or if it's a constant measured in degrees of awareness. Maybe his second can hear the thought in his head: He can't heal.

"Maybe it's time we—"

Stiles goes from wary to rigid.
"No."

"—talk about it," he forces out against the defiance facing him down.

"Did you hear a 'No'? I won't take it." Stiles shifts his weight from one foot to the other, gaze on gaze, intention pitted against intention. At least right now, in the forest awash with the Nemeton's power, the bulwark in Stiles denying his desire exists in the shared reality it sounds too simple to call 'pack'. "If you make me…" Stiles swallows, growing unsettled. Voice drops lower. "Hey, I'll forgive you. Otherwise? Not happening."

He's not as willing to turn it away as Scott is willing to give it. Scott feels himself moving into eclipse. Forces himself to break eye contact. Feels guilt.

"It should be a gift," he apologizes. "I know how you—"

He realizes his mistake the split instant before Stiles' draws up, anger, anger under control, flooding into his voice.

"If you say you know how I feel, we're braving the teddy bears separately. I don't want you to ever know how I feel." Scott remembers him after the funeral. He remembers the next year. He doubts he'll ever forget a single detail. "No Bite on your watch," Stiles says, levelly insistent, in the process of convincing himself not to flip on Scott.

They're not a month out from what was a shouting match about Scott not standing up for Stiles' dad to his own dad. Scott can really hate his dad sometimes but he suddenly ended up in a position where he refused to take sides. Room for uncertainty evaporated. What the two men were really fighting about, obviously but at first not so explicitly, wasn't Sheriff Stilinski's competence in a murder plagued town but who deserves to be with his mom. He would've expected Stiles to get that he's on his mom's side, only his mom's side, and not a traitor just because he won't confront his dad……was basically the thing he yelled. He knows, now, they were a lot more upset and – way, way more than upset – unused to having no controlling influence on something upsetting them than they were right or wrong.

"Maybe Ethan, or Aiden. That's a big maybe," Stiles gets around to trying out out loud, but he shakes his head. "Come on. You'd be completely useless if you lost me to choking to death on dirty engine oil."

Under towering trees in the dark, night sounds around them like there's no APB out on trespassing humans among the other wildlife…because there isn't – 'their' animals have started to treat them as scenery, Stiles doesn't just look small, which he isn't, at least compared to Scott by any objective measurement. He looks weak. Fragile. He's lost all his fat for muscle, he's gaining control and awareness of his body, and Scott could put his hand through him flat footed, snapping bones and ripping through organs.

He doesn't know how he sleeps at night knowing that.

"I'll be useless if I lose you in some kind of…"

There's not a version of this where he keeps a lid on his emotions, the desperate fear that strikes him isn't born from smelling blood. There was something worse about getting a clear scent on the healing wound. The scent of a body fighting an unending battle against infection. Most other people have less occasion to think about staph. His mom's a nurse, and he works at a vet.

This is going to hurt, Scott thinks. Then they'll get over it. He lays on the emphasis:
"Forget supernatural danger. Humans die all the time in car wrecks, jaywalking, getting shot for their wallet. How is dying from the Bite any different from me left here saying 'I should have just Bitten him'?

The face in front of him breaks as he pours the accusation on, every small motion, each tiny flinch, as clear to Scott's vision as under the light of day. Tears rim Stiles' eyes. Scott's seen him hurting too many times. Especially since he turned, every violence visited against them has carved as much out of Stiles as it has Scott. At moments like this it doesn't matter the new shapes their world cut them into fit together tighter than before. Scott can't escape full knowledge of the pain he's inflicted as the second half of him, shudders around unvoiced sobs, lips curling, voice raw, enraged.

If he was a wolf his eyes would be burn blue.

"Because it's your Bite. And you're gonna be asking yourself why it happened. If it was an accident, in the cards, if I just wasn't strong enough, or if it's there's something wrong with you. Every day. For the rest of your life."

Silence lies on the forest. Not the silence of startled animals. A silence down to the trees. A change in the air. Forest in pause. A forest that listens to the draíocht in Scott and Lydia and Scott's in Allison, in Isaac and in Stiles.

In the absolute quiet, while Stiles struggles for calm, Scott choked up; mourning, regret, and the urge toward apology. He makes the leader out of himself. No apologizing. They have to move forward.

Where Stiles' humanity used to ground him, now the Alpha waits to feel Stiles' feeding his own power into him. Misses it without it ever existing. Only after he became Alpha. Only then over the passing months, the part of him that's Stiles disorienting him – out of synch – and then he's thinking Why am I not a wolf?

Allison projects a silver energy honed sharper and even sharper with every trial, and the shine from her lights him inside. Stiles? He burns like a star. That should be enough. Is it not enough for him or is it not enough for Stiles? If they can and they should get over it, then they've gotta communicate. Despite the past. Despite Stiles' mom.

He'd unsee the wounds Peter's teeth left in Stiles' flesh if he could. That'll replay in his memory for days – more like forever. It's too easy for a werewolf to sink its teeth into Stiles. For him to catch him in his jaws. Stiles would forgive him if he lived. The only risk is his Beta not forgiving him while Scott watches the most important person in his life die slow and ugly.

And still it's still way too easy for anything to sink its teeth into Stiles. Scott has no idea what combination of luck, courage, and completely void of common sense has kept Stiles alive since Peter erupted from his coma, still burning to death. Scott knows the torment that plunged their lives into violence and chaos; remembers the dead bodies of his family peeling apart in the flames; escaping to a shower trying to wash the soot off, the burn off, the memory off, but he couldn't, he couldn't, even running only the hot water scalding his wounds; screaming as if the incomprehensible pain could be carried out of him on the sound; waking up with the full moon shining down on him naked except for a flimsy gown, empty except for the moonlight. But when he sensed Laura, he was deep in the fire.

He got a taste of loss. He thinks if Stiles died he'd leave him hollow like Peter in his memories. Peter now.

"We're fine," he stresses. He's making it true. "I'm not trying to rush it. I just wanna be able to talk this out."
Stiles moves his weight without actually pacing. He passes his hand through his hair, pulls on his neck, head tilted to one side, a moment later the other. Scott knows they're alright because the insects picked back up and not too far off a fox, still cautious and alert but not paying them any attention, trots through the trees on fox business. He thinks about the way he feels when a storm or an earthquake's coming. He wonders if they give the local wildlife a feeling like that.

Comparing his pack getting angry with continental plates lurching lacks any hint of arrogance.

"Nothing's gonna make me wanna talk it out," Stiles says, sounding defeated, not a tone Scott likes to hear. "Come on," he says, picking himself up by force of will. Gathering more force and now he's smiling. "Let's finish walking your nose."

"How're the Hales?" Scott distracts after a few minutes once they're back to walking. He rarely sees Peter. He occasionally lets Derek know he thinks about him, constituting a handful of text messages with the running sentiment 'I'm glad we're both not dead'. Cora? He has no relationship with Cora.

Stiles has expertise in the area.

"Peter got to lay off some people. It pleased him," he says, humor matched with hopelessness. Peter. Lost cause. "His basketball team still suuuuuucks. Slightly less than last year, apparently. They won two games this month. Out of seven. Which is apparently awesome for them." The wrinkle of his nose. "Maybe he likes watching them suffer, too." Now he perks, a hundred moods a minute. "But! I haven't caught him actively plotting our downfall yet."

Animated, cheered back up, he pauses to round up this week in Hales two and three before going for the rundown:

"Cora's dating. Derek's taking that super well. Cora's taking Derek taking it super well super well." He holds up a stilling hand, before Scott assumes too much. "He's not being a nutcase, just a pain in the ass. The guy has a serious reputation. Pluuus, I got a text that read 'How do you tell your older brother you're just having casual sex?' I said 'You don't.' He doesn't exactly frown, lips curling high on one side. "Little bit guilty. I'm supposed to be Derek's guy, yeah? Does that mean giving his sister honest advice or tipping Derek off? I'm screwed either way." He shakes his head, still visibly conflicted. "I chose the path where Cora gets more laid."

Scott grins seeing Stiles lose the subject he was on for the excitement of the next.

"I've been craving League of Legends, so Derek gets to play." Scott hears the arrogance before it's poured on. "I thought real time strategy was a pretty intuitive genre but he's all 'Why are the towers important?' and 'We keep getting gold, but who's paying these people?' "This game sucks, Stiles, I have no control over this character.' 'Does this thing actually eighty something characters? Do I seriously have to know what all of them do?'" His Derek impression's actually pretty on. More impressive because Scott isn't sure how much they actually speak versus chat. Stiles' looks like a guy who caught a bad smell. "I'm gonna make a little wolfskin rug, Silence of the Lambs style." Scott dodges the right arm of arms flinging out to his sides. "I want him to use his words and I also want him to just please shut up."

Scott laughs. At Derek's pain. He's connected to Stiles by osmosis and he wouldn't enter that virtual landscape. He's not bringing up I'm supposed to be Derek's guy even though, in his head, he has no other explanation for Derek committing to entering Stiles' downtime world. He never thought anything about them while they lived it all but Stiles and Derek did get close. It's like Derek and Isaac split the what-passes-for-friends in the divorce.
"Your life is super hard," he commiserates. "You finally found a victim that listens to you for hours."

Stiles shoots him a look of disbelief.

"What do you and Isaac even do? I mean, besides make out so you can show him what Allison likes and he can do it like Allison."

"Ouch. Shut up." Not surprised Stiles is on the same page, but definitely not a thing he does with Isaac. There's so much wrong with that. Specifically? It'd be exactly what Stiles just said.


Apparently this is a man sex war. He has a nuke in his bomb bay. He sticks to more of a semi-automatic pistol.

"When your Stiles-time fantasies involve me and Isaac? I don't need to know. I know you want Danny, but that's moving over into creepy."

Stiles whines in misery, managing to pick out a rock with his human night vision and sending it flying with a kick. He picks his head up, gets proud.

"I don't lust after Danny," he swears. "I just wanted one night of sweet lovemaking with his incredible body looking into his dreamy eyes." Sarcasm aside, Scott knows the incredible body. Everybody's seen it. So many times there's no reason for him to still be undressed. Dreamy eyes... That's a reach. But Stiles isn't done: "My actual fantasy is he smiles at me without mockery like acid. With affection and admiration." Seriously? Sounds like seriously. Looks like seriously. Serious frustration. "Why doesn't he love me, Scott? Am I not loveable? Am I too twinky? Why won't he buy me a drink ever? Because we're in the same club. Keeping the same hours. I would accept him grabbing my ass. Little squeeze. That's all I ask."

There's a minute where Scott can't formulate a response because.

He cringes.

"Jeez. I get it. I just needed a punchline. I forgot you're actually obsessed with him."

"I'm gonna admit after I got a third of the way into that everything I said came from the heart," Stiles mourns. "I want it too much. I know. That's unattractive. Desperation is not attractive. Not to most people. I'm just like..." He stops to determine what he's like. "I couldn't get the time of day off him! It's murder. That's gonna be what kills me. The day I don't have my phone on me and ask Danny what time it is."

Scott teeters close to clapping him on the back. Decides condolences don't fit the situation. It's not like he's getting laid, himself, or anything. Even so he can see an obvious trend.

"Do you ever think about how you only have these... stalker fixations on people, never crushes?"

"I do think about that," Stiles answers easily. "I really go for emotionally unattainable. I only have theories." Apology eyes. "Besides your tragic heterosexuality, it's the reason I can never be with you. I know. Your broken heart. We'll make it to the other side. I still love you, man."

Scott covers his face with his hand. Nothing weird has come into the forest and they're closer to finished with the circuit than they are to the start. He drops the hand, looks at Stiles. Danny has an amazing body. Stiles got really pretty. It's questionable if he should ever say that. And Scott...Yep.
Tragically heterosexual.

He could get so much play. The number of guys who've asked Stiles if he's up for grabs has apparently led to a series of increasingly vicious lies.

He sends Stiles the best flirty, sexy smile he knows to wear after a second of remembering the best times with Allison.

"I can't wait until the bike's in sight and I can escape. I'm gonna put my lips to something tonight, and it has a sixty-four cc two-stroke engine."
**Chapter 2**

**Late April, 2012**

The autocrats with the reins of a nation have parades of armed, uniformed men marching in unison and tanks rolling down city streets, inspiring awe and exhilaration in equal measure. If they're sitting on an army that relies on strategic distribution, holding an execution for an act of disrespect gets more common, although the end result can still be an artful public display. Being careless with simple human capital's by far the easiest demonstration of power. Plenty of aspiring dictators commit their human capital to collecting big piles of junk and creating an assemblage of overwhelming complexity, wasting time and effort maintaining the illusion it's not stacked trash for the rest of its existence.

Peter doesn't give a shit about the results of that but in its simplest form he can think of a few cases of ton on ton of broken rock shoved together to show that somebody dead could make people get together and stack rubble. The Washington Monument, that big Jesus in Brazil, the Sphinx, and probably that island with all the giant heads, but benefit of the doubt. He hasn't been there. They might be able to pull something off.

South of Sacramento, in Riverside County, in Palm Springs, Rancho Mirage and Palm Desert, anybody who's somebody can pick up a mansion or three, cookie cutter California prosperity, violently flourishing grass in the front yard and the size of the swimming pool on the property – on every property with clout – monument to the influential owner's command of the desert soil, timed sprinklers spraying their bank account over the lawn and into the wind after sunset.

The thing about power is when somebody has it, has it as in they can depend on it, the drive to flaunt it disappears. Elder druids aren't just found in veterinarian clinics, they're *only* found in veterinarian clinics. Figuratively speaking.

Therein the disparity between things he thinks about doing to Stiles and what he does with the actual article. Nothing keeps him from slamming his head on something, tearing his clothes off, minimum claws, full strength, and fucking him into whatever he wants, wolf let loose, Stiles crying off the stress of the concussion – at least here in Peter's head – and if Peter's clawed hand wasn't over his mouth he'd hear him really scream. He could get away with that. One hundred percent. He enjoys knowing he could. That bears no resemblance to ambition.

His mind offers suggestions for much more creative activities with regularity. Ones with consequences. Why don't we murder Stiles' father, strew his viscera over the living room, and fuck the kid on the floor until he's covered in blood? Because as fun as that would be, Peter, it never would have sounded like a good idea before the coma.

Nature of birth gifted him with an inescapable urge for violence, but not fantasies. Their frequency, their intensity, the elaboration, and his fascination wedded themselves to the urge as time passed. Rationally he can label the development 'Not Good'. A werewolf's rage has no acquaintance with rationality. The rage he controls expertly. That's lucky, because otherwise he'd apparently be an inconceivable nightmare. Everyone thinks the worst of him, already. Zero appreciation for what amounts to constant and considerable self-restraint.

He'd get therapy. Really. He even will. In an unrealistically optimistic future where he's not constantly engaged in armed conflict. One in which he knows his role to play too well, time divided between patience and preparation.
He lives in a comfortably spacious one bedroom apartment, works for his money, and buys what he has to to blend in with the humans he deals with. He spent over five thousand dollars on an Omega De Ville he'd hand off for free. Not by fault of his own, he has outmatched Derek for chastity. Stiles doesn't think about it, always living in the now, but he severed Peter's chance to turn Melissa before making his own designs on Peter.

He just let the boy in point into his apartment. Follows behind him to the living room, innocuously scenting for news. Stiles spilled Mountain Dew on his jeans. He masturbated in the school bathroom. He smells like Scott's back clapped him. A faint scent of perfume clings to him from the air surrounding Lydia. He's had his hands under the hood of the Jeep for whatever reason the thing needed repairs. Peter readily admits his own culpability in helping it along its continuous descent, the best deterrent to being targeted for complaints. Ripping the battery out and whatever broke off with it didn't do it any favors. Stiles' personal futile rally to demonstrate his capability and worth.

Peter avoids pointing out he invests his self-worth in a sad exercise against obsolescence. Suggesting he retire it to the trash where it belongs would strike a harder blow to a teenage ego than it will in the future.

"How was school?" Peter asks, passing the boy, heading for his armchair – comfortable, carrying a record of his recent history, and disposable – while Stiles slings his backpack off, leaving it near the open doorframe. School means pack and the partners of two conveniently extraneous Alphas settling into separate lives, no longer able to conjoin, less and less of a matched set. That and Stiles vividly relates exaggerated takes on any situations he got himself into.

Stiles glances at the gym mat, already laid out, flops on the couch, accepts water ahead of sweating, and launches into his day as a drama: a narrative where women don't make sense and Danny predictability turned on him, prioritizing 'the gay' over sportsman camaraderie. It sounds to Peter like Danny, in Peter's impression defined by practicality, made a sound tactical decision to face Stiles' offense over Allison's. He doesn't offer that opinion.

The voice Peter used to and sometimes still does find so very, very irritating delivers live performances noticeably more entertaining when Peter puts attention in. Tailor fit to play to his interests. Letting Stiles' rambling enthrall him takes him back to being years younger. On the best days, for a sliver of a second, he feels. He has no idea what, sensation passing too quickly. Less of a spark. A post-mortem twinge.

The straight, gay and lesbian scenes, diversifying out of discothèques, racked up unique cultures even as those cultures wove themselves into one American landscape.

A younger Peter did them all. He got further into his twenties and bored with that, occasionally kept up with his human connections by engaging. Until he woke up alone. Today he spends any bar time at the lesbian bar seven blocks away, drinking wine in the back room with a cloth hung, light strung ceiling and recessed floor lights. Populated by prospective conversation partners; very easy on the senses, any question of sexual negotiations checked at the door, heterosexual women there for the same reason.

Until his perspective on Stiles' pestering took a twist, he hadn't had sex in seven fucking years. He didn't volunteer for that. He took an early shot at a long term partner. Every other idea of setting up an interaction to earn credit for up to three nights sounded so exhausting he opts out for the immediate comfort of his own bed. Interactions with living people involve interacting with living people. He'd already be delighted to cull around half his office.

An aura of mystique dominates Stiles' experience of the gay scene. Easy to see why. Gay is flashing, inexplicably colorful lights. Headache inducing remixes of diva-goddess singers like Kylie Minogue.
Elaborate costuming. Stiles boggles over the distinct 'types' of gays; getting past their club affects; has difficulty with engaging anybody outside his queen-led crowd. He doesn't even grasp he's a hot bisexual accessory shaming surrounding twinks to stay in line. But are you hotter than our bisexual? He's not acting out. Yeah, obviously they like him. Not why they acquired him.

To a canny observer it's straightforward. Peter went in street clothes and had zero trouble honing in on the underlying personality that whoever he wanted was scouting for. Everybody can have a normal conversation.

(Except predatory, moneyed fifty plus businessmen with bizarre and specific kinks. The entire family would've been horrified. But. Once you're at a few exclusive parties at Hotel Bel-Air it's easy to make a phone call down the road to not interview for job placement in Sacramento. Peter Hale? My god. Peter Hale. Of course I remember you. Wealthy white European human men have a truly appalling system of nepotism Peter has to admire, even structured on pathetically simple power games. No pretending he hasn't assimilated.)

The point: Why ruin Stiles incomprehension when he can enjoy Stiles embarrassing himself instead? And he's already enough of a danger to himself. Peter has a vested interest in keeping him from being eaten alive from humans, too. To call Stiles a keystone element of a significant number of variations on Peter's plans for the future would sell the Beta short.

Peter watches his pink, full, agile lips go through their convolutions, follows the conductor's motions of his long-fingered hands, listens to the beat of his heart, salivates allowing his eyes to follow Stiles' strong, athletically rounded thighs from his non-existent hips to his knees. Has followed every word. When you can hear for six miles and smell something a mile away split-attentiveness develops naturally.

The slouching, relaxed teenager takes a long drink from his glass and glances toward Peter, sending a lopsided smirk across the distance.

"Guess I'm not learning to kill anybody today. You're like full blown pedophile."

"Ephebophile. You're nubile," Peter corrects, not bothering to correct the rest. Stiles frowns; cocks his head, accepting that, and tries to decide if he's alright with being 'nubile'. They've discussed the other before. Peter's positive he's not that Hale. Derek had the teenage harem. "Was that Greek or Latin? I have a lot of trouble caring. I'm pretty sure they agreed sexually maturing young men need a stern, virile example to cross the threshold into adulthood."

Stiles rolls his eyes, fixing him with an accusative look.

"Pederasty, says the guy who's not-so-secretly depressed he didn't castrate me before I really went ephebe last summer."

A contemplative gaze trail down to Stiles' fly.

"If I had a remote idea you'd cause my death, cutting your balls off would have been my first priority," Peter promises.

Castration. It's a good idea. Smooth skin in place of the testicles hanging between his legs. Taking motive into consideration, Peter'd never miss them. One emasculating modification in exchange for extreme damage to his little remaining psyche. A violent alteration wrought by Peter Stiles would be forced to live with for the rest of his life...one little game with a knife.

"Dude. Peter. Stop. Stop with the crazy. Castration: Not for sexy playtime ever. Antithetical to sexy
playtime." Peter notices Stiles has climbed halfway up the back of the couch grasping at the comfort of pretending he could possibly escape him. He stops crawling back; but Peter stopped plotting. "I love my balls. We're really close. We have a lot of quality bonding time. Before I go to sleep. While watching movies alone, while I'm gaming, sometimes while driving. Through my pants a little at school. I'm pro-testicles. My testicles. Both of them. I love them both. I couldn't choose between them."

Peter scrunches his nose. He's shared his more perverse fantasies aloud – twisted, carefully chosen words trapping the boy beneath his threatening hands; Stiles whimpering, strung between fear and arousal. Stiles knows all his tells.

"Bring them over here," Peter says, switching up to a smile.

Stiles leaves his glass on the couch; gives him an irate Just try it glare. Then Peter's lap is full of lanky teenage boy, weight resting against him, belt off, his jeans unbuttoned and unzipped.

Hates to lose, loves the game. Peter shares the sentiment.

His hand slides down the brand name boxer briefs, moving Stiles' cock aside, gently kneading and rolling the anatomy threatened under a suspended execution sentence. Stiles never disappoints, producing pleady noises at the most casual attention. Peter finds his testes within the soft skin, maneuvers them close to his body with gentle circles with his thumb; works them into place, waiting until Stiles forgets all about any threats. Grins smugly to himself. Two dexterously perfect pushes. Pair of gonads popped into the recesses of Stiles' hips. Into the convienient space they occupied before they descended.

Gripped by spasmodic disbelief and protest, Stiles shoves away from him; lands on the floor; leaps up, stumbling for balance, exclaiming how horrible, how 'oh my god', horrible it feels; helplessly repeats Oh my god intermittent with self-crotch-groping and inexplicable spinning, an off-balance top.

Already laughing, Peter doubles over, draws his legs up a little toward his stomach, at Stiles' bug-eyed, hysteria-tinged: This isn't funny, you bastard! He may have lost 'happy'. Not every definition of exhilaration.

Peter reproaches himself for not using his video phone, but it doesn't dim the entertainment.


"Oh, thank god. There's one. It came back. Peter you sick fuck!"

"Don't you have a gang of drag queens? You never wondered where their balls go when they tuck?" Peter asks, composing himself except for the stretch on his smile; a couple last soundless laughs left in his shoulders.

Stunned horror dawns over Stiles' face.

Pressing and prodding frantically yet cautiously, even gingerly, on his abdomen, Stiles teeters just short of falling to the floor again, but with relief, when he has both of his balls back in their sack.

"Magic. I assumed magic. That was the most horrible thing in an extensive, storied history of horrible things. You can't do that to a guy! How am I supposed to trust you with my junk ever?"

Peter feigns innocence, feigns emotion.
"I didn't know you trusted me. I'm touched."

Still wild-eyed but testes recovered, Stiles hands are freed up to add emphasis.

"I trust you with certain parts my body for limited periods of time. Rental. Time share. Time share between you and my hands. That is so over. You're seriously fucked up. You don't push a guy's balls **inside his body.**"

Peter lifts his brow at Stiles while he unbuttons his jeans; eases a hand down his own pants, massaging his own two testicles until they slip inside him – peculiar fullness in the wrong places, but in no way mistakable for ER-worthy.

"Oh no. Oh god. I'm Stiles and I'm going to die! My balls got up into my hips. It's hot in there. Some of my millions of valuable sperm never going to fertilize a woman may die!"

Stiles twists up his face, actual anger balanced out by the stunned inability to criticize Peter's riff. The wolf's glad he's here to let Stiles know what he actually sounds like.

"You—I hate you."

"Everybody hates me. So over that."

Stiles straightens to full height like he could possibly regain control of his situation; peers closely at Peter, still grimacing.

"You're gonna full on fuck me aren't you?"

"Yep."

He is now.

There're a select few things more enjoyable to a carnivore than moving at a speed an alert victim can't follow. Few – if any – that don't involve gore. Victim. Nice ring to it. That's Stiles being spun around and sent crashing into the wall behind the armchair. Peter pins him against it with irresistible strength and greater bulk, bites at his mouth, pins one arm above his head while blunt fingernails dig into his fleshy ribs through his t-shirt. Breathless from the impact, Stiles groans in protest. Surrender. He makes an effort to kiss Peter but has his lower and upper lip caught by a snap of teeth or Peter's teeth scraping over them both at once, dragging them together, a fleshy pouch. The boy gives up, free hand hanging against Peter's side like a looser mirror of Peter's, but he snaps his own teeth in the air, mocking the wolf's ferocity, before he lets Peter soften him up: still biting, now suckling on him, too, Stiles' eyelids swooning open and shut.

Stiles had the choice to put up a fight. Peter's the authority in that area. The prompts haven't been subtle enough to call them manipulation. He walked in intending to cancel his regular curricular. And, oh, Stiles knows that.

"Peter, come on," he begs; noisy whining – a horny teenager craving kissing and touching and foreplay; it seems clear the earlier masturbation failed him. Odds on the discovery of pornography to surprise even Stiles this morning. Peter's long warning growl banishes all his aspirations.

Peter agreed to fuck him. He didn't agree to other terms. Watching the teen so helpless, already prepared to bat him around meets switching to sex devoid of arousal at a sharp angle. Here's all his worst interests, all destined to go unfulfilled. He blames Stiles, not angrily. Is he being careless or
"I want your sweet little ass, and your obedience," he says, voice calm, making eye contact. Fear flares in Stiles. Peter doesn't remember saying he felt more in control of himself. Can't remember being unclear on what he passes over committing on him. He's hollow and Stiles a scrap of nothing with a rabbit pulse. Then he changes, earlier entitlement dissipated, for every purpose another wolf in a fury a packless Beta thinks he has the privilege to kill him. He burns with so much fight he probably should have, hm, picked a fight with somebody. Peter adopts a crooked smile popularly taken as seditious and evil when he reminds apologetically, refusing Stiles' proposition: "I'll take them one way or another."

He's answered with a scowl, a one-handed shove. He pulls the boy a little forward; releases Stiles' arm; shoves back with both hands, twice as hard, flashes teeth, hears the breath whuff out of the teen a second time when his limber body impacts the wall. It's breathing hard – adrenaline rush – anger coming off him, every muscle tensed to lunge with the strength he has, his gaze narrowing, upper lip flinching with subtle threat. Danger prickles on Peter's skin.

Stiles' flawless dominance display, backed not by physical power but the brilliance gleaming in his infuriated eyes, only more impressive coming from something still so humans, summons a powerful but well-masked, familiar longing. This is the Beta Peter needs. This is a Beta who matches him in wits and cruelty. He liked the mean little thing mocking him for pursuing Scott, there alone with Peter and a corpse in a parking garage. Had it impressed on him when he realized Stiles continued contriving his permanent elimination as and after he spared his life. When he has an objective, nothing interrupts him. There's drive behind him. Loyalty defines him. He has virtues. Unlike Peter, empathy. He's seemingly moral – exactly until it gets in his way. Ruthlessness to achieve the best ends is, in Peter's opinion, the height of virtue.

He looks forward to putting the Bite in his veins. He hopes Stiles will see it his way. That he's Scott's worse half. Peter's just a better fit.

Or the Bite might kill Stiles. That'd moot it.

Peter grabs the boy by the back of the neck, dragging him away from the wall, human nails pressing crescent grooves into his skin, Stiles held bent under the wolf's brute strength, forced ahead of him. He hisses and curses him, but he doesn't struggle, conserving strength. He couldn't be more fascinating than this second in time. Peter knows implicitly he has no power over Stiles. He can't cow him. He can only kill him. A mutual impasse. And now he remembers again how he wants him. Completely. He can't have that, either. Peter runs through the consequences of staying rough. He's never waited out his aggression; it ultimately plays into both their ends.

Stiles even gets what he pursued in the first place, at the height of realism, and he conceded Peter's demands while realizing his way around making any actual concessions. Peter said 'obedience', not 'submission'. Almost diabolical that way.

(They may need to have a talk about lycanthropy never being a sexual metaphor.)

Peter flings him down on the mat by his neck, human meeting stiffly padded plastic face first with a fierce, satisfying smack.

He smells blood; hears Stiles snorting up a nosebleed. Nosebleeds stop. He unzips his unbuttoned jeans, getting his cock and his balls out of his briefs. His penis hangs flaccid. He's not full on fucking anything with that. A limp dick says he's on the wrong side of the line between putting a scare in Stiles and homicide. He can put that right.
He gives Stiles the courtesy of not interfering with his nose pinching when he straddles him, getting his fingertips under his waistband; pulling his still-open jeans along with his briefs down to his thighs with one tug, baring that pale, masculine ass to the room, hips as narrow as they can be, gluteal muscles powerful but flat, gently rounding at their nethermost. It's not fair for anything to look that good, either, but can't be claimed as evidence he's fucking a devil.

Stiles groans; rolls his thighs apart, making a display of himself, anus there hot for the taking where his fair skin turns dusky. Arousal hits Peter's crotch in a flood. Stiles know what Peter wants to get at. He's gambling Peter doesn't have lube on him. He's Satan.

"Peder, dial id down. Bleeding."

He's in exactly the position to be making demands. Peter holds off reaching out and touching. He's not getting off track with using his mouth, even though a cock swollen at the base and starting to fill itself out – pick up – has the idea the sooner he gets hands on those hips the better. No one would believe him if he told them the pretty little bastard's Satan.

The urge to attack him and the scent of blood wind together with Stiles flinching into the mat. All his thoughts turn to stretching over him, held immobile, not just tight; matching the motion but so much harder, listening to the sounds of a partner devoured by sensation.

----

Reprieve Stiles abruptly does not actually want comes with a familiar text message chime from the phone in his back pocket. His heart rate kicks up, cold fear flooding his veins. There are so many ways this could go wrong. Wornger. Check that. So many ways this is about to go wronger. He thought he could get Peter on the same page; he doubts the wolf'll even be using the same playbook. Gonna-wear-it-for-days sex with Peter to lifelong mortification, zero to eighty. One potentially had redeeming value.

"I'll get it," Peter chimes, singsong himself, tugging the phone out and flipping it over in his hand. "MaieuticBlackout?" Stiles hears the total roadblack of confusion. "Who is that, and…what?"

Stiles groans, pinching his nose shut more tightly, waiting on the bleeding to stop.

"Id'z a handle. You pick a ding that meanz someding, den let it louz all meaning." He inhales a lungful of air to clarify for the muggle: "Minz been 'Swazzle' sinz I made my bard on Everquest when I was twelve."

"'How did the test go? Now will you tell me how you got possessed?" Peter recites aloud. "This is a strange one. The pack, the twins and I all know... Oh. Oh. This must be Derek."

Stiles releases his nose to raise his voice and rebuke: "Put the goddamn phone down, Peter."

He couldn't make Peter do that but he might be able to break the phone. If he was in any position to. He's not. He's hobbled, ass exposed to the air, cold draft on his cruelly abused balls, around a hundred seventy or eighty pounds of werewolf sitting on his thighs.

His nose freely goes on bleeding. He sniffs a few experimental times but the blood keeps running. He pinches it longer. Something to occupy his time with before he quits life forever.

"Let's see. The Canterbury Tales was written in the late fourteenth by John Chaucer when he....' What is this?" It won't take long for Peter, getting to his feet while scrolling back through Stiles' messages, to find out, launching into a dramatic reading of his text history while he paces the floor:
'It's not cheating if you understand the nuances of the text.' 'Stiles.' 'Hi, I'm Stiles Stilinski, I've spent the last three days being possessed.' 'Are you okay?' 'No. I haven't studied for my English test.' 'Seriously, Stiles.' 'Seriously. Put up or shut up bookslut.' Peter brims with glee that over into his voice. "Stiles. You took advantage of my dweeby nephew's anxiety over your health. That's beautiful."

Tragically, Stiles misses chance to pair them as dweeby introvert and sassy ultra-gay fashion whore interior decorator.

 Interruption: The electronic shutter of the cameraphone snapping.

 Stiles rolls onto his side, nose released, eyes bugging.

 "Peter! The fuck! Do not! If you send a picture of my ass to Derek this is the very last time you're getting this ass, you bastard!" Ineffective as threats go. Besides flat out being lie, he flubbed the delivery. What he's learned, what's important, is that yelling slows Peter down, stoking the giant drama queen living inside him.

 Peter's brows go up. He puts a finger to his lips.

 "You're going to disturb the neighbors, Stiles," he says – a warning he never issues when he's making Stiles scream his name.

 (Something some people apparently sometimes actually do.)

 Stiles stomach plummets, breath catches. It's too late. It's done. Peter's thumb has been tapping this whole time.

 "—breathe," Peter chides. "You'll turn blue." He frowns, as if disappointed in him. "I sent it to myself. I wanted a little memory to palm off to. How far do you think I'd go?"

 "Ugh. You do know that picture is illegal," Stiles bitches, sweet oxygen returning to his lungs. He won't look too closely at that statement. The only possible concern is Peter getting arrested.

 No one would ever manage to arrest Peter.

 "Now, Derek. Oh, Derek. Why do you never text your uncle? Don't you think I worry about you?" Peter asks the phone. Stiles moans and rolls over onto his back, away from the coagulating pool of blood. Now fresh blood runs back into his sinuses. The blood on his face is drying – Peter will eventually groom that off. Stiles takes his half-freed dick out, spreads his legs at the knees as far as they'll open with the waistband of his jeans constricting them. He closes his eyes, works on quelling the trembling of his stomach with old-fashioned masturbation.

 Optimism: Maybe Peter will forget the phone and fucking fuck him. Also, blood is definitely being directed away from the nosebleed. Some coagulation going on. Pessimism: He seriously doesn't want Derek getting an idea of any part of this and across their history together Peter has shown only the feeblest signs of still having a soul.

 "Bare ass Stiles. On the floor. Your favorite," Stiles says, voice falling low, hips flinching up toward his pumping fist. Enough heat pools to his crotch he can tune out the rest of his situation. He relies a little much on jerking off to refocus during whatever ridiculous incident looms over his ridiculous life, generally, but it's not like he needed an excuse before Peter bit Scott.

 "I wish you'd come back, Derek. I miss you," Peter announces dramatically. Stiles accepts alongside the rise of genuine distress nothing will tempt Peter away from the phone; vocalizes his
emotion as annoyance and offense, insulting Peter's lack of follow-through, and blaming it on a rude estimation of his age. His throat couldn't be creakier if it was raw from a werewolf making him scream, arousal and drainage that happens to be his own blood. "Hm. No answer," Peter continues, tapping his foot in displeasure where he stands. "At a loss for words, I'm sure. Let's see...I wet dreamed about you all last night. I'm lying here on the floor dying for your cock."

Stiles exhales. No way Peter's lost his violent high, but no vicious impersonations.

"He's gonna know that's not—"

The phone chimes. He waits for the response.

"He thinks I'm Isaac," Peter relates, dropping his ass onto his couch, leaving Stiles getting angry he's being totally ignored. For the reason he's being totally ignored. Because Peter's more interested in Derek. "I'd guess Isaac," Peter goes on. "He's a shifty thing. Even got into his Alpha's girl's panties. That's just unconscionable."

Palming himself is not putting out enough calm.

Stiles skips the argument that Allison was an independent woman when she fell for woobie-wolf. Not how it looks to Peter. He's never been anything but a werewolf, and the human clothing he wore when he was younger has worn thin.

"Guess again," Peter recites. "He's actually lying on the floor dying for some cock. Not yours. You want a picture?"

Stiles leaves off his dick and pushes himself up onto his elbows, eyes going wide. That much more interested in Derek. Derek. He can't even process dealing with Derek and Peter doesn't goddamn care he'll have to.

"Peter. I'll fucking Lydia you. I'll tell Lydia. I'll...I am going to find a spell to shrink your stupid penis. A penis shrinking spell." His threats are real. His anger very, very real. The promises possible.

"Who the hell is this?" Peter tsks at the phone, looking up at Stiles, smiling like a string puppet.

"He's sailing that famous river. De Nile."

The cellphone camera snaps again, silencing Stiles before he gets to the fact he hasn't heard that joke used in a conversation since seventh grade.

No, Stiles can't see it, but if there's going to be a picture this picture is the better one. It captures his rage, resentment, his intense, actual desire for homicide rival to Peter's. Peter caught him with his pants down, his cock out, fully erect and leaking. It's a skin pic drowned out by the sentiments loud and clear on his face.

Through his fury with Peter ice shoots through him when he recognizes he's covered in bruises and healing bites, skin on the mend where claws raked it off between fighting and fucking. Something so normal he's not sure Peter's thinking straight enough to remember to care. Derek being Derek guarantees he'll take that in the worst of all possible ways. And Derek, being a werewolf, believes in a different scheme of justice than arrest.

"Who the fuck is this?", Peter says. "That's blood." Peter sighs, speaking along stiltedly as he types; talking over Stiles trying to talk. "Derek you precious, naive boy. How many people do you know who would send candids of underage teens to your cellphone? Nothing gets past you. Promise I'll get back to you after I tear up this tight. twink. ass."
"He will actually drive across the country to rip you a new one," Stiles finally points out, shuddering at the magnitude of potential danger. To Peter, to Derek, to property, to two different relationships he’s really been enjoying. Peter tosses the phone away into the couch pillows, eyeing it sidelong and then fucking finally returning his attention to Stiles. The phone's chiming. And chiming. And chiming. Ringing. Then Peter's phone rings. All the while the wolf on hand leers at Stiles from his relaxed slouch on the couch, leer bragging his superiority over Derek like his dick isn't up, resting on his reclined abdomen.

Finally, silence. Eyeblink. Peter's on top of him, in his face like that scene in Alien³, breathing him in, tongue stroking the roof of his own mouth, tasting him off the air.

Stiles drags Peter's scent down like he's freebasing. Unfair that it calms him down when he wants to rip Peter's throat out. With his teeth. He flattens himself to the mat, lets the wolf keep going, human eyes locked with Peter's glowing ice blue.

He can't even pretend he wants what Peter's about to give him. He wants to break his dishes, maybe, or set his clothes on fire, or, better, his bed. Not as much have sex. He authentically hates him right now. Can't cope with what Peter just pulled.

He doesn't have to. He doesn't have the choice to yell, and rant, and brood. Made straightforward prior commitments to the creature looming over him; the murderous one, erection hanging just adjacent Stiles' but not touching. Not touching him anywhere.

He's pretty damn close to creaming himself.

He's willing to consider Peter's damage might be sexually transmittable.

"Forget him," Peter breathes over Stiles lips, jealous for attention versus Stiles' vindictive plans to wreck his property and end his life as if he wasn't the one who bailed on them first, or added a third party to their sex life. "He needs a little dose of the real world outside that head. The one where out of all people you chose me. Where I'm getting something sweet behind your Alpha's back."

"...about that," Stiles says, eyes going round. Peter locks up, meeting him expression for expression. Flag on the play. Peter puts that speed into handing Stiles his phone. Stiles doesn't look at Derek's messages, frantically tabbing to Scott.

Derek has probably just told you I'm having sex with Peter. Peter pulled some sickass trolling. Extreme. Do not come over here because I am gonna be getting laid. Laid like in ways omg you don't ever want to see. Please god text everyone to ignore Derek.


You're the best ever. I swear I'll confess to everything alphabetically or categorically. I think things between the Hales are about to seriously suck. Peter deserves what's coming to him.

Reasons pile upon reasons Scott won't intervene. Nothing changes their broader, enduring suspicion of Peter. Stiles still has a constant eye on Peter. Everyone agreed that's a huge improvement on a lurking Peter. Scott's going to rethink it. He'll take his time, weigh his options. Most of all, though, trust his Beta. More than his Beta. His brother. Soulmate could be argued. After Scott leaving with Deucalion and exploding at each other, with Scott's power working on and in Stiles, it became crystal they put absolute faith in putting loyalty to each other first, whatever the hell else it looks like they're doing.
Stiles isn't worried about Scott. He also doesn't deserve to have this fixed by Alpha fiat. His anger leaks inward. He knows who Peter is. He knows what they around play at. He's getting Derek's hurt. Got. He clutches the phone tighter.

"Let me call—"

Peter plucks it out of his hand, glancing at the screen. He frowns at the last message before tossing the phone back on the couch.

"And what do you think you deserve?" he asks. Genuine curiosity on a cold, murderous werewolf.

Stiles meets the mat face down a second time, arm twisted behind his back, pinning him with enough force to wrench his muscles brand new places. He yelps; cries "Uncle!" Peter laughs behind him, swearing smarmy-like and like they're not at odds I don't have that fantasy.

Stiles doesn't believe there are fantasies Peter doesn't have. Not if they involve power over another wolf. That sets Stiles' mind ticking. Two of Peter's fingers, slicked up with the lube he pocketed on the move, are getting pushy with his anus. Given that Stiles' cock is crushed to his stomach he focuses on that ow-god-ouch pain to make him sharp.

Son of a bitch.

"I'm gonna be pissed if you started having sex with me to pull one on Derek," Stiles bites out on a short supply of air, twisting his head back even with no way to see Peter, ignoring the pain he causes his trapped arm. The wolf's steadily fucking him on his fingers, Stiles' ass extra tight, jeans still restraining his thighs right under his butt. He's spread his legs as wide as they'll get. 'Wide' inaccurate. 'Wide' has no effect on his ass, all below the waistband.

He's not seeing a scenario that doesn't hurt. Briefly thanks science for modern lubricants.

"That's not the reason I consented to sex with you," Peter says. Stiles hears nuance, guess still stinging.

"That's not why I kept having sex with you," Peter flirts, toying with his prostate, his touch singularly gentle, giving even still-seething Stiles' gut and abused dick good feelings.

He hits on hint. The wolf looked forward to it in complete separation. He knew exactly what seeing Stiles' sexually exposed body beaten black to green with no explanation would do to his nephew. Right there Stiles knows Peter's started moving on a plan. Abandons hope of convincing him to just let him talk to Derek.

"That's not why I'm fucking you through the floor," Peter says, leaning nearer, soft voice soullessly devoid of intonation. The real Peter, faking nothing, giving Stiles his full private attention.

Stiles' arm is totally gonna snap off, and (one way or another) Peter's about to get cock up inside him. Both situations that get Peter Hale going. He torturously draws his fingers out, knuckles little bumps like the anal beads Stiles definitely no way ever got Peter to put into his ass last month.

Stiles' chest clenches. He's nowhere near as angry with him, which is stupid – sentimental and stupid. Peter wants him. Whatever there is that might be a person in there seriously wants the time with him. Stiles already knows that, and then everything around Peter gets so twisted up maybe he forgets it.

Stiles doesn't know is if wanting him matters. If it influences him in a single way on anything important. But they're here. Everything's about to go to shit. Stiles struggles to stave off breaking down for whatever it's still worth. They might not talk for a while. Maybe never do this again. Peter
decides that…with what he does with Stiles' best friend.

He copes with his fear; catches his breath in anticipation of serious discomfort; feels wet. Knows that won't help. Gets his ass split in two, Peter's thick, bossy cockhead pushing his butt in opposite directions and the rest of Peter's big, stupid, thick, soft-smooth, coal-hot dick plowing it all the way apart. Peter shifts his weight forward, crawling up on him; slides deeper, adding sheer force; wrenches Stiles' arm harder, sharp pains splintering through Stiles' elbow and shoulder, when he leans his full weight on it. Stiles protests "Hey!" into the mat.

Ignored.

Peter on his back. Body helpless under the wolf's. Chest crushed to the ground. A thick pair of thighs against the outside of his through layers of cloth. The smell of Peter's aftershave and the reality of Peter's callousness. The wolf's breath on the back of his neck. Just like that he's getting jackhammered. No roll to the hips spanking down on his ass. That drill bit's doing a number, at least the couple inches pushing through his rectum every slap. Strain on everything. Short yells build up in his throat as he gathers air to break out from under Peter's weight. He attributes that to the pain. Sensations peak; release excitement across his skin; into his gut, mixing his thoughts up. He's leaning on that.

Mostly the pain's in his arm and back, restriction daring him to move. His hips, ass, anus, the room inside him all want him to know they're under strain; they'll get worn out; go numb, now, and later, hurt, and as it starts he stops resisting. Not that he tried to resist, not like earlier, but his body stayed tense. Because werewolf. Muscles slacken. That frees Peter up. Stiles wants the rest. The body trapping his to fall out of pace and drive an orgasm in. To come out feeling used. Adj. Opposite of useless.

His cock lies hard underneath him, getting a nudge on every plunge; now he's lax and Peter's hips hit him faster. He creases himself as hard as he knew he would, eyes rolling behind closed eyelids, mouth gaping, hips a slew of sensations. One of them's an orgasm, soaked up by his shirt, turning his discomforts into 'must-be-good's, going between limp and shaking from the loss of muscle control following close behind. Peter's all predator: drops his shoulder back; turns his head; bites the crest of Stiles' back, necessarily pleasant pressure and then pain mounting until the fangs slide out; the shirt and skin split. Stiles screams like somebody does when sudden series of puncture wounds; a werewolf playing at the motions of snapping his spine. Peter lets off as soon as he bites him.

"You can have breaking my arm or eating me!" Stiles barks. They've both happened in the asshole's head. Stiles has real life physical limitations. He can't be run through the list of homicidal impulses. Right now he'd love to act out a couple of his own.

The wolf laughs. He's got the evil cackle down for his next murder spree – not counting murdering Stiles' ass.

(Is it gonna be a murder spree?)

He's taking a reaming at the limit of his physical endurance, except without the demandneedhunger of an erection his head clears – not totally, but enough. Scott knows. Everybody knows. Are putting five and seven together and understand what he lets Peter do to him. A five alarm fire of shame consumes him, trapped inescapably imagining Derek's headspace, thoughts he can't stave off. Frightened for him, enraged at Peter, confused, probably – the worst part; because there's a hundred ways Stiles could have ended up here. Pain blooms in his chest at the knowledge Peter saw exactly this moment ahead and didn't care. Tears sting his eyes. Anger burns hot again. He'd love to throw the wolf fucking him off and rip some claws across his stupid fucking face.
And the world goes dead.

A bright white clarity births self-certainty. Peter chooses to be the man or the monster he is. He doesn't deserve his emotion. Observations and advice testify he understands other strategies for these same situations and he chooses. He chose to wound his nephew. He wants Stiles to look like a real wreck, so he'll wreck him.

He brings his breath under control. Wills the trembling to stop and it stops. Coolly calculates from angles, pressure, and the depth of the bite how badly the wolf on top of him craves tearing his throat out in lunatic frenzy. He'll live to see tomorrow – especially with Peter's plans for tomorrow – but not for lack of murderous desire just shy of breaking the surface, close as touch on a windowpane.

The cruelest part of him, the part that dragged him under, his killer instinct, promises, venom and honey, that Peter can't keep the upper hand forever. With a little patience he could claim the chance to act out violence on the physically overwhelming Beta.

Peter can't miss he's gone cold. That works a change, the wolf nuzzling around at the back of his neck, nipping with, 'See?', human teeth. Prompt. Reminder. Stiles doesn't want to practice coming back. He wants him to die. Slowly or instantly. Violently. In one vehement fatal attack, whatever consequences follow.

He can't see him, now, but he's seen him before, and Peter's put together all wrong. Shadow clings to the wolf and never passes. Where the shadows lie his body rots, putrid. Stiles smells it. He smells it now. The decay of flesh. When the shadows shift the wolf comes together where he had decomposed and rots somewhere else. Death should be impartial, but a natural death should also be final. Mortality offers antidote to the ugliness of life, but Peter, specifically, should be severed.

Hours ago Stiles sat in the lunchroom looking at his tray and Scott's, to the next tray and the next, realizing all of them were piled with dead flesh. Watched people passing through a line to load up on the mutilated remains of the just-alive. Steamed, raw, torn apart and brought together in gross amalgams…Plant just as dead as animal. Youthful humans sitting in rows gorging themselves on the remains of less fortunate kin. Then Stiles understood the amorality of gorging on them, every cell in their bodies product of their endless consumption of corpseflesh.

In fascination, he wanted to kill one and explore. Not any particular one. Nothing spoke that they should or shouldn't die. Only his pack. Only the five of them shouldn't die. Only the five of them are necessary, and only for now. In the white clarity he has no curiosity. Certainty, and with it distance.

The sharp, rhythmic slapping of Peter's hips on his, the answering jiggle of his own sore flesh, the growl rumbling in Peter's throat, quiet but constant, when he grasps Stiles is content with where he is; the blood and cum soaking into Stiles' t-shirt, the sweet spikes of pain in his arm and in an anus still unable to comfortably part, still resisting Peter's girth…Stiles catalogs all of it. Peter goes still that one crucial moment; drives forward, pushing Stiles' hips up the mat. That hurts, too. He slams into him three times, sliding out to drive in. Last and least he rides up on him with little jerks, twisting his arm further; precise damage in his elbow. Finally he's satisfied. The urge toward murder abates, too.

Stiles' body could snap in half with a bare effort from Peter. Streaks of pain shoot through his arm. One act of provocation, a step after play; as if even if he tore the ligaments or snapped the bones he could provoke a reaction. It's on his touch and in his breath he enjoyed leaving him hurt. Meaninglessly. Fruitlessly. Counterfeit happiness already passing him by. Stiles laughs – so especially useless; ultimately worse for Peter to live his fantasies too loud, taste what the rage can't have, or can have only once; acerrima proximorum odia, a reflection in an English text Chris Argent loaned him. He keeps breathing as deeply as he can when he's mashed to the floor.
A moment out of time: Peter Hale's weight even heavier on him, head fallen to rest against the back of his shoulder. His muscles have slowly but totally gone loose. He heaves for air, breath moist. Teetering on senseless, but physically in complete dominance, not fighting it off. Stiles wets his lips. Squints. A rare moment Peter leaves it all aside, soothed, magnetically attracted by the icy grave-calm, placing a kiss.

Even the white clarity can't make sense out of his tenacious attachment to life. Threat of Stiles disabled, here's Peter and no explanation other than he understands there's relief he'll never find except in death. Untethered spirits lost on the wrong side of the veil descend into cannibal mania, fighting back toward their former existence, never able to take in enough. The wolf's lips say he likes where Stiles' head's at. Say That would be nice. Antithetical to the times he's free and Peter calculating how to kill him at need.

Stiles' surety he should exact the life from Peter slackens between the confusion and the disappearance of Peter's violence. The shadow passing from him should feel like waking up. It feels like going numb, some of the memories and the knowledge hard to grasp.

Peter pushes himself out by pressing Stiles harder to the ground, leaving him empty, in several flavors of agony. It's not so much his sphincter. Whackjob or not Peter in fact used plenty of lube, fit tight but slippery. It's every single other muscle even remotely related to his hips. It's the kind of pain where his muscles will keep demanding an explanation for what just happened and why the hell he let it until next week. Which they'll probably get fucked before, like, tonight. The arm is a novel on hurt. He decides not to move it yet.

All Stiles' problems where they were before but ranked and filed, not remotely as important as he thought: He won't let Derek and Peter kill each other. He takes responsibility for leaving Derek vulnerable to Peter. Peter knows, besides scheming, he had himself too much of what things don't agree are fun. The bank of Stiles just gained bounteous credit. The Hales are about to be a different pain in his ass, but not now.

Unease lumps inside him. He can't work up his earlier emotions, as if a surgeon took a scalpel and sliced away his anger, his violation, his suffering, leaving him with the facts and the freedom to act on them. He pressures himself to take the removal back. Nothing answers.

Derek's not going to believe a word he says over a phone as long as he's convinced Peter has blackmail material over Stiles, has psychologically violated him, or anything else that, to be totally fair, is a more plausible explanation than the truth if he refuses to think of Stiles as a shady, irrational guy. Stiles has had legit suspicions about that for years. He's collated a damning case file.

Seeing he has Peter, has to deal with this, and now Scott can cover for him…

Two hands slowly guide his arm to safety, extreme care; that'll definitely be with him for the week. Stiles decides inert is the place to be until even a few of his parts uncramp. Peter pulls Stiles' pants off instead of up, takes his shoes off before doing it. Pulling them up would turn into a gigantic mess. Right now they might even still be wearable. The Saxx briefs he shelled out for when, holy crap, somebody wanted to see him in underwear, though, those the wolf tugs back up over Stiles hips. Sure, Stiles will tighten back up like nothing ever happened, later. Right now? Peter's load's oozing out, warm and sticky. He moans and whines but the guy does a good job of getting the ruined shirt off without moving him around much, ripping the seam open on one side, going from there.

Stiles broadcasts approval with a sigh. There's a werewolf's tongue on the wound to his back, cleaning and soothing. Not an apology tongue. Peter's not into apologies unless he has to make them to get a thing.
Peter can put in some A+ caretaking when he's not douching it up. Somehow Stiles hasn't grasped yet he murdered Laura but he never left Cora's bedside. Hit or miss – catastrophic miss? Stiles worked out The doting relies on a semi-neuropathic physical obligation in place of actual caring after he knew what to look for, seeing a pattern in Peter's body's failed starts at caretaking, the ones where inertia or image overcome instinct.

"That tearing my twink ass up. You delivered," Stiles says. Impressed is not approval. He recognizes a solid follow through.

"No tearing," Peter corrects, concern in his voice like maybe he's going to immediately double-check that. Stiles under no conditions wants his aching ass pried into for, like, hours. Bare minimum.

"Exclusively hyperbolic tearing," he promises, voice groany. Peter takes him at his word and rolls him over (ooch), giving his bloody face a disgruntled look as if some other dude threw Stiles face down and busted his nose. He keeps on with the self-satiating caregiving, grooming the crusted blood off Stiles' face, lapping and nursing on the skin until it loosens and breaks off. 10/10. Not actually the first nosebleed. The first totally intentional during sex nosebleed. Having a tongue licking the underside of or a mouth sucking the tip of his nose used to make him laugh. Now it brings a smile out, with eyes only occasionally shyly squished shut.

He counts this as one of those 'in a sexual relationship with a werewolf things' that can go unspoken. They're close (as in familiar) enough Peter doesn't get left flummoxed staring at ungroomed injuries. At least that's how it is now that Stiles discerned Peter didn't do the occasional licking thing because he wanted to drink his blood. After that he sort of nudged it along. He can't use it against the guy because, uh, half the people Stiles knows share the compulsion.

When there's blood usually the blood is from Peter punching or elbowing him in the face. Raking him, claws out. That only happens when he gets sloppy, warnings never to make the mistake again.

Er. Out of the context of mixed martial arts and dirty fighting that would sound insanely abusive. Like Isaac's dad abusive.

It's abuse only in the literal sense that it's violent…Stiles tells himself at night. Tells himself times like now without believing it. He could successfully argue it with himself if he could strike the part where violence touches Peter in a special violence-only place.

Probably he should take less werewolf shit for granted. Especially the rage. He needs to take this as motivation to wake up he tells himself, strict, so that he can ignore himself, but choosing to ignore himself sits better than denial.

Now that Stiles is on his back, Peter's still-warm cum runs out more easily, a wet patch against his ass. Satisfied with Stiles' face, the wolf pulls away from grooming, giving him a last, very human look-over as if licking a person all over is just something people do.

He lays a flat hand on Stiles' chest. Stiles' expression softens. He wasn't sure. Maybe they'd passed into a new country. Not to Peter. Necessity dictates Stiles get his mind around that. Peter wanted him to hurt, and then Peter wanted to hurt the thing he becomes that might still be him even more. He enjoyed both. The person Peter privileges can also be a tool to apply pressure to Derek. Only Peter knows how the hell he calculates his priorities.

Peter's eyes go blue like impending sadism – blue because the pain exacted on Stiles he's exacting on himself, absent of mercy. Stiles' body forgets just how rough it got handled as the wolf lifts his fifty percent and more of the burden – Stiles body's gonna produce plenty more brand new pain – face tight, t-shirt hiding the length his veins go black. The calm way he goes about it demonstrates less
about his mental state than it does his maturity. Not exercised too often; something he wears well.

Peter's thick. Thick body. Thick neck. Dense. Cheekbones and jaw squared out. It's like the couple of inches in height he doesn't have on Derek scaled in other directions, and it's hot. It's so hot. If there's a hell Stiles just bought a ticket asking himself if Peter really killed his nurse because the haircut and the clean shave didn't work the same way as when he styles himself. Never revisiting that thought. He had started this train of thought with a point. Right. That Peter's a grown man. Peter's age actually is a thing. Hard to imagine downgrading to somebody his age without not just the mass, but the psychological gravity Peter carries.

A part of the time he could get more emotional maturity dating below his age. That's Peter. A side of Peter. But there wouldn't be times like now when he's this confident, purposeful guy – just not an authority-asserting adult. (Peter has treated him as a potential meal, and an idiot, but he's never treated him as a kid.) The man's hand rests flat on his chest, the ichor drain – the black, tangible draíocht – tapering off, but the guy behind the face with the goatee and the scruff and a few faint wrinkles recognized the time to take responsibility. Lynchpin. Peter sometimes makes choices that don't suck for everybody else.

Stiles moved on from Lydia's casual, unwitting neglect and abuse – no fault of her own seeing he's Not Her Boyfriend – to targeted, witting attention and abuse. He should be proud of himself.

Stiles' internet research says the dude has an inborn and trauma-aggravated physiopathology of his prefrontal cortex that turns him toward instrumental antisocial behavior and aggression. It's also a lot for the rest of them to deal with: Stiles takes damage; people die.

Happens it's also completely and totally his responsibility to meet them halfway, long term. Like Stiles keeping the Jeep looking as good as she does. Stiles doesn't sit on his ass like a little ADHD is an excuse for anything. It can be a reason, but he doesn't get to go around acting like with the knowledge he has he can't do some pruning with some Adderall and the wow, stressful but necessary fighting a few impulses that he realizes are impulses off. Premeditated homicide? Square on Peter, especially when it's just unnecessary.

Please could his life not include necessary premeditated homicides.

When Peter withdraws his hand, pain showing at the edges of face, the corners of his mouth and eyes and in his jaw, Stiles has gotten the kind of checking out done that Peter got over on him earlier. Verdict: He still grievously needs that body. Also the dude. He cannot be more reckless, more irresponsible, more selfish, but his gut's clenches up at the idea of Not. Of Peter not in his week. Of no longer thieving the times he matters. They can social proximity off some of this pain; some of the fucked up tonight before Derek, besides Derek, and, god, man, Derek.

He's got Peter covered. He can take influence back; aka the man better put in some goddamn work. Desire offers a couple impulsive suggestions as urgent as they've ever been even though his body Cannot.

…not true. Before Peter laid him he had plenty more urgent impulses. Drive him up the wall impulses.

"That's much more accurate. We could take it to 'vulture' to keep it ugly," Peter quips, brings his focus in as he hangs his elbows off the arms of his chair. The definition of 'putting it out there'. Erect hasn't been something he could hide since Stiles' contact and his hormones. Erect has no power over Peter's ability to reject him. Nothing trumps that. By now Stiles wants to think it's a mocking him thing. No evidence. Compass points to Peter out of his league; too good for him – that stings.
He's heartless to arguments like: The curiosity of what intentionally touching you would be like is murdering me. I understand you'd be happy if it actually killed me. I get that. It might bring joy back into your life. You know me. I start thinking about something and then I keep thinking, and thinking, and it never ends. Eventually I'll fail school and die.

Even Stiles feels shitty about what's kinda, as of today, flat out sexual harassment. It's a crush. Just sexual crush. If Peter waits him out, then, like erections themselves, possibly as in he seriously hopes it'll go away. Once it clicked a hot person is constantly in physical contact with him unlike any hot person before. Or un-hot person. Or anybody. Ever. Suddenly the downward spiral to physical torture. Like this hard on he hasn't been able to get rid of since he picked up some size down there over what should've been sparing.

And now there's Peter offering him the never before acknowledged bulge in his pants, coupled with carefully culled words yanking him out of the storm of hormones:

“What do you really want?”

He might not tell that to this guy if he hadn't just kept it together together under a brutal dressing down of his most fundamental social anxieties. That exposure rendered him fearless. The knife lodged itself before he ever met Peter. Peter pointing out they can both see his wound, that his peers stabbed him early and left the weapon stuck, boils down to Peter only able to give the handle a smack, not put a new one in.

He knows the reason Lydia, and Danny, and the giant pedophile – which he had to admit Peter isn't – and nobody else will get close to him: It's his personality, nothing else, nobody wants to get trapped with. He's either hyperactive and constantly distracted, or he's identical to somebody on crank: so intense no one can stand to be under his attention.

Peter socked him in the stomach, but he took words Stiles never can produce out of his mouth: You can't help that any more than I can not be me. That's the horrible part. My most serious problems still have the new car smell. You've never gotten a break your whole life. A steamroller with a jet engine. And you're brilliant. Bored all the time while everybody drags around in slow motion. There's those mornings you wake up. You have no idea how you're going to get to the end of the day. You don't know how anybody expects you to.

…what does he really want?

"A break. I want a break. I don't think I've caught a break since you sank your teeth in Scott.” Stiles gaze focused as tight on Peter's as Peter's on his. Tighter. He realizes Peter has immunity to his intensity in the form of a vast, empty gulf for it to pour itself into.

That doesn't mean Peter has nothing to give. For the first time the wolf comes on to Stiles, rakish look sweeping over his features. Stiles mouth opens, but he chooses not to launch a variation on 'Pleased to meet you sexy pirate I need very naked'.

Peter's erection put the wolf at a distance when he finished knocking him around. He already accused his complaint of the day: I haven't physically removed you from the apartment because I'm not letting you cop a feel. You're topped up on adorable, juvenile, senseless erotic urges. In my ideal world, you stop masturbating about me. I'm sick of you. You're not what I'm looking for.

Stiles doesn't want to know what changed. He knows what changed; he'd like to unknow:

Oh my god, Peter. The last thing you have is a moral dilemma. How about we break my sexual tension by you eradicating my virginity.
"A break…I think I can cut you a break," Peter says, getting high on his engagement as Stiles goggles – the wolf really smiling. Stiles' face slackens; his eyes search for nothing before fixing back on Peter; eyebrows pulling together as he realizes in shock he's Allowed. Permitted to touch another body. Permitted to get it naked. Going to get fucking laid. Whoa. He doesn't even know what to do. He gave up on that ever actually happening during high school.

A male bird of paradise wins hands down at flashy sexual displays. Inspirational animal. Peter deprived Stiles of wanting to move at all, let alone any human flashy.

Stiles makes his ambitious second go at prompting for sexy fun time, body language and eyes. It gratifies Stiles how Peter wryly appreciates what it takes to flex the right parts when he can't feel most of his muscles through the aching that is not dull. Either he cashes some of that credit or languishes in complete misery.

Finally they're kissing, Peter on him like whoa, smirking against his mouth. One childishly spirited werewolf made to order: the sass, the friskiness, the eyes that actual-to-god, how-do-they-do-that sparkle. Stiles would date the shit out of that guy if Peter could magically cut the baggage. Assuming the dude on him working all the angles lips can meet from, kisses rolling like waves on the beach – Stiles typically finds sex more the motion of a pile driver – would have any interest at all in dating somebody pre high school diploma.

The aching, and the pain in one elbow – an elbow saying Please, soon, ice – doesn't hold feeling up Peter at bay. He refuses to skip feeling up Peter, even if one hand sits out. The pair of broad, solid guy hands Peter's got aren't doing the same thing, one forearm level to the ground, resting the wolf above him, other the lever for the mouth on mouth flexing. Stiles would not be ashamed to admit he's a delicate, bruised flower petal, muscles not willing to put out the effort to hold him together, post-squished. Getting some tongue has an amazing revitalizing effect – maybe he's just amazed at what Peter does with his tongue. Irrelevant distinction compared to his eyes closed, his thumb traveling across a cut jaw, and making the fuck out.

This has become the part he enjoys the most. Sure, he enjoys other parts. He digs some rough and tumble not authentically violent sex and he's down for the softcore sex he gets. He enjoys all that. Often. But Peter could be doing that with anybody, speaking abstractly.

Not 'anybody'. Peter comes off as a lot of things but a straight up random-victim rapist isn't one of them. He's all about getting personal; he wants to be in Stiles' head.

(Despite currently, sincerely, deeply regretting having been in Lydia's.)

Oz behind the curtain. No hiding, no faking, and nothing even close to obscuring he's crazy for Stiles' attention. Has to have it. Has to keep it. Needs Stiles to keep coming back. Get Peter pouring it on and he comes off so hungry Stiles leaves knowing he spends time out of his thinking about kissing him, and therefore all other not-brutal things interpersonal and sexual, a whole lot more than he gets to act out. That by itself would be a trip. Factor in he's almost totally isolated from and is only really tied by Stiles to the world he really belongs in. Heavy duty stuff.

Stiles should cold sweat get out of Dodge fear that. Peter ranks up among the most powerful, most unbalanced threats they've ever dealt with. He can't have a healthy attachment, because he's all kinds of not well.

He wants to stay in 'Dodge', where he's the whole world of a supernatural creature of rarely rivaled power at full Beta strength, now, and fucking scary. Out of his head tripping on holding his own…
Better than that. Handling it. Getting Peter in his sway. He has a sway. He counts here like he's never counted anywhere. Not more than he counts to Scott, just Scott has the whole rest of his life. And Peter has nothing. —liking that Peter has nothing. That one's shady.

Peter moving over him slow, bragging how sweet he can be with every motion, stroking all the best places with the caress of his tongue, nibbling, toothy little pinches in the right spots capturing Stiles' attention, letting him tune his body out, being an obedient doggy letting Stiles guide his head, handsome, fully muscled under his clothes – virility, Peter has it. Ha ha, actual pederasty.

What would his dad think if he saw Peter on his son right now? The thought raises a shiver every time. Hashing this out with Derek frightens him half as bad.

His dad doesn't know Peter. He knows of Peter and he knows his son's scrapping and packing on muscle. He used to see the injuries and remind Stiles on the regular that if Peter rips his limbs off Stiles won't be fighting anything ever again. Call him an extreme skeptic.

Stiles brought Scott home to put on demonstration. He clearly had not won Scott's confidence, either. That he knew how to weaponize. So Scott totally wolfed out when Stiles feinted, pulled off a shoulder throw and used a Scott to crack the wall, one that landed claws out and launched up from the floor, leaving long, half inch deep ruts. Sure, Stiles lost beyond losing at that point, his Alpha keeping it safe and sane, 'killing' blow held in the air. He put an unsuspecting werewolf into a wall. Then came the repair dudes. Skeptical or not, his dad hasn't complained since. Scott got happy about it after the fact.

A big downside: He would show more people his new abs if they weren't perpetually some purple-green color. He pulled his shirt up for the pack, once, annnnnd they were as concerned as they were impressed. Changing for lacrosse demands ninja skills, but Scott and an in the loop Danny have his back. However unhappy they may be with his back.

Whatever. Who actually needs to see his naked body besides Peter?

"Mmm," Stiles hums amid the leisurely rounds of face sucking, notching a vote for Peter's 'patient scrutiny' eyes, legit more intense than his homicide eyes; those come in a matched set with homicide teeth and homicide claws. "Be an even better doggy and give me a blowjob."

That look. Derek either learned the look from Peter or it's genetically encoded into the Hale lineage. The Hale eyeroll. They should trademark that along with Hale-brand frozen disbelief.

Mr. Big Bad disappears down his body. Stiles shares a gloating smile with Peter's ceiling as the wolf pulls his briefs back down his hips just-enough. Peter mutters something about he's not even hard. As if erections just happen with a bruised cock. Gets a Duh, that's the 'job' part.

Lasting outstanding feature: God can Peter suck dick.

---

Scott surprises Peter when he agrees to come up with one lie or another so Stiles can stay the night considering the Alpha now and only knows his human Beta has gotten into ill-advised hard fucking in Peter's territory where rules of engagement get lax. That phone-call contained no explanations. Stiles explains: 'Bro code'.

The boundaries Peter holds extend far beyond the apartment and apartment building. He maintains control of a reasonable chunk of the city – claw gouges in the right places; tags. He has to. If he can't hold territory he'll fall straight to Omega. A pack makes a wolf stronger. So does a tie to the land. If a
wolf has neither, he might as well die. Even if a pack takes an Omega in, that's one hard climb back to power.

Aiden and Ethan are exceptions. As a single Alpha who stole the power of their pack, they were a pack unto themselves. In a diluted way they still are – enough that neither of them needs land. Or Scott. Or each other. Peter saw their submissive attitudes before and after the severance. As far as Peter's concerned, an Omega is an Omega is an Omega. They might even integrate into Scott's pack as two weaker Alphas, two of the few werewolves who'd know how. They went from being their Alpha's bitch to Deucalion's, and now they don't seem to be much more than emulating Scott.

Marking out a territory paints an explicit warning that disrespectful intruders will be found and killed, at minimum jacked up. No Beta would leave a mark distinct from an Alpha's. A Beta takes a gamble making a land grab to begin with. So far, only one other werewolf disagreed with Peter's claim, raking his own claws across his mark. They passed on the street. One of them entertained a poor estimation of his own capabilities. Tracking him by scent wouldn't have already been easy enough if Peter hadn't already cataloged him.

A shame it was another lone Beta. He could take out almost any Alpha, not limited to relying on surprise. So many wolves turn late in life. Not Peter. He has more experience. He's more dangerous. He did fail to kill any Alpha in a pack of Alphas while on the mend and he got stuck leaning on the what they're calling draíocht of possibly the worst Alpha in the history of werewolves. Not ashamed to have passed on that risk. Regrets it. In the end an unexploited avenue to cure his maddening body, disobedient even at the peak of power, his skin tight, form refusing to fill out. He can't repair himself soon enough.

He'd been meant to be beside Talia when she died. He's rightfully next in the line of descent. Not Laura. She had the gift. A natural shifter. Like Talia. Like him. Yet like Derek, she lacked the emotional constitution. Fleed and hid herself and her brother from the hunters. Settled into a new life, paying his hospital bills without responding to Gerard's little hostage scenario. Allowed the Argents to continue murdering other werewolves. Decimating other families.

His teenager, sprawled out on the couch, begged him for painkillers and another glass of water. Peter almost said Get it yourself. Opted out. The pain's in him, too, now, but painkillers won't work and there's nothing to heal and pain means nothing to him. He went exactly as far as he intended. The kid's putting up with it. Pivots on both of them venting the drive to extinguish the other's life. Stiles deserves some inconvenient, effort-demanding positive reinforcement. Only one of them got leveled.

(Other hand, only one of them snapped.)

Peter hands over the painkillers and the water. He's not a delivery service. At least, he wants to serve in that capacity as minimally as possible because Stiles gets ideas. He does not respond to text messages about Chinese food and wings after midnight no matter how much prescription speed Stiles has taken and how due tomorrow his ten page essay is. Stiles gives nowhere near good enough head for him to even consider it.

He's asking Stiles to be up to standard with what he's willing to do with his mouth, and just did. Stiles' lexicon of shameless, slutty, loud, loud noises and choice phrases as debauchee, producing Peter's name – repeatedly – no provocation necessary, he'll take as an apology for the great big no-effort Stiles threw at应当ing off his psychotic episode.

Peter enjoys a good mystery as much as Stiles. Those fugues rank as that. He knows what Stiles means when the kid says suddenly everyday things look vile, blighted, gruesome. It can be one aspect of a room, one person, the thought he's pumping the drain-off from vast vats of the sludge from organic decomposition into his car – only sometimes his whole surroundings.
Stiles talks about a white light that strips off the shadow; not there when his fugues began, coming through with increasing frequency. It didn't ring any bells for Peter, but then Stiles didn't need his interpretation.

"I've been there before," Stiles says.

"'Been there', as in…?" 

"Inside the Nemeton." He's off the couch and on his feet in an instant, walking the room as he talks, producing evocative gestures with his whole upper body: "I thought about what you said, Lydia opening and closing it. Is it a door? Is it a place? Is there a door in the place? It's bright in there. It's blinding. I've gotta be in the Nemeton." He throws his long arms out, all-encompassing gesture of how implausible any other possibility would be. Drops his arms, wetting his lips and shifting his weight, brain working, crossing the floor sporadically, now: "What's happening to me the other half of the time? I'd been thinking in terms of 'veil of death' like a mourning veil. Like it messes with my vision. Until you said that. Research happened. I looked up 'veil'. If you go back it's talking about actual cloth veil masking the Holy of Holies from worshippers."

He stops because Peter has no idea what he just said; wears it plainly. Stimulating phrase. Heard it before. No idea what he's talking about. Apparently not worth keeping in context. Stiles grimaces, scratching his head.

"Ugh, god you're so far from religious you..." Deep inhalation. Drops his arms. Wears seriousness well; vestiges of boyhood vanishing when his brow knits. He stays still, not needing to think; only rooting up the words, gesticulations concentrated in front of him at chest level: "Alright. You've got a temple, Jewish, and that's great, maybe you've got yourself a sweet-ass dome and everybody on the road's like 'Damn, that's a sweet-ass dome'. Um. Do only synagogues have—You obviously remember seeing one of these buildings, and you have no ability to clear up my confusion on those terms. Moving on. In some of these places, there's a super sacred place in the middle only the priests can enter where God hangs out, the Holy of Holies. Where in Jerusalem they kept Ark of the Covenant like in Indiana Jones so it didn't melt faces. I'm pretty sure that's why they built the First Temple. Face melting prevention. This veil keeps people from profaning the Holy of Holies, and it also prevents face melting. It's gross and unnecessary."

Long exhalation. Peter questions if he's been given the correct specific details, but he grasps the concept.

Stiles shrugs, hope in his eyes he has Peter following him now; watching him closely for signs he's losing him again.

"I like the term. I'm going with 'the veil'. Is it a place? Is it a door or doors? Yes. Is the Nemeton a sacred kind of space? Pretty sure it is. I can't use any of this information. It doesn't mean anything. What does undead or undying do to your soul? Is it anything like what changes wolves' eyes blue? Where's the difference in where I end up? How the hell in physics, including meta, am I in the Nemeton and here at the same time? I know—I don't actually know, but I'm really sure—that the Nemeton's using the telluric currents like Wi-Fi. That gives me a second delicious scoop of zero how."

Peter takes his time processing it all, expression tight. Stiles waits on him, arms hanging at his sides. He doesn't so much look tired as held in place by inertia. Peter intimately knows that weight since his resurrection. World weariness; not a supernatural phenomenon.

"Scott and Allison?" he asks.
"Allison, yeah. It's happened to her; maybe not as often. Scott... Things get dark, but he hasn't gotten grabbed or possessed by or walked into the Nemeton. He tattooed the thing on his body. He has to be closer than anybody. My current hypothesis is the indomitable will. He's the most grounded out of all of us. I am not. And there's you. We were set up to come back. No offense: You're just plain undead."

"I have no problem with that. Only with 'dead.'" He stops to think again. These things have been on his mind, but he's not Lydia or Danny, working with physics. "I'll take a shot. You know the Nemeton sapling that sprouted after the ritual revived it has co-opted the telluric currents which, from what I've understood, Jennifer had been using in the same way. Let's say it's a cellular tower and you're a phone on the network." Peter holds up his hand before Stiles speaks, seeing his energy pick up. "My point is that wouldn't explain why you're so active thirty miles away."

Stiles starts pacing again, arms folded, tapping one finger in the air.

"I can work with that. Me, Scott, Allison, we have SIM cards. Are SIM cards? That'd be a huge difference but, Stiles, this is a metaphor. —got it! We're removable soul SIM cards embedded in fleshy exteriors. We weren't the only people in the ritual. We had anchors. People to reinsall us in our meatsuits. Allison had Isaac. Scott had Deaton. And Stiles? Ding ding ding. Woman of the Barrow. Wailing spirit of death. Hot dryad until. Look at the installation job she did on you."

Peter snarks, but gives the plausibility a nod. He doubts Isaac could influence the ritual one way or another. Not to sell him short. Peter can't underestimate any of Scott's pack, but Isaac's so physical he doubts he could use his draíocht to swing anything.

"Deaton has experience and power," he muses. "He's so sweet on Scott, such a 'True Alpha' devotee, he'd even intervene more than his code of conduct lets him to give Scott more control. Being Scott's Emissary and everything."

Stiles stops in place and turns, expression flat, not annoyed but not impressed.

"Ohh, now we're getting cute with it." He shakes his head, letting his arms unfold. "I don't know. He's Scott's boss. Scott spends the same amount of time with him he did before. Unlike you I don't creep or lurk or skulk. In fact, I know that you know more than I do because you're interested, ergo you stake the place out."

True and true.


Stiles told him why he gets murderous, how Peter looks like an abomination cloaked in darkness poisoning everything around him that he has the obligation to kill. Not the worst thing he's been called. Seeing he wants to kill Stiles all the time, he set that aside in lieu of trying to figure out a way he can use this. Access to the Nemeton he wouldn't otherwise have. If not use it, fix that programmed assassin angle.

"You have homework?" Peter asks. He does not effortlessly adjust to sharing his night with someone, even this seventh time. He wants to check his e-mail. The Hornets aren't playing until tomorrow night, and he isn't caught up on the conference standings. He derives entertainment from seeing teams performing worse than his Alma Mater's. He needs to do laundry. That doesn't require diverting Stiles. He has a strong preference. Even though he puts double-checking a high school student's homework dramatically low on his list of interests. Stiles resists honest statements like: Huh. All six of these questions are variations on 'Do I give a single fuck?' or Get a GED. You notice how much more often you half-ass this stuff since the year started?
Stiles' groan extends unnecessarily long. Sounds a lot like post-mortem, bacteria released-gas escaping a corpse. So, the answer is yes. He has homework. Stiles huffs.

"Who cares? I can't write. You disabled my writing arm."

Hindsight. No amending that, now.

Peter sticks the television remote in Stiles' other hand.

"I'll bet your tortured body can manage this much. I have things to do. The more you interrupt me, the later I feed you. Got that? Need it on a Post-it note?"

Stiles looks up, smile as smug as anything Peter's ever worn.

"I hear noises. Sounds made by your mouth. Am I listening? Only time will tell."

Peter stares at the grinning Beta until he's sure he's not about to receive a renege or reassurance.

"Right," he says. Irritating seventeen year old decorating his living room. A tenth of his luck with survival comes down to 'He's pretty'.

The inevitable running commentary on Stiles' questionable taste in television prattles on, background noise. Tradition dictates Peter situates himself in the armchair when Stiles is in his apartment to spare himself from being touched. He'd inescapably be touched if he sat on the couch where Stiles, who didn't go find pants or a shirt, has covered himself with the throw. News is good for the Hornets. The Northern Arizona Lumberjacks are equally loss-racked. They might be battling it out for last place by the end of the season. That Sac State was once any good at basketball has become a myth from the mists of time.

How terrible they are now is a huge improvement on how terrible they were when Peter was enrolled in the university. Joseph Anders and then Don Newman took him to dinner a collective seven times trying and failing to recruit him. He's sure they lost sleep over an unattainable top prospect. It's not like he wanted to stop playing basketball. In a different world he'd have had a good time. Could have even helped turn things around.

In his world college basketball meant entering and leaving god knows how many packs' territories being a Hale. He wouldn't be enjoying basketball, he'd be sleeplessly making it to the games while navigating politics. Most packs would want to break bread with him. Others would be eager to get killed in the attempt to put killing a Hale under their belt. Either way? A giant pain in the ass.

Stiles can't have that problem. In California college lacrosse is almost exclusively played by women. It is so hard not to take more shots then he takes when all three of the boys are playing New England's traditional rich, white, stolen sport.

Lacrosse is a noble, impressive and most important of all deeply spiritual and ritual sport...If you're a citizen of the First Nations, the games lasted three days, the goals stand miles apart, and there's up to a thousand men on the field. If you're a suburban high school student on a men's team, it seems to Peter you're mostly shoving other students around and hitting them with sticks.

E-mail. Laundry. Cooking happens, and it's an open wall between the kitchen and the living room, yet, by diablerie, Stiles manifests the sudden ability not to continually pester him when being fed is the immediate outcome.

Etiquette always pricks him to appropriately provision his acquisition prospect, giving him access to choice cuts of a kill. Yes, even murdered vegetables. Caution of Stiles' pattern matching behavior
spurs him to err on the side of cooking standard, even a little bland American dinners. Shame. As an older member of a household frequented by grandparents, parents, siblings, cousins and nieces and nephews he really can cook.

Not such a shame to avoid revisiting better days.

He joins Stiles on the couch for dinner, not just because those dark-eyelash rimmed eyes are sweetly alluring, matched with hopeful eyebrows. Because he's thinking about a whole night ahead of him. Free access to this fucked out body ahead of him. His own body, coming down off the hurt, refuses to let him to stray to the chair. His reproductive system can't grasp Stiles' complete immunity to getting knocked up. Not that he'd ever want it to. He votes to keep the 'drive' in 'sex drive'.

Stiles asks him what feels like ten thousand questions about the Highlander reruns he's been watching while Peter had his own evening. Peter has some familiarity – the root of damnation. He rarely feels old. The teen was born while this series was being made. Peter saw the original movie in theaters with his high school friends. Keeping up with his half of the conversation equates with conjuring the most droll or scathing answers possible; Stiles' half designing questions that don't require too specific an answer.

By the time they're done eating he's cuddling a specific someone with their fluffy head on his shoulder with no invitation. A concession. No triple checking for an assassination attempt. He ignored Stiles' maneuvering while he ate, occupied himself with the volley of conversation, the television and his hunger. Got his arm shouldered over by Stiles' good shoulder so the kid could settle in when he put his plate aside, Stiles' on the couch. His arm rests over his shoulders, now, Stiles' aching arm tucked so it doesn't have to move. He lacks motivation to aggravate it. It had no effect on the fugue, and it won't have an effect on Derek until around fourteen hours finish counting down.

When it's all weighed out he doesn't care he has Stiles sharing his space as much as he thought he might. At first contact the close proximity to the same Beta that thought patiently on killing him underneath his weight, wrenched in his hold, impassive to his violence unleashed an icy rush in him that passed. Having the mostly-naked teen in relaxed, non-sexual physical contact? Means and ends. They make only full body contact and only in states of agitation. The reverse of grounding Stiles. Common sense dictates if he dislikes being murdered, and he can say from experience he does, he establish a baseline for keeping Stiles calm.

Stiles isn't his Beta. They aren't obligate allies, or even friends. 'On friendly terms' has scant strategic value. Factoring Stiles into the entire risk-reward schema succeeds under the condition he factors Stiles in over the long term. That detail's not optional, now, if it ever was. Risk elimination will never be as simple as snapping Stiles' neck. He'd face an avalanche of repercussions starting with Scott's vow of revenge. Distancing himself from Stiles until he registers as a trespasser again sounds the same. Not a choice. Only an idiot brings a creature along toward consummate killer and takes his eyes off it.

Closer in time than Stiles deciding to assassinate him, having Derek here in Sacramento is the most important thing. Enough time has passed to decide what he's good for. He does want to look well behaved compared to Derek. Derek and Stiles are friends. Close ones, too. The teenager getting exasperated with Derek's inconsequential. Peter only wants to provoke exasperation if it brings Stiles around to chasten him, he only benefits from cultivating a habit of forgiving bad behavior. He can only allow either of them to be so mad at him before it reaches 'a hassle'. And, if he plays them off each other he can't have them fight. That has one outcome: Blame Peter once they make up.

He loves finally having things to think about. He looks down at the tall teenager sprawled against
him, resting content. Eyebrows working their way through the episode. Lips hanging parted, per usual. Glimpses of skin among the contours of the burgundy chenille throw.

Peter settling in doesn't pass unmarked. As sore as he rendered the teen, for all his stealth Peter probably couldn't move without alerting him. In answer, Stiles gets more comfortable. Half-wriih, half-snuggle, careful with the elbow. A moment passes, and then Peter's brow heads toward his hairline; he looks down his own body. There's a hand making an unexpected, damn fine effort at palming his cock through his jeans, slow but moving handfuls.

No question that wins approval. Stiles deliberately passed below notice, good elbow ending up propped where his hand could get immediate access. This time the wolf's the one groaning an inauthentic complaint, dropping his head against the back of the couch. Shutting his eyes. If Stiles worried him earlier, he's also naked and un-armed. Hand job? Feels promising. Really promising. The only poor outcome would be more painful than anything else Stiles can do to him. He'll risk it.

"Take it out. I am incapable of undoing your pants. I couldn't get your dick out of your pants if I had an hour. Not so much with 'fine motor coordination'," Stiles says – requesting, not bossing. Somebody on screen has their head lopped off amid an electrical storm.

He prefers not to get masturbated as an excuse for searching out vital weaknesses under close inspection. Peter studies the boy's face, touches his cheek, looking for no more – or less – than Stiles in his eyes. Bright and glossy, attentively changing focus with his actions, no sign of the pall of death. Stiles presses his lips together, looking like he wants to apologize but knowing he took no intentional action, plus withholding on account that Peter has no apologies. Under slightly different circumstances, better terms, he'd leave off with a kiss. Isn't feeling it.

He refocuses, working his fly open again one handed, digging what's essential to the offer out of the confines of his clothes. He has to wonder what relations other people in other apartments that put up with the noises coming out of his with only occasional complaints engage in as he appreciates no charitable mood suddenly emerged. Pop quiz, test of non-aggression: Will he lose his guard, show his belly, and let the other Beta at his neck or won't he? Human threat evaluations consist of insulting the suspect and see if he or she acts out. Peter has to think he's getting the best of all worlds as he casts Stiles a curious, inviting look, leaving his own hand at rest on the cushion beside him.

Never a reason to turn down time with Stiles'fantastic hands. Hand. Fingers long, comparatively slim, but back broad, veins thick, only muscle blood and ligament beneath them – another place that baby fat disappeared from, callouses on the upper rise of his palm from grasping the lacrosse stick, skin firm from reckless use. Not hands Peter would particularly want dry stroking him, but an oily sheen of lube remains on his skin. He knows what to do with it, picking Peter up, grasps sure, lazily pulling his foreskin up his cock, further over the head and sliding it down, face scrunched, not thrilled Peter's soft. Curiously Peter remembers the same dilemma, one Stiles told him to solve with his mouth. He's sure he put in more effort, but his penis isn't as discriminating as he might be, filling out for a teenager who looks like he's waiting for the bell as readily as if Stiles thought hand jobs started here.

Peter drops his head back; shuts his eyes. Tries to avoid thinking too closely on how damn young Stiles is. It's not that his hands are always moving; it's not that he gesticulates; it's the way he uses his them, passing them over his face, through his hair, scratching at his neck, sticking something in his mouth to chew on – or, in this case, pulling on Peter's dick absent finesse, wrist loose enough to be pulling it in a different direction on every stroke. That wouldn't prick at his notice if it wasn't his cock and in the most sensitive area of his body. Also noticeable: Theme song. Damn if Stiles isn't watching the show on Netflix. Not really the kind of thing he'd like on during sex – if there was anything. In the now he's only interested in Stiles' admirable taste in cocks, he's not interrupting him
to turn the TV off.

Stiles picks up interest when Peter develops an erection, holding his upper body still but legs drawing in closer to his own body and to the wolf's. He stops being so basic, twisting his wrist when he comes up onto the head, caressing the long saddle curve, pulling at that sensitive fold of skin clinging to his shaft on the underside, the one the tip of his middle finger's just touching. He hums to himself, vibration passing into Peter's body, while he makes the head appear and disappear in long strokes. It hurts to think what he could be thinking. That he's a magician. Or Hey on repeat. Peter appreciates him keeping it to himself, never a guarantee that he will. It anchors his focus inches above his body, arousal washing backward, flowing out, its heat seeping deeper into his hips the longer Stiles works him.

Then he closing his hand over his cock from above, fingertips stroking up the shaft of his erection, hand opening, touch disappearing, and over again. Damn those are long fingers luring him forward, asking to bring his attention down and center and drawing electricity up from his hips, balls crawling up to be closer to what's a hell of a feeling.

By the time Stiles gets around to pulling the looser, protective skin down, he has skin slicked up with precum under his fingers. A plan, probably; more importantly Peter's drifted to a permissive space, listening to himself groan while Stiles' fingertips play at the edges of his glans; when he lays a light touch on the delta underneath where delicate tissue's pulled tight and lets the pad of his thumb brush a circle Peter feels like he took hold of his whole body, sexual ache closer to a sound than a feeling. A low, clear, continuous tone resonating through his body while all his muscles answer to the motion.

This. Now. This is when men say a lot of stupid things. His body pants, his throat makes plenty of concessions short of articulate speech. Shame is never a factor; his relaxation from pushing Stiles millimeters shy of the breaking point, the quiet he feels from coming into contact with that stranger, and his loose body make it too much trouble to come out with anything believable.

Arousal's in his thighs, heavy in his stomach, beneath his breast in constriction, in the muscles between his jaw and his shoulders, in the tightness of his throat, but his throat still remembers swallowing dick, hitting two different notes depending on if Stiles' still-flexible semi stretched it out.

Peter chases satisfaction down before Stiles' taxed body wears out, Peter's memory of dominance mint, sweat soaked long sleeved shirt conforming to his grasp, illusion of the hunt left in the other Beta's back, anatomy of a favorite plaything – that back end on him – conforming to the force from his hips. Mixed up with his neck stretched back, guard given up to the kid's hand stroke by stroke, trust extending as far as Stiles staying alert, able to let his body go, the semen wells up and he disappears into pleasure that takes his whole body at once, deafening.

He registers Stiles' scent, pervasive, first. The scent of his cum at the same time he registers it running over, a sticky downward drizzle onto the crotch of his jeans, surging in low waves, load recently spent, holding out until he moved fluid into the anatomy working in concert to release something more nixed. Besides playing an angle for his own benefit contradicting polite submission, he'd prefer handing the latter over before someone with their hand somewhere vulnerable pushes the issue. That somebody switched up to short sliding motions on his shaft. Keeps at it until Peter's cock gives a post-orgasmic effort, what would be left behind leaking over the head.

Stiles' gone-limp grasp slides to the base of his cock where he holds on loosely, hand warm, hand still. With the can't-believe-he-did-it look which can't be related to giving a hand job – he gives plenty of hand jobs – Peter deduces his other arm, tired of leaning, quit. By contrast, Peter's body's being so very giving. He dumped a monumental volume of hormones he always stays too on edge to
"Here I'd just given up on you as high maintenance pushy and totally useless," he thanks dryly.

"I have a variety of uses. For your penis. Wait. Is it your penis has a variety of uses for me? Yeah. Both. Mutually beneficial relationship. Most of the time," Stiles says, snide but satisfied. Peter's penis doing the heightened sensitivity deal but okay with the kid's hand at rest. "My ass so very wants this in it, but first it needs a cold compress and so, much lube. And my arm? You have to pull some of this pain off. It doesn't even feel like an arm. I need ice and packages of peas. Your whole freezer."

If he disagrees with that he's not getting anything else. He has apprehensions – already territorial, already resentful. He has to put emotions aside. He has no doubt Derek can drive from New Mexico without stopping, and he will. Is. Only face to face confrontations satisfy his grudges. He and Stiles know it's time to quit on this for the night; sheer belligerence, borrowing time to hold each other in esteem pushes them ahead.

"Fyi, besides washing this hand because your penis has been in my ass, gonna use an enema off label for actual hygiene for intestinal reasons," Stiles rattles on. "I'm unsettled by the idea, too. I need help with that. Plus, more painkillers. Let's leave the whole bottle and a glass of water by the bed. Gallon of water. Dude, there will be so much lactic acid in my muscles tomorrow morning. So much. When you bone me I have got to be able to breathe this time."

Brief, unsettled look at the clock while he rambles.

Peter snorts at Stiles' bossing. He has no immediate leverage, only futures. Like reductions on the amount of time he refuses to associate with him. The possibility of ever having sex again. His imagination conjures time to touch, time to taunt, the necessity of arousing the other Beta beyond an erection for him to forget to reject the pain.

"I hear: I'm filling your almost helpless body full and your head with bad things until the pain doesn't matter; you beg me to fuck you. Little boy, I am making such a whore out of you tonight."

Stiles laughs; pulls him by his t-shirt to kiss him, making a noisy fuss about what it does to his own arm while he sucks at Peter's lips; licks past them, kissing wet and hungry.

"I'm counting on that. Holding you to that," he swears, falling back to hold himself up on his better arm, unsettling the plate down the couch but not unfortunately, wearing mischief and challenge. "If I feel insufficiently like a filthy slut, I'm charging double." His expression changes to one of reflection before he lifts his chin, confidence a lure raising Peter's pulse. "You will say my name, but that's secondary. A side item."

The kid'll have to prove that one. He reaches for and achieves the remote without Stiles crying out, although it involves maneuvering over him. That one uncertainty has been nagging him in the background.

"Why the hell are we watching Highlander?"

"Our individual character deficits."

****

The key to Peter's apartment has been pressed into Derek's palm since he took it off the key ring. He prompts himself not to bend it under his fingertips while he leans against the wall of the elevator, watching the numbers change on the red and black display as it climbs. Peter handed it to him the first day he moved in, insurance in case he had to retrieve something for his uncle in the future. He
never used it. He doubts the other wolf's going to appreciate the single time falls in line with the reason he held on to it.

He never seriously missed his Camaro until driving a thousand miles in a utility vehicle. He felt good at the Chevrolet dealership on the day he bought the car that ultimately took him from New York back to Beacon Hills. A year later he stood in front of a college student's car, useless in emergencies – he thought – and he sold it. When the emergency isn't carrying a wounded body, or a kamina in a body bag, prompting the sale, he misses the low center of gravity, not feeling the drag, not stopping to rack up credit charges he hasn't examined. Definitely over two hundred dollars, added against losing work days. That's four—Doesn't matter.

Stiles matters. Leaving Peter on his own. He shouldn't have done that. Peter wanted him out of town to begin with, tried to replant him when Kali threatened him. Because he was too weak to fight her. Because of Peter's advice. In Deucalion and Jennifer's wake, Derek still had no real home, no steady employment, and had seen too much death. Neither of us want this life for her. Peter. I wouldn't make it out there. Can you see me starting over as a civilian? When I bit Lydia I didn't know if I'd survive to finish off the Argents. She brought me back and all I did was watch Scott end it. I'm a mistake. I belong right here with the rest of our dead. Derek argued himself into acceptance.

Peter never said anything untrue. Derek could cure Cora. He wanted him to leave. He stood by and watched when Scott triumphed against Gerard. Derek knows he should be angry for more than yesterday; more than whatever Peter's done to Stiles. 'Why?' and 'For what?' have no answer.

The lobby smelled like Peter, Derek smells him in the elevator; walking out onto his floor brings Derek up straight. Placing his hand on the walls and running his touch along them, ongoing, the claim staked by Peter urges him to slink along the floorboards to his door. After months away, instinct warns he's entered an unwelcoming territory far from his and Cora's. He chooses to walk straight, picking up confidence as he goes, determination to protect shouldering off Peter's influence. The picture Peter sent him – too clear in his mind – was as unwelcome an intrusion in his territory. He had no idea that that could even happen digitally until yesterday.

No hesitation unlocking the door; entering and shutting it behind him. Locking it back to protect neighbors from barging in depending on how this plays out. The scents heavy on the air repulse and rile him. He pockets the key while Peter strolls into the hallway from his living room, standing calm, head tilted, wearing his familiar, genial neutral smile. Derek listens for Stiles. Still here. In the bedroom. Sleeping late into school hours. Breathing and slow heartbeat easy to pick out in the silence. Easy assumption it's Stiles. He picks up faint traces other people have come and gone, but two dominate the apartment. It frightens him to think he's here often enough to be on every surface. And…be on every surface. His temper starts coming up.

No human greetings. Not at an impasse, just scenting. Derek missed his shower last night, body a record of the machines at work, meals, pumping gas, sharing space with Cora. Peter billboards his own hours: Sex. Stiles. Blood. Ejaculate. Sweat. Old hair product, hand pushed through bedroom hair for now.

Derek knows what he should do after an insult like the one Peter delivered – cruel, vain, mocking. He tells himself they're past that. He tells himself they can be civil about this, that Stiles' condition, both mental and physical, comes first. Until Peter's taunt, he hadn't seen his face since he left. The text messages, and then the e-mail, IRC and in-game chat, hinge on the separation of thought from their deeply rooted defenses. He's heard him infrequently on voice chat with Stiles' same crowd; he's never heard Stiles curse so fluently.

Remembering his face and his voice, engulfed in his scent, runs counter to keeping it civil. Peter sees
the change; hackles rise, human hairs prickling in an evolutionary throwback, He picks his head up. Exhales. Remains still, smile faded.

The punch to the face. Peter staggering backward. A bloody nose of his own exacted against him. Looking up, blinking several times until his eyes can focus, body unable to reabsorb the flood of blood down his face, over his chin, even though the bleeding stops. Unexpected to Derek, a full toothy smile breaks out on Peter's face; now he's laughing, harder because the only sound is air panting through his sinuses, arm raised in front to cover his face, looking at the ground, working on packing it back in.

Derek's confusion twists toward fury, hot temper shutting down his reason. Not a strength. He couldn't have traded a more controlled, precise response. It's about Stiles. It's supposed to be only about Stiles. The problem is it is. Peter knows exactly how extreme an insult he's delivering, even as his laughter dies down. Entertained smile; eyes bright with excitement; chin tipped up; body still. Derek didn't ask for a fight. He's being challenged to a fight, sanctimoniousness gloating Everything in these rooms is mine.

Not true… and Derek wants this. He hasn't exercised the rage that wanes but never leaves a wolf against anyone but Cora since June fifteenth, last year, when the moon went into the Earth's shadow.

Peter lowers his shoulders. Fingers go wide. Claws come out, eyes glowing cold blue. Chin comes down, defending his neck against any opening shot, their shared gaze unbroken. Derek rapidly catches up that his uncle's serious about this. Information he has nowhere to place. No time to place. Either he has the right to be here, to intervene, assert his belief that from any standpoint Peter can't have sex with... a seventeen year old? Or just Stiles? The murder he'd commit if he found out Peter seduced Isaac or Lydia snaps in place. Stiles. And principle.

Claws out. A step further, bringing his power out, changing his body.

Peter's roar shakes the walls. Next: jagged events out of synch with time tied together by violence. Blood flying. The kitchen counter breaking under a wolf's back. Back of the couch ripped out of the covering, frame turned into a club with the range to smash a wolf upside the head. Wood exploding on contact. Two bodies crashing through the plate glass window onto the concrete porch together. A scramble back inside, the danger of going too far, neither willing to gamble on who takes the seven story drop. Derek won't remember who dealt what damage; there'll be no catalog of scars. Peter outmatches him, except in willingness to take pain to deal it back. Nothing matters except that Peter bleeds. What matters is a voice he's never heard before.

"BOTH OF YOU BACK OFF."

Derek blinks stupidly, mirror image of Peter, uncle and nephew retreating a few cautious steps in opposite directions. Peter would swear he'd just been checked by an Alpha – not his, but any Alpha has stopping power. No, it's Stiles. Peter, in his own territory, has to steel himself to focus on the teen in the doorway out of the subjugated sense he shouldn't be looking him in the eyes at all. Derek's eyes drop to the floor.

Common sense kicks in. Peter's eyes automatically fall away toward the carpet long enough to satisfy manners before attending Stiles, again. Derek sees nothing inhuman about him. Swallows against his intimidation, cold rushing through him at the idea of what True Alpha means. The fact of Stiles rapidly replaces thoughts of Scott; Scott's left – there's just an angry, ranking Beta. Peter wears murder for seconds before the wolf falls off him. Derek allows his own strength to fade. His anger with Peter runs just as hot, but Stiles has a pack. A pack that could walk in and sweep away
Peter's claim over his slice of the city. A factor Derek never considered – although, from Peter's reaction, he could have given it closer thought than he has; has never closed the gap between abstract reality and deference.

Easy to see why. Nausea battles the relief, the happiness, and another gap closing: attachment and Stiles as a physical reality. The right half of his face and bridge of his nose wear a bright bloom of purple, darker in places and red at the edges. Origin of the blood covering his face. Not a punch. From the stain of dried blood – not the only dried fluid – on the blue exercise mat lain out on the floor, blood fresh at the side of Peter's picture, it's not hard to work out he smashed into the floor.

He's shirtless; has just buttoned his jeans. Not hard to work out that time frame, either, just knowing Stiles. Easy to imagine the time he sat in bed, frustration with them building up until he raised the power entrusted to him by Scott. His right arm hangs useless, handprint bruised like a handcuff on his forearm. The bruises covering his body overlap, some almost faded, others fresh, but mostly not as fresh as the damaged tissue of his face, human-bite shaped bruises on his ribcage an exception. He can't count them. Could. He feels too sick. Most of him wants to beat Peter into the ground, take Stiles, and go.

"You," Stiles says, pointing at a quelled Peter. "In the armchair. And you..." – Derek would call himself quelled, too – "Sit on what's left of the counter."

Derek registers that puts him at an advantage in height. That disconcerts Peter but when he looks at the armchair he changes his mind, taking visibly a proprietary seat.

The alternative is going for each other's throats again, dearly desired on both parts. Instead of starting up Derek obeys, hops onto the broken countertop, sitting where it looks like it can support his weight.

"Fucking what?" Stiles demands, walking forward toward something like the center of the room, looking between them. "I knew you were going to act like rabies, but I thought maybe one of you could keep your shit together," he barks, dividing his gaze between them, voice raised, but raised to angry teenager.

"He started it," Peter says. Smiles at his nephew when Derek affixes a glare.

"You. You started it. Last night." Derek's conviction rings certain. Peter raises his brow a little higher; keeps the self-assured smile up. He'd like to get mouthy as much as splatter more blood on the walls. He knows better. Derek remembers when they bantered – didn't fight. When Peter would tail after or abduct him, not necessarily physically – dragging him by the tricep if he didn't get moving implied, to satisfy his sociability.

"All the not caring, Derek," Stiles snaps, looking exceptionally disgruntled with Derek, specifically. It stings. "I'd tell you to look again. Do not do that. But a person hypothetically looking at that pic could tell I had forewarning Peter would abuse my camera. A hunch I ignored because I got a kick out of the looming threat until it became a thing." He drops out of the accusatory tone, eyes searching Derek's for understanding, maybe sympathy. The nausea ebbs, sudden pain in his chest distracting. He understands next to nothing about what's going on here, except circumstances where Peter's in the right are impossible. "I'm sorry I let you end up in that position," Stiles rallies himself to put out. "I would've called, except I know you and that you'd already made up your mind about whatever you think's happening. I might have just made you more angry. You still can't hit...Peter."

Derek takes comfort in the pause. Stiles doesn't know where to place Peter. Neither in human or native terms. Boyfriend? No. Pack? No. Friend? Really unclear. Coming out with only what they all can agree is his name's a good sign.
In the corner of his vision Derek can read Peter hates that they're ignoring him.

Derek ignores him more firmly, but he's vindictively glad to realize Peter's on Stiles' shit list, too.

"Peter is the sleaziest person you know," he points out.

"Untrue," Stiles says. "That person is in my Jungle clique. She has fucked people you and Peter and I wouldn't... Forget it. My point is you're assaulting somebody I'm having very consensual sex with. Present tense, assaulting, because if I let up on you you will continue assaulting him."

"Untrue," Derek rebuts, clenching his teeth. "I'm assaulting someone who sent child pornography to the phone I, before Peter comes at me, don't have with me."

Not an exaggeration to say defending this one could put his life at stake.

"Child?" Peter asks, surprised, at the same time Stiles' calm vanishes in a shout of, "CHILD?"

Derek looks between them. It took time for his head to clear coming out of the vacuum of unreality Beacon Hills creates.

"It's not me," he stresses. "It's the law."

Peter flinches, restraining from lunging, lips twitching up without baring his teeth. He's handing this one to Stiles. That's actually much more intimidating.

"Child?" Stiles asks again, pointed, accusatory, his arms in full action, as far as they can be, one animated and the other feebly copying it. Nothing broken. Good. "That's. That's great. That's rich. Yeah, remember what a little kid I was when I saved your ass? Before Peter got to maim you and Scott? Kill Allison and Chris? I won that fight for us." Derek has to admit that. "How about when I've carried your dead weight for hours? Wolfsbane ring a bell? Swimming pool? Or when I got Peter to help me pull Cora off the floor before Ethan and Aiden tore her apart and then resuscitated her in the ambulance when she went into respiratory arrest? That happened. You have no idea what I've done since because you bailed. What am I to you? What the hell do I look like to you?"

"A minor. A minor who's doing a convincing impression of a hysterical teenager." He's looking it and acting it. That makes this eas(ier). He gets more serious; takes on his own borrowed authority. "Your father told me to get the keys to the Jeep and take you home."

Stiles stares at Derek in open-mouthed shock. Peter's brow knots up. They're both waiting for Stiles' anger to catch up to his mouth, Peter looking; waiting for permission to physically assault Derek. A glance of Stiles' picks that up. There's the strength he needs to speak his mind; Derek loathes the source.

"Derek. You're a traitor."

The pain in his chest intensifies, all emotion, but damn it, this isn't how he wanted to meet up with Stiles again. The urge to fight Peter fails, collapsing in on him. He understands Scott letting Stiles make his own decisions. Derek wants to think Stiles can make his own decisions, but he can't trust that until there's no chance of Peter cueing him – or Derek. He had hours to debate his decision, phone tossed in the seat across the console from him, not in arm's reach without leaning to get it. Minor deterrent; impulse stifling.

Stiles wants to protect his father. Take total responsibility on himself. Derek understands, has the ugly picture in detail, beyond abstraction. He put himself in the man's place. Imagined what he'd want if Cora ended up in the same situation with a man anything like Peter. He put protecting Stiles
father first. That meant eliminating a future where he's subjected to excruciating uncertainty. Stiles isn't the only Stilinski that takes comfort having a werewolf backing him up.

"Hello?"

No grogginess in the voice on the other end of the line. Phone calls after midnight must be routine with the year the man's just had.

Derek feels like a kid around Stiles' dad. That's because the man lumps him in as 'one of Stiles friends'. That's how he looked at him when he and Scott got them out of the root cellar. A nod of gratitude his way, focus on his son.

They have a separate relationship. The one where he's an adult murder suspect in the interrogation room at the station. Not thrilled to fall back on that.

"Sheriff Stilinski? It's Derek Hale." His wince deepens. "Stiles is alive and he's not in the hospital. This isn't that phonecall."

"Thank god. Derek? It's been months. Stiles tells me you and your sister are living in New Mexico?"

Derek has no idea how to make small talk, unless he's selling somebody on something. As he moved into human society the revelation smacked him that he imitates Peter. After he killed Paige, he lost interest in sports, lost interest in his friends, became the kid sitting alone at the lunch table studying.

He hadn't been imitating Paige. That'd been depression. Peter refused to accept his doing-fine act at home. The short lived era of watching Peter work his smarm. Hadn't it been apology for his involvement in Paige's death? He's less certain now than he used to be.

"Yes, sir. I finally got a steady job. Since then we've been doing alright," he says, recognizing he sounds way too serious about it. "Actually, I'm on the road to Sacramento."

"So, this isn't the 'your son is dead' call, and it's not social," the sheriff fills in, waiting expectant on the other end of the line. Derek knows the sheriff narrowed it down when he first spoke. He can think of delicate ways to put what he has to say. Sheriff Stilinski gave him time to feel normal; that doesn't mean he'd enjoy decoding anybody's hedging. Prefers straight facts. That's how he's trained to operate. That's how he interrogates, with direct questions.

"It's not social," he agrees. "Stiles and my uncle have been having a sexual relationship."

Silence on the other end of the line. He hears the sheriff move saliva in his mouth; swallow. Usually an indication somebody's thinking. Good sign.

"I see," he says. "Is this a consensual relationship?"

Derek loses his tension. He played the right strategy. He's had a lifetime worth of huge mistakes without completely screwing up his friendship with Stiles by setting his dad off.

"I don't know. I hope so."

"Have you known about this long?"

"No, sir. I found out yesterday. I was the first to know." The road ahead disappears into darkness past the few pairs of tail lights in the distance and the cones of light ahead of them. "The drive's about fourteen hours."

"I take it there's an immediate issue on hand. You should be calling Scott, shouldn't you?"
“Scott’s aware. This isn’t a werewolf situation.” Wow. It feels dumb saying that. He doesn’t have words for it in his day to day language. This is no less a ‘werewolf’ situation, it’s all about werewolves, only it’s social dynamics, not bloodshed. Sheriff Stilinski only deals with one side.

He remembers Jennifer, a human, like Stiles – at least she was once – caught up in their politics. She put his back to the wall – repeatedly and violently. It was that human woman that opened his eyes to what he couldn’t see dealing with Peter during his rampage. Derek gave her a future by taking a life. He saved her from Boyd and Cora, again from Kali, again in the hospital. What she chose to do with the chances he gave her wasn’t his fault. If he acts out of guilt he’s always a step behind, reacting.

“Peter chose to share his personal life with me abrasively.” —he bites out the word on the edge of a growl. There isn’t a better one, they only get more colorful. The less said about that, the less chance he’ll accidentally tear the steering wheel off the Cruiser. "I have to deal with that. I don’t know where Stiles stands on this or how he’ll react." He wants to be finished talking. Wets his lips and holds himself on task. "I wanted you to know what’s happening. I’m pretty sure you’ll end up in it, too."

"Son—" The sudden switch to an impersonal officer of the law catches Derek off guard. "—you're not planning to murder your uncle, are you?"

The sheriff graduates to more than capable of dealing with this in Derek’s esteem. He’s not planning on it. He hasn’t ruled it out. Even if he wanted to, the odds are in Peter’s favor.

"No, sir."

Another pause for thought, longer than the first. Derek checks the gas gauge, scowling at it. Because he could scare it off from tipping toward empty.

"Seeing that my son is seventeen years old, I have a say in this. From what I know about Peter Hale, I want you to take that kid's keys and put him in the Jeep. I want you to bring him home. He has no chance of escaping you."

Derek reaches the limit of imagining himself in Sheriff Stilinski’s position: Stiles defiant to authority, immune to punishment, too smart to be corralled. He’s spent years alone with his helplessness. He’s not helpless today.

"Yes, sir."

He’d rather drag Peter down to New Mexico, except he can’t make Peter go anywhere.

"I called the only other person who’d handle this appropriately. We’ll talk about it with your dad," Derek says in a too-successful ‘adult’ voice. Yeah. That’ll make Stiles happy. It makes his uncle pretty happy if the touch of a smirk at the corner of his lips indicates anything.

"You fucked me over," Stiles spits. "Think about what that's doing to him! He's at home right now probably thinking…I have no idea what you said to him. I know he's broken up. He already worries about me way more than enough."

Derek shakes his head. He loses the patronizing tone, softening even with a Beta that looks ready to rip his face off in front of him. Actually intimidating. Inaction just isn’t on the table.

"I know for a fact he's sitting at home right now waiting to see you. What he said was: 'I want you to bring him home. He has no chance of escaping you.'"

Stiles mashes his lips together in an angry line that quivers with the pressure before stilling. Derek
Now that they're in the same room, he has no idea how to communicate. He sits frustrated, sorry not for what he did but the hurt it's causing Stiles, trying to pick up a clue from a well-defended face so he's not the enemy.

"Derek," Peter interrupts, suddenly bored with them. "Are you hearing what I'm hearing?"

Derek focuses. Sounds of the city. Sirens. Police sirens. He tunes them out as background noise or he'd be hearing them from all over the city.

"You think your neighbors called the police," Derek fills in for Peter's raised, waiting brow. He cringes. 

"Shit!" Stiles explodes, already passing Derek, opening the doors under the kitchen sink, pulling out a box of cleaning pads and setting them next to the sink while Peter's already folding the exercise mat up. No questions needed. Stiles hands him one when he comes up beside him, all grudges on hold. Derek eyes the wall and rips off a long sheet of paper towel, passing the pad under the water Stiles has running and heading to hit up an impressive splatter of his own blood from the wall. He makes a face at the few chunks of gore that went flying with it. Picking those up in the paper towel after blotting the blood dry and remembering why he doesn't love the werewolf lifestyle.

Peter leaves toward his room, coming back to make quick work of the broken couch frame as a semi-plausible means of breaking a plate glass window. Stiles has his hands full cleaning up spilled blood on other surfaces, forcing his injured arm to work through what looks like painful cramping. He has a face that's already going to get one or more of them arrested before the police ask for IDs. He looks between his uncle and Stiles.

"What do we do with Stiles? Shouldn't he get out of here?"

"Keep working, dude," Stiles says. "I am going to go hide in Peter's body dump with the mat. Happily, it doesn't smell like death. He's fastidious. He like triple bags them."

There's no place to start with that statement. Besides that he's glad Stiles has put the argument on hold to throw off the authorities.

His uncle picks up where his confusion begins, filling in unsentimentally:

"I put a false back in my closet. It's where I put the bodies. They keep giving me bodies. I'm gonna start charging a disposal fee."

Derek doesn't pause this time, going after bloodstains, on a new Magic Eraser, trash compacter pulled out from the kitchen counters, filling with porous materials stained with slowly spreading crimson. Panic threatens.

"Wait. There's bodies there right now?" He's eventually going to jail. If he keeps getting held on suspicion of murder, somebody's going to find something to stick to him to get him off the streets.

"No." Peter makes it sound like Derek's being absurd. Peter's never been handcuffed and put in a squad car, or been the prey of a manhunt. Unable to use a credit card. Waffling between dumpster diving and risking a drive through window; although Derek's done plenty of scavenging without that motivation, besides hitting up soup kitchens. Part of him craves the hot entrails of a rabbit, and hunger between odd jobs can chase away any other considerations but one: Getting covered in blood. On that subject, when he already showered at the YMCA, being wanted meant going out to a natural body of water with a bottle of shampoo. Bringing Isaac into all of it had been a lowlight.
He may always have that one over Peter. Despite the trauma of burning to death, of reclaiming his mind, pieces of him irrecoverable, materially his uncle's spoiled and he's always been spoiled. Derek wishes Peter had no more tragedy, no more trauma, felt less dead – was less dead, even knowing he's a terrible person. He could do with a big dock in the sense of entitlement.

"I just can't always disappear them right away like I did 'Jennifer Blake'," Peter goes on, strategically moving some furniture. "You're welcome."

That stops Derek in place, eyes scrabbling across the new part of the wall he's finishing on.

"Peter!" Stiles snaps, getting up and heading toward the trash behind him. "Oh my god. Other people. Feelings. Other people have feelings."

Derek focuses on Stiles' rebuke. On Peter hissing in through his teeth. Imagining Stiles afraid to challenge anyone's a reach. It reassures him anyway. That doesn't mean Peter's not manipulating him, just that the relationship doesn't lean on Stiles taking any and every kind of abuse.

They're almost out of time. He has to save feeling it for whenever he's alone. He scrubs off the last of the blood, hopes the wall doesn't look as wet to a human as it does to him, and joins Stiles in trashing the cleaning supplies.

"You should hide," he says. He means 'Thanks'. Stiles know that, sharing a look of sympathy with him that's unusually tense; worried, too. He nods, and he's gone.

Once the men in navy blue arrive, take the ride up the elevator, knock on the door, they're are let in by two contrite Hales in new shirts, old ones in the trash, Peter's face – and shirt – covered in fresher blood after Derek delivered on Peter's gesture to his nose. Not so satisfying this time. Three times. The blood on the furniture and the floor carpet, some scattered elsewhere despite best efforts, demands explanation. Getting a believable amount of blood out of Peter's nose put Derek's focus on the present and not getting arrested.

"I fucked your girlfriend," Peter said when the cops were in the hall. "We'll go from there."

Cringeworthy, but doable.

All told Derek has one up on dealing with them over Peter. It borders on inconceivable Peter could commit a crime traceable back to him, at least by a human.

Yes, officers, they've resolved their differences. No, officers, they don't wish to press charges. The roar? Just screaming. No idea what they mean. What initiated the interfamilial conflict? Why do men ever fight, officers? A woman. Definitely not a seventeen year old boy. Is she safe? Yes, officers. We're sorry, we'd rather she not be dragged into this. But they press for a name. Peter says, raising his voice as if just to enunciate clearly, 'Olivia Lapaha'. With any luck Stiles gets to texting whoever the hell that is. Yes, officers, she's not only safe but finished with both of us. Derek doesn't need to reach to land on losing his dead ex-girlfriend. Emotional authenticity's easy. Peter has no use for authenticity, but he produces one of his facsimiles.

Hales? From Beacon Hills? They end up being consoled about their dead family. Unwelcome, but as far as these officers are concerned they're currently the kindest, most forgiving people Derek and Peter have ever met short of overselling it.

Feeding off Peter comes easily. Any time Derek would hesitate, his uncle takes over or lends a physically communicative prompt. It takes him back to being pack under his mother, then Laura. To edging around accepting Peter as his Alpha, and Peter accepting him, relying on his energy for
recovery after the stolen kick from psychic vampirism wore off. That always felt wrong, Peter distant. Because he died? Because he held himself at a distance? Because Derek did the same? Derek didn’t even feel like he could put him in line. He’ll never know; he never tried. If Peter didn’t purposefully create the impression he nudged it. No specific example of when or how. Maybe they’re unneeded. Peter gives alienating attitude and always has.

Like right now.

"I don't know about them, but I'd make love to you on this wrecked couch," he flirts when the police have left the scene. "I forget you can ooze that charm. You learned from the best."

He answers the scowl Derek shoots him with a smile. There goes thanking him for the backup. It couldn’t mean as much to Peter as the self-congratulation he’s enjoying.

"We clear?" Stiles asks, reappearing after a moment. He looks toward the closed apartment door with a frown. "I got enough of that to message Olivia." He hands his phone to Peter, who starts scrolling through the conversation. "Pretending she slept with you? You better go to Best Buy and make a stupid big purchase, let her sell you all the extra store insurance crap, and tell her manager how wonderful she is."

Peter sighs, looking annoyed he agrees while typing out a few more lines of text with his thumb.

"New in town. Skinwalker. I tried to kill her. Put in a great try," Peter says, answering Derek’s expectation. Derek resents they're still in tune simultaneous with recognizing it. Focuses on Stiles when Peter hands him his phone back.

"We're going."

Stiles double-checks with himself he heard that right before turning on—to Derek, not a stone wall but building one.

"Whoa. Do you—We are not. We are not going. Unless we are going separately. I am not going with you."

"Will you go home if you leave on your own?" Derek asks him flat.

Stiles gapes. Scowls. Pokes his chest with a finger. Gives a shove, poking it deeper. Drops it. "Don't do that to me. Don't do that heartbeat thing. I'm finished with you guys doing that heartbeat thing. I'm instituting a ban. It's banned. I've banned it."

Derek folds his arms over his chest. He can stonewall better than he ever could before, insecurities and fears sewn up.

"Give me the keys and let's go."

Peter sticks Derek with a disappointed look and gives Stiles an apologetic one.

"I guess you'll have to be the bigger man and face the fact that Derek denied your autonomy by manipulating human social mores after failing to convince your Alpha to co-opt your free choice."

The tin plated fakeness of his sad resignation gets under Derek's skin the way Peter meant to.

"What Peter said," Stiles says, as grouchy as Derek's about to get. "Jesus, let me go put some clothes on. I accept you're a huge dickwad." No he doesn't. Pause electric, he flies into animation. "When have we ever worked inside the law? Never. We have never done that. I have the fucking
right to sleep with Peter. I answer to one person. If the person I'm sleeping with...If I get nasty with Peter, and he crosses a line, that's Scott's call. You know it. Choke."

Peter smirks, watching Stiles stalk off to the bedroom.

"Great job. You've set him straight. It's all uphill from here."

"I don't care what I am as long as I get him away from you," Derek says, monotone.

"I don't understand that," Peter says. Derek displays his aggressive skepticism. "I'm being as genuine as I'm capable of," Peter promises. "I'm teaching him how to survive. Including going after what he wants."

Derek cranks up his sarcasm:

"Stiles wanted this. You didn't manipulate him."

He watches his uncle's masks crack; fall off in pieces. Derek can believe the exhaustion he sees, whether or not he should. Peter's actively dodged most emotionally charged situations since he resurrected, or participated but emotionally disengaged. He's in a triathlon. The older wolf rolls his eyes, all the other muscles of his face lax. No personality in his voice, just the quieting of it and the articulate despondence:

"Breaking news: All I did was spar with him. Despite my staggering self-obsession, I ignored his sexual responses. Can you imagine I ever wanted Sixty Miles a Minute in my space more than necessary to rule him fucking up out as a threat to my health? Keep your judgmental bullshit limited to things I initiated."

Derek glances toward the bedroom, dropping his voice as quiet.

"You're right. For some reason, you thought you'd get a one off. There's no way you'd invite Stiles in. I don't know how you got to this kind of physical abuse. What I know is I have to get him away from you."

Peter meets him with attitude, this time, not on his game but driving in his words.

"I'm not sure if you'll do anything to try and fill that pit inside you where your pack used to be by protecting anybody that even looks in danger, or if you honestly think this is the right thing to do. What I know is I have the right to fight you over my naked, vulnerable sexual companion when you come in my apartment to physically abduct him."

Stiles, dressed, passes them without looking at either of them, unzipping his backpack – he's been using his stiff arm, he doesn't have as much trouble as Derek might expect – pulling something out. A black leather pencil case with a distinct odor. He goes into the bathroom, making the visible, conscious decision not to slam the door – just close it behind him. Derek shuts his eyes. Can't pretend Peter away. Remembers he'll only say the things that hurt. Skew the picture. The ninety percent success rate doesn't mean he has to let the words stick right now.

Peter stops talking. Even with eyes shut, Derek feels his eyes on him making a full evaluation for Peter's own purposes.

"You're right. For some reason, you thought you'd get a one off. There's no way you'd invite Stiles in. I don't know how you got to this kind of physical abuse. What I know is I have to get him away from you."

"I'm not sure if you'll do anything to try and fill that pit inside you where your pack used to be by protecting anybody that even looks in danger, or if you honestly think this is the right thing to do. What I know is I have the right to fight you over my naked, vulnerable sexual companion when you come in my apartment to physically abduct him."

Stiles, dressed, passes them without looking at either of them, unzipping his backpack – he's been using his stiff arm, he doesn't have as much trouble as Derek might expect – pulling something out. A black leather pencil case with a distinct odor. He goes into the bathroom, making the visible, conscious decision not to slam the door – just close it behind him. Derek shuts his eyes. Can't pretend Peter away. Remembers he'll only say the things that hurt. Skew the picture. The ninety percent success rate doesn't mean he has to let the words stick right now.

Peter stops talking. Even with eyes shut, Derek feels his eyes on him making a full evaluation for Peter's own purposes.

Stiles returns bent on maturely giving Derek the silent treatment, Derek's eyes widening. He can't see the injuries on Stiles' face, only the edges of the make-up. Whatever avenues he acquired his skill through, one was practice. And that...Stiles continues pretending he doesn't exist, going to get his backpack. Derek can hear him rooting his keys out, and then shouldering it; one shoulder. The keys
he hands over not stiffly, not angrily; no more hysterical teenager. He meets his eyes and holds them until he's satisfied Derek understands him: He doesn't hate him, but, wow, he resents him.

He kisses Peter.

Derek's stomach drops. He should look somewhere else. Or leave. Leave and be in the hallway. He also knows how a person chooses to kiss somebody says volumes. That's Stiles pulling his uncle in by the neck, Peter's hand effortlessly steadying him on his injured side. Derek's qualifications as a judge are stymied by the amount of sex he avoided and kind of sex he's had over his years. The easily angling of heads, two bodies in close contact shifting once to adjust, like maybe two people who have a couple customary positions shift, and skipping straight to something more open-mouthed and coordinated than slipping somebody tongue...kind of obscene...Not that Derek's conservative about sex. Obscene as a category.

Stiles intended for Derek to watch him. Peter? If Peter cares if he's there or not, he gives no indication of acknowledging him. His stomach's clenched up; his thighs are cold with the reactionary response of blood cutting off, shunted to his torso like he took an actual blow. His nose hits him with the fact the apartment never stopped smelling like sex, it just moved the smells to the background to make other concentrated scents distinct. He's grateful for the fight response. He has not been having sex. He would like to be having sex. Abstractly. Completely abstractly. Is Stiles even planning on no longer kissing Peter at some point?

Peter soon has the same thought, removes Stiles from him, a couple small adjustments to buy himself a few inches. He questions Stiles' sheer follow-through with his amusement.

"That's not nice. You're getting my nephew bothered." The teasing tone disappears into a critically assessing one: "Unless you want him bothered to withhold sex. Moreso me. Because I sent that photo in the first place." Peter opens his mouth in a silent 'Ah' at the confirmation he reads off Stiles' flat affect, but he smiles. "You keep raising my expectations for you."

The trouble Peter's in reveals itself, unmistakable on Stiles' face and body. Derek can't say if he's more selfishly satisfied by that than he is frustrated that the two fingers the Beta slides into his uncle's waistband, the tug he gives it before breaking away from him, cement getting an erection he doesn't want. One he can't do anything about. That Stiles gave him on purpose. Nothing painfully awkward about that looking at half an hour of silent aggression while driving Stiles' Jeep.

The last one ranks as unwelcome as contacting his father. Unfortunately for Derek, it's also what Sherriff Stilinski expects to see him doing.
Chapter 3

Stiles expected Derek to follow him into the house, he has nowhere else to go. He spitefully hoped against it the entire ride. Derek's behind him on the sidewalk. Hopes dashed.

Clarification: An entire ride taken together in his Jeep. He accepted that for whatever reason Derek decided on the way it had to down like this. Stiles stayed calm and quiet and kept his eyes on the sunlit road ahead, poking his tongue into his cheeks and drumming his fingers on his thighs but not toying with anything, not going through his own glove compartment, not occupying himself rolling down the window and rolling it back up.

He didn't even turn on the radio.

Living Hell.

The only good news is when every muscle in his body is rich in lactic acid he can barely pick the wounds out from the overall ache. That, and it's pretty easy to move around. He's only sort of glanced into it, being an actual athlete who plays an actual sport (whatever Peter says), but the stuff does the job reducing the resources it takes to keep the muscles moving.

Later, when his system flushes it out, that will be the time of suffering.

Before they left Derek got his phone out of the Cruiser; called his dad to let him know they were on their way. The phone's in his back pocket as they approach the house. All plotting plotted, Stiles had no way to take it off him that didn't involve the .50AE Desert Eagle concealed in the glove compartment and Derek putting his arm back on. (The one he keeps putting off registering since his birthday in November. He can always say he 'just' stole it from Chris, but he's seventeen and he needs to void Chris of that legal risk.) Recognizing his train of thought turned him pale and carsick.

How did you even think that?

He can barely cope with having a handgun in his car. The first time Chris took him shooting he didn't make it through the magazine before he started puking, wretching over the leaves on an empty stomach, tears streaming from the sting of acid in his nose; upchucked so hard it went into his sinuses. He couldn't tell his tears from his body's desperation to wash away the burn. Allison knelt in the leaves, her arms around him from the start, her face pressed into his back, dragged him back into his present with his packmate where he broke into a stream of apologizing she spoke through until he tuned in. The panic started coming; in the woods the shadow engulfed him instantly, none of the occasional pre-seizure-like aura. He fired three clips into Chris' targets before they left.

He can fire the hand canon straight, now, within the shadowy half-world. That he could even think about a gun and anybody he loves…For a few minutes traveling the road, head fallen against the window glass he hoped he stopped breathing; suddenly went out. Thinking of a gun as a tool? Different from anything else. Remote from any impulse, if he took the Bite, to wreck the Jeep by jumping Derek wolfed out.

Their world has only gotten more violent. Beasts of lower intelligence moving in, the absolute worst case to date a winged manticore with a fat scorpion stinger separating them from disabling it multiple times, even grounded, that Peter, in one of his rare group engagements, which Stiles has identified a clear pattern to – situations involving things the lurking lurker can only attack, not outthink, got fed up with, blasted with an insult it couldn't grasp, and got himself skewered with to rip out.
That snaps him into why he has a gun in his glove compartment, why it's there to stay, why he's registering it after this private disaster ends. Getting the shot off that crippled it's wing, grounding it in the first place, waiting a long time in the darkness watching its speed let it inflict wounds with its claws as the wolves dodged the stinger, arrows only stuck out from it like quills, immune to all poisons, and Chris, with so much more skill, had no similar ability to suddenly see the wing joint disgustingly weak, about to be blown apart, fleshy wing ripped to bleeding tatters, and the scapula of its first, larger shoulder shattered, turning against it, shearing muscle away the more it runs.

He remembers the fascination that motivated him. Wanting to see it happen; if it happened exactly like in his imagination. Pretty much did. He didn't have another shot he had the skill to make. Watched the rest of the pack and Chris finish it. Came out of the veil while staring down at the gruesome thing happening to Peter's body; suddenly not curiosity stimulating so much as dealing permanent trauma.

(If he'd had access to the Nemeton, maybe he would've had an edge beyond a sharp eye for creating a grisly mess.)

He'll stick with the venom being the most horrific thing ever. Lydia called the effect 'generalized fasciculations'. It apparently means every muscle in the body thrashing out of synch from the others until Peter looks like a skin sack for an *Indiana Jones* number of writhing snakes hell bent on making their escape. Lydia apologized that in probability no one has invented manticore antivenin, and if they did Americans wouldn't stock it. Getting him to Deaton's, Melissa joining up, Stiles' second go-round of exciting Hale respiratory failure in the back of the Argent's RAV4 which would have, under other circumstances, been a hilarious black comedy of everybody swapping spit with Peter to keep their own oxygen up.

Full confession. It became hilarious a couple hours later in that post 'What the fuck are we doing? Fuck it. Stab him with that syringe' hysteria that eases people from hideous realities back to regular life. Scott took a familiar bonesaw away when Isaac said *The Japanese have honorable ritual suicide, right? You don't lose points. How does that work? I accidentally slipped him tongue.*

The gun reality check reminds him of a puzzle left to solve: Did Peter not know how dangerous the venom really was? He's almost never taken off guard, and he has more knowledge of the supernatural than anyone else – although in this case 'Don't get stung, that'll suck' was already obvious. That'd mean he gambled on…what? Not on Lydia. She won't bring him back again. She can't heal, only call and send souls.

The gamble would have to be on Scott. Even if Peter hasn't been the biggest proponent of the more cultish respect paid by other people to their True Alpha. On trusting Scott not to let him die. Stiles has accepted it as the pragmatic explanation. Doesn't mean he hates gigantic outliers in his information on hand for determining somebody's motives less than virulently.

Other shifters, some curious, some hostile, moon-touched humans – or ones possessed by raving spirits; personal experience, ripped out of his body by Lydia, full on rag – and some hungry, nasty fairies with gnashing teeth he can look straight on at that like Lydia have a 'hot' mod, round out their experience so far. Deaton says the manticore worries him. That beasts like that don't exist anymore.

"The stories of my nation say once there were giants, here in the West," Oliva says. "I hope we never see one."

Derek asked him a couple of times during the drive, during that long period stuck in self-disgust and then some fact re-crunching, if he was alright. He didn't feel up to saying anything, wasn't being stubborn, lifted his shoulder in answer to say *Meh.* Until he locked it down, stubborn again.
Silent treatment? Warranted. Anger dismissed. Desire to rub it in Peter's tutoring facilitated that now gone. Another upside, his blue period killed Derek's hard on.

He helped Peter put concern, fear, and total confusion in Derek and exploit him again. Stiles regrets that, even if Derek's violating like thirty items in the unspoken codes of conduct between friends and between wolves.

Looking at Derek equals forgetting that part and starting on worrying about Derek, so he refuses to look at him even walking up to his front door together. The extent of the physical injury he ignored in favor of the still-excellent choice of Peter feeling him up and sexing him, uh, twice more, unless he dreamt the second time, starts to worry him with his dad ahead. Right ahead. In the open doorway. Can a guy have some time to straighten out walking after half an hour in a car and the extreme cramping like waking up to two wolves fighting all over again?

His father nods for Derek to go inside, still holding the door, now looking at Stiles with that disappointed concern that makes Stiles sick even Stiles' his brows leap up and he holds his arms out in the classic 'handcuff me' pose – one arm through sheer force of will. It rebels, throwing out some twitching and shaking, although staying in almost the same place.

"Here I am. You have me, Sheriff. Lock me in my room and impound the Jeep. I'm complicit. I aided and abetted. I knowingly and with full consent engaged in a potential felony. I can't be at liberty. I'd put the general populace at risk."

His father sighs, still holding the door. Stiles naggingly suspects it's to keep himself steady on his feet and feels worse. A lot worse. He leaves his arms outstretched, wearing a guileless expression of expectation. It's easier this way. Not on him, but on his dad. He refuses to bring more guilt on his dad than the guy already feels. It's 'Stiles is a little fuckup' versus the full brunt of 'Did I raise this boy wrong?'

"I care that you're having sex with someone at least twenty years older than you. I do. I care so much more knowing you didn't get all of those injuries from fighting. Put your arms down. I don't know what I— Don't think I didn't suspect..."

Stiles drops his arms, makes an annoyed face and breezes past him into the living room where Derek is hovering, rattling off as he walks:

"Oh my god. I like rough sex. I know that that's your business because I make bad decisions and even though I'll keep making them, I call it 'making decisions', you're my dad. You want to torture yourself over all of them."

His father has closed the door and followed him. He crosses his arms over his chest.

"According to your own summary of the story up till now, Peter Hale is a manipulative, sociopathic serial murderer."

He thinks the term he actually used in their second conversation, when his father actually paid attention, was 'spree killer', a thin semantic line.

"That's—" Yeah, serial murderer works too. He went in order. He huffs, conceding: "I would have nothing to argue if we were talking about a human, but you've been briefed on the rulebook. Werewolves take revenge seriously. Crazy seriously. Ask Derek. And ask Derek about what he's done today and how many of those choices fly in the face of the whole system that keeps a lot of angry shapeshifters from throwing a bloodbath." Now he looks at Derek. Suddenly Derek develops an interest in interior decorating eerily Peter-esque. "Yeah. That's right. Look somewhere else," he
The wolf’s been standing there wearing his most polite, most innocuous expression, his hands – amazingly, somebody should frame a photo – in his pockets. There's a shit ton of nonsense going on behind the scenes, in Derek's head, about deferring to Stiles' father both because it's the human's house and because they're in Scott's territory. Every human in it is granted sovereignty or something like that over their property because they're Scott's herd and only Scott can herd them. When Stiles figured that out he thought Rude. He doesn't think that anymore. Harassing an anything on another wolf's turf’s a straight diss. Kind of like—

He already started on forgetting why he's angry with Derek about anything. He tears his eyes off him. Considers how dated that lamp looks. Passing through the rough patch between anger and a rational assessment includes waiting out smaller eruptions of insult, an internal drama nobody else needs to be subjected to. Even guilty parties.

Stiles' dad waits on Derek to explain his side when he's ready. No asking. Gratitude as plain as the daylight in skewed, window-shaped squares on the floor. Unignoreable gratitude. Stiles cautiously tries on the still-offensive idea Derek made at least one right call.

Derek's jaw shifts. He keeps up his interest in his surroundings a minute before looking at Stiles. Derek spends so much time scowling and sassing Stiles forgets he can look all soulful. Resolute, firm, but soulful enough to give Isaac a run. Stiles attempts to continue judging room decor but keeps catching it in involuntary glances.

"You can't trust Peter. You shouldn't be spending time with him at all. Let alone paying him regular visits. He's incapable of honesty. Of...He can't even care about your wellbeing. Not like other people care." He presses his lips together, notching brow losing the woobie eyes. There's the Derek Stiles is used to, although earnest comes with that territory. "Having sex with Peter is so far from something you should be doing it wouldn't even have to be part of the 'You're too close to Peter' conversation except that you are having sex, and he's hurting you. When you told me he was giving you self-defense pointers last year you didn't mention 'alone at his apartment'."

Stiles calls up memories of Peter. Memories of desert-island-stranded-starving kisses and the never-made bed. Derek sounds convincing. He wants to be convinced because it's Derek. He wanted to be convinced because it's Peter, uh, last night. Maybe Lydia doesn't have the market cornered on fickle. Maintaining the not speaking to Derek would be embarrassing in front of his dad. Especially when he's on mark.

"Wow. I never thought about any of this before all of it, so, so many times. I look like shit today. Peter fucked up my arm. Maliciously. There's two things Peter's never done before. Inflicted something I can't shake off, and harassed you. Which means either Peter spontaneously acted out – because he's so energetic – or he had provocation. It's B. We've been having some territorial issues. It was...a series of unfortunate events, okay?"

He realizes in the next moment whatever hormone signature nixer Peter mixes up with his uncomfortably diverse knowledge of wolfsbane and other werewolf-impacting plants, Stiles has none of it here in the house. He could spend the rest of the day in the shower after purchasing an enema kit and tomorrow and the next forever he'll still smell like Peter banged him to any other werewolf.

His father may be he's reconsidering if he has enough knowledge to make a verdict on a werewolf situation. That's happened before. He comes out of it still wearing all the clues that Stiles has let him down. Again.
"From what I've heard, your only justification for having a sexual relationship with a disingenuous, psychotically violent adult man is that you're enjoying it."

Now that... He may have done a lot of sketchy stuff here. That one he has to dissect.

"Dad, for like a hundred years now that's pretty much the only reason you have sex with anybody here in our country. Because you like it. Remember? That's the whole thing unless you're making babies which, hello, I'm not, unless there's something you're not telling me about my chromosomes, only I had high school biology and there is nothing, nothing mine could be doing where I would come down with babies."

"Do you feel that if you broke off your relationship with Peter he would accept that? That you'd be safe?" Derek interjects coolly.

He never should've left off the silent treatment. Regrets that.

"I don't have any reason to break off with Peter," he stalls. He hasn't worked out the full answer to that. Why would he? Not because he's scared of the answer. Completely because he hasn't intended to stop having relations with Peter.

Stiles prefers his father's grave expression over his disappointment by miles.

"That wasn't a 'yes', son."

Doing the math on this one's not working out. Somewhere he divided by zero. The question exploits Peter's unpredictability. He hates Derek a little for forcing him to a second impasse, besides not hating Derek at all because the choices people make under pressure look different from what they do when not freaking out. Less in Stiles' case than in Derek's.

He can't math when he's being dissected by two pairs of eyes.

"Why are you both looking at me like— I don't know. Don't look at me like I know because that's not fair. Like asking me to identify somebody I saw in a funhouse mirror in a line-up. Give me some room to think. Please? Today has new information."

That's not what he'd call room. Between them it counts as backing off. One of them's thinking what he'll do if something happens to his son; Derek looks more proactive. Plotting a kill proactive. He settles for them appreciating the recognition of his excellence in deductive reasoning at all.

The one thing Stiles can't calculate is how likely (or incredibly unlikely) Peter would be to exact retribution in the first place. He has to start with the assumption he will. Whether because Stiles left him or a later provocation reminding him Stiles left him or a gradual psychological breakdown. He only has to think about the crazy he feels having as much power as he does to keep Peter wanting him to say taking total abandonment bad over time is a credible threat.

It's surprisingly hard for Stiles to imagine Peter stalking and raping him... as uncomfortable as it is to know his first assumption was stalkage and rape. Doesn't fit. Stalking and murdering him pings. Stiles grants Peter might rape him before he killed him. Neither one makes sense for Peter to ever actually do.

Peter already fantasizes about stalking and murdering him. No change there besides the possibility of an additional sexual element.

If Peter's known for anything besides that he's a heartless killer, he's known for not taking any gambles – never exerting himself or engaging in a situation for unclear returns. And, in the case of
raping and murdering Stiles he'd be paid back with interest. By Scott, and so goes Scott so goes the whole pack. Probably Ethan and Aiden, too, and, of course, Derek.

And then there's the fact that either the raping or the killing or the raping and killing could be a tipping point for annoyingly-protective Derek to join Scott's pack. Stiles knows in his gut Peter doesn't want that. That might even distress him. The only person who wants to see Peter distressed less than every single multicellular lifeform would be Peter.

Killing his father. He could kill his father. Not only closer to possible but way more frightening. If Stiles and Scott weren't who they are, if he was just Scott's Beta, Peter might get away with that with his life. By booking a flight across the ocean. And starting a new life. He barely wants this one. In the real world, Scott would be as murderous as Stiles. No way.

It shocks Stiles how safe he feels. Bulletproof. He's one hundred percent Peter's retribution of choice would be kidnapping him long enough to psychologically dismantle him into a quivering, broken fleshbeast. Vengeance for Stiles getting in his head. Logistically unfeasible. He might as well just hand himself over to Scott if he took Bond villain kind of time. No kind of revenge can't pay dividends.

"He would accept it," Stiles says with new and complete confidence, backtracking to Derek's question. "I would be safe. I can walk you guys through it, but it's one of my more compelling arguments ever. By cold calculation, I'm not worth what it'd cost to hurt me. I'm a big chunk of change. Outside us relating, present day, he came on way seductive with the whole offering the Bite thing—'" A couple of alarmed faces. Now that he thinks about it, he never mentioned that. "That was when he was an Alpha," he points out. He has faith both his father and Derek's thinking parts would figure that if he waited a second. He's not waiting. He's talking. "I said no and he dropped it. Literally. I had no way to make him let go of my arm. He's not into unwilling victims any more than any other werewolf. You know, with the rage."

"So you wouldn't mind if I had a talk with him?" his father asks.

That idea turns him cold like he's been standing inside a walk-in freezer. Peter wouldn't kill his father does not translate by any known mechanism to wouldn't manipulate his father. Peter can only manipulate his father. Beginning with the most basic act: choosing which face to wear. Nobody wants to sit at lunch with a hollow Extra. Every word out of his mouth? Creating whatever image he wants Stiles' dad to see. Even at his most innocuous Peter nurtures pliancy. Absolutely no way ever.

"We've established if he's not on the level he'll lie. He's not... We're not dating. He's not joining the family. Or the pack. He's not a person you bring home, especially not to meet your dad. Ever." Did he put too much emphasis on all that? He did. Breathing, now. Taking the intensity way down. He can pretend he didn't react violently to that question. Credibility's a non-issue. "I mean. Yes. I would mind. Talking to Peter would impair your judgment about Peter. People love Peter. Everybody that doesn't know him loves him. Nobody who knows him has killed him even though mostly we all want to all the time and know it's not a bad idea."

"You don't want me to talk to Peter...in case I have to kill him."

"Dad. I'm not trying to be an asshole, okay? But you couldn't kill Peter Hale. You almost definitely couldn't escape him. Just take any thought of a physical confrontation of any kind and shelve that."

"Your instincts tell you not to let Peter near your father," Derek abbreviates; usually Stiles appreciates Mr. Cliff Notes. Not so much right now. "We both know he'd fill his head with bullshit.
You know he's already got him in his contacts in case he has to take a chance on using him to get out of some kind of legal trouble. I'm not trying to be an asshole, but I'm glad something finally rang an alarm bell."

Stiles' brain blanks and his throat sticks.

"Stiles?" his father prompts.

"He's right," he admits when he comes back online. "Peter's not psychotically violent. I meant he's an actual sociopath. He has values. As in, he values everything based only on the use it has to Peter. I don't know how he was seven years ago, but he has serious post traumatic paranoid tendencies. A.k.a. hyperarousal. I get into these things. I've got a twenty page write-up on his psychiatric history as known to me he'll really hate to know I have. I'm saying that knowing he's outside listening to us having this conversation because you're a paranoid sociopath, Peter. But has he ever denied that? Not that I know of." He scowls at a window. It might be the wrong window, but his voice will carry either way. He has it down to a gut prompt which of his actions could set Peter off assuming he's plotting against him. No room for lack of clarity. He's plotting what he's always plotting. To have Peter completely figured out. Peter knows that. Like Stiles knows Peter's stalking Derek. Ugh. Just thinking about Peter even passing his father on the sidewalk… "Stay away from my dad!" he snaps at the same volume, momentarily vitriolic. Anger vented his shoulders slump. He makes a face. "— ugh, he's totally gonna try and have lunch with you now."

"He's outside listening to..." Stiles has never seen that expression on his father before: surprise, awe, and fear, too, but all of it pushing him to prepare to fight a creature he could never kill on his own. It disappears. Sheriff face on. "Before this conversation I didn't think he was actually crazy."


"Can you guys not with the loaded language?" Not freezing cold, now. Concerned, alarm sharp. Derek's got the face on. The not-coping face. What he used to think of as 'Derek's face' because the majority of their time together Derek wore it. He associated with adjectives like 'intimidating', 'threatening', 'holy shit he's terrifying'. Totally wrong read. A lot more like 'I'm scared, I'm out of my depth, I have never developed the skills to deal with the situation I'm facing'. The not-coping face leads directly and almost exclusively to the punching it solution.

It could be reassuring Derek developed a completely different response to trauma than Peter. Defensive, not pre-emptive. If not Peter. Peter knows exactly how to break Derek's coping skills. There exists a single alternative to the punching it solution. The letting somebody else call the shots forfeit. Stiles isn't gonna judge. His coping skills? Work in progress. Difference being people use Derek like a puppet when he's vulnerable. He's even watched Scott do it literally to Derek's helpless body.

"I just told you he's not crazy," he stresses. "Crazy people are way less dangerous. Crazy? You've got a psychotic break, or extreme cognitive dissonance, you're not making rational decisions. Crazy people aren't responsible for their actions. Their reality's gone Swiss cheese. Peter's all kinds of informed. Sometimes in my head I get a little rude but...Just don't ever, ever assume he's doing something 'because', okay?"

Maybe the tone of his voice, maybe whatever's on his face, maybe who he is and established trust – Stiles doesn't know – but Derek accepts his call. Fact repulsive, outcome optimal. Derek's come so fucking far in self-reliance Stiles can't think of a single thing more important than him getting the hell out of Beacon Hills.

"I want you to stop seeing him," his father says, talking about a wish he doesn't expect to get – a
safe, remorseful way of talking that drives another one into Stiles. Right. Because massive impending
danger to Derek isn't the topic. But he's so far past the sleeping with Peter topic. "Frankly I've never
had any luck stopping you at what you've put your mind to. That scares me," his dad goes on. "It's
always scared me."

So not taking a raincheck on the mortifying guilt. What're all his lies about his dad as the most
important person in his life when he ditches his concerns every single goddamn time. To keep him
safe, yeah. Even now, Peter not getting his way with Derek, that's keeping his dad safe. Safe and
miserable. Derek being ten times a better son off the cuff – never seen his father calm and grateful
like that since he doesn't know when – got that through loud and clear.

Time to bring the almost-legal-and-already-realized-adult out. Not his role of choice. Putting his
feelings out when he doesn't know the outcome of giving them over makes them ten times more
painful. Derek's listening. Peter's listening. He wants his father to believe him. One thing he does
know: The man's never happier with him than knowing he has human emotions. As long as Stiles
stays careful what emotions he lets show. He already feels his eyes stinging; tells himself not to cry.

"No matter what you probably think by now, disappointing you is non-goal," he swears, so much
honesty in his voice he's going to have an allergic reaction. He steadies his breathing, instead, and
soberly puts the other part out there seeing that he already needs to dissolve a Benadryl under his
tongue before anaphylactic shock. "Dad, I appreciate Derek driving up here. Staying awake twenty-
four because he's scared for me. I'm glad he called you. I wasn't, now I am. Scott's gotta be freaked
out – he just knows I'm not gonna try and dodge him. Scaring everybody like this...I don't want you
to worry. I never want you to worry. I'm picking up that that leaves you with so little to go on I'm
hurting you probably way more than if we talked."

The crying. He doesn't give a damn about the level and especially source of the relief when his dad
gives in and hugs him, just hides his face and holds his father.

You just wanted to put this behind you.

A thought that needs a punch to the face. He didn't lie. That should be what matters, but he knows
right now it wasn't enough. Short cut. Cheat code. Hugging his father tighter dries the tears up. His
dad's okay. He wants that. Not just to move on.

The smile he shares with his dad's real, too. He wishes he could see him this happy every day. All
the time. An authentic Stiles desire. It's after they've separated, when his father's thinking and Stiles
has realized there's no way to say In other news... without being the horrible person he just made an
effort not to be, that he sees Derek made him.

Cringeworthy. He tenders his resignation, allowing his defeated expression free rein. Promises not
to defend, acknowledged with a nod.

"You're going to keep seeing to Peter."

He still groans, rubs at one eye; looks between them, his father apprehensive again, trying to
comprehend him, and Derek's trying to play off what amounts to his own defeat. These are by far the
two people who least deserve to deal with his massive kink for manipulating the attention of a dude
who at his most passive naggingly wants to eviscerate him. Other people have an investment in his
recon, regardless of technique.

"The way things are at this moment? I'm going to keep seeing Peter. Not tonight. In my future. You
guys are right and we should tone down the..." He can't even make it through the sentence. Besides
being a lie it's an artless lie. "So, I'm not gonna pretend that'll happen. This is a rough patch, the
mutual insecurity in the puppy politics arena. We gotta deal with it – I know it sounds weird, dad –
like werewolves."
His father suddenly looks confused. Stands there a minute with his brow deeply furrowed, Stiles and Derek waiting on his question, before asking them:

"If he's outside why doesn't he just come in?"

The blank, shocked expression on Derek's face must be the same on Stiles'.

It's too late. It can't be unsaid. Like the third 'Bloody Mary' or an invitation to a vampire. Only way worse, seeing neither of those things actually exist.

"Um. That'd just," Stiles trades an alarmed look with Derek, double-checking Derek is equally alarmed. Affirmative. "That'd be weird, dad," he says as if awkwardly explaining it has any power at all. He stresses: "It's like mostly we just don't acknowledge when he gets, you know, Petery. It seems rude."

And Peter walks into the living room, sweet and curious. The bastard—

Used the unlocked front door. Stiles doesn't know what he thought Peter would do, but it'd be creepier. That's polite. Stalking Derek? Scummy. Using the front door? Civil.

Peter here in his home in the daylight in one of his plain cotton blends and his jeans, all the blood washed off of him, looks so much less out of place than Stiles wants him to. He could be any guy. The fact he leaves his apartment five days a week, goes to work, and nobody knows never intersected with Stiles' life before. He's simultaneously processing that Peter is in his house and that Peter isn't Catbert. He's only engaged with his job when he is, but there's this guy out there, right here, who looks completely normal.

Looks. Nixed by pleasant opening statement:

"Your father has a point. You're all playing chess while I'm playing Go. Why not be open about it?"

Derek gapes at his uncle, but only for a second, then swaps to offended and angry. Stiles thinks property damage.

"You're seriously telling me you're plotting something."

Now it's Stiles and Peter with the matching looks. Looking at Derek like he's completely, staggeringly hopeless and there's no explanation for what Stiles knows is, independently, is the same reason he wants to just be a safe distance from this place. Maybe they need to start playing EVE Online. Derek will kinda hate it, but he'll also have to scheme.

"Dude," Stiles says. "Does the Earth go around the Sun?" Maybe he's talking to Derek, laying it out – this thing that no normal person would ever assume is going on – but he's admittedly angling at Peter: "All this bullshit is Peter's bid to move you back into town to watch him so he can watch you. I don't know why he's watching you. Once I figured that out I did know he was outside."

Peter grins, looking at Derek but tapping his finger toward Stiles and Stiles thinks So it's gonna be like this. Proxy war.

"That's why he's my favorite. No hard feelings?" As if. Derek's grim face has all of the hard feelings. "—oh, come on, Derek," he sighs, abandoning hope; skips to Prince Charming without missing a beat. Peter possibly likes manipulating new victims more than he likes sex and murder. The fuel to move Peter past just keeping an eye on Derek. Stiles has a satisfying lunch Peter'll be as wiped out as him when the competition dies off. The wolf nods to Stiles' father; turns to face him. Mr. Congeniality. "Sheriff Stilinski? Peter Hale. I'm in a relationship with your son."
His father steps forward undeterred to shake Peter's hand, giving Peter a glance without returning the smile, calm face of the law. Stiles marks a plus. His dad has decades of professionalism to put toward making nice with scumbags. He stays assessing:

"Peter. Glad to finally meet you. I've heard all about you." Implicit questions pepper his tone. One of them what he's supposed to be impressed with. For a second Stiles recognizes himself in his father. Actually, exactly where he learned to be a bastard to somebody from. The deductive reasoning, working a case, asking the right questions, all those are technical – impersonal. Standing unmoved when somebody has pressure on him he didn't realize he copied. Because how long ago it was.

"All bad. I'm sure," Peter laments...lamental. Lamenting. Drops his hand. He passes from that to apologetically honest how very sorry he is he's a schmuck through and through. Sorry he sets new standards for schmucking. "They never tell the stories where I'm being a team player."

"He does help out. He mostly helps out," Stiles admits, matching it up to his memories. He's mad at Peter, Peter's playing a hand, Stiles has his own. Being mad at him and wanting him to suffer internal conflict and agony doesn't mean he appreciates what he appreciates less. He doesn't know exactly when this turned into a game of 'Who's more mature than a fifth grader'. So far, his dad's winning.

Derek's as grudging but unhappy it's true as Stiles is. Stiles masks it better, maybe because Peter's a constant in his life. Mmm. Nah. More likely because Peter only cleaned up superficially and the scentscape Stiles misses out on would piss him off, too. It's an easy run here through forest without traffic signals and signs. On top of the rest of the smells he's carrying, Peter probably jerked off while Derek drove somebody else's car in the company of their silent hostility. For all Stiles knows he smeared himself in cum.

Probably did. Did. That'd get to Derek. Even telling Derek he's not the favorite? About prodding Derek. Stiles keeps a lid on the snark he could bring out, that also for Derek but the opposite of torturing him until he does a trick and Peter reaffirms his power.

The older Hale tucks his hands in his jean pockets, but with his elbows turned out, deliberately increasing his presence. Derek's arms loosen up and his elbows turn out in response. Nothing anybody would notice if they weren't looking for it. Stiles has his arms crossed. His dad? Just one thumb hooked on his belt, arm hanging at his side. Claiming the alpha male role. Stiles feels pretty great about his dad right here. Primates are way more serious about social rank than wolves. Wolves in packs. This three unaffiliated Betas situation's still bad. No matter how wolves age, or how stupid guys are when they get competitive, having a man older than all of them dominating the room has everybody, thank god, chill.

"I wanted to apologize," Peter says, still playing it like it's regrettable it turned out like this but he wants everybody to be friends, and still addressing only his father. "Not for what I did. You know our laws are different from the law you enforce. We do adopt human citizenship and we respect human law if we can. With your job what it is and how long you've been working, I think we share a very similar concept of protecting this territory from outside predation. The investigative work I left you after disposing of my family's enemies was...gruesome."

"Where do werewolf laws fall on age of consent?"

Not. appreciated. Stiles has to bite down on an outburst. Peter remains sincere.

"Sheriff Stilinski, I stopped thinking of your son as a child when he killed me."

That'd be Peter landing one. Long running frustration at his distance from their parallel world
shows back up in his dad.

"I thought Derek killed you."

Peter's eyes widen, he pretends to take a moment to put his words together, then explains:

"Derek ripped my throat open. Stiles set me on fire with a Molotov cocktail he made himself and provoked Jackson Whittemore to do the same. Otherwise, I wouldn't have held still." He shrugs it off, tone conversational. "I would've killed Chris and Allison Argent. Where would we be today? Kate's dead. Gerard paid. There was never going to be a happy ending. Everyone did what they thought they had to."

Allison brings her aunt flowers when she visits to bring flowers to her mom. That doesn't reflect the understanding she developed. Except for Laura and maybe the nurse, Peter made legal kills.

Stiles hasn't asked but he thinks in reality the pro-homicide nurse had to have kept tabs on Peter, maybe for the Argents, maybe waiting to kill Laura and Derek if they came back – helping Peter only because he promised if she did she wouldn't answer for her own crimes. She made it super-duper clear she'd be down with killing Stiles herself and the level of enjoyment she'd milk it for.

"I don't think either of you generally give Stiles enough credit," Peter says, squinting at Stiles, now. Every inch of Stiles inside and out says No. He doesn't have to know what Peter's about to say. There is no world and not enough mind altering substances in this one for Stiles to want to hear whatever Peter is about to say. Evisceration for Stiles warning Derek and standing here considering how to cut Peter off from his nephew. He's horrified. Pre-horrified. Peter looks like the most pleasant, optimistic man in the world. Definite grounds for horror.

"The highlight of the whole Jennifer and Deucalion ordeal at Beacon Hills Memorial was being trapped in the ambulance with you," he says. "You had your hand on my ass way too long and thoroughly 'helping' me into it, and then Scott left and you put your hand on my back. Then, my thigh." He makes a chiding clucking sound with his tongue, looking to Derek. "For all your white knighting I'm pretty sure months before he so aggressively came onto me I was also molested while in a dependent state."

As horrible as Stiles expected. Somehow, as horrific as for Stiles it may be, it's not the issue. Peter declaring victory, that's the issue. This is the part where either Stiles and Derek shut Peter down verbally – not happening – or shut down Peter violently.

Stiles grasps for anything worth saying. He remembers Peter exhausted and next to helpless. He remembers the fascination he felt, the Alpha they all feared so mortal, close to just...human, still on the mend from death. He remembers his hand on Peter like it just happened. Totally unintentional ass groping; it landed there, it stayed too long, sort of he was helping him into the ambulance. And the hand on the back had a comfort component, not just to verify the whole unbelievable 'mortal and helpless' part. Maybe seeing Peter not-terrifying allowed other things to register. Baser things. Like how all the Hales look like Venus herself descended and blessed them to make up for the Zeus'd-to-wolves thing. Peter looked like that and like complete crap. He'd meant to be reassuring. Getting turned on had nothing to do with his intentions.

In his defense he'd just had his mouth on Cora's. Cora alone was a lot for a single teenager to handle. (That seems like a bad defense. A terrible defense. Skipping over that.)

"I—Fifth amendment," he says. He'd pantomime the janitor from Scrubs' 'I'll kill you' at somebody who is just angling after Derek – still – except Derek and his dad are looking at him like they'll refuse to accept anything but stringent denial. Threatening Peter's life in mime wouldn't be subtle.
He could deny it up and down. Peter'd say Don't be shy. Now setting up lunch between his dad and Peter sounds so fantastic it would have been the high point of Stiles' entire life. Instead he let Peter decide to take him down with him. If it happens to mortify him in front of his father, his dad's opinion of him's become a casualty of war. Talk a good game. Go time.

"We were all under a lot of stress. It was a very stressful time. I didn't do that on purpose. I can see now, after the fact, that Peter experienced the situation that way. Recently I finally recognized that Peter's ambitions to dock the quality of life of other people, like his nephew, don't set straight treating him like a vending machine there to satisfy my adolescent hormonal urges. Everybody here knows the ambiguous content of my character. Especially my dad...who I'll be avoiding for the rest of forever." Stiles even smiles, kind of smirks, and nails sincerity: "Thank you, Peter, you're really the jerk we all think you are."

Peter shrugs, smiling back, a smile that says how stimulating he finds Stiles.

"It's a gift."

Stiles expected the pride and approval for joining him at his own game. The expectation failed to vaccinate him against the effect: like all the air just got sucked out of his chest, lungs vacuum tubes; a burst of endorphins. He goes warm inside; he's motivated to get warmer with the cooperation of Peter's body which his body responds to based on proximity, not whether or not he actually wants to get intimate with the bastard. His dick shows some interest – heating up. Less like being in love and more like a cat going into heat. Peter's approval means a ton to him. He's sparing with it. If Stiles hadn't fielded his play, he would've gotten disappointed disdain. The result would be the same.

There's an enraged werewolf to his right. Something he should have already noticed seconds ago when (distant maybe) he could have done something about it. The rage comes to a boil. Derek draws his hands out of his pockets; walks up to Peter with a loose swing to his arms that communicates You don't frighten me and coincidentally also says I'm about to tear your stomach open and rip out your intestines like they're party streamers. Luckily Stiles' dad gets the idea, backing off from them.

"No," Derek says with his mouth words. Peter slips on a gentlemanly Whatever do you mean? face, Derek unchecked. "This is exactly how this always goes. You get everything you want." Derek bares his upper teeth. Human teeth. Human teeth are a positive sign! The rest of Derek's aggression less so. "You're going to hurt these people. You're going to hurt me. And you don't. care. You're not capable of caring. This is why I came back. To stop this. I don't give a damn that you wanted me here. I want you gone."

Peter's a blank page, emotionless in the face of his nephew. Calm. Attentive. Plus, holding eye contact. The last one could easily be substituted with a punch to the face. A claws-out slap with fangs out. Stiles won 'Who's the biggest Beta' earlier. That's settled. It's still super useful to be able to threaten a werewolf with a storm of fire and hail named Scott McCall.

But then Derek and Peter. Both packless. His gut tells him if they go at it this time they won't stop until they know which one of them one up on the other, or one of them's dead. It's hugely unlikely they'll respond to Stiles trying to break them up, because Stiles couldn't catch them to do it. They won't touch him. Ripping into each other remains on the table. Since this is Stiles' house, they'll probably take it into the yard, possibly through a window; probably to the woods where he can't even run their stupid asses over, and a second time in reverse. In this future, Stiles calls Scott. Scott and Isaac hunt them down. Odds are Scott won't get there. Not in time. Stiles hand rests on his back pocket, on his cellphone, in case.
Stiles roots for team Don't Do It You Fucking Idiots. Even so, it pricks him Derek already showed he
can only take on Peter on the grounds of having the most fight in him, not not getting his ass
thrashed. This? Not a strategy.

The flex and relax of Peter's fingers that Derek only sees as the flexion of distant shoulder muscles
says he's just as ready to show claws. Their perfect posture and the slight lift of their chins, the
tension in their shoulders, their slightly pursed lips are more potent than two dudebros posturing the
same way in a bar parking lot. Actual canines negotiate through ear and tail signaling. Werewolves
communicate with the little muscles around their eyes. An itty-bitty, potentially deadly conversation
which, being relatively fluent in werewolf and motivated to pay super close attention, Stiles sees is
going poorly.

He almost collapses to the floor in relief when they squint at the same time. Verdict: Too close to
call. Too close to risk. They're equally unwilling to find out they're the one in the subordinate
position. Psychologically, Peter's had a long, long, long forty-eight. Longer than Derek and even
Stiles, even though he's been beaten to shit since yesterday afternoon. Less fight in him, wanting
Derek with him, and Derek's more recent Alpha status could all lead to Peter racking up a loss. It
took all of two seconds to decide it but took years off Stiles' life.

Derek turns to Stiles, huffy but human. Expects solidarity.

"Stiles, you can't just let this monster prey on you. On your father. In your own house. We're just
going to let him play us? Like we don't have a choice?"

Stiles blinks; shrugs, hand lifted, turned palm out, saying he's got nothing.

"And the plan for making him gone...?" He made a liar of his hand. Everybody around Beacon
Hills in the know knows that plan. Up to version E.

"There's really only one way to know he's gone. He should think twice about pushing anybody to it,"
Derek says, voice even, turning his eyes back to Peter, rise of his brow asking his uncle what kind of
future he really wants. Derek only needs the update, the latest patch, not a fresh install of Kill Peter.

Peter plays innocent. Wounded and innocent. Harmless, wounded and innocent, tension
disappeared from his muscles.

"Derek, I don't want to think about what could happen if you convince me I'm fighting for my life.
I've worked so hard to hang onto it," he says, tone like he's apologizing for that.
Compassionate!face. "You get violent when you're angry. I think you should take some time and
calm down."

Stiles' dad, confused and studying them all closely, has only the barest or no idea of the volumes
they're speaking. Scary shit. The idea of his dad reduced to a Hallmark card made of entrails; inked
in blood has been his biggest fear since some time in those first two weeks he learned werewolves
are a thing. The fact that his father barely grasps that at this moment how legit they all are frightens
Stiles even more. That chill returns, colder than before but just as human.

"Stiles..." Peter segues. He's letting it go. Loud and clear. Another 'no hard feelings'. Having a
couple of plans to kill him's just common sense. He knows it. This time Stiles' whole body says Thank
you; fills with relief even though he has no idea what Peter is about to say. Peter says: "Maybe you
need some space to consider this on your own. It's all fun and games until somebody's torn limb
from limb."

Stiles expression twists up. He's grateful, sure, but. Hello. Annoyed. Really annoyed. Beyond
annoyed. What comes after annoyed that isn't anger? Vexation?

"Did you just dump me? How did this become you dumping me? I should be dumping you. You know what? You can't dump somebody you aren't even dating," he snaps, hurt stinging in the thawing cold. Unfair. Unfair pre-emptive strike. Not against Stiles rejecting him. Against Stiles' previous liberty to keep track of him. Maybe he actually wants to see Peter never again. "Yeah," he says, jaw tight. "Yes. I need some space. Go home, Peter. Really, actually go home. Go fuck up Derek's paint job."

"Hey!"

"I'm incentivizing."

Peter looks thrilled; smiles an actual smile; lights up with anticipation.

"Done."

Never seeing Peter again or not, Stiles takes compensation and satisfaction in the fact that he scored. If he can score against Peter he can score against anybody. (Too bad the same can't be said on 'score with'.) Knew exactly what carrot to hang on the stick.

No way he'll gloat about it or anything. Derek looks just short beating Peter to a total psychotic break. 'Come on, it's not a Camaro' might get Stiles' nose smashed one more time. No, it'll never be factory again. Yes, Derek keeps his rides that way, but Stiles knows some great body shops.

"...I can see how this individual is the problem you say he is," his dad says after a minute of silence, letting Peter get good and far away.

Stiles owes an apology. Apology would ring insincere. He has other actually sincere feelings to reiterate with even greater sincerity. Problem outstanding that they're feelings. Lucky thing he's ramped up his threshold for pain.

"Derek." He waits the second it takes for Derek to get some composure. "Thank you," he says, stressing the meaning it. "For driving out here on the fly. Because. I seriously, totally appreciate that." Now that he's further away from the emotion, anyway. Somebody, that somebody being Derek, drove all night because he might have been in danger. Hello ego boost. He considers Derek's situation, then: "You should text Cora everybody's alive and get some sleep. Seriously. You can crash in my room."

Derek's cautious surprise makes for two wins in a row. Stiles smiles at him, even if the Hales, besides beautiful, are also all paranoid nutjobs. That saying about 'it's not paranoia when'. Derek doesn't have a smile; drops everything but relief the politics, the talking, the possible homicide's all over. The way he's looking at Stiles leaves Stiles unsteady. As if he's the only thing in the room and standing here not being a great person still gives Derek purpose.

Because he's not touching that one right now, soon Stiles stands in a finally-werewolf-free living room with his father. His confused, shaken father.

"Stiles..." he says. Stiles lets him search for a minute but he can't find the words.

"I know, dad," Stiles promises.

He died for the better part of a day. He let a famously aggressive, unpredictable werewolf pop his cherry. (Correction: Let that werewolf pop his cherry after weeks of increasingly demanding, super horny desire and individual-centric masturbation.) When it comes to monsters invading Beacon
Hills, they never catch a break. Root cellar caved in, with a giant root system to feed one ascending new trunk, plus a few souls, the Nemeton started growing in hyperdrive once it produced its shoot. It's the size of a five year old oak, full sized leaves dwarfing the limber stick of a trunk, soaking up sun with zero risk of dehydration. His dad understands that things are going to get hopelessly worse until Scott racks up credibility. No matter who or what they drive off, who takes a territory belonging to a pack of teenagers seriously? Especially when three of them aren't even werewolves.

"I know Derek and I soured it for you, Scott, but you need to give the Bite. To Allison and Stiles, or you can vet other candidates. Two, three more wolves in Beacon Hills and you'd earn some respect. Just turning a wolf yourself would earn you clout," Peter says. They're in Deaton's clinic, hanging around the surgery table breaking plans, Ethan and Aiden out scouting.

"I already see another wolf," Isaac says. Isaac lacks the appropriate terror of Peter. He only read about the murder in the papers and excavated a few of the graves. He's never seen a hulking, quadrupedal werewolf, elongated mouth full of fangs. Technically there are still only four fangs. 'Mouth full of fangs' conveys the idea without breaking it down to component parts like 'molars and premolars with scissor-like shearing edges'.

Isaac runs the speed of an Olympic athlete, add in his unnatural stamina, but he can't do fifty. Stiles never clocked Peter because the trying not to die. He'd fill in that field with 'Stride length unacceptable'. There should be a law.

Peter shakes his head.

"That wouldn't work out. For any of us."

Lydia exploits her pouty lips, looking up at him from beneath mascara black fake eyelashes that make her doe eyes twice as large.

"I'd hate for your fragile ego to be bruised when you realize you're not as powerful or important as you think you are."

Peter answers her with a smile, the slightest nod of concession, not agreeing so much as posturing that he's too powerful and too important to argue with a teenage girl...he's scared to hell of and in practice pathetic for. Only because Deaton's around.

Stiles pushes his hand through his hair; sighs; tries out several different expressions but doesn't come up with anything that makes for a less ugly truth.

"I don't know the right thing to do," Stiles admits. It's not like he'll get advice out of his dad, not on this one. There's naked emotion. There's the hard won maturity to show his dad just a little of it. "I know you have to be thinking 'Why wouldn't Scott get my son out of this situation?' Even when Peter's the reason we're all alive the next morning, he's got some ulterior motive. Apparently he's worked up to bragging on it. It's better me visiting him plus my stupid hormones than nobody having an eye on him. Now he shut me down. Because I tipped Derek off. I mean, I have no idea how much of that you followed. But this sucks." He carefully takes a set on the couch. Now that he can feel his muscles, it's not as terrible as he thought it might be. Except his arm. He's lucky the muscles tore a little, the joints were stressed, and that's it. Lucky throbs like a second heart pumping only pain. He looks up at his dad, disgruntled. "How could I not tip Derek off? Derek hasn't been famous for doing much besides every last thing Peter wants. Which he made headway at. Again."

"Derek can hear you, can't he?"

"Um. That doesn't really matter. I'm so much worse taking it to somebody's face. This way he can,
you know, reply if he wants to. Without my bitching." That shameful truth his dad knows all about. Peter nailed it. It gets frustrating the fifteenth time in a day he's trying to catch somebody up to what he's thinking. Sometimes he starts feeling like they're stupid. He has no idea why people think raising their voice is gonna help somebody grasp something quicker. Repeatedly guilty. "It's not that he helps him on purpose. Like was heavily implied, Derek would fall in with Scott if he says it's go time to kill Peter. " Wrong choice. Upset father. He pushes his hand through his hair; looks sorry. "You don't wanna hear me talk like that. There's no werewolf jail. You can drive somebody down to Omega. Peter'd rather go back to dead first. I don't know how to say it except we actually do care what he wants."

He's screwing this up. His can't stand the way his father looks. It wrecks Stiles as hard as it scares him. He hasn't seen his father look like that since the months after losing his mom. He might be losing his son who's sitting here trying to explain what makes complete sense to him, the pack choosing to go for the kill because they owe Peter. Never, ever should have started on this one.

His father sits down heavily beside him, folding his hands between his knees, looking at him closely, dredging up fears of his dad being done being responsible for him. 'Today's the day' and 'Here it comes'. He's only thought that a million times. Focuses.

"I know you boys and…that the pack has killed some criminal people, and what I'd call 'monsters'. It's tough for me to stomach, but this's been going on here since before I was born." He presses his lips together, looks at the floor a minute, really thinking how to put it, not Peter pretending for dramatic flair. He looks back to Stiles, squinting how he does when he has no idea if Stiles is even gonna listen to him. "I used to love cowboy movies. TV shows. They were all over when I was a kid." That's straight out of nowhere. At least Stiles face communicates he's attending. His father scoffs, corner of his lip turning up. "Possemen. The 'Code of the West'. It's not the only reason I joined the Sheriff's Department. I signed up because I'd seen good people get hurt, not to be a cowboy. The day I earned my badge I knew how serious a responsibility I had...and, for this long moment, I was eight again."

He's really smiling. Stiles is glad his utter loss can entertain. He's seen Tombstone. His brain's stuck in a loop trying to remember if he's seen any more. Should he count Blazing Saddles? —listening. His father's looking down at his hands now; went serious.

"I struggled with it at first. God knows I did." It takes him a pause to make eye contact. "I respect Scott's the other side of the law, here, and those Westerns are about the only way I have to understand what you do. I can hate the idea and not step in. Too many of my people have already been killed in this."

Oh! Oh. Oh. They're a posse. They live by a code! That's pretty cool. If his spider-sense wasn't...

"I feel condemnation lurking in this heart to heart."

No humor in his dad.

"You're talking to me about killing a person you've been in an intimate relationship with I have no idea how long. I'm guessing the first and only person." He presses back anger, sticks to: "I don't like him. I know he's at least forty. He was a local celebrity when he was in high school. Basketball star."

"—oh my god. Are you fucking serious?" Because that's so his joking face. Not even remotely. "You're serious. Damn it, dad. I tried so hard not to know that. They don't age like us. I moved to a position of avoiding that information. I've still gotta..." Wait. Wait. Negative. "Technically you mean he's at least thirty-four. Coma."
"I agree with you there. Especially seeing it isn't the point."

Stiles quiets, stilled by remorse, itching to reinstate his moratorium on truth:

"Derek's right. Give him time and Peter's gonna seriously hurt someone. I don't look at him like...I'm not touching dumb optimism. I'm not pretending I can change him." He wants to care about what Peter's going to do enough to not be around him. He wishes he cared that much. Upon a star. Or a classic Volkswagen Beetle. There's the part about having an older man and a really powerful werewolf starving for him. Peter's dickish sense of humor. He enjoys it. The body. Oh, shit, Yes, please, the body. All terrible reasons to be attached to sociopath with a history of violence. "Like I said, not dating. I look at it as: Pederasty? Yes. Dating? No. Now that I've said that I don't understand why nothing struck me dead. At this point today lightning owes it to me. Dirty pool." He squeezes his eyes shut until he can let the words fall out. "I do care about him, dad. Sometimes a lot." Heaviness camps on his chest. He speaks quietly: "I don't know if I'm a good person."

"You haven't gone wrong yet," his dad swears, suddenly vehement. Reassuring only himself. "Your injuries. God. He doesn't...Has he hit you in the face when you two weren't fighting?"

"Not exactly," Stiles hedges. He's not even a great liar. Mostly he goes on momentum, of which he currently has zero. He suffers all too human defeat. So finished with this conversation. Up to the point he craves drawing strength from the shadowy, liminal space between life and death. Not in front of his dad. "My face has hit other surfaces. Violently. I guess. Especially yesterday."

"God."

"It's not like whatever you're thinking," Stiles stresses, chest swelling with surety beneath the weight of shame. He needs his dad to understand it. Becomes energized despite himself, latching on to a thousand familiar facts. "We get kinda crazy. Like I said, not like this. But if he didn't show me any kind of respect I'd've already gotten out of there, eyes on him or no eyes. Put that in context. Considering other people tortures his selfish ass. I'm a fuck-up, just...He's at least mediocre to me."

"Sometimes he's pretty great."

Peter Hale apologist. New low.

"You're not a 'fuck-up'," his dad says; Stiles isn't arguing that because done. Finished. Looking for an extraction point, even though his dad's pretty emotional. "I'm scared of this world we're in now. More scared than I knew how to be before I acknowledged it. I'm more scared for you. I'm a lot more scared that you aren't scared, too."

Can't handle that. Throat isn't even tight. His teeth clench. His father's trying to read where he's at off his face. Hard to tell what conclusions he comes to.

Keeping it separate from the rest of his life means, correction: it meant he could get shit done without people asking him something like 'Don't you care about him?' His dad wants hear him say 'Sometimes I'm terrified'. He doesn't do terrified anymore, for the same reason it wouldn't matter that he cares. Soul scar. Decay-o-vision. Tree-and-Relative-Dimension-in-Space. Hasn't mentioned that. Not going to. He had a difficult enough time getting across 'I died under medical supervision'. He didn't know the consequences at that point; needed his father to know his emergency might require a veterinarian, not a hospital.

"I'm gonna head to work," his dad finally says, giving him another second to continue to be unable to produce something another human could grasp before clapping him on the shoulder, rubbing his back, looking concerned but taking himself away to change into his uniform.
Derek rouses from drifting, maybe even sleeping, lying on top of the covers on Stiles' single bed, his shoes off, when Stiles comes in. Stiles bets Derek knows how to grab sleep when he can get it; doesn't stay up for an hour chasing thoughts through his mind. He gives the wolf a firm-lipped smile and takes a seat at his desk. There are school things that require attention before the next round of violence, drama, and death crops up. As in yesterday's homework. He can do that one handed on the computer. 'cause he's done plenty of stuff one handed on the computer.

He doesn't maintain focus long, looking to the left, toward the wolf, before Derek's dead asleep; he senses Derek's planning to end up there. It's such a big demonstration of trust, especially under the circumstances, that Stiles wouldn't wake him up once he goes under. He's still carrying tension in his muscles, face hasn't gone lax or head tilted off. Stiles guesstimates he's in the clear.

"I need to give you that other thank you. For not having Peter brought up on child porn charges. Uh, so, thanks."

Derek's eyes remain closed. Stiles doesn't get to see him like this, all relaxed, not this relaxed...Basically never. Owing not only to rarely in the right place but to Derek's physical incapacity to relax this deeply, before.

"I'd be putting innocent law enforcement officials in harm's way," he murmurs, dozy.

If they Skyped Stiles would have already seen new, less aggro Derek, who he hypothesized existed due to textual communication.

Stiles doesn't turn back to his hypothetical work. Frowns, instead.

"You need to talk…?"

About Peter. About Stiles with Peter. About Jennifer. Derek can be as next to sleep as he wants. He still got dumped on. Talking to his dad wrung him out like a dish rag, on top of multiple prior wringenings. Derek deserves to talk it out, if that's even possible in the same space.

"Not right now I don't."

Stiles has gone from the things he should be doing to a desire for acknowledgement. Just acknowledgement. Not all the attention.

"How about that hard on? You totally didn't know I'm hot." Sue him, he just got kicked to the curb. Plus, Derek totally had a boner. Visibly did. Plus Derek. Right here. Where Stiles isn't mad at him anymore.

Derek's voice doesn't pick up from sleepy.

"I haven't had sex since when," he acknowledges. Since the obvious. Before that, at least since he came to Beacon Hills. Which makes sense. Trauma. Betas. More trauma. Searching for Betas. Even more trauma. Hale men. Cora shoves it off; goes and gets some.

"Does that mean I'm not hot?" Doesn't hurt to double-check.

"It means 'Save it, Stiles'."

Stiles slumps in his chair, dreams deferred.
"Damn. I was gonna collect a Hale harem. You’re all abnormally hot. Cora’s also hot. Plus with two for three down, I could assume she’d go for me."

Derek opens his eyes. Eyes that say Stiles has completely lost it.

"Are you actually coming on to me a couple hours after I watched you with my uncle? Did you develop amnesia in the past sixty seconds about what set me off?"

Stiles hasn’t had time to reinter the emotions he went through communicating with his dad. They rise to his throat, this time forming a big, ugly lump of the reality he’s tacitly understood since his mom’s death.

There’s something wrong about him. Something alive and grasping inside him he refuses to look at, giving it free rein to lash to any next impulse.

"Probably. That’s the kind of reason Peter and I make such a great couple."

Derek pushes himself upright, focused, wide awake, and defensively concerned.

"Stiles. Nobody belongs with Peter. And nobody should suffer because of him. He wanted to get in our heads. Make it harder to trust each other. He needs you insecure for when he wants you back."

The wolf waits through what appears to be real physical pain. Huffs, gone sour, accusing Stiles with his eyebrows but saying: "You look great."

"Thanks."

"Really."

Stiles’ emotions move to his belly. Not his crotch at all. Stomach. Not nausea, another, smaller knot, this one leaking nervousness in waves. There are things that, without being addressed, will proceed directly to stilted distance.

"Scientists say wolves howl when they’re apart from the wolves they’re closest to. Sometimes it’s to call the pack together to hunt, but usually? It’s how they say ’I miss you’."

Derek exhales, forlorn expression not defiant.

"You never texted Scott. Or Isaac. Not Peter," Stiles says carefully. "It was just me."

The wolf lays back down, broods, and then, grunting, rolls onto his side, back to Stiles, who doesn’t take it as a slight. He wouldn’t want anybody watching him brood himself to sleep, either. Derek sounds back to drowsy already:

"Wake me up in a couple of hours."

Stiles’ heart jumps. His smile barely passes as a smile, still, it’s, fond. He puts his attention on his computer. His dad mentioned, when they passed on Stiles’ way to his room, he’d bring a sling back. Both a nice thought and legitimizing his absence without a doctor’s note. The school accepts sheriff’s notes. He won’t need one of those, either.

Homework. Lacking the motivation to do homework can no longer be called a bored teenager thing. He looks at homework and thinks This is fucking useless to me even as he mechanically lays his books out. He stopped asking Peter to even look at it to pick up easy answers. The last time Peter actually saw any the wolf snatched it from him; pointed out the things he’d written weren’t even on the same subject. He’s started going and going back to trade school websites. What would he even
major in? History? He can read those textbooks by himself.

He has all summer vacation to figure out if he's gonna do senior year. Not his first, or second, or fifth concern right now. Indicative of the answer.

He finishes his homework anyway. He's not hugely motivated to leave the chair.

He watches Derek sleep. Uncreepy like. Acting up would be sneaking to the other side of the bed to see his face. This position's aesthetically sound. His bulging shoulder blades, the mountain range of his arm, his butt – his juicy butt, as everyone in channel knows because while pointing out they are not a couple, again, with Jazzi apologizing for flirting with Stiles Stiles lamented the unfairness of its existence – his solid thighs, his big sock feet. Cute because socks. He no longer looks small next to Derek. Shoulder breadth unlocked!

Er, matter of fact as his reality took a bizarre twist he learned he always had a jock body. Flipping through what pictures of himself he has raised the question Who the hell is this? He's been flung into a bizarre reality where lean, predatory Derek? More ectomorphic. Stiles' entire reality? Premised on a lie. He's disappointed, though. It made him sound like one of the Reptiloids. No possibility of being a member of the British royal family now.

He wakes Derek up with a series of "Derek!’s Not poking the werewolf. He can poke Peter (sadly not how Peter pokes him under the same circumstances); that's because Peter's territory. Or, he could poke Peter and now the magic eight ball's unclear. AND, it's less poking and more graduated petting. Either way it's not waking up to being sexed. The absolute best because all too often in his life morning wood.

The wolf's alert when he rolls over and sits up. He digs sleep out with his fingernail, one leg hanging off the bed and the other crooked up. He gives the room a fast evaluation; force of habit. Focuses on Stiles, lifting his eyebrows.

"Do things with me," Stiles demands. Derek didn't bring his laptop. Suckage. But there's movies, maybe playing something hot seat, putting off that one conversation because he broached it, therefore it will occur.

"Like lock you out of your room and go back to sleep?" Derek gambles.

Stiles miffles.

"Not like that at all."

"You're not gonna...?"

Derek's suspicion is natural. Stiles gets oily even with his friends. Unctuous. That's the word he wanted. He answers with a change of latitude of his own eyebrows.

"Do you want me to gonna?"

The wolf treats Stiles to an extended suffering look.

"The alternative is 'suddenly'."

"Yeeeeeeehh, that sounds like me. A lot like me. I swear it has nothing to do with He Who Shall Not Be Named. You're here. You're fleshy. You consist of flesh. I'm not a werewolf but with the fighting and the sweating you also smell like guy. Dude, it's been seven months. Suddenly my hot best friend. The boner I'm actual, not fake or glib, sorry about. That was low. I know I shouldn't play give
unconsenting parties wood, that that's sleazy. I regret that."

"I'm gonna just remember I didn't get apologies from Erica. Thank you. You were really shitty."

"Serious inquiry. Have you considered saving Peter from me?"

"No. If you fuck him up? Good." Derek relents to Stiles silent criticism in matrimony with skepticism. "I tried to get him to come to New Mexico. I bought want he sold me. I didn't force it. Now I know he jerked me around."

"Have you tried assuming whatever he's trying to get you to do it's probably in your worst interests?"

"That wouldn't help, Stiles. If I do the opposite of what I think he wants me to do? It's probably because that's what he wants. I can't help it. He's been pack since the day I was born until Laura died. He stayed awake the first few days. He tried washing his skin off. Ripping his skin off. And he just...kept screaming. Laura couldn't command him. She couldn't stay at the hospital, she had all the legal work, to deal with the police. He slipped me in the middle of the night. I found him in the showers, in a wheelchair, and for this one second I thought he was dead. I almost...I should have killed him. I'd just lost everyone. We needed to skip town. We left him. Our Beta. You understand what that means. I never saw him again; but what he turned into knows how to look like my uncle."

Stiles adheres closely to what's coming out of his mouth because even if Derek lived in Beacon Hills he'd hear him talk that much at once maybe three or four times a year. Read a hundred words or three? Sure. Actually hearing his voice, seeing him with the distraught eyes for more than maybe ten seconds? That's completely different.

He nods affirmation. Derek needs recovery time – from the emoting but equally from the articulating. At least the articulating tires him out because his emotions have a seven-speed transmission. On the other end, there's the difficulty zombies have getting anything out of their flatlined brains.

He waits until Derek's not 'maybe' but obviously recovered, studying him with narrowed eyes. His winding thoughts weigh the likelihood Derek took a convenient out into the comfort of denial led him to something he can resolve right now.

"How old are you? In actual human years."

"Huh? Uh, twenty-eight."

Damn. That got a lot easier.

"I guess maybe twenty three," he says after thinking for a minute. "We don't age the same way after the first full turn."

"Does that really matt—I know this one! Because the wanting to know what's not working in Peter's wetware. Cortical development and synaptic pruning. That makes so much sense. Impulse control finishes setting around, um, twenty-five. That gives me so much more hope for you. I don't deserve that look. You're an angry person. What's Peter's functional age?"

"It should be mid-thirties. It could be late twenties. I have no idea. There's not math for what happened to him. He's—"

"Nope, nope, nope, nope. Silence. Do not want or need to know."
Derek's smiling. An actual event actually happening. Even if the smile says Stiles is kinda stupid. At best still ridiculous. The subject on the receiving end gets up from his chair. Cramps; not so much rigidity. Like he played three lacrosse games in a row. He drops himself on his bed beside Derek. Brow quirk? Brow quirk is not rejection. Not that there is something for Derek to reject happening. Groaning Stiles stretches both his legs out in front of him; pulls them back in without difficulty, just the soreness.

"I'm not gonna play you. I want holding."

"That sounds like a brilliant idea that's going to happen."

"You'll succumb to 'lying down and looking sad'. Trust me."

"Maybe."

"I bet you lo—Holding makes you emotional. Damn. I'm not saying I'd be emotionless. That's not it. Nobody holds me sentimentally with anything approaching regularity. I have less emotional nuance in my entire being than you. Maybe not if I took a couple Vicodin. Oxycotton. One time Scott and I back when we were friends with this dude Vance took oxycotton and smoked some weed and I would not leave Scott's floppy hair alone. I think I sat there petting him for an hour."

He should e-mail Vance. He remembers Vance as a good guy. He wasn't high constantly, because broke and thirteen. He didn't charge them when he shared his stash. Stiles felt guilty enough about how expensive drugs are he tried to reimburse him but the dude insisted at their houses he ate their food; that that was his house, and he didn't buy the stuff to do it alone. That was the beginning and end of him and Scott experimenting with substances. For one thing? Drugs are fucking expensive. He'll hit a bowl if the lacrosse team's hanging out. Or, uh. He never faced peer pressure to do any drug, just friendly offers for cash or not, until Dalton placed a packed pipe and lighter in his hands and said Chill out or Jackson's gonna skin then kill you. He had reason to trust in the truth value of that statement, so he smoked the bowl. Then he ate a medium pizza.

Shock! Awe! No longer zoning in Derek's proximity to avoid developing disappointment. He takes a deep breath; processes the wolf, after an unknown amount of consideration, chose to put a hand on the back of his neck. And he's chuckling at Stiles mind exploding. His thumb's doing a really nice thing making a circle against a sore muscle in his neck. Stiles drops the tension in his shoulders, whining – but in satisfaction. The one happy muscle, although aching, pulls his attention away from the pain everywhere else. Because touch.

"Don't let up," he's quick to plead as it happens. Happening cancels. "Pressure is good. I'm extremely sensitive everywhere."

Things not to say to people you're not seducing.

"Right," Derek says.

Stiles declares this level of contact, a declaration to himself by himself in his head. The touch takes some of the stress off him. Derek controls how much touching Derek's okay with. No enormous glaring issues.

His eyelids droop. No reciprocal obligations here. Derek chose what works for him: Stiles allowing him to take care of him. He stands opposed to the concept, in general. Not 'Derek taking care of him'. Dumping his personal shit on anybody. Usually he searches out an ear. In text, with Derek in New Mexico, Derek's perfect because he can't do anything about anything. Commiserate a little, then help take his mind off it by doing something totally unrelated together.
Stiles survives off bad ideas. Like looking beside him. Derek has The eyes going. He possesses a multitude of eyes, if by eyes Stiles means expressions. They can be ranked by any number of metrics. How guarded, how angry, how engaged versus completely sick of his life. Eyebrows lifted out of the way of his eyes, their prominent lids parted the same just-enough, face lax, jaw slack, lips meaninglessly parted, eyes front and center, whites bright. A face Stiles sees never. Two, three, maybe four times. Focus off what he’s scenting, deaf to his surroundings, given over to his sense of sight – and unguarded.

It takes a second for Stiles to remember he’s considered by a surprising number of people something to look at. But that isn’t this – even as Derek’s lips firm; his brow sinks into place, still studying him, expression neutral. He had been watching what Stiles’ face did in response to his hand. Stiles does that, except he’s visual all the time, systems don’t shut down in cascade when all his focus goes into seeing, possibly Derek’s weakest sense.

When every sense is superhuman that seems irrelevant right until Stiles opens his eyes to the wolf looking at him like a religious icon or piled high hamburger or other thing somebody wants to see all of.

The wolf’s not embarrassed. Quiet, sorta sad, massage on Stiles’ neck slow motion.

"I don’t want to be the person that makes you look like that," Stiles says after a minute of looking into the same face, voice lowered to keep the quiet.

Derek presses his lips together. That's all. His hand loosens, sliding down to not-far to rest on the upper curve of Stiles’ spine.

"I'm okay," he promises, does a cloying little eyebrow rise thing. Not untrue. They don't share the same definition of 'okay'. Derek's translates to 'still able to perform mechanical tasks'. Stiles, on the other hand, defines 'okay' as additionally emotionally functional. He lies about that one a lot.

"I don't want you to be 'okay'. I want you to be happy. 'Good'. By tonight's way too short a timetable, but we should work in that direction."

Derek's mouth quirks. Whoa. Again.

"I am those, Stiles. Not right now, but lately I'm usually 'good'."

Stiles stares in shock. Derek smiles! At him! On the other side of the computer screen. Repetitiously. He has no idea what he imagined Derek doing on the other side of the computer screen. A hundred variations on his concentration face. Getting competitive. Not smiling. He wants Derek to kiss him. At this moment, not to kiss Derek. Comfort levels! Derek glances at his mouth. Looks back to him giving a dissertation on how unbelievable he is with only the position of his eyebrows. Unbelievable. Unquestionably single. Already single, but with any confusion swept off the table. Every ounce of intuition assures him Peter really went downtown.

"Ah. Aha!" Stiles' smile gloats. "He didn't put me on the curb for the trash guys to pick up. He put me in a 'Free Puppies' box. Hoping you and me have the repressed sexual tension to make it, giving you the combined motivation to push you over the edge and replant in town." He wins. He's on a streak. "One more almost-cookie for you, Peter. I eat your cookies. I eat them up."

Derek drops his hand from Stiles' back, casual:

"Good thing we have no repressed sexual tension."
Stiles shoots a look at him, askew.

"None? Not even a little?" Derek played that extra smooth. He's still lying. Stiles' ego accepts nothing else. "Maybe you don't. You slammed me into a lot of things Derek. In my sexual dictionary that's 'foreplay'."

Derek's eyes roll, going from casual to bland.

"I slammed you into a lot of things…and then I grew up and I didn't. You are beyond too beaten up to have sex with anybody."

Stiles jumps to his feet, spinning to point accusatively at the wolf on the bed.

"Knew it!"

He's more three hours treading water in a swimming pool without a break. Eventually he'll meet a hard limit, but he sat a long time.

Derek demurs.

"I'm just making an observation."

Stiles works up his mettle. Steps up to the bed. Slides his hand over Derek's collarbone; holds his neck, thumb pressed behind his ear. He's dizzy but he's not hallucinating; the tightening of the muscles around Derek's eyes talks. That's permission. He puts all thoughts aside and presses his lips to him.

Derek and Peter's mouths aren't physically much different. Same basic shape and thickness to their lips. Distinct but not dissimilar facial hair. In the act itself they're worlds apart, Derek parting his lips so softly Stiles feels like a guy on a Harlequin Romance cover. No biting. No licking into Stiles' mouth within twenty seconds of their first kiss. Derek's firm, active lips stay on his skin. After he's eased into it to his own satisfaction he presses up toward Stiles, deepening the conjunction of their mouths, making the French connection. Unconquered new territory. Does not mean that in an aggressive way. As in, Stiles has to adapt; stay attentive; work out a different way of kissing.

He kisses him until he hears a change in Derek's breathing. Until Derek goes from receptive to turned on. He remembers not sneaking peeks at Derek's assets. Instead, times Derek told him to run, with and without throwing him in the direction of safety. Or a Take him. Go! when they're both half paralyzed. They're important. Memories he never brought together before while he has Derek's skin under his palm, convinced by the wolf's lips to kiss him slow. In the car together, before a rescue, before Derek screaming into a phone for him to run, a concerned, attentive You're not going to make it. There's never been a point when Derek hasn't put him first. All of them. But the rest of the pack doesn't have Derek opening his mouth over theirs, tongue swiping ahead of his lips closing, lower lip stroking the same skin.

Stiles breaks away, whispers against his lips:

"Liar."

Derek is caution and visible concern. Visible desire.

"You shouldn't have done that."

Stiles laughs, disbelieving. Derek spends half his life willing away things he wants or doesn't want to deal with.
"Didn't you hear him?" he teases darkly. "I'm a molester."

The wolf's flat expression's preceded by a shorter roll of his eyes.

"I drove here to try and keep an adult man from sexually exploiting you."

Point. Stiles frowns a second.

"You're not wrong that me having sex with you right now could be seen as exploitative. You and I know Peter doesn't want us in bed together. I do know he's not staking us out. He already ran all the odds yesterday, including the fact that sending you that picture might lead to us having sexual intercourse in the future. It'll still piss him off. I really want to piss off Peter right now. Fact. That in no way means I'm only using you to piss off Peter."

Derek's brow furrows so deeply his eyebrows are almost touching, appearing to run into difficulty over something fundamental, like Stiles' existence.

"That's not what I'm worried about. At all."

Understanding dawns in Stiles' widening eyes.

"Oh. Oh. Right. You would be an adult man having sex with me." Out of all the naval mines lurking under the open ocean and clear sky that one never appeared on sonar. Thinks about it. Thinking done. Still no pings. "I don't think that part's gonna mess me up, Derek," he apologises. "If that aspect of this scenario has done me permanent damage, which, personally, I don't think it has, the hypothetical damage is already done. This is how people get together in romance movies, so it has to be on the level."

"I don't watch 'romance movies'. I don't know. Peter has you spun around right now. Both of us. Everybody," the wolf says, terse. He hasn't pushed Stiles away, does a leaning in thing, head infinitesimally tilted. In English trying to smell him over or past the scent of his uncle. Fed up with being on his feet, Stiles, climbs onto the bed on his knees, Derek consenting to let both his legs hang over the side of the bed before awkward. Stiles rests his weight on his thighs, clutching a handful of shirt to steady himself.

The 'spun around' part Stiles is extremely sorry about. He releases Derek's shirt, balance won, wetting his lips, reaching up to touch his jaw, fingertips on his beard where it's grown in dark, cupping his face with that light touch, fire in his fingertips; where their thighs touch. The wolf struggling to understand him lets his gaze fall away. Stiles moved past his uncertainty of his own intentions while he had him giving face. He softens, opening up his expression; hoping they're in the same place.

"You have to go back to New Mexico. A-sap. Besides incredibly slutty…is it unbelievable I wanna know what having sex with somebody who cares about me would be like?"

Derek's gaze jumps up to his, Stiles reeling harder than he expected; imagined. Saying plenty. Derek has impressed the effect of those hello-pretty grey-blue-green-how-much-brown-is-my-pupil-pushing-out eyes. A lot of brown. Because dilation. That'd be grey.

"Oh," makes it out of his mouth, lips hanging parted in a way Stiles associates with himself, seeing he lost whatever he meant to say right around 'oh'.

Derek remains still underneath him. Stiles takes a deep breath, should give him a minute – climbs off him and leaves the bed. He pauses long enough with his back to Derek and an open ear to let the wolf come up with words. Derek offers him nothing. Stiles goes and locks the bedroom door,
outwardly calm. Inwardly his pulse flutters like a hummingbird. Derek can hear it. He digs around his conscience for guilt. He wants what he wants for the reason he knows he wants it. Everything'll still be a mess a few hours from now. Tomorrow. Next week. Stiles has no reason to expect his life to ever get itself in order. He might be setting Derek behind. Unlikely. He runs the risk of being that one person a married Derek always wonders what-if – at the absolute least how he would've been in bed.

Besides the excitement and a fear of somehow getting caught by his dad, who has important sheriff things to do, unfounded, he's rocking the longing. He wants Derek. And things exclusive to Derek. Not just his penis, although that. Whatever and everything Derek feels toward him. Stiles knows all about donating one-sided affection. Nothing about being physically close to a person who genuinely wants a mutual exchange. Peter can be affectionate, sometimes for his personal enjoyment; more often as a form of currency.

Stiles doesn't need to imagine much to picture a naked Derek. Clothes hide nothing when it's tight fabric against all that muscle. The guy's so beefed up his collarbone has its own muscles. Not a stretch to a stiff dick matched with his crazy abs. 'cause Derek wears really tight jeans. Hales may be deficient at fitting jeans. Nobody taught ever taught one.

When he has his head clear he turns and checks out what he's got to work with. First and most obviously there's a sorta-confused, tanned, dark-haired Hale on his bed.

No question Stiles himself will please take a hot, sweaty roll in the sheets. No actual rolling, both because parts of him will break and because it's a single bed. Maybe they can take it to the rug. No. There waits longer-enduring pain. A menagerie of cricks. He thinks this through one more time because he can't take it back. Has time to think. Derek with his bewildered staring is more afraid than Stiles to make a wrong move, which can no doubt be alleviated with some more (bewildered) checking him out. There's no framework for Stiles to imagine what life is like after seven months out of Beacon Hills' unending crazy.

Not having sex would waste having a hot best friend. That might even go both ways. Derek finding him attractive could be new. Or not. Later he'll ask. Setting aside his self-sacrificial protective drive, it probably took a long time for Derek to see him as more than a bratty kid's brattier best friend. Stiles held some really personal information on Derek by the time the wolf left town. Some from Derek's mouth, some from Peter's. That, but they'd almost never done things like, oh, have casual conversations. Life or death debate and decision making? Affirmative. Constant.

Stiles has nothing but praise for the shield of text-only technology covering them both. Stiles prefers to share his feelings with nobody if he can remotely help it; risk surrendering autonomy. But Derek didn't choose his isolation. No secret extrovert, the wolf is still sick of mistrusting every single person in his life. The internet frees both of them up. He's told Derek a couple of things during nightblogging hours that he will never bring up in person or to any other person ever.

When he hits the tipping point, has made sense of Stiles being here, real, and hoping to get with him Derek loses over half of the bewilderment. Thank god. He's back on Derek like that; spent too long imagining how to get at him, just clothes between them and clothes can disappear so fast.

He applies what he learned in Round 1, keeping a slow tempo, kissing him deep but mouthing; coaxing his way into it. Advanced courses. Now hands have his tired but willing body, but the wolf's still not kissing just to turn him on. Communication. By kissing. That's a new one. The man holding him wants to show him respect, and he's urging Stiles to provide intimate attention. Stiles knows only how to say 'I wanna jump your penis'. He focuses on what he can do; feed into Derek's need for some compassion. It demands he put in that he cares; how much he cares. That sense of dread
coming on's nervousness at how easily Derek could use that exposure against him. Just has to wait it out until his defenses bend to his rational brain with no doubts about his personal security.

If he's wrong, it'll still be a hell of a way to leave either or both of them with a permanent scar.

-----

Stiles wants to have sex. Right now. With him. The fact sits with Derek like he fell into a fever dream. Disorienting. Intense. Impossible. This is Stiles' bed supporting him and Stiles with his head tilted, in synch as they pursue each other's lips. In his memories of the mouth changing up its earlier habits is always slightly parted, showing a can't-miss glimpses of the tongue getting personal with his. A tongue with a habit of wetting Stiles' lips right before he says anything he put actual forethought into.

When he drove into Sacramento he had his moon-demanded self-control; could've played it off like he's not and never has been interested in sex. Now he's spent hours smelling sex off Stiles. Peter he's unavoidably breathed before. It takes some ignoring. He ignores him. Attractive? Stiles came on himself more than once. Forget his uncle, earlier. That scent Derek's motivated to reproduce fresh, demand imposed by arousal in all its details, from the physical need growing heavier in his cock, the little-familiar body he's discovering with his hands, to the ache for connection; proof of what he already knows: that he matters to Stiles as much as anybody. He's less sure why it hangs bringing Stiles back to a high. Something hazy about masculine sexual potency he'd have a better chance of putting a finger on if he'd been to bed with another man.

He remembers Jennifer holding him, leading him; proving his dedication to herself. It meets a certainty he's never asked that from any woman; not that there's inherent power games between men. A private relief. He doesn't want asking him to turn over power becoming the keystone of his relationship with Stiles.

He wishes he didn't remember Jennifer with so much clarity. She's dead. He hasn't started to deal with that. He wants it to have meant something. Maybe it never did. He needs this to mean something. He has no idea what.

It's not just Stiles' body but his room. The upside of smelling like a place he's gotten sexual without the downside of carrying anything – anything related to carnal congress, anyway – that Derek has no interest in scenting.

Stiles feels out his upper body through his shirt while he carefully helps him rest his injured arm over his own thigh, tucks it against his side. The human whines sufferingly, pushing in against his mouth to distract from and slake the pain. They're moving patternless through kissing, shallow and sucking each other's lips; mouths parted, tongues passing, no deeper explorations; lips gliding over closed lips, tongues committing brief trespasses, licking or sucking at each other's in play; that hot open mouthed breathing-the-air-you-breathe swallowing each other's mouths, following a natural chase as one flexible technique leads into the next.

It's too right: Stiles' body heat pooled with his own, the hands that've held Derek him up – actually held, and in an abstract sense – touching him neglected places, one hand especially encouraging him to let the heat rise. He hears everything. Stiles' heartbeat, sure, and the sounds their mouths make, but an empty stomach gurgling below human perception, every brush of skin or fabric on fabric, the quieter friction of skin brushing skin, all the strands of hair in motion as fingers pass, Stiles' breath whirling through his sinuses, the times the air sticks in Stiles' throat as clearly as his louder encouragements, and even his blinking, surface tension breaking when he's kept his eyes closed.

All his senses are feeding in, scent occupying its place at the top again. Never having smelled Stiles
this aroused, inhalation becomes an act of worship. For all the sex he's had, only once before did anything approach this sensory vibrancy. Once and so close in time. Isaac in his head accusing *Were you lonely?* Jennifer lying with him *Not exactly how I imagined our first date.* A first date she imagined for years. He's been exploited so many times by so many people poison seeps into the memory, blackening it deeper every time it's recalled, but he opened his senses to her, remembers her in every dimension. A stranger to him. Stiles isn't. That last time compares weakly to picking up instant to instant changes in Stiles, minute details bright as signal fires compared to his identity in his olfactory memory; Stiles' long name.

He had no idea it could be like this. That cliché smarts. He'll leave. He has a job. Cora. Another, even more dedicated stalker, motives inscrutable. *I'm having sex with Stiles.* Future tense.

That should have broken into the fore, notified him of itself maybe five minutes ago. The immediate present kept a fierce clutch. Stiles' his rocking into Derek's never caught his full attention amid all the other ways their bodies are moving together. Then again, Stiles'd lay on more force and enthusiasm if he wasn't budging his arm every time – if he had another stable place to put it, or a sling. It's the low friction keeping them steady, smoothing out the arousal, staving off the need for rhythm to their kissing; buying them time for sharing company and figuring out what they already have between them instead of racing to get off.

A body his own size, approaching his weight; his multi-sensory inebriation; the nearness to the human who, by at least a couple definitions, he loves; the furnace in his hips. He brushes off the confusion that chases that realization he's going to be in Stiles. Probably. The hips are making suggestions. Riveted by the possibility, the wolf distances himself from his uncertainty at how much more intense that could really be. If he's lucky, it won't catch up to him.

Endgame realized, his mind fills in the obvious way to make this physically more forgiving for Stiles. Derek's hand returns to his friend's forearm, grunt in his throat as he takes the hurt in, individuality of his own arm blurring – he's never done this kissing someone; running on a sexual high like he's back to being a teenager. The disorientation, inability to place his own body in space or where it ends, spins him beyond tracking time. Stiles rubbing his neck, muttering *Hey, not too much,* sucking, begging at his lips snaps him out of it. *Now* his left arm hurts on its own. He leaves it where it is, scoffing at disabling himself. Stiles laughs against his mouth, realizing that it wasn't on purpose. His thumb drags a circle on Derek's nipple that, with Stiles on his thighs and at his lips, strings his body together – lips, hands, chest, and dick.

Derek wishes he could say he's been dreaming about this at the rate this is moving. He hasn't. Not about sex. Not even in his daydreams – at least until Peter decided to show him Stiles definitely masturbating; he spent a car ride brushing away the lurid thoughts formed unnoticed like brushing off cobwebs. When Stiles shows up in his dreams – he does – he remains as distant and untouchable as in life.

No dreams, no fantasies, but it's crept up to the point that once in a while, lately about once a week, Derek scrolls back through their text trying to figure out if there's something there or if he's had actually gotten so desperately lonely he's projecting the beginnings of a relationship onto a boy who would talk to *anybody* as tolerant at listening the same way, mind racing. ADHD full throttle. It never narrows down to one phrase, any single change from the early months. He's not exactly going back to do statistics on flirtatious things Stiles says. Sixteen year old. Seventeen since November. Uncomfortable idea. Idea more uncomfortable than the article himself in his lap.

Derek pulls back just enough for Stiles to catch the clue and break away, Stiles' eyes alert,
concerned, and expectant besides dilated and yearning. Derek wonders just how much sex he's actually had. No estimate comes in under "a lot".

Stiles concern swiftly graduates. Derek would've expected him to look panicked. There's only the worry, and an ounce of apology:

"Is this freaking you out? I can see how this could freak you out and also possibly change your opinion of me probably for the worse. I feel like we have something going on here between us and so far it's working but I totally understand if you're not actually this freaky. I think the way I approach sex most people would call skewed, I almost lost my virginity on the cold concrete floor of a wine cellar before suddenly the emotionally damaging but routine trauma and murder," Stiles says.

Derek uses the burst dam of speech to give himself time to think.

Breathing Stiles in starts new work on Derek's hormones. The scent of fresh arousal tinges the smell of last night's sex. Now Peter's scent smells like a standing challenge. If Stiles is right, if Peter's willing to pressure him with sex, that's exactly what it is.

Stiles and Peter are much too in tune for Derek's comfort. He hates that he's in tune with Peter and Derek's his family. Derek's willing to wager Stiles knows Peter better from the handful of months they've shared than Derek can ever know him. The gulf separating the way Derek's mind works and Peter's machinations has, since Peter came out of his coma, revealed itself as total. He suspects it always was.

They're working the definition of 'something going on'. Derek has a good life. He's also started looking at masturbation as a chore. The physical chemistry by itself drowns out anything disaffirming the safety of having sex with Stiles in the immediate present.

Derek kisses his shoulder. Stiles pulls back from him; concentrates on Derek's eyes for a few seconds, a tight but all-pleasure sensation taking a turn in Derek's chest. The teenager wets his dried lips and pushes his hips down, drags the fly of his jeans up against Derek's, a slow movement careful of their arms. Derek exhales as arousal flares everywhere the fabric brings touch to his cock. The rascal smile on Stiles' lips invites a concept alien to too much of Derek's sex life. Playing. Enjoying himself. He musters half a smile in answer, amused but not engaged.

"My dad won't be home for hours," Stiles promises with big, hopeful eyes, fingers falling to Derek's waistband. Stiles sees his whole line of hooks land; brightens. "No awkward on that front"

Derek closes his eyes on Stiles' quirky smile. Despite groaning over involving his cramped arm, Derek tool enough of the pain away. The human discards with Derek's belt without style but undoes the button of his jeans excruciatingly slowly. The small cloth slide of the sudden, final give couldn't sound any louder, fresh fuel to the building ache. He has to remind himself that, no, Sheriff Stilinski can't hear it. He's not here. He's at work. Trusting Derek with his son.

Stiles knows sex with werewolves, his way around Derek's senses. Derek staves off thinking about that why with his zipper splitting the teeth of his fly, noise playing down his spine like his bones are piano keys; his cock thickening further. Committing completely.

He lifts his hips as Stiles works his jeans down by inches, his next-to-exposed cock still held tight against his flesh. Stiles wags his eyebrows. Derek pretends his cheeks don't get hot. Not familiar to his adult sex life.

"Not big on the underwear, hunh, big guy? I'd narrowed it down to thong or nothing after the multiple free tickets to how low you wear your jeans. You plus a tiny thong? Banana hammock? Not
Embarrassment exits a long time before Stiles stops running his mouth. So what that Stiles' brand of enthusiasm hasn't been his sexual forte since his second relationship disaster – Kate? Not before or since. He's building his sexual confidence up, piecing it together fragment by fragment, more left than he realized. Had a setback. Going on eight years. Not rolling over and giving up.

They hold each other's eyes while Stiles' fingers get clever with the skin above his unzipped jeans, below the hem of his shirt. Fingertips caress. An index fingers trails down...Stops. Right above the exposed flesh of his erection. He has a tough time breathing through the longing throbbing an inch away as if, somehow, he could bridge that gap. He can't congratulate Stiles' for his successes at cranking up the heat. Because they're working; the last thing on his mind's talking. The human's hand slides up under Derek's shirt, fingers pushing through the thick line of dark hairs that run together in a line down the depression between his abdominals, his friend's rough palm resting on his muscles. Stiles leans in, light kiss no more than a touch of lip. He's ecstatic over Derek's groan. Derek could be some kind of all over him right now. He doesn't want it more than he wants this: Stiles bubbling with happiness. He may be forward with his physicality; maybe not so confident it'd work on Derek. His oxygen-hungry chest rises and falls under Stiles' hand.

Derek closely associates Stiles with putting up with each other's bullshit. With buying a laptop only because Stiles ordered him to get comfortable with a computer...and in Phase 2, play video games with him. With stability, always answering his messages, always texting him at inconvenient times. With maybe, maybe, being able to do something normal, almost human, like asking him out. Like Stiles across a table somewhere, next year, laughing, dragging a smile out of Derek.

Not sex without direction or clues to a future. Not smelling Peter. Not nagging thoughts that Stiles is using his off-hand and when he he's not he's creating new pain in the taxed limb Derek still has empathy for. That 'maybe' future, the one that's still possible either way except for taking it in steps – even over the course of one day – tugs at him. All he ever has is sex. All the sex he ever had was with strangers. Yeah. Jennifer loved him, Derek and her preconceived idea of him entangled; did she even care? He can believe every piece was a lie. He knows someone that false. For a beat he can't remember how this even made it to 'idea'.

—because Stiles has never had anything but sex, either. It sounded like the way to bridge any rift all this caused. Getting close; physical. Kisses, again. Their lips slick, saliva stringing between passing tongues, Stiles a better kisser than Derek's been with before – he even saw the evidence to know there's more and very different – all of it luring him in; compelled forward by full body contact, he balks at the idea of sharing something this intimate, getting in the SUV, and driving back to his other life. To his life.

Peter's scent. A lingering just-not-right. Even though he has his hand dipping under Stiles' clothes, riding up his sides, pulls at the fabric, tired of it. Stiles' two hands and their nimble fingers are ferreting out places that have him groaning approval, and, yes, he's getting horny – Stiles' enthusiasm infectious – the arm he dropped back to lean on starts digging his claws into the mattress through the wrinkled covers.

At first he didn't notice, owing to the amazing things happening under the shirt pushed over his chest, his own hand in Stiles' hair while he watches him touch him, Stiles' thumb tracing his clavicle calls up a tightening of muscle at his solar plexus, same hand stroking down one of his pecs, intimate with the curve, cupped, pressing against it, his other hand tracking down his abs. Things that don't happen to his body unless he's the one doing them.

He doesn't consciously register it until Stiles jerks back and he recognizes how long it's gone on
owing to his fingertips sunken into the mattress. Concern genuine and more serious than before, Stiles: "You, uh, okay?"

"Of course," he says without thinking, old defenses habitual, vulnerable; needing to catch his breath, holding Stiles' gaze in defiance of himself; of his uncertainty coming back for him.

Stiles doesn't look as young as Derek remembers. His face changed, but it started changing before he ever left. His eyes, the melancholy haunting them – that he's never seen before. He's seen Stiles in pain, frightened, guilty, charged with purpose, and he's seen his sorrow. It wasn't this sadness. Derek has no idea what the Beta has had to do, how much he's left out when he does talk about threats warded off. How much the darkness he's talked about late at night takes out of him. Too much caffeine, coming down off meds, in a /msg window, desperate to support Scott and Allison, or at least not drag them down with him, sometimes he pours it out. Derek has a rough estimate of the division of privacy and confession. Stiles keeps a lot more to himself.

His friend pursues his point at the usual unnecessary length, head weaving back and forth with the cadence of his words:

"I just noticed you're not touching me. Which was the idea at first with me touching you but then I thought 'I'm losing him here' leading to Exhibit A: The digging your way toward escape through the bed with not inconsiderable success. So, I thought: 'Hey, Stiles, maybe he's not okay. You're being a real degenerate. The androphilia. You should put the breaks on that'."

The guilt of leaving Stiles to assume he's in the wrong here stings. Guilt for being stupid enough to do this when he should know by now never to trust his decisions about sex, blanket ban. No sex. Have nothing else to do with Peter. That's not complicated. There's nothing Derek can say that he wants to say to Stiles where they are right now. He holds his ground and waits for the emotion lodged inside him sick through the core of his body to pass, cringe of his brow telling Stiles to keep the brakes on, minus the hostility he throws out when he needs space. Space won't matter; can't help. The single panacea's this never happening in the first place. His head's muggy; hopes Stiles doesn't deduce his way into it before he gets a handle on himself. Stiles' vigilant focus threatens to sour that hope. They're going to have a conversation about he doesn't know what with his dick half-exposed, fly wide open over the curls of his public hair.

He takes responsibility for ending up in these situations, how he ends up in them inexplicable.

He has no idea what Stiles is capable of, with few important qualifications. No suspicions, no worries, no chance that the Stiles he's been in communication with has lied or manipulated him. Stiles, his Stiles, what Stiles shows to him? That's real. He has one side of Stiles, almost to himself, and sometimes the human gives him more.

He's picking up disturbingly much from Peter, but not how to live an entirely fabricated identity. He has meticulously excluded other areas of his life. A skill he had already; one he can perfect watching Peter. That Derek's had no time to adapt to, either, since he got the facts – however many facts he can expect to get from people like Stiles and Peter.

He's feeling his way through the emotions snarled together inside him as much as he's thinking. The one bitter thought sticks – What can you expect from people like Stiles and Peter? – throwing him in the lurch, breaking his expression into countless, confused together, and fleeting sentiments.

Kick to the testicles. No rewind. He should have waited it out in New Mexico until Stiles or Scott got in touch. He could have stayed outside it. Would have his own part of Stiles and be close in a way Peter never will as Stiles' safe harbor from the games he's starting to play. No mind games. No power exchanges. Just Stiles' sense of humor and a teenager that built a refuge in him. He wrecked
Oh shit," Stiles says, voice barely above a whisper. Derek recognizes the naked, too-intimate weight to his words. The shock of loss coupled with raw exposure. Should have prepared himself for Stiles to skip ahead of him but didn't. "Shit," Stiles says, drawing back, looking ill – stricken, his voice rising. "You're like in love with me or something. Oh. Wow. You have like two other friends and you're in love with me. Shit."

His startled emotions do their violence; leave him with an oppressive weight in their place.

"I'm not in love with you," he swears. That's not his guard talking. He's not in love. He'd know. He has three friends and he has Cora. He wants to keep it that way. If he holds on to that he has a chance of escaping Beacon Hills and really never coming back.

"No," Stiles says slowly, going from nausea and the verge of panic to studying him like he's one more supernatural puzzle to crack. That hurts. It's better than Stiles being upset. "You want to be in love with me," Stiles course-corrects. "Not actually a huge technical difference."

Right now, Derek wants to dump Stiles on his back on the bed and leave through the window a lot more than be in love with him. He picks up growling, willing Stiles to back off. As if Stiles would ever take him as a credible threat considering there's no threat he's made to him he's ever followed through with. He draws strength from his anger at being crowded for space, gets it in his head to pick a fight, even one that he hopes remains verbal:

"Since when did you know anything about—"

Despair insinuates itself with the distress. Great. Perfect. Stiles loves Peter. That's sick. Disgusting. Stiles' level of empathy is way too high for any other explanation. Stiles deducts. Stiles works like Sherlock Holmes. He doesn't empathize. Derek's never held Peter in lower esteem. His uncle did nothing to deserve it. The only redeeming fact's that he saw them together. He doesn't know. It's outside his comprehension. He's seen the lengths people in love go to; knows the obvious signs.

What does love look like to a sociopath? Two people having power over each other. The one obvious thing about his uncle is he thinks in equations, tracks competing influences like a machine. If he's already competing with Stiles for influence, he won't recognize a damn thing.

Stiles? He's all kinds of things, but not self-aware.

Fuck. Stiles doesn't know he's in love with Peter.

Derek won't be the one to tell him. Not when the bullheaded competitiveness his scent's still feeding means he's guaranteed to make an asshole out of himself over any attempt. Not just. Something worse. He'd be putting Stiles in danger. He's screwed up a lot of calls he's made so far in his life. At least he's sure of that. Peter'd only use it. Maybe by the time Stiles works it out for himself he'll be even sharper, even stronger.

Stiles has grown subdued and uncertain. He saw Derek's temper go off and the wolf catch and stifle it. Good he didn't deviate from that. The human looks as young as the not-naïve, capable, but no matter how he sees himself, no matter how much blame he piles on himself, innocent boy Derek first met him as. Speaks as quietly and slowly as he did before, but guiltier:

"Derek…I don't not want to be in love with you. I think about how stupid I am not asking you out. We already kick ass at everything we do. It totally makes sense. Just everything is so fucked up…"
No longer growling, Derek tries to grasp the upside: No more wondering. Yes, Stiles changed. No, he wasn't reading into anything; keyed into subtext that actually existed. That's the first thing to feel great in minutes. He's not so lonely or so desperate he started projecting really inappropriate thoughts on a high school sophomore. No roadblock to talking about it. The caution against planting something in Stiles' head with 'grooming' overtones? Not necessary. Non-issue how much Stiles' flirting and his openness to it contributed and how much being here surprisingly-not-that-naked owes to the easy way they get along after a year and a half – mutual compatibility forced ahead by those first three months of nonstop violence, misery, and days where survival tunneled to dealing with each other's flaws.

He wishes he could happy Peter drove Stiles off. He would be, if his uncle had driven him off far enough not to go back. 'The evidence not in the form of a hunch but of Stiles' actual statements speaks against that. Getting him to promise things Stiles isn't emotionally equipped to do – mostly not sleep with Peter – sounds like drafting a formal invitation to failure. Derek's been trying to end his relationship with that since he first looked to protect Scott McCall.

"Stiles, don't," he warns. As if so many successes mark his history of warning Stiles and Scott against things he knows are bad for them. If there's any one idea Stiles shouldn't get hung up on, right now this'd be the one. The weight on him doubles; Derek succumbing to inevitably sinking. "It'll hurt," he tells him, speaking like a ghost from somewhere still far away inside him. It hurts already, but not like it will once he meets his new normal.

"Maybe you could've 'Stiles, don't' around November. December," Stiles refutes, huffing, but equally resigned, melancholy shading his expression again. He comes back around, hardened voice; tempered resilience. "It'll already hurt," he voices for both of them, refusing to stay down. Derek knows how long Stiles can keep them from drowning; rebukes himself for turning right into dead weight. "It's already hurting," Stiles says. "How much do you have in your life that doesn't hurt?"

Easy to answer. So is what they'd rather have to regret.

He grabs Stiles by the back of his head, yanks him forward, angles wrong, noses mashed – arm hasn't shed all the pain, yet, cramping at a phantom injury; they work themselves out in moments. He kisses him whiles his better hand slides down Stiles' body, splayed to touch as much shirt-hidden skin as his reach allows. Minutes pass before either of them calm down, Stiles rough with his mouth at first, biting hard even with Derek crushing him close. He's finished sitting on the edge of the already-narrow-enough bed, carrying Stiles back with him, using the one arm and the strength in his legs and the human's tenacity to stay up against him.

Stiles passes through a whole series of noisy, voiceless complaints before happily settling back down in his lap when Derek's centered their bodies against the length of the mattress. He pushes up at Stiles, urges him up onto his knees, sinking down his body, bunching t-shirt fabric in his teeth, satisfying while avoiding the temptation to rip, not interested in dealing with it versus scraping his teeth on the skin of his collarbone; his shoulder, giving him something back for denting his lips up – undamaged but nerves still stinging. Derek's hand on Stiles' hip in case his already-exercised legs protest, Stiles' hand raking through his already-disheveled hair, clutching handfuls and letting them slide out of his grasp.

Derek sees no trace of Peter-in-Stiles when they break apart. He sees his best friend: a little lost, a little sad, fiercely desiring, hoping, and searching his face in return. A metaphorical hillside erodes beneath the wolf, a scrabbling slide with no way back up. He's not in love with Stiles, but now? That's a matter of time. Inevitable but denied root by the bedlam in his head. Here in Stiles' bedroom, maybe even naked and tangled up, or later, miles away in the car, it'll sink into him, steep the marrow of his bones in his desires not just for sex but for close company; after that there's no stopping it from
passing into his blood. No refuge. No denial.

Stiles takes a deep breath, shoos Derek's hands; takes his shirt off, Derek helping him maneuver his sore arm. Body-shy reaction – like he hadn't yelled at him shirtless earlier – when Derek looks down Stiles, at his chest, at dark hair he's had a little trouble believing, only between his pecs but thick, growing sparse toward each side, strands long, loosely curling, wispy hairs around his nipples. He's never seen Stiles grow stubble beyond a peppering of spots beneath his skin, just his t-shirts riding up, the trail beneath his navel twisting together in a line and confined to it.

He smirks, and it's approving, glancing up at a relaxing Stiles, reaching out to touch. Actually a shallow excuse for side-eyeing Stiles' puffy nipples. Is puffy going if he keeps working out the way he has been? Because they're cute. Perky. Seriously. They're adorable. That he's either taking to his grave or waiting on Stiles getting his self-confidence up.

Stiles follows his gaze, highly suspicious.

"What?"

Derek looks up; blinks it away.

"Nothing."

The throb of his partially-exposed cock insinuates a great distraction would be shucking his own shirt. He reaches down for the hem only for a hand to cover his.

"Leave that on, hunh? I wanna keep that. Mine'll fit you a whole lot better now."

Stiles close gaze stresses there's more here than what it sounds like. Fact: Stiles wants to wear a shirt soaked in their sweat to Peter's. The competitive streak in Derek jumps at it; really wants him to know. Maybe that's not all Stiles wants to keep the smell of his sex for. The image of Stiles' nose pressed into the fabric, breathing him when he's gone punches him in his gut somewhere primal.

"So, you wanna cover this scent up?" Stiles asks, wetting his lips, ambitious, heat in his eyes and lowered, startlingly rough voice.

Yeah. Definitely gonna be in Stiles.

He asks with a look if that that's an actual question, knows it's not, just wants to see Stiles miffed he doesn't get tackled.

"Covers off?" he asks, quieted voice an aside. Stiles picks up, realizing Derek only hit pause.

"Nah. Turn them over later. Otherwise it won't dry forever." He winks; smug smile. "Whole system. Trust me. So much experimentation."

Derek snorts, touches Stiles to steady him before he lets himself fall onto his back. His cock's still tucked to the right in his unzipped jeans, flesh different temperatures against denim and air, fabric pulled against it when he moves; even breathes, fresh flush passing through it chasing Stiles' wink.

He's not sold on getting it out of there. No more personal reservations, guilt, discomfort – things he abstractly wishes he feels; moral continuity. It's just gonna get in the way until it gets to work.

"Please be gentle," Stiles teases, sitting on him, unchanged smile gloating his height advantage, eyebrows rising. "Or rough. Unf. You and your serious eyebrows and the illegal jiggle on that booty."
—the illegal what?

Stiles misreads the question on his face on purpose, smile spreading; switches up suddenly to playful, patently fake innocence.

"I'm saying you can dish it out to me. Damn. I know the maintenance and check engine lights are on, low coolant, the powertrain's probably fucked up and I will care about that way later." Much too sweet, too earnest a face for the words coming out of his mouth. He shrugs one-shouldered, drops his eyes down Derek's body, lingers at his unzipped fly and looks back up, reaching out, laying nonsense grooming touches on Derek's face; leaned over him, stroking his hair, the calming, caretaking voice also new: "I know maybe you want it slow, and I know you going hard won't involve any hammerlocks."

He has never in his life put a sex partner in a full on, legit wrestling hold to fuck them. Not even Kate. And he…That was by miles the most holding and being held down. Forcing a partner into submission is not a turn-on. A newly heavy-built seventeen year old, Stiles, playing with his hair, his ear, and face talking his enthusiasm to get closer to Derek? That—

He pulls Stiles down; careful not with his strength but his precision; flips him over on the bed, arm ready this time, cramping done, just the pain hanging around, serving to inform how to handle Stiles', whose delighted yelp gets some extra volume off hurting muscles. He chooses to trust Stiles – underneath him, radiantly happy, bruised chest swelling with delight. Stiles would go until he passes out. That's how he operates, but that's not where he's at.

Working together they pull his clothes off one piece at a time until he has a hard, enthusiastically naked teenager. He wishes 'hard' arrested his attention first, not Stiles' flesh clawed, bitten, and bruised from sex and scrapping. Derek's inborn rage thirsts to add his own graffiti, cover every mark with two of his own. The bruises are too fresh, too purple, too black; the scores too red. Rough sex. No fucking kidding. He reminds himself some of these, maybe most, are from fights. Normal in their world. What he and Cora do; subtract healing.

Derek doesn't have to go as far as Peter did to slake his rage. Stiles groans and whines under his hands as he digs the butt of his palm into sore, abused skin, massaging a mottled stretch of flesh, threshold for pain low. The boy shuts his eyes tight, mouth open, pushes up into Derek's touch, releases a long Nnnnnn, approval; pleads Derek's name – nobody else is on his mind; feeding Derek's self-control. Short of breath, the wolf sheds his last reservations.

The human's bare body exaggerates response to touch like it exaggerates everything else. Expressions continuously change, all but a few within the range of sensual. Handsome. Powerfully. On the other side of exhausted and still with everything to give. Too alive to be real.

Naked, he's incomprehensibly masculine compared to Derek's taken for granted image of a loud, weedy little teenager: filling out into an adult since he reached his full height, urged on by exercise that would daunt a professional athlete. Stiles has all his leg hair, only some of the leg mass. It's been all long distance running. Experience with the close-range gymnastics it take to escape a werewolf are changing their shape.

He slides down Stiles' body, drawing his own legs up under him when he has to. So much more pleading and wriggling, Stiles confined in place by his need to conserve energy the same as if Derek held him down. Derek! Mmmph. Don't bite that that's—Awesome. Okay. Bite that. Oh hell yes. Dude! Stop it! That tickles! Stiles' laughter soothes the wolf's raw nerves. He's not in as alien a country as he thought. The rub of his half-on jeans are giving him all the reward his body needs to keep him in a hot flush, metal teeth of the fly unable to scratch his tougher than human skin, alien
sensation he's never repeating on purpose.

Stiles' penis, that's about what Derek expected, which in no way at all means he's not attracted to it. Not that he can compare it to many other dicks viewed live, no erections besides his own, his sexual flexibility completely hypothetical beyond masturbation fantasy until…how long ago did Stiles kiss him?

His cock's tall. Stiffened to the point of hanging a couple of inches over his stomach. Not thick but thick enough not to look like it could snap in half. Derek's grateful seeing he could easily cause that to happen, doesn't need paranoia pricking him. Stiles comes naturally pale. Even with his cock tinged a shade darker there's a one bluish-cast vein that stands out, flowing in river bends up the left side of his foreskin. Disruptive note head's pink like 'original' flavor bubble gum. Like Stiles' lips. Just gonna keep it to himself. Forever. Learned his lesson with his nipples; changes focus quickly.

He breathes in, eyelids drifting, turbulence in the myriad canine convolutions of the delicate concha within his nose funneling scents across the moist flesh reading them to him. He holds the memory and his breath, focusing on Stiles' scent alone, again. Holds on until he's tuned out everything else. Takes another breath and wraps his hand around the teen's cock. Stiles kicks at the bed; makes a happy sound as Derek slides the skin over the shaft. Derek studies his face while he jacks him off: changing brows, eyelids, and mouth desynchronized. Cheeks puffed full of air one moment, lower lip sucked into his mouth, gripped by teeth, the next. Eyebrows moving to every setting. Stiles sometimes blinking sightlessly at the ceiling, other times back to shutting his eyes. His friend's eyes stray down once; linger in amazement on Derek's hand. He almost makes eye contact, close, catching himself to stare at Derek's cheek. His gaze flies away, Stiles coping with an upper body flush.

A smile tugs at the corner of Derek's lips. The wolf's pretty glad to see some shyness. No big deal having sex with a guy. Having sex with a guy who may've had more sex in the past few months than Derek's had in his entire life has an intimidation factor. It puts him more at ease than it detracts. Strikes out nearly all his concerns about balancing power or undue influence.

He's getting comfortable; having his hands on an erection he's used to, but nothing complicated's going on. He needs to acclimate to the uncanny fact he can reach down whenever he wants and handle Stiles' dick. He's still amused, has his attention back on it, props an elbows up between Stiles' legs; double fists it, more or less in synch, hands not always twisting in time with each, letting one move faster and the other slow. He chides himself Never bite that with the head vanishing into his hand and reappearing as ludicrous as before. A couple turns of his wrist slide his palm over it and back. Bite? No. Lick? That urge's almost overcomes him, and he'd be happy to. Not a rare occurrence anymore; difficult to resist after years divorced from that emotion. Except:

"Dude. Lay off or I'm seriously gonna blow my load," Stiles warns, sex voice, already thrusting into his hand for a truncated definition of thrusting – hips, thighs flexing, working out some erection-unrelated stiffness.

"I don't know if that'd be so terrible," Derek says, but two more strokes and he lays off, leaving Stiles flushed and panting and himself aware he'd suck at least one person's hard on.

"Nnnrrrph," Stiles says so eloquently. He looks down his body, meets Derek's gaze, dreamy-eyed, catching Derek off guard. Last night sucked. He could graph how much worse today has been…

He can't remember being as happy as he is right now since his joy in the company of a no-longer-moon-crazed Cora. Soaking in the fact she was there and alive.

"Come on. Hold me," Stiles says, little frown forming in his brow.
"I knew you'd be a brat," Derek chides when they're lying on their sides face to face, extra close on the narrow bed, one arm underneath Stiles, the hurt arm crooked between them, hand resting on Derek's neck, Derek's hand coaxing up and down all this bare skin. He touches thick, damp scabs on Stiles back, seen in the apartment but not examined. Maps the puncture of each of Peter's teeth with feather touches, plots future wound care; not for bringing up. The human doesn't react to his discovery. Instead, Stiles looks as smug as before, grins, gets his arm together; slides a hand over Derek's still-denim-clad ass, grips him under the leg and pulls it up over his, easy because Derek's willing. Stiles' hand skirts down his thigh. He rallies the muscles of his forearm; massages his fingers underneath Derek's knee where the nerves hide. The wolf's heart stutters, breath uneven.

Maybe there should be guilt that he only has his fly down, has his shirt on, socks on, with Stiles wearing nothing. He doesn't. The sex he has is pretty damn normal. Lamps have broken, he definitely hasn't always been in a bed. One time, not thinking her name, he had sex in a public space and had been seen, but…normal. No torn skin, no smashed noses, no bruises. Just hard sex. He appreciates Stiles making a thousand little implications it won't get crazy before he lets him join in on nudity.

Being denied the chance to undress, even with leaving the shirt, already passed 'accidental' straight to 'Stiles getting off'. He's not reading a power bid; more like personal entertainment at debauching him in steps. To taste. That and making him really start to hate his jeans. Not cruel. Still playful. Stiles' fingers keep on firing off nerves in his leg, streaks of heat racing past a cock aching with sympathy pangs. Kisses get rough again, Derek giving his own sharp, hard bites to Stiles' ridiculous cupid's bow lips; to his chin, tongue sweeping Adam's apple to jaw. Mounting haze of arousal. Stiles leaves off his knee, hand following Derek's thigh toward his hips.

"I'm not keeping your pants," Stiles says, impish, guiltless look carrying a slew of filthy thoughts pouring out freely while Derek thinks Finally. Got him cooking. Got himself leeway and liberty to be whatever kind of pervert he wants to be. An over-confined, complaining erection drowns out any chance of Derek thinking straight.

Derek wets his own lips. Pulls his leg back. Disentangles. Looks down his body while he lies hanging partly off the bed; slides out of his pants, seeing at the corner of his eye Stiles is watching him with arched eyebrows, curious. His erection swings until it bobs into place, standing. Stiles nods along approvingly. The wolf's too relieved to count how many ways he's being a little bastard. Derek pulls his legs up to get his socks off, gathers them together and tosses them off the bed. Different expression on Stiles, mouth open, fixation on his inner things, and he's good with that.

Stiles has on one of those flirty, playful smiles when the wolf stretches back out beside him. The moment transports him back in their history, lying on the floor side by side waiting to be killed with bullets to the braincase or by the kanima. Right now, a good memory. They survived it together. One conjunction among the many. So far they've come out in one piece, and closer.

"One sec," Stiles says, rolling over, hissing at putting his weight on his arm, warmed up and flexible or not. Feeling around a second with his left hand with Derek incapable of doing more than staring at the long, flat slope of his ass down to the shadow between where it rounds to his thighs, light glancing off barely-remaining oils the human eye would miss, he rolls back with a grin on his face and a bottle of lube in hand.

Significant eye-talking. He glances down Stiles' body, ignores the contusions, thinking: You're about to fuck Stiles. Trying the thought out a last time. He's fine with that. Anticipant. Wants it.

"You don't use protection."

He knew from the smell off Stiles. It didn't foreground itself until right now when his body is eager to lay a coat of his own semen over Peter's. (Seriously trying not to think about Peter's semen. Yep. Thinking about Peter's semen. Moment he'll not treasure.)

Stiles looks dumbfounded.

"From what? The dangerous parts are in the mouth and on the hands," he says, like maybe Derek didn't know. "—this is part of your whole protective shtick." Derek wouldn't call it a 'shtick'. "I swear I'm not bar crawling going bareback with forty year old perverts. There's just the one. Still avoiding the exact march of years past four decades right now. Please comply." He'll do that. Stiles takes on exaggerated sincerity, continuing in an explanatory vein: "Derek, I wanna smell like your jizz. A whole lot like your jizz. I would do a bukake flick with you."

A—

"A what?"

Stiles rolls his eyes; face silently begs: Are you serious? even while he's uncapping his lube,

"The internet, Derek. It's twenty thirteen. They say it's a series of tubes. You travel them."

Justified complaints. Derek knows his way around a smart phone and now most of a laptop but he should be more not computer but culturally literate. He tries. Know Your Meme's a bookmark so he doesn't have to ask what the hell Stiles just said…repeatedly. If Stiles has doggedly pursued one quest, it's that one. Derek seriously does listen. Stiles just might have an aneurysm and die if he told him he can now navigate the entire Microsoft Office suite. That would be entertaining and satisfying except he'd prefer to actually suck less at League of Legends, something Stiles cares about. Why are there eighty plus characters and massive flow chart of items to make flexible decisions on based on whatever the hell role he's in, even with the same character, and what the other team is fucking buying? He just wants to make people dead. Repeatedly dead.

"That doesn't answer what 'a bukake flick' is," he points out.

Stiles slides his lubed up fingers inside himself behind him, unseen, relaxes his muscles and works himself open with ease of habit. The animal in Derek waits impatiently, close enough to the surface to brush aside everything but how close he is to breaching Stiles' body, all the reasons he wants to blurring together in a fresh wash of arousal.

"Guess where you can find out?" Stiles says with all the exasperated derision only teenagers can pull off. He sees the change in the eyebrows; looks worried Derek might actually get up and do that. Flicker of thought. Tempting; he knows he'd handle the disarmament easier. Even if Stiles is making himself wet for his dick. With visibly increasing, frustrated irritation, Stiles goes strict: "—no. Don't. Not the time. Derek. Put your penis in me already."

Whoa…buy a second for 'Whoa'. His close ally, sarcasm.

"I've had actual better offers for sex from Peter."

Offers, yes. Today. Young and lying on the roof of the house, staring up at the waxing moon through tree branches: We're much too good looking not to be making out. Weaponized moments. Saving grace is one hundred percent of the time Peter makes an overture he's caught up with how hot he is, not Derek.
Stiles balks in offense. Withdraws his fingers and pushes himself upright. Slides a leg over Derek's hips. Sinks down onto his bare thighs, pianist's fingers easily collecting both their erections into hand, Stiles' balls pressed to his. Head swimming, disbelieving where he is and who's staring him down, the daring and resolve, the heat of Stiles' cock soaking into his. Stiles watching coolly until Derek's brain rolls over and nothing but Stiles and getting at the body he's been touching, its scent holding him in sway, matters.

Their skin glides together. The glans Stiles covers and uncovers with long strokes have precum welling up, spilling down the gullies beneath differently long, narrow slits; comingling; smearing against Derek's erection with the lube on Stiles' hand. Doing anything Stiles wants him to do with his dick goes without question, heat spiking through Derek's cock, base to head, as a bubble forms at the tip of Stiles', following slowly down the damp trail to break on contact, liquid snap audible only to the wolf.

"No, you haven't," Stiles corrects, expression lax, words toneless, lucid eyes, captivating in surety.

"No, I haven't," Derek submits, voice thickened.

Stiles comes back on without a flicker – like throwing a switch – dopey smile as endearing as if he harbored no unbelievable kinks behind it.

He puts another small helping of lube in his hand, rises up on his knees, and gives Derek's erection a handful of wet, slippery strokes with his waiting body close above, Derek's silently gaping mouth and his blinking turning that smile sharp. A little look of concentration; Stiles reaches down, steadies Derek's cock and rests his weight on it, anus effortlessly sliding open, a sigh escaping him as he gradually but easily lowers himself hips to hips. He grins achievement, incorrigible; settles down on his hips with a wriggle.

Derek's non-history with anal's not a factor except he had no idea it could go in like that, skin twisted tight against itself one moment, spread into a circle holding fast against his cock the next. Derek can guess recent exercise is a factor. He's heard stories. Heard it can hurt. Heard there's more ways to do it wrong than when he's brought a woman's cunt to swollen – soaked with freely produced cum; welcoming – grasping him, but only when she flexes. Stiles obviously knows what he's doing, and perfectly.

Derek registers the heat immediately, hot compared to warm. Then, the openness to the space he pushed into, no vertical stretch, no couple building thrusts to ease a natural expansion that's still an expansion.

'Tight'. That's the word he's heard in conjunction: 'Tight'. And, damn. The muscles of Stiles' anus clutch him, can tighten even firmer, flinch against him, and relax but still have grip. The entire rest of Stiles' body tells him the spasms are pleasures. Beyond that it's not 'like a glove'. The smoothest skin he's felt envelops him, holds firm against him. Glove, no. Condom that comes lubricated inside. So much like that and then better. As in he looks up a body to a familiar face he fully recognizes it's no sexual favor, Stiles getting as much from it as he's giving.

'Smooth'. The thinness of the skin. No cum-slippery, rippled ridges to unfold. He reels that Stiles trusts him with something his natural strength could damage so easily and doesn't even think about it – besides it's him he wants in him. Sex to him, with normal human women, means hot co-eds; the knowledge that even if they hit it off he's a kind of dildo, but she's alive and proof he's not alone. Letting dating fall apart before it even happens, scared to care and lose. This. Stiles. He's another country. Somebody integral to his life, not just holding him inside him, the weight of his body on him, their skin pressed together, his own dick up, eager. More than anything else, the way he's looking down on him, not just appreciating what he has but knows him to appreciate.
Derek loves him. A surge of emotion intertwined with the velvet grasp of Stiles' body and with instinct. He doesn't have a face that can hide it. Hiding it's the last thing he wants. Bewitched by Stiles' beginning, then ongoing, rise and fall; by the affection, the adoration in his lust-blown eyes; the complete physical certainty one person in the world gives a damn he's alive. His chest heaves for air. He realizes his hands are nothing but in the way – not the time to put pressure on tired legs – and reluctantly, for right now, brings his arms above his head, makes fistfuls of pillowcase and down. He's been wishing for this longer than he thought. Didn't know. Forgot what it felt like out of fear after his eyes changed.

There's so many reasons Stiles needs to thank Scott for never letting him let Derek die.

Early days. Something he should rethink later if he's concerned about the 'good person' thing. Directly pertinent to the sex he's having.

(Note to self: Scott didn't let him kill Jackson after they kidnapped him, either.)

Stiles' mind's still running a mile a second. He wants to remember this. He wants to see Derek to catch a break more than he wants to bliss out. He has to figure out how to deal with the thing that happened. Later. He was uninformed he is unprepared to accept what he's culpable for: Letting Derek Hale fall for him. In his defense he totally thought he was. In his imagination if somebody gave him eyes like they'd be happy spending the rest of their life just being around him he'd feel the same thing right back. He loves him, there's actual warmth in his heart, but not more or less than a minute ago. That scares him a little but he's already pushed past that.

One important thing is he got Derek up in him and it feels awesome sitting on the body with all the muscles spread open by his cock. Another is Derek has an epic sex face. Calm, lips just-parted, pouty lower lip making a rare appearance, freed from displeasure and concern, eyes swooning open and shut, highlighting the power of his focus and this gaze like he can't believe where he is and that somebody would choose to be with him...

It's sad that anybody as genuinely a good person as Derek could be left feeling like that. That brings Stiles mood down – not like "I'm sorry", like 'firmly grounded'.

Perspiration rises to Derek's skin, starts to just-barely show on the acceptably tight t-shirt, not enough to add cling. It doesn't have to. The arms are enough with their own couple of 'Which the hell is that muscle? Do I even have it? Did he make it up?' They flex in concert with the motion of his tragically truncated riding. He's still sliding up and down a certain disco stick, one longer and less thick than what he's habituated to, not by much but when he knows one guy's dick so incredibly well he marks the difference. Stiles' fingers, and feet, and his dick are proportionately long; not so Derek. Not a complaint even in a far flung sense. Stiles wants his ass stuffed. That's the cincher. That's all he can actually feel past his anus, how awesomely full of werewolf he is. It actually is about the thickness. Good time. Derek's got enough but goes deeper into his sore ass; he'll take the trade.

(Sore's relative as long as the arousal's on, he's already appreciative of feeling more more acutely everywhere. Ten gold stars to the werewolf workover. He genuinely appreciates all the intensity but nothing ripping through his skin.)

His weight's shifted back, thighs putting in all the work; if he wants to get it going shameless bouncing is required. Stiles already lost any and all shame about anal. He can bounce smoothly with a hard dick keeping him on target, but his breathing gets heavier; he better enjoy Derek enjoying it the short time he can.
He's never quiet, especially not when all the nerves of his anus are throwing Mardi Gras, but the next lusting groan has to do with Derek inadvertently looking extremely fuckable strewn out and sweating. I am a man, and I would fuck that butt. It's an extremely fuckable butt, Stiles affirms to himself; gives the idea its moment. Derek's spread out in front of him buffet style. Wanting to hump's the prerogative of instinct. His own off the charts willingness to stick to anal relies on the way all his nerves hook up.

From how Derek's heaving for air, he's on his way to coming. That deserves its own moment, briefer, knowing with werewolves' stamina he's getting off on eye contact and the idea Stiles (so very much) wants to get it from him. If Derek comes then he won't. He actually still will, but he's not willing to wait.

He tunes it down to just bobbing a little, then eases off entirely. He leans forward, resting his weight on the hand he puts beside Derek's head, other hand resting on his chest. Conspiratorial smile while Derek catches on and lets the pillow live another day, placing his hands on Stiles' shoulders. What was just all up inside him's partly exposed to the air. He varies its exposure, dragging his hips forward and down. He pushes Derek's shirt up with his cock with every roll, pushing himself back down it with strength from his arm, getting a serious boost from hi, hello, grinding up the glory trail of Derek's exposed abdomen. New feature, that other guy light in that area. Good feature; long strands petting him all Thanks for riding my cock and sliding your penis against me, Stiles.

Derek's expression, foggy with lust, says he's not as focused on the details as the sensations. Stiles sinks down on his arm; matches their lips up; can't do a damn thing like this because his legs submit their resignation letter and go out, spread to each side of Derek's. The wolf picks up in his place, rolling up and in and falling back, the same idea with more force to back it; he's gonna have to do everything requiring hip motion now because holy fuck that's no longer happening on Stiles' side ever again in his life. Stiles satisfied himself at giving Derek's cock his effort; can remain happily at the mercy of Derek's plunging dick, the one pushing his body up like nothing to it. The way they're kissing gets his hormones going, body calming his racing mind – easier off the Adderall.

Stiles' sexual stamina is an acquired talent. Back off orgasming or Peter's done, the game: usually unfairly challenging.

How does he kiss 'grateful for everything' into Derek? Starting with saving his ass repeatedly when he hated the guy up to becoming a fixture most days of Stiles' week. Trying means the more intimate species of emotions involved threatening to overwhelm him. Hide in the bathroom level overwhelm him. Derek holds him, caressing his mouth with his mouth, stiff cock gliding through a certain orifice Stiles enjoys having filled except now it means something and Stiles understands his incapacity to respond to Derek's emotion. Informed, unconditional, interpersonal acceptance unbudging against the overwhelming conviction of how undeserving he is would drive him directly to freaking out except for the freaking excellent job Derek's doing laying down the soothing, steadying, slow-burn admiration.

Bodies in concert, lying chest to chest, Derek holding him, the calming movements of his hands, the kisses feeding Stiles his inexplicable confidence him lead Stiles toward relenting he has no power to intervene against Derek knowing him and still loving him. Derek's so fucking strong. More than just his physical ease at keeping Stiles' body in motion. He's suffered more loss and more losses than Stiles can imagine enduring and still asking to shoulder a part of Stiles' broken, that strength an overwhelming presence flooding Stiles' human senses, leaving him no idea of when he pulled himself so urgently close or when the floodgates broke on the corrosive guilt of exposing his father to more suffering, to only suffering and danger and nothing but since his mother's scream, the sound of her body hitting the floor of the darkened hallway, his ears ringing, and the textured grip of his father's backup compact pressing into his palms. His dad. The first officer on the scene.
Stiles sheds his tears. Swallowed up in sanctuary he bathes Derek in his gratitude, enough to wash the wolf of the soul-certainty he always comes up short, can never be enough for anything or anybody, from the way Derek's arms tighten. Everything sentiment. Then everything forgotten and skin, sinew, sweat, fingernails on flesh. The delirious urge to take in more of Derek. He has Derek in him, the only thing close to ever showing him how far, knowingly and unknowingly, he let him in.

Penises, though. Those run on their own timetable, pursue their own agendas. Fact asserting itself there's no more ignoring transparent physical needs if good orgasms are on the table and not random accidental jizzing. Mirror image of coming out of the Nemeton – so sure of so many things one instant; the next his head clouding up.

Derek up again, lifting Stiles – Stiles' arms instinctively wrapping around his neck, one more loosely than the other. The wolf flips them over, Stiles' lying in the warmth Derek lent to the bed, just as full inside, whimpering how he has to when his self-control's overthrown by sensory overload – Derek never stops thrusting throughout the shifting and settling of their bodies. The teasing smile Stiles had earlier has escaped to Derek's lips. Stiles wishes he could lose his own awareness of his dewy eyes.

"Oh look, you've had sex before," he says, blasé, outward calm at odds with his own virgin-like uncertainty, emoting so hard he could crack open in the gory chestburster way. Christ. You're never taking that one back. Get over it. Derek straddles the line between lover and a werewolf. He finds a deep bruise to ply with his thumb. Stiles hips jump involuntarily; don't get very far.

The suffering and complaining noises ring of authenticity, but Stiles looks big-eyed up at the wolf until Derek catches on; presses his mouth back to Stiles', exploiting other contused skin, again, while his hips ramp up their pace. There it goes. Here it is. A sideshow starring Stiles' past-over-extended body steeping him in Derek's sexual intent. His emotions are not done with him and he can't do this without that carnival sleight of hand. Orgasming while he is crying? Will not accept.

Derek swallows Stiles' vocal but inarticulate bitching with every kiss, hands equally alleviating and inflicting pain, jumbling up Stiles' sense of time despite the metronome impact of Derek's hips. He lost some of his erection what with the jolt of emotional trauma but he's getting back to the point that he needs to come. Derek's paying too close attention. Edging him. God. What is up with the endless doing of that in his sex life so far? The whole show stops, the band falls silent, every time Stiles thinks he gets to nut. Derek wins. He's playing this one way past anything Stiles' body's been asked for before.

That smile the wolf threw his way? Notification he can not-come as long as he fucking wants. Stiles grasps how not coming's easier than not flipping out and murdering people under the moon.

He suffers hot, melty adulation in his chest that endures through the chill of fear that follows as all his defenses slough away again in its heat. He wants this too much. He cares past too much. Emotional collapse is one thing; the reason-loving majority of his brain may not field the fact that Derek pulled him into oh fuck actually in love with him. Parting from him again – pounding hips not letting up – the wolf's eyes unravel him, spooling his conflicted feelings out and reeling them in.

Stiles thought at one point that afterward he could play this cool. Nix that. That leaves...Trust Derek. Trust Derek sounds so much easier as two words than it is in real life, seeing the wolf kind of kidnapped him this morning and then there's dialing his dad.

(Self-reminder: He can still shut himself in the bathroom.)

He trusts Derek. He's not even sure which part of this he's afraid of. He wants to give whatever inside him the man with a hand on his cheek that Stiles turns his head into, who he swipes his tongue
over the palm of, meets the gaze of again despite the exposure thinks is so worthwhile. What Stiles has no idea. He's worth his actions in support of his pack, however much he can spare his dad from, seeing the void in Peter and refusing to turn away. An abyss staring back means there's something there, even if it's just 'an abyss' – just darkness. In Peter, except the few rare times when Stiles persists long enough, there's nothing. How Derek wants all the ugly that's the only thing left over, damaged goods as in 'let me show you the scar of black decay on my soul', Stiles has no explanation for.

He suffers for it, but Derek has the hang of stringing his body along without doing fresh injury, now, scrambling his thoughts and keeping him distracted from his cock. His noises get needier, hands grabbier, both arms motivated to put in some groping. If he exercises his body in stints…That's the only strategy going. The wolf feeds into it by losing the shirt. No argument from Stiles. Shirt has all the pheromones it needs; he wants naked parts of his werewolf easily in reach. Naked. Decked out at the same time.

So much muscle. So much time put in shaping it. Not satisfied with the raw look – that brings his former hobby count from reading to two; Stiles never thought about it until totally naked Derek. Then the accents, as in his body hair grows in directions, the same curls at the clavicle as ------, but darker, growing higher, too, with a few curls in the dip beneath his Adam's apple, downturn – pec sweep, when guys got it going straight down the clavicle, plus rising over the top of their pecs like wings; coming in from the ridge of their pecs, flowing inward, taking a turn toward their abdomen and then that real useful line running down. All the way down, while spreading out over Derek's abdomen. Not like most of the pictures Stiles has appreciated in the past, coverage modest in perspective.

The muscle on Derek's so thick he's inches wider than a lot of other guys. Even Danny. Probably not…Thinking about him. Right here, all this beef at his fingertips, Stiles'd say 'I'll take it', except done deal. So he takes a little more of it, feels him up, following the handy guide to Derek's massive pectorals already on his skin.

Amazement comes and goes: Derek as in Derek Hale's between his splayed legs he's let slump to the sides because the word of the day is Nope. Boning him. Everything else besides he never expected this one. If someone asked him in the past week he'd say 'No way'. His understanding of Derek's changed so radically over the past year, since their first collision, the wolf may not know what league he's in but it's out of Stiles'. Body over him, cock so in him, too hot to believe, obviously didn't receive that memo.

He's still kissing Stiles somewhere like the mouth even as his hands falter; slide under Stiles; hold him, taking some pressure off, counterweight to going at him hard. Stiles' has his hands on Derek's sides, stroking encouragement, skin and mostly muscle passing under them. Cross his heart he'll wait to come if it, oops, means his cock never works again. Wouldn't miss seeing Derek orgasm for anything.

The wolf closes his eyes; punches the ticket; kisses break off. Shine of sweat on his skin, mouth hanging open, working a few useless times, brow rippling through relief, chest shudders on one breath in; no hip slamming, moves in him slow, instead, while he's still shooting; slow means Stiles can feel his cock pumping, so fantastic, makes up for not getting to feel what's flowing in. Stiles freezes. Suddenly Derek's eyes are open, and, whoa, those're blue. Not like homicide. Blue like he'd make some fucking puppies with him today. Excitement lurches through Stiles' entire body; the dizzying amount of devotion on the table he can't cope with right now.

He grabs the wolf by the head and hauls him down, lets Derek bite up his lips – now a lot more gently – and crush his thoroughly pre-crushed skin under his hands. Pulls that immediate memory
right up, Derek's abs in fact still stroking his cock, wolf moving for him, even pressing down enough to make it quality. Stiles' ticket straight to painting them in milky splashes of cum.

Someday Stiles might reconsider the werewolf chew toy life plan. Not when he's being held and idly groomed at by worrying hands lying expended, overdrafted, in the arms of a phenomenally good looking...Derek. He smiles tiredly, shakes his head at the wolf's concern. He's not gonna die. He may wish for death; won't die.

Body. You got your bench time, he warns himself. He needs just one more effort.

He slides his arms back under the wolf's, over the rise of his hips, palms leading, over two globular buttocks. No growling, no teeth baring, just interest, so he gets his hands up underneath that, digs his fingers in, pulls – gathers a handful – up on each side, gives his parted ass a squeeze, butts of his palms pressing in, kneads Derek's cheeks in his hands. That stunned expression: not violated – confused, though; little winces indicative of following what's happening back where, breath that just came down picking up. Awesome. Excellent. He strokes his ass with his thumbs further up from where he's evaluating how it does that jiggle. For science. Has his minute with that, more delighted than he is exhausted.

"Really?" Derek asks when Stiles withdraws his hands, not because he wants to but because they kind of fall off him.

"I'm not into spanking, but I could be," Stiles confesses, exuberant.

Derek takes a second, brow tightening.

"Nevermind." 

Stiles yawns and snuggles further down in the comforter, world looking swimmy. Derek's plan to keep Stiles' jizz from dripping anywhere involves his fingers rounding up spillover and his frowning mouth. Dirty kinds of hot. Like an accident with a cinnamon roll no-that's-his-cum being sucked off Derek's fingertips.

"You know yours is just gonna spill out of my ass when you're not in my ass, right?" he reminds him. "My comforter strategy now has some claw shredding to explain, but remains sound."

From Derek's sigh and surrender he hadn't thought that far ahead yet. Derek might not even spend that much (or any?) time having anal sex or even sex with dudes. Voldemort has left him with a how-to guide like in Chamber of Secrets by leaving Stiles.

Derek does pull his dick out. Stiles' anus feels swollen. Swollen and sore. Not the fault of anybody but Stiles allowing the amount of action he allowed from werewolves, who really bang, despite all the lube he's gone through. Derek? He's guilty of something much worse: The oozy heat in Stiles' ribcage that's so hard to breathe around.

He has a good thing going with his psycho sex partner who technically dumped him, yes, but will live to regret it more than Stiles, and anyway: this was all scheming. What's Peter gonna do? Sleep around with random people that can't satiate his narcissism? Ha. He's only punishing himself. Stiles knows, as if there's a second Stiles removed from his present, he can't let him be left alone too long. A sulky Peter is 500% too much drama for his life. It's a good thing. He knows exactly what's what. That should be enough.

Point is, he does not need to be lunging up to kiss Derek who's got the Disney-princess, lash-rimmed eyes and macho beard. Does not need to have a hand supporting him from beneath and his head
pulled back by his hair to do a Gone With The Wind poster with more tongue and more necking. Needs less to be doing a whimpery, begging version of Derek's name.

"Stiles," Derek says, but a statement of intent. He wants to Ask things because he wants to Know things. Not fair. The wolf's not confused on this. Stiles completely regrets every single time he's typed – patient and enduring or irritated – 'Use your words'.

Guilt stings at Stiles when he shakes his head 'No'. He can't use his. That's an exceptional circumstance and deserves a break being cut.

The gaze Derek pins him with could be mistaken for pining. It wouldn't be a mistake. Stiles has gotten a look at himself pining plenty of times, mostly in the mirror of a school bathroom and over Lydia. He knows what his own traitorous eyes are doing. The same needy thing.

"This is too West Side Story," he says, for the record – a record for which it seems important – starting to feel desperate.

Now Derek plays it off collected and confident. Stiles gets annoyed in advance. So what if they've only been texting and typing? He can see he left an opening for Derek to do a smartass, showoff thing.

"Arthur Brooke. The Tragical History of Romeus and Juliet translated from an Italian source, written into a play, eventually retold as West Side Story."

Stiles puts his annoyance into a face; slaps weakly at his bare chest, measly strike of his hand like chastising solid granite. Quipping should be taken as adorable revenge for peppering the guy with questions about that and history and the fact Derek paid attention in school. Stiles wants to throw up.

"Jesus, Derek, finish college."

He can see Laura's dead, rotting bagged body in the dirt like he just pulled up the wolfsbane. Stiles would quit on higher education and focus on revenge, too. He bets Derek was at Columbia or some stupid place like that. He hasn't pried around since the answer to Hey, were you in college? was I came home.

His heart goes off beat with fear as Derek's expression closes off.

"Even I know there's a part about renouncing your name in there," Stiles pushes. If he's making a point he wants to make that point clear. "Peter's not your problem. It's not your fault you're related to him. Me and Scott aren't your problem. We put ourselves in the middle of this since night one. Nobody but Isaac is even kind of your responsibility. Fall in love with a real English teacher instead of a fake English-teaching Sith Lord. Just..."

"...get out of here?"

Damn it. Derek's all stony with that pain right behind it like Stiles remembers him looking all the other times his cool doesn't quite cut it.

"I don't mean 'of my bed'. I don't mean that at all," he says, not above begging, hand gliding over damp werewolf skin. Calming. Apologetic. As calming and apologetic as he knows how to touch somebody, technique usually restricted to Scott's shoulder. "It just sucks. Everything sucks because you keep putting yourself in the middle of this like an idiot, but you're not an idiot – you're too nice for our bullshit."

"So what's Scott?"
"He's shifty and getting shiftier. You know, devious. Remember the part where I got pissed he struck up with Deucalion? After he mind fucked you to nail Gerard." Stiles rolls his eyes. He's staying on this. Staying on it spends the desperation. He can see Derek's nostrils flaring, eyes a little too wet. Stiles banks on him venting the dam before he hits overwrought; banks on Derek refusing to cry. "Beacon Hills is a sinkhole that collects douchebags. Contrary to my earliest opinions, you're not one of them. The fact that you got out proves your insufficient douchiness to deal with the rest of us. Consider that I will never leave this place. **Go back to school.** For me. Please. I never thought I would say that to a person ever in my life."

Derek pushes his lips together, puffs them out, frustrated. Stiles still wants to puke, and more than he did before. He'll be going to college in the city. If he goes to college. If he doesn't go to trade school. None of the things he needs to learn are in mainstream textbooks. Human life looks more remote by the month. All he needs from humans is access to a grocery store, a healthcare plan, and enough cash for those.

Humans? Forgot for a minute.

Derek touches him, bringing all his attention back to the wolf. He can't stand the way he's looking at him. Like he's got ESP. He might as well have ESP. Stiles can't keep his own emotions off his face. His own stinging eyes aren't going anywhere. Unlike Derek he can and will get his tears on.

"This is where I say come with me, and you say Scott, and the pack, Peter..." Derek quietly offers.

Stiles shakes his head, emphatic.

"You forgot the big one: I get off on this stuff," he says. If Derek could fall in the other direction, away from love, that'd be so sweet right now. Stiles would never get over it, but a Pyrrhic victory's still victory. "I was the one who came to Scott's house in the middle of the night because I wanted to see the other half of your sister's dead body before my dad found it. I'm the first guy off to see every mutilated, bled out, eviscerated, poisoned body in town." He struggles with all the things he could say because there's not a single thing he **needs** to say. Derek understands he worries about the patterns behind the choices he makes. Novel length understands.

He's blinking wet eyelashes. He wants to yell. In Derek's face. With his palms pressed into his eyes and his fingernails trying to rip his scalp off. That he can't take this. His chest closes in. He remembers to keep breathing. Right. Just keep breathing.

Now he knows what it's like to be with somebody who loves him. It's incredible. The most phenomenal thing that's happened in probably his entire life.

He can't have it. He's with the pack, the pack's with the Nemeton, and nobody knows what that means. Peter intends to use Derek for another who knows what. Stiles wants to believe Derek could hold up against that. Knows better.

Swamped with emotions; never should have done this; maybe probably gonna panic or sobbing wreck. So, he moves. Intentionally. Easily. Lying in the same place and in a bright harbor of peace and clarity, emotions spread out like puzzle pieces in space, none of them touching him.

Derek kisses him slowly, letting his warmth seep into a grave-cold Stiles who tries to remember when these fugues began to change his body. He can't. Time isn't the same. The wolf rubs circles, these slow, too, under the unknown possibility of violence. Most of his warmth comes through lying alongside him – his other actions sentiment.

Derek knows the outline of Stiles, Scott and Allison's spells. Doesn't understand and can't. Is naïve to
how fleeting the heat of his living body seems, and how little his one small life matters. Stiles finds no desire to take it. He's a single fragile mortal. He'll die on his own. He points out factually to Derek the wolf's getting cold, but Derek stays at it, nuzzling and lipping, touching and kissing Stiles until the heat comes back into him with an unexpected serving of unquelled emotion. Derek matters to Stiles. Can't be filed away.

Stiles wants to break down as much as he already did. The break stripped his body of all its preparations. He doesn't.

"You just about have me convinced I'm not leaving," Derek says, plunging Stiles into a more complete hopelessness. There's no temptation to act out; yell; panic. All that he swept aside. Tables turned, he's the one heating Derek up. It's impossible not to wound him if he stays. Weaken him. Help him toward whatever's waiting for him here.

"I'll still go back to Peter," he confesses quietly. Derek doesn't need him. Derek anti needs him. The only thing he could give him to ward off his future is a heads up; the only way to get it's a knife in his side. Even if somehow he relearned not to give a shit about Peter.

"I don't care," Derek says, that voice he uses when he's frustrated with Scott, or Stiles, or his Betas' slow uptake. When he had Betas. Point is, right now he really doesn't. "You get that? It's not important. Until yesterday, it didn't have anything to do with us. I'd rather be here."

The words spur upset, Stiles' expended body trembling at the idea of movement. He steels against it, forcing his words out.

"I want you right here. In Beacon Hills. In bed with me. Gaming in the same room as me. Dating me. That's a quality fantasy. One that's never gonna play out in my real life."

"You need me to be in New Mexico. Because you're in danger any time you're around Peter, and you can't tell when your dad'll be less scared and confused with a heads up. And a tree's messing with your head," Derek fills in, thinking in pace with him itself resistance.

Stiles' thought are too scrambled to force the issue; body annoys him – both his arms shaking and he can't get control. Derek starts to look worried, putting a hand over his uninjured arm. It goes still. Stiles finds a point.

"That's…It's not just my head. All those animal freak out suicides when Peter woke up, and when Jennifer started messing with the telluric currents? It's like a Disney forest out there now that the Nemeton's in control. Don't you think people should've moved out of town by now? Nobody even thinks. There's not even 'Save Our Town' orgs. These people are on lithium. Olivia? Came here to destroy the Nemeton. Now you'd have to haul her away, restrained. You and Cora may have to Luke and Leia it if the whole thing goes bad. No kissing."

Amid petting, Derek's hands are prompting him still as his body keeps losing control over itself.

"I'm glad right now you made me watch those movies. Otherwise? I'd stop touching you."

The idea makes Stiles frantic; he's asking himself if it's another shift of consciousness and why but he's blabbering over it, emotional at just the idea.

"Do not. Keep on touching me. You have to keep on touching me. I don't exactly know when…or, you know 'if'…I'm sorry. The part where I'm having sex with your heartless, abusive uncle. Which is stupid to say because if I'm sorry I should be able to say 'Stiles, don't do that again'. And then actually not do it, as opposed to saying it and ignoring myself which at this point is par. I am, though.
Unfortunately not exactly broad-spectrum sorry. Enough. Just I wish I wasn't and you could un-
know I was because I never did. And then I wouldn't be hurting you. Now no matter what I do I
don't think I can not hurt you and I get like…I get that—Wow. I do not know what I was saying."

Derek's reservation and critical stare breaks into shocked realization.

"Fuck. I forgot you haven't eaten. I've gotta feed you. Right now."

Stiles centers himself around the fact. He hasn't. Not since last night. The room has never stopped
looking swimmy.

"I'd resent the idea I can't feed myself, but I couldn't move if I had a wheelchair right now."
Irrelevant. Derek's going to take care of this. What is 'this'? He rifles through possibilities. "Clothes,
and turn the covers over, and Fräulein Hale cooks for me. Showers."

Derek has sober responsibility face on, steady, statement of fact voice leading him further toward
calm; Stiles thinks abstractly as he talks he's happy Derek's getting to be a big brother, and there's a
hand cupping his face.

"Fräulein Hale cooks for you. In a pair of your underwear. You pass out up here and completely
miss it. Then the shower. I can tell I'm going to be holding you up. You'd fall and crack your head
open. Then clothes, and the covers." He puts two fingers on Stiles' chest when Stiles tries to sit up;
might as well be two ten ton weights. "Don't strain yourself."

Stiles frowns.

"But…domestic, muscly werewolf in underwear."

"'But' nothing. Try not to pass out yet." He squints; discards that plan with a shake of his head. "—
I'll bring you around. We should pack your arm up in some ice. You have drink at least a glass of
water. Two glasses of water. You have any fruit down there? You need carbs. I think your blood
sugar's crashing."

"Probably my muscles have eaten every last molecule of glucose and then some," Stiles admits. If
that was true, he'd be dead. It's not far enough from the truth for comfort. Scott, if he ever knew,
might chastise him for this more than his alternative sexual activities. Stiles had a pile of men's fitness
magazines and computer printouts unloaded on his desk because apparently his eating habits suck.
Something his body doesn't tell him about. He takes drugs that lie to it. He's run on distress since he
woke up. Another great appetite suppressant, but ultimately he can only tear his body down for
alternate sources of sugar so fast. Only one thing is actually important: "You've gotta wear the
Sponge Bob boxers."

Derek pulls back, wary like a YouTube video of animal versus unknown object.

"No. I don't. Whatever that means, I already know how annoying you'd be for the next six months."

Stiles fights to stay conscious watching Derek's a$$ go through his clothes; not for the first time.
Score. He's being humored. Not with Sponge Bob – although that'd be the greatest – but humored.
He has a big woozy grin for him as Derek pushes the drawer shut and turns away.

"Little smiley faces! Aw. Look at how they don't match your grumpy widdle face."

Derek raises his eyebrows, begging would-totally-be-his-bitch please. Graces him with a pair one
finger salutes – Stiles feels giddy, beaming; that's the one emoticon he's ever picked up – then leaves
for the kitchen.
Derek frowns at the serving plate of pancakes he's made. Glancing at the box and deciding he can make more later, he turns off the stove top. The cartoonish number of flapjacks piled overlapping, discusses hanging out drooping to gravity even if he cooks them firm, mostly for him. They remind him of home. There would be three times as many pancakes and a second plate, the twins underfoot, seeing how far they could push it before they got slapped away by a spatula, running off with pancakes to divide with Payton; Cora, youngest member of the household, uselessly informing them all they should wait to eat. Stiles gets eggs and turkey bacon. Derek'd feel guilty tearing through that. Plus, carbs reassure a body it has fuel right on hand – don't let Scott say he never uses strategy; he's going to just-in-case pre-eat his emotions'.

After the surreality of the past twenty hours he's grateful for the normalacy of cooking breakfast. Until yesterday the only thing he cared about was Cora finishing high school. There's no work shift where he misses putting food together before or after the sun while she goes through her exercise routine, showers and gets dressed. Making or leaving her dinner he usually works in so she can knock out homework. He wants her to go out after school – just not with asshole guys like Cameron. It's not his business. They didn't even have a rough break-up but he's just as maliciously happy the kid gets out of his way like he's seven years bad luck, because sometimes Cora still smells like him. Usually she's with better people.

If Stiles is been bent on socializing him, he's been bent on socializing Cora. Less forcefully bent. Too much time online and Stiles will make him pick up the phone and call Juan or Wade. He hopes it comes out of suspicion, versus calendaring, which might be a little weird even for them. Cora drew the line at Derek taking all the chores, but Stiles keeps him from getting intrusive, too. He's neurotic. Guilty. He can still smell Laura's eviscerated bowels lying in the woodland detritus. Hear the flies circling; see their wings flash in the moonlight as they crawl over her skin and spilled guts, ants dark lines across her skin edged with a thousand moving legs.

She was an Alpha. A better Alpha than him, and even with a single Beta left much stronger. He was the only lucid survivor of their pack they knew of. He should have come with her when she left for Beacon Hills. He sees her smiling at the airport terminal, duffel slung over her shoulder reminding him he has an exam and a paper, promising him she'll be fine. He asks himself if Peter won a killing blow because she held back, or if Peter defeated her because he's that much better. The second option he doesn't want to consider. Peter trained Laura. To rival him, or not?

He remembers Peter the night that he killed him, became Alpha, before the fight moved out: Not even wolfed out and batting him and Scott around like bean bags; like kicking kittens.

During the drive he thought History repeating. Kept his foot on the gas. He made an angry Cora swear on their mother not to come to Beacon Hills if he died. Never to contact Peter. Not to feed herself into the meat grinder.

This morning bore no resemblance whatsoever to history. He's downstairs at the Stilinski household wearing obnoxiously cheerful boxers surreptitiously picking his mood up, yellow happy faces on black, his best friend upstairs under his comforter and sheets ice packed around his arm, no clothes, asleep. After the sex they had. Stiles needs fuel. He needs to give his body a real break just as much. Not that he wouldn't claim bragging rights putting himself into a hypoglycemic coma from having too much sex.

Derek fed him saltines when he found out there were only oranges. He's not a doctor but he knows from articles read in the bookstore alongside others on circuit training Stiles' pH is too acidic already – just not if oranges will make that noticeably worse. He's not going to risk it while lactic acid
pollutes Stiles' bloodstream. Cleaning cum off Stiles, grimacing in concern and taking extreme care with an anus leaking his own semen still partly open and redder at the edges than he really thinks it should be? Strange. Generally he's not tissuing off his sexual partners. He's never done that. Stiles made a couple bitchy sounds; treated it like nothing. Probably okay. Checking it out later. Also a little strange, but.

Derek feels…**great** about the sex pre-blood sugar crash. So great he still swallows, breathes deep, and gets slammed with a chest full of excitation when he thinks about it. Right now, 'almost constantly' no matter how emotionally unstable. He couldn't be anything else, aftermath ongoing. Stiles' state of mind unknown. Derek should have recognized 'blood sugar crash' earlier than it clicked. Reading about something and connecting what he's read to a living human doesn't match up one to one. He never has to deal with that.

He can tell himself none of this should have happened as many times as he wants. He tried to. Gave up. Wrong situation? Wrong place? Wrong year? Right person. *Maybe* the wrong person? He can't convince himself of that; can't make a credible argument. Stiles doesn't get he's the second person, the only person outside his family since Paige, that got realistically close and not only stuck by him – Scott sticks by him – but wanted to get closer, no ulterior motive. He can't even expect that from who should be his family.

Derek's sacred initiation into Stiles and his friends' IRC channel showed the wolf a totally different half of his life, like how some of Stiles' online friends are in their thirties and forties and that's not weird in his end of the gaming community. If the ringleaders were younger apparently, according to Stiles, they wouldn't be using IRC. They'd be on Steam or use some other kind of modern forum. Configuring the old chat program was a pain in the ass. Derek felt like a kid getting walked through features by a stranger. Then he'd realize he was a kid, too, but it all equals out when you hold up your end in conversation and on the field.

Moment of clarity: No wonder Stiles expects respect from adults; has no respect for anybody who can't cut it in his meritocracy. Not a punk. Not arrogant. Not anything he came off like when they met. Capable, and he knows it, and that's where it comes from.

He started getting updates about Stiles' drag and other scene friends reading the gossip that goes on or that he missed while the program sits in the background. Stiles has resigned himself to the fact that he will never be scene, despite clothing and make-up tips from his friends – today Derek discovered that's totally unrelated to his ability to apply make-up. The short list of 'martially contained glitter, mascara, black nail polish, even more dangerously precision applied black eye shadow or total systemic collapse' makes literal sense when he can picture Stiles having that degree of accuracy. His gender rigidity has turned out to be one of the great insurmountable obstacles in his life. *I can't even pull off gaymer. I'm just a guy in a Zelda t-shirt in a gay club. I am imprisoned in cis bisexual blandness. Designated wingman and driver. Every single person at Jungle knows I'm too young to drink. People who have never been there before know. I'm surrounded by subatomic scene-repelling particles. I need somebody into particle physics. Somebody get a grant to study me. I can't die without a man ever trying to pick me up. Fuck off Maniu you wouldn't take me to first base.*

Apparently inaccurate if Stiles offered it up. For some reason, he skipped mentioning he already had success with that method. Only in retrospect does Derek realize his friend stopped whining about being a permanent virgin.

He hears nothing on the pack, except for, sometimes, Scott or Lydia's day to day. He talks lacrosse. Derek doesn't get many updates on the supernatural side of Beacon Hills in private communications, either, unless something explosive happens. Nothing on getting sexually rowdy with somebody who's forty-four this year.
He's basically right Peter's solar-cyclical age has no relevance. Nothing that's changed about him came with age. The lurch in aging after a wolf's first transformation has psychological effects, biology or inherited attitude up in the air, and the older they get the relatively younger they stay, but boys, with their later puberty, turn later – in time for their personality to set in. Cora was nine. That's why she's a sophomore. Partly because she missed years of formal schooling, also to be with humans closer to biological peers.

He heard nothing on Stiles abandoning the idea of a human future, either. Whatever he thinks he's doing, Derek hears what he's saying. That's gone. Left in the dust. Derek went in the other direction. After Paige died, after he got serious about school, his aunt's husband, his uncle Darrel – a couple years older than Peter, human, and much more mature – turned into his role model for his future. Stanford graduate. Father of three, legally adopting his aunt's first child. The rock of the family when Derek's mother died, during the uncertain time while Peter taught Laura, suddenly Alpha, what Peter's father, Derek's grandfather, had passed down to him and Talia. Their sister, Derek's aunt – Darrel's wife – Alona Hale – didn't have talent for shifting. Comfortably, naturally a Beta, she was never that interested in even being a werewolf, all three of her children with humans.

Talia intended Peter to inherit her power. He hadn't been there, in their own house, when Laura stole the mortal blow from an Alpha frothing at all he'd lost to their mother's adjudication. Derek, his father, little Natasha, Alona's only wolf daughter, knew to make the chance when Talia screamed for Laura. It was actually Natasha's older brother, human, who put a staggeringly-tight cluster of rifle fire in the other Alpha, and bullets in one of his Betas…Laura's Alpha frenzy carried forward the turning tide.

Standing in the middle of that carnage, his mother dead, the floor a lake of blood, Calvin throwing the rifle on the couch, pulling a pistol out of his waistband and putting bullets in the heads of suffering Betas that no regenerative powers could resist, the blood dripping from Natasha's chin…In that moment Derek wanted what Alona and Darrel had. Completely.

Then he met a human. Met Kate.

He finds Stiles out cold when he makes it to the room with breakfast, including pancake syrup that was hidden from Sheriff Stilinski he had to sniff out. He drags the green leather desk chair over next to the bed; wakes him up with his voice, not his touch, and helps him move the ice aside; helps him sit up against the pillows. Until Stiles has a full night's rest Derek's not treating him as anything but a hospital case. Stiles goes at the food voraciously. Derek splits his time between watch him from under his brow and putting down a rapidly disappearing stack of pancakes. He guesses Stiles can magic away the purple handprint on his weakened arm the same way he did the bruises on his face – showing through in places after all their touching.

The human has a thinking face on like his food is a challenging math problem. It's adorable. Derek sticks to sitting on the things about Stiles that are puppy-precious either for the rest of his natural life…or an opportunistic chance for sarcasm. They're all equally antithetical to the adult image Stiles wants to project. Can and does, more frequently than before. Derek lost his right to an opinion on whether having underage sex, having sex with Peter, or a combination of both is a problem. Doesn't take a law degree to think 'conflict of interest'.

He's still kicking himself for expecting Stiles to have something to say way too early for Stiles. Derek knows damn well Stiles prefers to handle emotions in a Hazmat suit with a set of metal pincers. That he'd drink to kill coping with his emotions. He doesn't not from an inability to buy alcohol, even as the sheriff's son, but because of his father. He doesn't mean his father's history.

Derek never wants see himself as that guy who's clingy after sex. He wouldn't be, either, in
comparison to almost any other person except Stiles.

(He doesn't need his mind pitching in \textit{everyone} probably is compared to Peter.)

He wants more; gut-clenching yearning just seeing the other Beta in front of him, at remembering any part of being with him. Stiles leading his orgasm more than anything else. He's always thought that's the most detached part of sex, without ever breaking it down in detail. Orgasms aren't the most cognizant points in his life but he didn't miss that Stiles had him coming how he wanted, got what he wanted, steered away what he didn't.

Derek racked up enough bad experiences to \textbf{know} taking it slow trumps the things his impulses tell him to do...like pour it all out on Stiles because he gets passionate. He already needs a handle on that reaction. Normally? His passions kick in over his desire to kill somebody.

He's had enough with the fucked up relationships. This biggest roadblock to permanency and fidelity's obvious. He can't be missed or mistook.

He \textit{can} be his uncle.

At some point Stiles compliments him on the pancakes. His head is too full of Peter to 'You're welcome' more than vaguely. He's stopped looking at Stiles' new-minted buff body. He focuses on his plate, memories and emotions inescapable.

Every smirk, every smile, every bored observation; the casual cruelties, diligent gentleness when Derek suffered injuries, cruising downtown during one of Peter's abductions after Paige died – how it was impossible to tell if Peter knew where they were going or sensed a promising spot, all power of observation. Times Peter made him feel like they could have anything and everything if he asked. He never asked. It felt dangerous. Now he knows it was. Peter's attitude. Talia and Alona spoiled him. They never completely stopped. Extra room to practice lipping off. \textit{Then why does Peter get to?} a familiar complaint; a question never answered, but the answer \textbf{obviously} wasn't 'Because he's an adult'.

Their resemblance: nose, lips, jaw, expressions. Not eyes. Fighting together. Derek brawls the minute emotion gets the better of him. Peter hopes everyone can just get along – and \textit{do exactly whatever it is he wants them to do} – until he's out of choices. He doesn't get angry the way Derek does. He fights to kill.

Stiles says Peter's a sociopath. Derek believes him. He felt relief hearing the way the word came from Stiles: statement of fact, no derision. Clinical. The denial Derek's taken to battle against the possibility Peter's deranged, or that he's \textbf{evil} inside, now, has a '13th century superstition' label pasted over it, today. Whatever they made of him, if they thought of him in terms anything like it, it finally explains Talia and Alona's unbelievable patience. They didn't expect him to respond to the same strategies as Derek. He wishes he'd paid attention to what those were.

With some time, maybe he can wean off struggling over the fact his mother formally chose Peter to carry the Hale inheritance if she fell. Peter's self-assurance commands a room. Derek all too readily accepted an re-awakened Peter who'd just beaten him into the floor as his Alpha as he, denied any other choice, had his head filled with compelling assertions. If not for Scott...

He doesn't want to know what would've happened without Scott, but even unhinged by trauma Peter made a strong, purposeful Alpha. Seven years ago maybe he could've been a great one.

Derek commands nothing. He commanded Stiles, occasionally, in the past, through physical threats, before Stiles completely got over the moderate danger he posed. Never Scott. Not his own Betas.
The fact is he can't compete on equal footing head to head with Peter. Over Stiles. Over anything. Instinct tells him not to try. He doesn't like the man he met in the hallway of Beacons Crossing Home. He hates him, earlier resentment turned to loathing. He'd kill him if he had the chance. Wishes that defined their relationship.

It never will. He loves him more.

He'd take a rusty knife to himself if love could be forcefully removed. Sacrifice to escape the thrall of unnatural separation; not to plead Let me forgive you with every beat of his heart. If three Betas can't form pack, he still waits to see some slim chance of gaining his packmate back, in function if not in form, for all that he knows better. He and Cora scrape solidarity together from what they have left of old ties. Not enough they feel like Hales again, but better than before.

There are things he'll never hear from Peter: I'm sorry and I'm going to fix this. Other things he hears too of much of already. How little his uncle values the lives of others. He could do without ever reading he planned to 'tear up' Stiles' ass, seeing at the time he had no idea how literally or not he meant that.

"Whatcha thinkin' bout?" Stiles asks, lilt in his voice that says he knows. He reduced breakfast to crumbs and syrup on the plate set beside him on the bed, relaxed into the pillows he's propped up against. Derek, eating mechanically, has finished his own pancakes. He has no idea how long he's been staring at his fork besides it's the exact length of time it took for Stiles to get together the energy to talk.

Derek takes Stiles' plate from his lap and sets it on the bedside table.

"Looking for the moral fiber and power to kill Peter before he kills us all," he says.

"Oh. Yeah. I get stuck on that one too," Stiles agrees, smile playful. At least they can joke about it. Seeing neither of them are joking. Stiles' expression stills. His tongue wets his lips. He doesn't lean in, but bows his head a little. He speaks softly. "I could kill him. Without anybody's help. I want somebody to know that when things go to shit. That I could have killed him. So I'm telling you."

Derek sits frozen.

"How?"

He feels nothing either way, even as Stiles talks through it.

"It's not a super-secret secret weapon. Scar on my soul, blackity blackness, I get all weird and chilly, like earlier. The stuff you already know. The chilly part, when that happens..." His nose wrinkles as he finds a metaphor. "You know how when you wolf out you mostly lose all your color vision and ramp up your motion vision 'cause most of your cones change to rods and they all change function? It's sort of like that. I see when to make people dead. Not how to make them dead...How close to dead they are. Since I didn't wanna kill you, you were, be happy to know, normally close to dead – for a werewolf. It's what Lydia does, but so far only for the really immediate present." He takes a deep breath in, losing animation. "I think, if I plotted, if I was plotting, and whitened out, and then I ran my plot by me, I could probably know exactly how dead I could make Peter. It went from vague idea I could get an idea from that to today I'm sure." His mouth twists into a frown. "That's what we think about when we eat pancakes. Double-checking our capacity for cold blooded murder. I vote to be other people."

No use seconding that.
"You planning to tell Scott and Allison?" Derek asks. A better way to get a result than telling him to; seeing that he's not. It forces consideration.

"I need to tell them." A knot in Stiles' brow. "I will tell them. I should." His face falls. "Why tell people something you're not gonna do? It's not the same as telling them something you didn't do, afterward, at the trial. Look, I know I'll tell Scott. Seeing we're gonna have a Talk and now I slept with you and it may be a more uncomfortable Talk about how I make decisions period. I don't even know what I'm gonna say about Peter. More how I'm gonna get it out of my mouth…"

"You mean what he did, or why you're bent on staying with him?"

He did not mean that to come out that acerbic. Too late. Unlike anything he did this morning, he has an actual right to question what's determining where he can live and more than likely some painful limitations on his conduct he wouldn't choose. The melancholy back on Stiles; the emotionally depleted he looks at him – ugly confirmation.

"Both. Two. How do I say to Scott…" At which point Stiles realizes he's not more inclined to say anything to Derek, but Derek waits. Waits through Stiles reflecting, Stiles glaring at him for not giving him something to work off of, back to a low mood, finally huffy resolution. Derek loves not what's happening, not what they're dealing with, but that Stiles can change attitudes so many times in three minutes. He has that. "I've been completely clear, I could not be clearer, there's no spin you can put on it. I don't belong with Peter. You're right. I contribute as much as Peter. I take as much out of Peter. I go over there and I know he's alone and I'm what he's got and I love that. And that's sick. I put a lot into not doing that to you. But I would. I bet you I would. I don't have to ask myself if I could."

Peter made you feel special, Derek's thoughts fill in. He's been there. But what he says is: "Have you thought maybe I wouldn't let you?" With that face, it's a 'No'. Definitely never thought that. He clenches his teeth against his temper spiking. "I'm not Peter. Neither are you."

He's done a great job of looking like he has no spine in front of everybody in town. He shouldn't be pissed at Stiles for not recognizing that's not his problem. That doesn't affect him getting pissed with Stiles. He presses his fingers into his temples until it hurts. Stiles hasn't figured out what to say, so he pushes past it: "I'll get on those showers. I should wash down first so you're not just sitting on the floor."

Derek gets clean; enough time to shake off the mood. Stiles sees no reason to bring it back up. He's interested in two things: turning Derek on and complaining about his total incapacity to have sexy shower time. Exactly what he expected and enough to make him want to shove Stiles out of the shower stall and let himself jerk off. Tile floor, he reminds himself a couple of times. And: Human. Not a combination to leave to gravity.

Water streaming down Stiles' skin. Derek's arms around his waist, Stiles, sturdy but boneless, rests his weight against him. Derek's kissing the nape of his neck through the water running from his hair; his hands working the warmth into Stiles' body, touch recalling touch.

Finding bruises not by sight but by the feedback of the body engulfing him, in the changing ways Stiles kisses him. Learning how deep the contusions are by the application of pressure. Hating he's hurt, becoming gentle when he's a limp, noisy mess – drawing him back to him. Hips thrusting. His mind's running over the idea of being allowed to cum where he's driving his cock, but no questions – Stiles' red-rimmed eyes made his needs clear; he keeps a hold on himself as the hands on him grow more confident; until Stiles' troubles with staying hard disappear. There's no moment he gives permission, but suddenly Stiles is as completely here with him as he was whatever happened minutes...
Derek has an anus, plus he has a rectum. He wanted to think they weren't hiding anything from him. Besides apparently his prostate gland or something. He should probably ask. His hand slides down Stiles' back, slips between his buttocks, touching with curiosity, drawing a circle with his fingertip when Stiles hums in comfort, doesn't mind. It closed up again, like he hadn't left it gaping. The swelling's still...swollen, but between Stiles' total lack of discouragement and the fact there's nothing besides swelling standing out as wrong he doesn't think he needs some kind of medical intervention. That's a relief, because Derek would not know what to do if he had messed up Stiles' ass.

He could've used a little warning a rectum can move. Skin rolling against his cock in waves. Not the rhythmic contractions of a woman tightening, lightly pulling against him. Not the flutter of muscles against him when a woman comes. Surprise. Good surprise. One that after the first staggering incomprehension made sense even in his hormone-addled brain. Digestive tract. Moves.

Actually, probably better he didn't see it coming. New and that jaw-dropping-overflowing doesn't come up in sex that often. Derek's racked his brain, since, but he's never felt himself move inside. There's no reason Stiles would know about it. He's saving that conversation to put in paragraph form, with forethought.

"Request? No fingers in Stiles. A little sore like all the other things. Not really the norm when you're putting things in there right. You did. You put it in there right. You put it in there great. Blame the extenuating circumstances." Stiles turns his head back toward him, grin on his lips. "I totally encourage you to put things in your own ass. It's awesome." Check that. "Uh. Things you can take out. That is a tunnel that goes on forever. Even werewolves could end up in the ER getting...excavated."

Derek's still drawing circles. He stops, snorting softly, moving his hand away.

Stiles stiltedly goes through the motions of shampooing with Derek holding to keeping him on his feet.

"Question," Derek says. "Prostate gland.'"

"...a winner is you. I wish I had any ability to make the first thing that goes in Derek's ass Stiles' fingers. With the leaving? Maybe not. You trust me to tell you what to put in your ass, right?"

He never wanted to consider this question.

"...probably," he says. Provisionally alright. It's not like he'll be blindfolded.

"Sweet." Still leaning against him, Stiles reaches back, slides his arm around behind him and grasps Derek's thigh, freeing up Derek's hands to lather the shampoo into his hair with annoyance. He's not annoyed he's washing Stiles hair. He's annoyed he contributed to leaving Stiles unable to wash Stiles' hair.

They renegotiate space to get the shampoo washed out. Hand on the wall, Stiles gets right into the spray and squeezes his eyes tight. When Derek thinks that's gone, between one hand holding onto him and the other's fingers working suds away, he turns Stiles around to use the towel hanging over the shower door to scrub his eyes dry. He'd feel ridiculous if this wasn't, in ways, more personal than sex: complete, unquestioned control of Stiles' body. The kisses he's still intermittently dropping on his head, his neck, or his shoulders promise he has all his attention; whether inquisitive touches travel his skin or his hands are still.
Stiles may be younger, but Derek's used to, comfortable with, letting him take point. Deal out the knowledge. In combat, before. Lately insofar as Stiles has dragged him into his element: computer games, and now anal sex.

Derek can hold his own. Talking wrangling Sherriff Stilinski's dietary habits. School. Managing his finances. The blowout fight with Scott over Scott's dad bullying Stiles’ – Derek knows plenty about explosive arguments. Getting into them and managing other people's fallout. Siblings. Cousins. Peter. Even some wolf's son or daughter taken in under the Hale roof for a few months. A proverbial powder keg packed with people who can breeze past 'angry' with ease. When he was thirteen he threw an armchair at Laura. She turned. He didn't throw any more armchairs.

Stiles falls out of his element and into Derek's when he's exhausted, when he feels helpless, or doesn't have access to Scott or his father to vent. With Stiles keeping the worst of his negativity – his deeper, persistent hopelessness over himself – sealed away from the world, Derek can only do what he can, but he'd say it's working for them. His emotions pick up over Stiles finally, what could be for the only time, letting him be there with him. Stiles must catch a hint, demanding: "Loofah me."

Derek sees something that could be used to create as many suds from soap or body wash as anybody can in the hard water of northern California hanging off the shampoo rack.

"That's not a loofah. That's plastic, or it's nylon. It's something. And it's purple." He takes what looks like not-shampoo, first – versus the bar of soap – subjecting it to similar examination. "Cucumber-melon, cocoa-shea-and-mango-butter body wash with anti-oxidant rich natural oils?"

Stiles goes for a record breaking pshaw.

"I wasn't exfoliating up to standards. I've got some pore-minimizing toner out there if you want to continue judging me. And, oh, right, like three hundred dollars of make-up so the school doesn't call DHR." Derek's sudden escalation in guilt gets interrupted by becoming the ear for a rant. "Did you know foundation and finishing powder can cost like forty bucks each? Add another forty for a palette to make different colors of skin look like the rest of your skin. And Lydia made me buy this hundred dollar 'face serum' which...actually reduces bruises. But it's armed robbery." Derek keeps appalled off his face. Barely. What else can someone do when a fist drove into their face? He does feel like a shitty person for making a thing out of it. For about four seconds. Before Stiles opens his mouth again. "We don't all have perfect, baby-soft, blemish-free, magical werewolf skin, Derek."

Derek bares teeth long enough to make a threat out of it.

Fine. It's soft. It's not baby-soft.

…because babies are fatty. They don't top in around two-hundred pounds of raw muscle with zero body fat. Damn it. So, that's going to be part of his self-image for the rest of his life.

"Loofah. Me. Wash. Now," Stiles grunts, caveman style. Derek pulls a frustrated face but here he is 'loofah'ing Stiles.

He doesn't want to be rough on his body. He can't be that gentle, either. Dried fluids cake Stiles' skin, cum and the salty aftermath of sweat. The scent of the body wash carried on the steam coats his usually sensitive nose.

If werewolves could dictate the mores, humans and wolves would smell as strongly as the two of them did before they got in the shower all the time, not weakly like AXE shower gel (which Derek
usually does), or cucumber-melon, extremely faint on Stiles earlier and not remotely prioritized. (Now he's been reminded Peter actually uses Old Spice Derek's considering finding something with fruit and anything butter and getting out of stereotypes. Forget AXE is at Walmart and it's cheap.) No one would smell exactly as strongly. Body scents would even out once the population stopped over-producing skin oil to make up for it being stripped off as often as twice a day, and skin would be more pliant.

Maybe 'baby soft' was worth defending…

No. It wasn't. Not even. That's not the conversation he wants to have for the next hour.

"I'm ready to say you're clean. Physically. Filthy thoughts? On you."

It's a happy teenager in his arms, spontaneously kissing him with mineral-rich water on their lips. Pain finds Derek with Stiles naked and weak, draped on him, kissing him, in his arms. Animal, unreasoning pain. Sorrow with claws demanding Why not this? and Why not me?

He knows then, completely, with crippling certainty, he's not capable of this. Kisses Stiles that much deeper, lovesick. This emotion Stiles doesn't know; can't recognize. He's never loved like this. Neither has Derek. He's only ever loved possibilities. The possibility of forever. The possibility of inspiring passion in a woman like fire. An inferno. He did. He lost everything. The possibility of playing the Romantic hero, of overcoming isolation, being civilized by a woman. Poor judgment. Roles reversed. Edmond Dantès bent on revenge, moving in society unrecognized. He played out the part of Mercédès as well as circumstances permitted. The hope Julia clung to in her exile, the promise of a future, one disappointing in reality.

His future with Stiles – the teen he's lulling half-asleep with slow kisses, stealing privacy despite naked physical contact – lays a spread of certainties out before him. Derek returns to New Mexico. Peter has his hands on Stiles again. Not today, or tomorrow, but soon and often. Stiles'll throw a little spite into being set aside so publically, how Derek doesn't know. He can't imagine the shape of their relationship backstage. They played their parts to the hilt in Sheriff Stilinski's living room, different characters than in Peter's apartment. Derek doubts he saw anything resembling the two of them alone.

Already enthusiastic about the idea of dating – if they haven't been dating – Stiles will take Derek closer to boyfriend like Peter's not there.

Stiles texts him good morning. Gifts him out of the blue in one game or another, leaving him wracking his brain about what he did right, because Stiles doesn't explain to him how to play something like a normal person would. He makes him download a game, bitches about how he sucks, then drops heavy clues or actual presents when he gets on the right track. Maddening. Also… flirting. That's flirting.

He opens his e-mail to find thousands of words in a series of messages Stiles sends, remembers something else, sends, remembers something else, ad infinitum, at first total gibberish but he starts making sense somewhere halfway through, long after Derek's slouched down in his chair making threat displays at the screen and Cora asks him from the hallway, at least once, if he's alright, or reminds him computers turn off.

Right. They've been dating. The only thing that changes is playing around with sexual communications. Until.

Until everything changes. With warning. Without warning. When Peter or Derek gets tired of Stiles half-in and half-out. Stiles gets tired of Peter. Or Derek. Or both of them. When any one of them
becomes someone they aren't, yet, today. When the quality of a relationship changes to something more serious. After the murder. When the corpse is found. Whose murder? What corpse? It's too early to play *Clue*. Someone will die and everything changes. History and the odds aren't in Derek's favor.

It's late in the game but not *too* late to recognize he's not capable of this. He wants Stiles with him. Wants his touch. To listen to him chatter. For his scent to cover everything. To hold him the way he's holding him now, water dripping from brows and noses, hot water running out.

He knows it's really love because it already hurts this much.
Women who have vaginal orgasms swing their hips more freely when they walk. Science. Stiles hips have unavoidable drift to them because they are either unable to maintain torsion or for the same reason: relaxed pelvic muscles. Helplessly relaxed pelvic muscles.

If it wasn't for Adderall, he suspects he could not stay awake through his classes. No muscle goes without complaint. He should be bothered by the wounds to his back and neck. They don't impair him. He's learned to ignore inconveniences like that. The sling his dad scored for him helps him avoid the worst pain, but OTC painkillers don't have him covered. Only Lydia's extensive, imparted knowledge of make-up has him covered. Even then she dragged him into privacy, told him to hand over the pencil box and touched up the back of his neck where Peter's fingernails left bruises between classes.

He's claiming 'tackle football' to the endless number of people who ask. Making first line on the lacrosse team this year makes his arm every student's personal business. A painfully bland excuse with I fell down a flight of werewolves sitting right there.

Scott's been weird and avoided him all morning. Anger Stiles could deal with. Scott not sitting near him, shaking his head from down the hallway, avoiding eye contact – weird – offers him nothing to devise a strategy from.

The pack's together at their lunch table, as far from other people's lunch tables as possible. Allison handled his tray, even with him arguing he can use his arm. The sling keeps him from banging it around.


Super fucking creepy,

Stiles doesn't like the way Isaac's looking at him either.

"You smell like Derek," Scott says three lifetimes later.

Stiles chokes on his beef taco.

"Things happened," he wheezes. He need not ask why he went in for a quickie with Derek who drove him to school in the Jeep because his hopefully-not-totally-trashed Cruiser is at Peter's downtown. They didn't have time to go pick it up. He felt under the circumstances leaving Derek trapped at the house all day with no ride would be inhospitable. He felt extremely hospitable.
Now the back of the Jeep smells like sex, forever. Stiles smells like fresh sex. Like somebody who didn't even shower between sex and second period, when he actually arrived at school. Scott's usual harmlessly-adorable face more closely resembles his narrow-eyed, red-lit, about to fuck up a thing face.

About to fuck a thing.

Stiles shoves his chair away from the table, tipping a scant inch from toppling it over with him in it.

"Whoa! Bad wolf! No mounting! No sex with Stiles!"

People are used to these things shouted out of his mouth. That's right, civilians, look away. Higher priorities, like failing to escape through the plastic back of his chair.

Conversely, the whole pack plus Danny is looking at him, Isaac alone not confused.


Riiight. That. He clearly did not think this through. Freely carnally consorting with what smell more than half like rival Alphas. He's been busy thinking about his dad Not Finding Out. He thought...

He assumed Scott would continue to judge him, but harder.

"I'm close to having sex with him and I'm not even Alpha," Isaac reassures Scott.

That's not reassuring at all. He takes a deep breath. He does the last thing he wants to do, which is pull the chair in. Lowers his voice, sounding half as frantic as he feels. How strong a compulsion is this? Like Scott once trying to murder him in the locker room or like Scott and Isaac leaving him alone after a stern talking to about how unannounced werewolf sex lashed to extreme situations has a negative impact on their instincts?

"Don't let it be said I have a blanket ban on sexventures with friends. Even spontaneous sexventures. I'm way too young to up and rule that out. Believe me, when I say 'No', it is by majority because you guys are looking at me like full on werewolf crazy knotting shit. No wolf orgy. Not happening. Ask me again on your birthday. God. I'll go buy an enema. No wonder Peter—"

"And now we've eclipsed TMI," Lydia says, setting her fork down like the rap of a judges' hammer. She turns a stern face on her packmates; flashing eyes. "If you two want to threesome Stiles, drag him off under the bleachers like everybody else would. I don't want to know what goes into him. I don't care what goes into him unless the object is life threatening."

"Hold on," Allison says, sitting between Stiles and Isaac. "What's knotting?"

Danny clears his throat. Glances at Lydia and Stiles. Stiles wonders if his pleading eyes make Danny more or less likely to pick up the ball.

"It's not a factor unless you choose to have sex while they're fully transformed," he says diplomatically; lift of his eyebrows marking his earnestness.

"Oh, boy," Stiles says. Now Allison looks twice as confused and knows who has the answers. Is it his responsibility to explain this? Is it like an intervention where they all tell her they care about her? "They have some, uh, anatomical differences as werewolves. Obviously. Some are more obvious than others."
Duty done. Detailed explanation evaded. One point to Danny. One point to Stiles.

Lydia looks across to her best friend with her utmost sincerity.

"Dogs, and wolves, have a swelling at the base of their penis called a knot. When they achieve intercourse it expands up to six times its original size for half an hour to two hours, joining the male and female, or I only assume Peter and Stiles—" She talks over his interjection of 'Once!' "— together until the swelling decreases."

Danny renews his interest in his food. Scott has been startled out of his looming sexual dominance. Stiles loves Lydia. He loves her so much. (Still a little bit like love-love but right now like buying her a day trip to a spa gratitude love.)

"...up to six times?" Allison says after an extended pause.

"Mmhm," Lydia says with a perky smile. "Have you ever had an orgasm using Ben Wa balls?" Allison shakes her head. Stiles chooses not to volunteer that explanation based on empirical knowledge. Lydia has command here on out. "You know what Kegel exercises are, right? Ben Wa balls are two metal balls you can flex against. Knots don't move like Ben Wa balls, but they're great for Kegel exercise."

Kegal exercises. Not the reason for the semi. He does them. Better orgasms, orgasm control, healthier junk. Sure. Great. Absolutely fantastic. He's thinking more about, first, sphincter control and, bigger motivation, no permanent damage to or prolapse of anything ever.

Urban legend? No scientific evidence anal sex causes prolapse? These are things stated by people who aren't regularly pitting their pelvic floor against pneumatic hammers. The idea that one day it will give up on him as a lost cause niggles.

These details are not for sharing time. Matter of fact, Lydia started this with a ban on talking insertions. He never needed to know Lydia could have Ben Wa balls inside her as they speak, orgasming her way through classes. It's not like she needs to take notes.

The fact he will never know may haunt him until his death.

"I know what Kegel exercises are. I've never actually done them," Allison says, deep in contemplation.

Her attention turns to Isaac. His huge eyes graduate to prodigious.

"I've never done that," he blurs.

Stiles could not be happier all attention is off him, he leans forward to look down the table at his packmate; smile couldn't be more smug.

"Isaac, she's gonna make you a man."

Isaac's eyes dart to Stiles, panic evident.

"I'm okay with not being a man. We're talking weird swellings."

"We should be talking Peter. He's gone to lengths to keep us from knowing he started having sex
with Stiles. He's famously nefarious," Lydia says. Shit. Back around to him again. No spa visits for
Lydia ever. She pouts, drumming her fingernails across the table "I haven't revisited with him in a
few months, but I thought burying him six feet under with wolfsbane poisoning made maintaining
interpersonal boundaries as clear as anyone could make them. Do you think I should bring him a
casserole or bring him brownies?"

Stiles gapes. Unfair. He's at least as culpable as Peter not wanting anybody to know he's having sex
with Peter because that is weird – even if Peter definitely pressured him into the enema de-scenting
thing to start with. He pressured him with a list of sound reasons. Scott demonstratively confirmed
Peter's wisdom. All morning. He agrees with the bean sí forcing a hallucination-deranged, powerless
Peter to drink a punch bowl of dissolved ash. Totally deserved that. Evil pot brownies? Unnecessary.
He sees a rehash of the Sicilian's death scene in The Princess Bride.

"Can we not chase off my potentially murderous sex buddy? He comes in handy lots. And not just
I'll bet. Experience. Intelligence. Extra muscle…"

"Ethan and Aiden are all the extra muscle we need," Isaac says, point blank. Danny glances over at
him. Smiles. Isaac's looking at Stiles. Stiles is trying not to look at Isaac so he's looking at Danny.
Danny looks touched in Ethan's place. Ethan Stiles likes. Besides in the specific case of burying
Peter like a badger, Aiden he'd hot swap out for Peter at any time. At least when one of them goes
off the rails it's premeditated. It's not Aiden.

Stiles gets his courage up. Defending Peter Hale? Defending Peter while his arm's in a sling because
Peter? Not his proudest hour. He takes the temperature of the critical eyes sticking to him. In an
uncanny turn of events that's everybody but Danny's eyes. Unwelcoming table.

"I know without a doubt this is all part of his insidious schemes because he told Derek out loud that
he has schemes are they're insidious, nefarious, whatever. Not news. Do you want him cockblocked
– which means bored – and with no babysitter?"

Catch-22. No willful naivety in this audience. There's a list of possibilities of what Peter wants
floating around and a 'don't get murdered' buddy system that Lydia orchestrated with rotating code
phrases and partners executed via text messages between 7:00 and 9:00 every night. It's not just for
not getting murdered by Peter; it goes unspoken it was put in place with Peter in mind.

When Lydia said burn after reading, she meant they had to memorize their lists of forty-two and
sixty-seven items standing around a trashcan fire. Kind of weird, kind of awesome. Nobody knows
anybody else's series of partners, or the separate rotation of codes. It'd be tough to fake two nights in
a row. Stiles always gets a little kick texting, receiving, and deleting both messages. Feels like a spy.
Not the only innovation in coordination they exercise. Chris has a lot of cool hardware.

Scott reluctantly began to eat, which is so great. He looks moody. Way less dangerous. Obviously
what he needed was to get it off his chest. Also, he waited until lunch so he didn't touch a cornered
Stiles in Stiles' private places, which Stiles appreciates. When they were thirteen and got their hands
on some hardcore porn they masturbated to together the one time. They could both agree that that
added nothing to masturbating – getting handsy on each other a couple of times or not. And that they
don't even have the same taste in pornography. Stiles approximates he confirmed to his own
satisfaction and declared himself bisexual at that night: That dude with the piercings was hot, dude.
But not Lydia hot. Scott did the supportive friend thing: Okay.

Stiles also earlier in life understood the difference between having a mom who's a nurse and a best
friend who can figure out the weird thing going on with Scott's penis using the internet without
having to ask his mom, before super werewolf healing.
That is the extent of his relationship with Scott's penis. He's not excited at the idea of extending it except in the context of an unbelievable threesome or moresome opportunity: Not with Isaac. Say, against all probability, an opportunity with Jessica Alba And Her Husband, who he is prepared to hit on as an item. Apparently they're both young for his tastes, and he's never gonna be over Sin City, or Machete. He saw Fantastic Four for her. Sin City he and Scott watched together when they were ten, while Melissa and Scott's dad spent more time fuming at each other than watching Scott. Transformational. Even easier to sneak the comics back and forth during school.

Strange looking back to think of their initiation into the darker world of adults – triggered by the dissolution of the McCall's marriage and fed by media that didn't pull punches and lie to Scott – coinciding with Derek's life in collapse. Bad year.

Danny's looking squarely at Stiles. Under other circumstances he might take a photo on his phone. Mark that on his calendar. Pump his fist in the air and declare victory. Not under the circumstances: in which amid uncertainty and internal debate Danny, Mr. Straight to the Point, has reached a conclusion first.

"You're pushing this pretty hard, Stiles. You have a thing for Peter. Don't you."

Stiles studies him suspiciously because that in no way sounded like a question but his honor is in question. If he has any. He probably doesn't have any. No honor here. Luckily he's too stressed out by his life to blow up about Danny ignoring him his entire life when if he knows he has a thing for Peter he damn well knows he has a fading thing for him.

"That depends on how you define 'thing'," Stiles hedges, belligerent. Danny's stoic face says he isn't going to define 'thing'. Stiles is pro-that. That makes stating the facts as he knows them easy: "For unspecified values of 'thing' covering the spread of possible definitions, the answer is 'Yes'."

Danny rolls his eyes. Not going to press the point, he grudgingly goes back to his food, muttering Nevermind.

Allison picks up where he left off.

"You understand we're worried, right?"

"I totally understand that," Stiles says, spreading his hands in the air in surrender. "I'm sure everybody here has made up their own scenario of how I got from having sex with Peter to having sex with Derek. I'm telling at least half the truth saying this is both stressful and I can't explain it. I can't explain it in less than two hours. Had no time to process this here, guys."

"Since we're already intruding into your sex life, I'm just gonna go ahead and shoot," Isaac says. No apology. "I want you to tell me what your relationship to Peter and Derek is."

Stiles slumps in his chair. Whines at Isaac to not pursue that shit. Isaac's not only the authority on where he's at, he's lived maybe five months with only Derek and Peter in his private life. Stiles underappreciated until now how excruciating that must have been or he would've hugged it out when Isaac moved in with Scott.

"I totally will. Not here. That's kind of…not so high school cafeteria. And private?" He puts his hand to his head, digging his fingernails in, closed his eyes, hoping to dial down the roar of emotionally charged thought. "Guys…When I hit the veil I have a relentless desire to kill Peter. Makes us a little uppity at each other. I seriously can't handle the constant emoting. At this point I'm gonna slip in the
middle of class and start methodically ripping a textbook apart. Again. Worse. Shut up. Shut up or I'm gonna scream. "

When Stiles chills out to the point he's not going to throw his tray anywhere and yell at anybody – roulette as to who, he drops his hand and finds a table full of people checking on him in glances, trying to keep the pressure off.

Isaac's wetting of his lips and the further narrowing of his Japanese-comic-artist-installed eyes catches attention, but speak concession. He extends his arm behind the cover of Allison's body, resting his hand palm up on her thigh. Stiles hurts with gratitude, a drop in the ocean of hurt, sliding his own into his packmate's grasp, Isaac's closing over it, Allison eating like nothing doing. Isaac shows no pain, picks up his fork with his left hand and goes back to eating while he pollutes himself with Stiles' injuries – a hundred thousand times better than 'Sorry, bro'.

Isaac's social skills may never be standard. He's made strides.

"You're next to completely patterning your episodes on stress. They're not random anymore," Scott says, words tentative, gaze no longer avoidant, holding the last third of a taco, hand clutched around his bottled water. As if avoiding all the question marks he's implying makes that gentler.

Stiles frowns, urge to run his fingers through his hair again, stretch his neck or pound a fist on the table undoable, body happier and happier as Isaac keeps taking. Unlike in Derek's case, he's not gonna question his packmate's pain threshold. Isaac knew exactly how much he intended to take on before they touched. He's undistracted.

"Not a personal choice. An instinct driven survival strategy," he points out. "It's my one supernatural leg-up, Scott. I'm a twelve foot tall, loping Black and Decker food processor zero percent of the time."

Scott maybe thirty-five. He has all the power Peter did. As they could've told Peter in the first place, most of the time it's an unnecessary amount.

Scott's not happy. Stiles isn't not not happy. Nobody's happy. No one ever promised them happy. When Isaac does let go Stiles combs through product with his fingers, straightening his hair out from the clawing at his scalp. That's the extent of the conversation. None of them has the spirit to engage in something more optimistic.

He notices Lydia. When does he not notice Lydia? She's attention catching, flash of her earrings arresting his attention. Nobody else seems to notice she hasn't eaten a bite, only moved her food around her tray to sustain the pretense of employing her fork for the usual activity. With poise as perfect as hers and her selection of masks competitive with Peter's nobody else does notice. Fighting-with-Aiden typical. Lunch ends. They return their trays.

----

Scott tried to interface between Stiles and Coach Finstock. Tried, but the interrogation about his arm, what happened, can he still play lacrosse, how long until it's out of the sling, and how could he do this to him lasted three minutes past the bell. Scott sits diagonal to him, behind him. Stiles feels his Alpha's eyes on his back. The offer of reassurance. The promise they can just get out of here. Pen in his left hand Stiles stares down at blue line after blue line on the blank page of his economics notebook.

Scott and Isaac wanted to bully him in line with a sexual dominance display. Lydia would gladly use him as an excuse to hurt Peter. Danny has concerns about his relationship with a man Isaac is ready
to rule an abuser he'll push hard against Stiles seeing or not an abuser. He doesn't give a shit about lacrosse. He doesn't give a shit about this class.

The window sports the impact marks of a small, fragile-boned body from two days ago. An image of the moment of fatal injury captured in powder down, chest and head crushed against the glass, the top edge of the wing with feathers fanning out at its tips captured in memorial until the next rain washes the dusty image away.

Stiles missed the brutal collision but one day the marks were there where they hadn't been before. He touches his own impact-sore nose, remembering the heat and flavor of his own blood. His eyes scour the windows for other indications of lives unexpectedly lost. A catalog of life expended against classroom after classroom since his freshman year fills in window pane after window pane. Portraiture, not always head on, sometimes the distraught animal tries to turn away and hits flat. Other times the body impacts so hard Stiles could count the dust left feather by feather. Blood on the windows. Shattered windows. Dead bodies lying on the floor dropped into garbage bags…

One windowed wall of a filthy classroom with its soggy ceiling tiles, the disease carrying, message-scarred surfaces of its desks, floor unable to be scoured of falling bits of snack, of snot or the endless snowfall of dried flakes of human skin without undiluted bleach, without scraping, janitors' mop water a slurry of filth sloshed over the floors of the classrooms and hallways.

The groundspeople picks up the rigid corpses and pitch them in the trash, latex gloves rolled over their hands, treating them as if they're the bringers of disease to a building steeped in refuse; a structure slathered in decades of human skin oil. Stiles never tried to count them all before. He can't count them now. How many did he not even notice, not sensational enough a death to catch his attention?

Stiles slides his arm out of the sling and stands – first thing first moving right out of Scott's grasp. He catches Scott lift his fingers, stopping Lydia, one foot out in the aisle. She's watching him, but waiting on her Alpha. Danny's frozen holding his pencil, pinching the eraser in his other hand. Scott has a plan; an excuse. Reliable man.

"Get up for a minute," Stiles tells the boy at his better-located desk. His name may be Tate. It's definitely Tate. Tate glances around the room; at Coach Finstock for support, scooting out of the desk, frightened. Stiles wonders what his own face might look like.

If Isaac hadn't helped him at lunch, for which he's grateful, there's no way he could've knocked the four window insert out of the frame. The death stain shatters as the middle bar bends outward. The top and bottom panes don't explode until desk and windows crash together onto the school grounds below. Ghostly second-sight memories of birds fanned or bloody everywhere, the result leaves him so darkly pleased he repeats it two windows down, disappointed when the desk falls back into the classroom, clattering on the linoleum floor.

Scott's holding onto him now. Exclaims to Coach: "I'm SO sorry. I think he has a concussion!"

Stiles submits to the uselessness of resistance as Scott drags him out of the classroom. He asks where they're going. Scott says somewhere safe. Stiles points out none of his behavior has put him in danger, and, academically, that the windows are unsafe for the birds. Scott agrees. He's marching him through the whole repugnant building holding his bad shoulder and good arm. Stiles curls his lip at the over-handled lockers.

After planting him in a chair, helping his arm back into the sling, and conferring with her briefly, Scott leaves him with Morrell. One elbow propped on the chair, Stiles holds a hand against his mouth, fingers curled.
A huge gift vase of slowly dying flowers sits on her desk, still fresh bright but already wilting, losing crispness. They'll bruise, darken, and shrivel. Gladiolus burst in multiple colors, daffodils bright yellow in between, bluebells hanging out of the arrangement – not the California species. Only daffodils do well in California. Can be used for banishing negative energy? Yeah. That sounds right.

Morrell takes a seat across from him. He's still examining the senselessly dying plants, torture extended by the water she's supplied them. He shifts his gaze to her. She's remarkably fresher than the dirty paint covering the tiled wall behind her, decay imperceptible. He's been considering her while he waited.

"You aren't here to preserve the balance of 'nature'. You don't care about birds. You don't care about the flowers. I don't think you even care about the people." His lips purse as his eyes narrow. "You and Deaton are here to manage the telluric currents. I think you stayed because the Nemeton's so unpredictable right now."


"It's a little much to say I don't care about birds, and I spend more time taking care of young people than I spend with the Nemeton." Stiles withholds challenging that she's full of shit, attentive to her defense. "Humans and birds are both animals living in nature. My brother and I are free to interact with them as humans." She inclines her head toward him. "You're correct it's a neutral action: I'll show you a spell to keep the birds away from the windows in your territory. Outside school hours. If it's really birds on your mind, breaking the windows only means exposing them to the hazards of human habitation."

He jerks backward, hand falling away; veil slipping off, Stiles looking panicked toward the door.

"...I threw a desk out the window."


He turns wide eyes back on her.

"You think I gotta pay for that?"

The druid laughs. If he was in her position maybe it'd be so freaking hilarious. He purposefully committed vandalism in front of a classroom of his peers. It's possible Coach'll be so glad he used his arm he won't care about the window.

"More likely the school will ask me for a full psychological evaluation," Morrell says, fully composed. Stiles thoughts fill in this could be as stressful for her as the pack. Laughter. Medicine. "It sounds to me like I'll be confirming a concussion related outburst. Obviously Scott brought you to me and not the nurse knowing concussions take time not medical attention to heal and our established relationship would allow me to keep you placated." He thinks he heard them saying something like that. Morrell purses her lips, studying him closely. Damn it. She's actually going to psychologize him. "I heard about what you did to your math book. I'd have different suspicions about this if that wasn't prior to your possession. Why do you think your episodes are growing more physical?"

Stiles makes a miserable sound. Apparently not only his sex life but his mental and spiritual health are in season and everybody's got a hunting license. The chair having no place for the back of his head he drops it forward, forehead on the desk, staring at his shoes.
"Can we skip you making me say things you know I know you know? It's because I'm using them to harm or kill living things in the physical world. God. All of you. We're getting so close to summer break here. I'll have space to figure it out."

"From the sound of things, Scott and Allison's episodes remain primarily existential. Which means, as far as monitoring the Nemeton is concerned, I consider you the precursor to possible complications with the two of them."

He huffs, too exhausted to rebel with a So that's a no. You could've gone with 'No' and covered the same ground. He took his next dose of Adderall after lunch. This time as prescribed. His focus is here. He's descending toward 'strung out'. That place where other parts of his brain put up the white flag but the drugs power him through. If he dosed up again to get through school he'd end up at 'the shakes'.

"Peter and I think it might be because Lydia was my anchor. She's tied up with death. I probably slip easier," he tells his shoes.

"Peter Hale."

"Yeah," Stiles says, slumping until the weight of his upper body hangs entirely on his head. "I'm sleeping with him. Except I banged his nephew yesterday and this morning. You're you and you don't talk and I'll give you the director's commentary because I don't want the pressure: I am in love with that man. Derek. Everybody just found out the part where I'm a slut. Not yesterday. The day before yesterday. But I hadn't come to school. Lunch was a special hell. And I chucked a couple desks." He hauls his body weight up, falling back into the back of the chair, sure his forehead's one big red imprint. "I promise I won't chuck anymore desks to save any wildlife...unless for some reason there's wildlife right there and that's the option. But I'll take that spell."

Morrell's in counseling mode. It's in her eyes. Or is it full druid mode? Funny they look so alike.

"Stiles. Why do you think of yourself as a slut?"

Stiles balks; makes sure he heard that right; screws his face up.

"Whoa. That's your first question?" Now he knows which. So important. "Um. I guess because Derek can't stay here for Peter is evil reasons...? For some stupid reason I can't imagine my life here on out without spending some more of it with evil!Hale. I would like your advice more than the advice of anybody else who's talked to me today, but I'm gonna flip again if I have to talk any more about...So, who sent you flowers?"

Morrell's smile spreads beyond professional, brightness of her eyes in-the-know to in-the-know. Stiles wonders how isolated she is from her native milieu without the Alpha Pack.

"Not a romantic partner," she says. "It's hard to date in my position. Everyone's so young, and we have strictures against relations with wolves."

"Deaton was Talia's Emissary. Probably for the whole time she was an Alpha," Stiles says, tapping his finger in the air toward a druid acting like it's the first time she's heard the news. "Your poker face is meaningless," he warns. Throws around a little head math. Peter's forty-something. Derek and Cora are years apart. Talia could have been any age starting at 'older than Peter'. "Damn. You're like ultra-old." Never tell a lady...But he's not talking to Morrell the French teacher; he's telling a badass tight-jeans, leather jacket druid. A compliment. She's old: Not dead. His eyebrows rise. "Did you ever wanna get with Deucalion? This is a safe room." Frown. "He reminds me of a younger Willem Dafoe. Not that Dafoe's age or his strange face matters if you see him do yoga. Holy shit." He can
read her poker face. Folds his arms over his chest. One's already there. "The silence has become manipulative. I don't respond to that."

Morrell inclines her head.

"Empathy has powerful influence. We talked about that before."

"We talked around that," Stiles says. He can play the straight-faced game. "You know how hot it'd be to get nailed by a wolf with that ruthless-Alpha swagger." He tilts his own head in. Otherworld-confidential. "That is what I wanted; the only thing, before I got to know him." Face scrunches up. "Unlike Matt, who I feel nothing for, by the way, I do have seriously misplaced empathy toward the roots of his evil ways." He shrugs, dropping the one arm. "I can still do my job. Even if that means killing Peter. That's the truth."

"I believe that is between you and your Alpha," Morrell says without engaging.

Stiles clenches his jaw. True. He wants sympathy, not advice, and sympathy is not her non-paying job. If he's a Beta, not a student, maybe she'll do her off-time job:

"What's happening to me?"

She straightens, smiling an in-on-it smile.

"The last years of puberty are fraught with emotional conflict." Banging his head on her desk becomes the plan, until she relents, shaking her head. "I understand you make it your duty to Scott to collect that kind of information. I can save you time and phone calls. I don't know. Deaton and I have never witnessed one of these events in our lifetimes. The answer is: You're correct. The Nemeton's unpredictable. No other nemata have begun displaying this behavior. It's rarer than seeing a True Alpha born. We don't know. Even long-dormant nemata usually function consistently when reawakened, and there are too many coincident factors affecting this one."

Stiles grins his not masterful but way improved flirtatious grin.

"You have some…phone numbers?"

Morrell's smile preludes an answer Stiles foresees as intractable:

"In two minutes I'll write you a letter of recommendation. To the school nurse. To check for post-concussive symptoms from 'when you hit your head' two days ago. I suspect you'll spend the rest of the day there being monitored for further outbursts and to lower your cognitive load."

All the whining; squirming; and sad-facing in the world will not affect her. He can try.

"Oh my god. Come on."

She's taken the paper out. It's on her desk. She uncaps her pen, pushing the cap onto the opposite end.

"You need to lower your cognitive load, even without a concussion, and— " Here she opens a drawer, passing a bright green, pliant ball to him. A stress ball. It must be Beltane. "—exercise your arm."

Actually, Beltane's in four days and there won't be presents, but: Hell yeah! Fire.

"Should we sacrifice a cow?" Isaac asks him seriously. "Wikipedia says there's cow sacrifice."
"Where the hell are we gonna get a cow?" Stiles retorts. Somewhere in there lies an actual question.

"From a feedlot? A farm?" Isaac tries. "Where else do you get cows? Maybe we could steal a cow."

"I'm pretty sure if you steal the cow it's not going to count," Allison says.

Scott's lying on his back on his bed, the same wince lodged on his face since Isaac posed the question.

"We're Sacramento, California adjacent. There are grass-fed cows everywhere. I've seen them when I'm out running." 'Running' has a different definition for Scott. 'Getting used to being a giant monster werewolf in the backcountry.' "Do we have to sacrifice a cow? I'm not enthusiastic about that, guys."

"How about you sacrifice me a cow in the form of a designer leather anything?" Lydia asks, sitting at the end of the bed, legs crossed at the knees.

Stiles gives her an apology-look.

"cause it's not for you. It's for the fairies in Tir n'Ail not to come fuck us over. 'Heeey, guys. We got you this cow. Hope you like cow.' Beef: It's what's for blood sacrifice."

The bad news is cows are expensive. The good news is after a call or two to grocery stores and meat markets Stiles managed to secure a volume of fresh bovine blood from the butchery of organic meat.

Right now, Scott's the straight class fighter, and Allison's the ranger. Isaac's the rogue, and Lydia's the sorceress. Stiles has abused his human bonus not to suffer multi-class penalties, but a hybrid rogue-wizard-druid ends up with a lot of low level abilities and no combat orientation. He's unclear if he's training in rogue, fighter or monk levels with Peter. Maybe he doesn't have to choose until he hits the next level. What is clear: He cannot take a level in cleric. There is not enough real life time, which extrapolates neatly into experience points, for that to happen.

He's trying to egg Isaac and his interest in being helpful toward becoming the actual maintenance guy for the Nemeton. Luck's with him for once, because 'Hey. You wanna do crazy stuff with blood?' works suspiciously like a pick-up line on Isaac. That and lunch enforce they don't need to hold group discussions on their sex lives.

Stiles accepts the letter from Morrell. He doesn't want to sit in the nurse's office all day. He also doesn't want his dad called by the nurse, who naturally assumes Morrell already called him – bolstered by Stiles lying that she did. So, here he is. Recumbent. Right arm lying alongside him, tightening his grasp on and releasing the stress ball to the distress of an unknown number of muscles between it and his shoulder. Some might not be cramped, stressed, and in revolt. The pain and aches have him convinced otherwise. Benefit of the doubt.

He's not thinking about birds, or property damage, or uncharted parallel universes. That leaves him uninhibited to dwell on his topic of choice: Derek. Derek and his blunt, sarcastic personality. Derek making expressions. Still mostly the smirking, and the smug, but his face has loosened up in general. Sex with Derek. Sex with Derek yesterday. Sex with Derek this morning. His own body aggressively attuned to working up some more of this gushy, just short of embarrassing crushing-on-Derek trip.

He looks up into space. Into the wolf's eyes, glowing bright, pupils wide. A gaze that knows exactly who Stiles is, why his muscles are rhythmically contracting – why he has a huge load: because Stiles got his glands working forever ago, in Peter's apartment; hot trivia – and what he wants. Everything.
Stiles can barely grapple with that more successfully, now, than he failed to grapple with it then.

Supply/demand conflict. 'Everything’ is right off the table unless he wants to also sex Scott. Watching Derek attempt to seduce Scott could have sufficient entertainment value for Stiles not to get jealous but instead to record it. Especially if Scott agreed to try and have sex with Derek. From there, a deluge of apologies about performance issues and It's totally completely absolutely not you, dude. Maybe he only needs to make Beta with Scott, but that scenario's less quality.

Scott's not the only one generating demand. Stupid sexy Peter. A man who shows no capacity to identify Stiles mid-orgasmically. Actually loses the capacity to identify Stiles. His suspicions are split between some kind of self-preservation mechanism to prevent emoting or a total, possibly permanent traumatic KO of some unknown crucial element.

Connecting through sex Stiles won the new ability to miss doing it. It also makes the times Peter knows exactly who he is, who he's kissing, who he wants, not only collectable rare-earth magnets of ego-inflation and power but even harder to imagine snatching away from him. I know you're lonely, miserable. I evacuated that nephew you're attached to back out of town, and that besides the unending lunar rage your personality's a couple torn threads. Good luck with that, man.

He can't kill him like that. He has few enough moral principles himself, possibly he should tether himself to the ones he does have. Not abandoning the people he's made commitments to, formally or between him and himself, when things get hard. It's painful to look at it that way, but that's kind of Peter. He can pretend-away the Pavlovian trade of sexual flexibility for Stiles-centric behaviors. That's something Peter would do. Also, that's something Peter would do.

He went and all by himself overestimated Derek's capability to have semi-casual sex. He, oops, fell on his face for Derek. There goes the glow inside. The universe he occupies refuses to rearrange himself and his obligations refuse to vanish to compensate for that.

He kicks himself into remembering Derek has no actual, realistic way to act out his desires, either. At least there's the remote possibility Stiles isn't the life-ruining roadblock he wants to cast himself as. Derek's Have you thought maybe I wouldn't let you? holds him back – the single reason he remains shy of crossing the event horizon to absolute self-condemnation. Derek's first loyalty's to Cora. If facing off with Peter would've put her in harm's way, the wolf wouldn't have engaged.

Stiles agrees with Derek's priorities. She's had limited resources. Gave up the ones she had to come back to Derek. Could easily fall to Omega without him. Scott would take both of them, but that would mean Beacon Hills. Nemeton. True Alpha. Escalating extravaganza of violence. Why even consider the sudden psychological pressure into Scott's way of doing things? Isaac had a long transition period from when he first got the Scott bug to when he cut himself off from Derek's draíocht. Even then it went rough.

If the issues were just Cora and Scott they could split the difference.

He cuts his arm and his 'cognitive load' a break; lets himself drift to a better place close in time.

Stiles starts it. The eye undressing. He has regrets. All of them are his arm in a sling and owning a ride not designed for sucking the driver off in – never before a concern. Stiles also has eyes. Those tell him Derek's jeans look a hundred times too zipped for what he packs in them.

Derek's driving because of Stiles' arm, and in case he needs a ride during the day, which Stiles can get easily. This time he's not getting hate for it. Overtaxed werewolf starting to do the side-eye commits to action. Turns off the road into the half-gravel alley between a shopping strip and a Chinese restaurant.
Making sex work in the back of a 1976 CJ5. A challenge worthy of its own Olympic event. Katy Perry may be pretty tall, Stiles is pretty sure from music award shows, but when she's freaking in a Jeep she is not two six foot tall guys, one with an arm sling, add muscle.

Breathing into Derek's body.

Stiles shaved the nothing off his face in his bathroom; got to do his hair. Derek hasn't shaved in two days, hair filled in across his full beard, dark hairs shading down his neck in their natural gradient. Stiles pervs on how it contours the curve of too-soft skin beneath the boneless vulnerability of his inner jaw that meets his neck somewhere above his Adam's apple. Hears Peter saying Even your teeth can get a hold there. Rip a throat open. A different, more isolated Derek made his favorite threat, not empty but low on gas, to do exactly that, but wolves can sink their teeth anywhere. Stiles tips Derek's chin up with his nose; scrapes his teeth across it, teeth against short hairs a crisp sound.

"Isn't that my line?" Derek asks as Stiles teeth click together, as Derek bumps Stiles' head away to bite his jawbone.

"Finders keepers," Stiles rebuts, still euphoric from an earlier medicinal indulgence. Will be for a few hours. He stills as a dark look passes over the wolf's face. This is Derek at primal intensity, someone he hasn't seen since they battled the Alpha pack in the hospital, except in the last moments of yesterday's sexual indulgence.

He withholds agreeing with a barely-self-restrained werewolf that Derek came, and Derek found. If Derek retained his Alpha status that Bite would be coming in three...two...

He lost that potency. The wolf remains nowhere in the vicinity of 'impotent'. Peter left a carnival of inspirations on Stiles' body. Ones Derek already fed his competitive urges on. More werewolf in fresh places sounds appealing on the attractively labeled tin. Not on the real, in-pain Stiles who's gonna be dropping sixty bucks on some serious pills during fee period if he takes more damage.

He's already making those contingency plans. No intentions to deter action on Derek's part that may force him to reconsider which werewolves get his time. Derek has the power to call a recount. 'If' one of any three score things. Little limits his options. Looking like that, he knows it. Has a better handle on influence now that he's not scraping for it.

Once they mishandled physics to get in the back of the Jeep, the wolf jammed his feet up on the inner edges of the front seats, knees bent, to keep himself from sliding off the bench seat down into the narrow space between bench and seat backs, Stiles in his lap, a position for kissing and not much beyond kissing. Insufficient space for getting savaged. More likely to be dragged out of the CJ5 into the alley with the concrete and the debris, the tiny scattered shards of broken beer bottles. Stiles presses his eyes closed and kisses the wolf.

His tongue discovers fangs. Claws' sharp tips trail across the skin beneath his shirt where Derek's hands were indulging themselves. The leap in Stiles' mood ushers in apprehension-free excitement. Nothing kinky about a wolf with his claws out. For people who no longer consider werewolf claws kinky.

Derek didn't transform. No savaging. Disappointment or not? Doesn't matter. Wrong surroundings to start with, what with the potential for roaring. Yet never let it be said Stiles possessed the wisdom to recognize the terribleness that would be Derek wolfing out on his battered body in the middle of town. In his single previous experiment he uncovered what puts the exclamation point in possessive!werewolf.

Derek growls through kissing him, rumble in Stiles' lips and beneath the hand pushed up Derek's
shirt to get at the wolf's chest in turn. He holds him with fingertips pressed deep in his bruises, claws pinpricks above them. It's Stiles who can claw. Who does, nails digging at skin through the hair of Derek's chest. He makes a case low and quiet that there's lube in his backpack. Derek unseats him, rolling him beside him – expertly *not* ripping his shirt on the knives at his fingertips – grapples the bag over the passenger's seat, snapping an adjustment strap caught on who knows.

No space. Stiles's never been so tangled up in another body, clothes in the front seat, all his skin pressed to living, flexing muscle. He worked Derek to thrusting steady, packing serious force: part leverage, part unrestrained lust; bit and scratched at him when he felt him coming off the superficial transformation, Derek only lips against his lips or on his body despite him. *Stupid, Stiles,* he tells himself, only after he loses. *Stupid, stupid, stupid.*

Hand around his wrist holding his arm off until he stops being bratty, a human thumb pressed into his palm until he lays off with his teeth, he gets to be stupid. Has this awesome body with three levels to overpowering rocking him but can act out without weighing the consequences. He's watched Derek erect a difference between what he wants and what he'll do; makes a grateful sound that wobbles when Derek thrusts as he presses his hand to him and only touches. He's getting kissed, Derek *wants* to do more to him than he can handle, and Stiles couldn't thrill harder realizing he's been disarmed, no war games. Thinks it's called 'compromising'. He's heard about it.

He's holding off one more please one more minute on begging for mercy, abso-fucking-wonderfully full, one detonation of recoiled muscle after another forcing his feet to brace harder against the Jeep's side and sports cage, good hand clenching Derek; ass not clenching because he wouldn't have one if it tried. Mouths search to meet at an inconvenient angle, rendering them that much more a mess of one flesh. He wants these long legs running against his; his cock pressed to Derek's abs, yeah, that, but not to omit his abs are rubbing on Derek's abs, what he could mistake for an infinity of skin; pecs butting pecs off-center, Stiles lying on Derek's arm, but body hair rubbing up on each other's still brand new; plus the beard and his pubes and the legs, and his un-styled hair all over the place, scent of his body heady, Stiles is getting banged by a *man* and no offense to anybody else *Peter* but fuck is it like getting run over by a sexy-guy-shaped Ford F-150.

Derek's stayed careful of Stiles' arm even with his touch unavoidably brought tiny droplets of blood to his skin. Stiles can't go to school with messy hands, so the lube went on Derek's cock, 'cause otherwise the less durable Beta would be having ass surgery. The slippery stuff Stiles buys's damn sure still getting all over the place. His body makes a press release surgery will be scheduled, anyway, if his tendons all snap. He groans, pushes on Derek, and gets his mouth back.

"Dude, no part of me wants to say this: *Please* fuck me gently now like the Tenacious D song," he says, clenching his teeth when his mouth's unoccupied; sending an apology to his human body that's never done anything to him but build reflexes and muscle when he got serious on it and die for him once already.

Derek curses; there's only so much a wolf can keep track of when he's managing his rage. Stiles knows. He reassures him with a sting of *Nos* because he had and has the enthusiasm, 100%, but no longer the physical endurance. He goes back to laying kisses on him, letting Derek renegotiate their position. *Oh, hey, sex like I'm a feeble human,* Stiles thinks with Derek screwing him sweetly. In reality gentle works out. Derek shortens his now-quarter-speed thrusts, thrusts shallow, shows uncertainty at even that much, wolf vanished, his head clear. Stiles coaxes him on by touch, murmuring reassurances, promising important things – that he can still walk. Stiles believes that whether or not it'll turn out to be true.

Slow sex, bodies sticking to the leather seat. Derek staring into his eyes, eyes drifting half-lidded when they kiss. Stiles mutually enjoys his face too much to shut his eyes to it. Prevents
miscommunication. Promotes a dangerous level of emoting. The dazzling, daze-inducing first-love feeling he got around Lydia all these years turns out to have a bigger kick when a second, equally mystified person lies beside him, up against his body, riveted by him and junctioned to him.

The plan. Stiles has to stick to his plan. That one that slips and slithers into the cracks in his mind, chased off by dangerous surges of make-believe. Fantasy lives with a sun-soaked, fine-boned former Alpha whose skin, in fantasy, draws him from the shadowy cold into the hot flush of life being the first person he wakes up beside every morning forever. He doesn't ever annoy or overwhelm him. They never fight. He doesn't make stupid choices. Nobody dies. Seems plausible. Legit.

The wolf may not be not loud like Stiles is loud. (He's trying to remember not to shout. Difficult, since sudden incapacitation by his nervous system causes any shouting.) Derek still puts in damn well three times the noise Stiles gets out of Peter on a regular day, or going at him rough, or making love. A thing that's happening to Stiles in his own steamed up Jeep featuring the inclusion of love. He bets Derek doesn't have a lot of sex in alleys behind shopping strips where anyone could open the door to bring out the trash; smoke a cigarette or a joint. Besides Derek, like Peter, just not having a lot of sex, trapped in his own mental obstacle course. Jealousy flashes thinking about anybody else pressed up to this man, giving him an outlet for the base urges laying the foundation for expressing what's understood between them; going unsaid.

Stiles has the urge to let him cum, but less with the wet ass after he's already late for school, so when he gets it going that's when Derek learns he has to pull out; it's not until then Stiles remembers the guy still takes the benefits of condoms for granted after one time. \textit{Dude, you gotta...} and no window to really figure out where bodies move to. It's the most Stiles has ever heard him cuss when he jizzes on the back of the seat like he played paintball. With semen. An aggravated series of rated M for mature language he never uses when he can do his talking with his claws.

Amid laughter, Stiles swears he's \textit{the best ever}, it's fine, just get some wet wipes at a gas station, rubbing his back. Derek groans, grumbles, shifts his body around and leans back into a corner, legs splayed out, feet against whatever, light sweat on tanned skin, chiseled marble physique in motion as he breathes. The eyes drifting aimlessly under dark eyebrows showing him putting the immediate past into context humanize the quality of 'statue brought to life'. Stiles' breathes out an awed: \textit{Oh my god. You are glorious.} Steals more kisses; groping a puzzled but willing Derek who forgets interpreting himself in favor of taking the attention.

Then Derek sucks him off. Stiles is used to that treatment. \textit{Not at all.} 'Used to' fails to capture the privilege of the experience of a sensual creature of superhuman fury letting him ejaculate down its throat, a throat that may with the right motivation and mood lighting guzzle the blood of its enemies. Stiles has achieved that more times than he's bothered to count, but it never fails to impress him. Except that's with Peter.

This is Derek: Absolutely nothing like anything else that's happened in his whole life. Last year popularly known as scowling, irritable, entire life is a burden he's sick to shit of, posturing, tormented Derek. Going down on his cock like it's all he ever wanted, orgasm-relaxed, his attention undivided. An undercurrent of curiosity to his gaze, which is when Stiles realizes Derek's never done this for anyone before. He woke up today and realized sometime in the past two or three minutes it'd be a good day to suck Stiles's cock.

Cue cumming like nobody should have to deal with on their first go; jerking hips Derek's hands reflexively force still. Stiles gapes, making an ongoing noise of mind. blown. Derek gets his serious on, eyes shutting, like he drew the tension from his throat up into his brow. Swallows effortlessly, this beautiful roll of his throat beneath the thick muscles; the grown-out beard, his lips wrapped close and soft; mouth patiently holding, huh, just the head of Stiles' cock. \textit{No big} Huge fucking deal.
Spitting it out on the jizz-stained vehicle never crosses Derek's mind.

Now, Mary Mother of God, Stiles has Derek between his legs breathing through lips wet and glossy with spit and cum looking surprised he swung it, like Stiles’ dick is some incredible new invention, all continuing curiosity and intelligence, guard swept aside. Stiles wants to hold him for the rest of his life and swear getting close to people is more than just pain, and betrayal, and more pain, and loss, and long bleak stretches of emotional torment. He holds him a lot like that when he gets him under his arm, a second surprise, at first, but the wolf chooses not to and anyway doesn't have a lot of room to argue. Stiles keeps his lying mouth shut. He's the last person to admit it: sometimes silence talks louder.

----

Stiles' Jeep contains A: Derek Hale in the driver's seat and B: A stifling aura of bad juju. He stands at the open door, backpack slung over one shoulder, taking a step back, Derek staring at him with a stare he refuses to acquiesce to.

"...if I say I forgot something in my locker, leave, and come back, will you still have the 'We need to talk' face on?"

"Yes."

Stiles finds a few colorful words, flinging his backpack to the floorboard and throwing himself into the passenger seat for a heavy landing that punishes all his parts, sourly closing the door. He's cool with Derek driving because his arm is less stiff but no happier and because he may need to get out of his own vehicle and stalk off.

"I'm gonna die from sharing my feelings. If this can wait..."

"It can't."

Night to sleep on it, Stiles woke up in a bed that smelled like Derek. Headed downstairs dressed for school and there's his… boyfriend, no access to product after sleeping on the couch, fringe of inadvertent bangs sticking in all directions. Derek got this look that Stiles reads about or sees in movies when somebody lays eyes on their love interest and the rest of the world vanishes around them.

Stiles' heart went off like running a marathon. When he heard his dad coughing in the dining room he thinks that heart tripped and broke pace between him starting back so hard he had to put a hand behind him – not the one hung in the sling with his tired-ass arm – and save himself with the doorframe, the high of the Adderall on a still-empty stomach already elevated his pulse pre-romance novel interlude. A weird lurch through his upper body. Derek's baffled but momentary attention to his chest. It only skipped a beat. Or two. Completely harmless.

He took a little much amphetamine to get past the idea of having to survive the day incomprehensibly sore, plus left handed. His subsequent sky high 'Just Fine Right Here' smile sent Derek's eyebrows through a few variations on The hell, Stiles? It clicked for him; he let it go, shaking his head.

Stiles wanted to kiss him, idiotically risky as that would've been, but Derek ordered: "Eat. And no caffeine."

Realizing Who died and made you Alpha? would be beyond inappropriate he had his own coughing break, clasped a hand to his heart in sincerity, and went to enthusiastically greet his father in the kitchen. Who stood up, took him by the shoulders, and planted him in a chair.
"I suspected myself at risk for narcolepsy," he stated with authority. The poker face he returned to his father's silent request not to shit him promised torture would be required to admit he woke up, realized his entire body and got high as a kite. At least he didn't snort it.

Now he remembers the initial silence and tension on the drive to school, Derek looking like he'd been put through enough for the rest of his life. They both had, so Stiles didn't examine it like he did the still-fine body. Maybe that had been Derek trying to say something; failing epically. Stiles doesn't remember turning down his habitual blatancy, in retrospect a lot for the regular person that in most ways Derek is – more than anybody Beacon Hills resident – to cope with 'the morning after'. He'd been buzzed.

He turns to look at Derek. Classic model. If it could only cross its arms, the stoic, self-hating Derek would be here with him in all its moodiness. Stiles' extended familiarity with the wolf's self-loathing holds him back from getting in his face. Stiles' skills exclude 'avoiding arguments', but he reaches:

"Three hours. Give me three hours. Can we just go out to the preserve and spend...I don't know, dude, time. Person time. I'll trust you to tell the Nemeton to fuck off if you'll trust me not to try and preemptively change your mind about whatever you've got to say to me or to go after sex, something I'm not even capable of. You may doubt my ability to walk. I spent half the day lying down after I evicted a desk from a classroom through a window. One for two. Veil of death thing. Not worth the story. Morrell lied me a concussion related outburst."

Derek's staring ahead out the front window, waiting in the line of cars that starts and stops as vehicles filter out of the parking lot, or students back out to join it. Stiles envies them. He promises himself that's a young adult novel thing to say. As if he had smooth sailing up to the night Scott turned. Like he's waiting on Derek's answer and because he's got some draíocht and Derek was born with more it's off the curve.

Yeah. It's so much harder to live a secret life, he snarks, slumped in the passenger's seat browsing the departing wave of familiar and sort of familiar faces. You're the only one doing it.

Straight up human kids have it easy, going home to alcoholic fathers or mothers, to screaming arguments, to cope with break-ups and deaths, to indulge the pill/meth/heroin/cocaine habit they can’t or don't want to kick, meet their dealer for a fix, go for a natural endorphin high abusing their own body, stress over whether to tell their parents or siblings or boyfriend they're pregnant or go to the clinic alone. Pick up bruises and broken skin from their own partner that they'll cover tomorrow. Weigh if tonight's the night they kill themself.

Stiles wishes he could say he's lived any of his life for them, ever thinks about if he's making it better for worse for them, sees chalk lines as more than blocking in clues. He thinks about dead birds.

"Three hours," Derek says, probably two minutes later. Stiles wonders how much of that time was spent quadruple checking Stiles wasn't covertly pressuring him, absence-of throwing him harder than if he was.

Stiles keeps at it, refraining from asking if that time starts now or after they park, strong personal preference notwithstanding. He fails to ask what Derek did today. Derek fails to say anything, either, but at least his face has personality, now, when Stiles steals non-erotic glances, even if it says he has no idea what he's doing, what he actually wants to do, and least of all what he should be doing. Stiles appreciates him not punching the problem. Stiles, as the remaining problem, might not survive that.

The unaffiliated Beta develops a mounting case of nerves when nothing but trees surround the car on either side of the road, bends ahead and behind, the wolf's body language progressively tenser.
"That draíocht crawling on your skin's totally normal. I'll work it out after we park," Stiles promises. Derek remains unsettled while nodding acquiesce. That tamps down any remaining chance of conversation during the ride. Stiles remains abnormally occupied in the quiet. Existing in the same space, phantom touches echoing on his skin, Derek groomed – that means he bummed Stiles' electric razor and hairspray. Possibly straight razor. Whatever. Werewolves are incredibly sanitary as bodies – he has what is colloquially called a boyfriend. For two hours and thirty minutes.

After he parks the Jeep, Derek hovers by the driver's side door, scowling at the treeline. Stiles gets him. The forest remains unnaturally dim all hours of the day. Happy-making comfort for Stiles. Warning to supernatural visitors. He comes around the front, up to the wolf trying not to look backed up to the door. Extends a hand. The left one. He can't choose.

"Come on. Once the trees get you're with me they'll lay off."

Derek's new expression broadcasts Stiles has completely lost his mind.

"I change instantly into a werewolf when I'm angry enough. I don't understand how. And that sounds unhinged."

He cautiously slides his hand into Stiles', anyway, not gleeful as he's hauled from the civilized dirt parking space into the trees. Stiles is. He swings their hands when the Nemeton backs off Derek and Derek backs off the tension, flirting like a kindergartener:

"Told you so."

Eyes roll. Stiles gives his hand a squeeze; breaks his grasp, surreptitiously confirming Derek's disappointment; glancing askance. He already has his gameplan.

"How long has it been like this?" Derek asks, still alert, eyes moving, which reads 'senses generally extended', and finding nothing to be sensed but the magic because there is nothing. Their pack has made him a stranger in the woods he's spent most of his life in.

"A set in stone benchmark'd be the night Peter turned Scott. The same night the Nemeton made me and Allison pack with him. That night. By then. That's the foot of the exponential growth. Um, we think the actual answer is 'when Lydia appeared'. Nobody knows when that was. Deaton and Peter of course suspect more than they're telling, but my bet is they don't have a calendar year."

"I was out here when Peter turned Scott. Peter, too," Derek says, the last part for the sake of the point, frowning with his whole expression.

"You were. Uh." Stiles rubs the back of his neck. Awkward. There's nobody to ask about this one. His guess is better than most people's. "The Nemeton works in frustratingly incomprehensible ways? I don't know why you weren't tagged. There were a ton of humans besides us out here, too." He shakes his head; realizes pleasantly he knows exactly where he is in relation to the rest of the preserve and beyond, even if he's more often here at night; twists his lips contemplatively. "Of importance: That's what Allison and I are. Humans. Scott was human. No natural buffer to alien draíocht. Yet still no whammy even on the officers as close to it as I was. Like my dad. Allison hadn't met Lydia yet. For that matter, she hadn't met me and Scott. I could clarify all that significantly with: It's not personal; it's a tree. A tree hungry for fresh meat, and we were malleable."

Derek glowers into the trees, in the direction of the Nemeton. He knows exactly where he is, too.

"It's personal."

Bad date spot. He always feels the pull, wants to come out here. Bad because he's so edible.
Uninvited guests show up because the place hits them wrong. (Or right.) He assumed he'd be safe out here with Derek; forgot Derek's experiences since he first came back to town have been uniformly bad in a way his own sense of continuity glossed over. If Talia whammied him and Peter to forget where the Nemeton was because more than Paige happened, it follows many or most of his previous experiences with the power now piggybacking the currents, fanning out for miles, were bad.

There's specificity here that none of that explains. Stiles' eyes open wider when intuition, more like a couple score comments here and there to put him on the right path, land him on the answer. He makes sorry at Derek.

"You tried being Beacon Hill's Alpha, it wrecked you life, and another Alpha held the territory the entire time. You would've been more powerful..."

Derek turns his displeasure on the ground, kicking a rut in the detritus, revealing the darker soil beneath.

"Maybe realized what Jennifer was doing to the currents," Stiles thinks on, still apologizing, not on behalf of the oak but because it's aware of him and his mood and doesn't care but Stiles does. The final fact tastes the worst: "...maybe have been competitively strong with Deucalion's pack."

The outward venting of his resentment dissipates. Holding a grudge against a plant's tough. People may be plotting around the plant, but the plant itself is mostly all 'Spread out. Get sunlight. Regrow microbial friends on my roots. Feast on blood and souls.' It started life as a normal oak sapling. Stiles relates to that. He and Scott had just been out in the woods. Looking for a gory dead body. Like people do. Druided. You can't return that shit to the store. Can't sue Ashton Kutcher for emotional damages.

"This is the first place I think of when I think 'privacy'. Besides my room. I thought: No, Stiles. Not your room. But, you're in luck! You only agreed to three hours," Stiles half-teases, half-apologizes.

"If I thought it sounded like a bad idea, I would've turned you down," Derek says, one eyebrow higher than the other.

Stiles meets him with stubbornness, straightening up and squaring his shoulders even if 'ow':

"Stop trying to be equally culpable. My culpability exceeds yours."


"That's true."

Damn it. Stiles realizes that he lost control of that one, but too late to fire back.

He rules Derek could use touching. Stiles can even establish that through their general, ongoing negligence of personal space. Stiles' slides his hand across the wolf's back, into the farther pocket of his jeans. The other Beta starts when touched; relaxes when he identifies the gesture, as unfamiliar to it as Stiles but acquiescent. Giving him a glance, Derek rests his hand lightly on the back of Stiles' neck, avoiding his injured shoulder. Stiles smiles to himself, pleased; slips the smile over to the wolf.

A stopover at skepticism. Stiles sufficiently softened him up; wins another look at the smile he never sees through the computer screen for his effort: lips soft, relaxed, Derek's eyes lit, eyebrows not drawn together, all worn freakishly natural. The possibility of losing it scares the teen too much for him to kiss him. The wolf's lips quirk that much further, gaze animated. It looks like Stiles' incompetence at real emotional relationships has endearing qualities. Stiles bases his survival on
Walking again. Hand on Derek's quality buttoc. He does a little feeling around within the confines of his pocket; perks up even if Derek loses hope with him, still with the affection but making the sarcastic eyebrows. They realize they are where they’ve been going. To anybody else it'd nowhere. Middle of. Couple fallen trees, ground breaking off in a rocky outcropping to one side, and aside from a couple of boulders still technically 'the open'.

A thick black layer of soot coats the 'roof' of the outcropping without the underside forming a cave. Something about the place says people stopped here for hundreds, probably thousands of years. Just not in the past fifty. The first time he took a break here, walking the night with Allison, Stiles noticed the soot when he stood up his flashlight. The next time he came around he dug up a chipped arrowhead – obsidian – examined it a minute, then covered it back up. Hardly the first thing out here he's found and intuited Not My Stuff.

Point is, this place cuts Derek a break from the potentially-overwhelming assimilation vibe by degree. It's Less-Druidy. Because that's a thing.

He gives Derek a squeeze. It's so 'normal people' he stops to look proud of himself; laughs when Derek drags him down, last year's leaves breaking under their bodies, the crunch of collapsing layers of forest floor, hands in the right places to avoid jarring him, his bruises memorized. That he'd never find in a human relationship.

"Look at you, smiling," he says; a happy sigh, his own lips spread wider and stuck there, Derek's smile on and off. Lying on top of the wolf, he'll only mourn his hand vacating his pocket for a minute.

"It's a bad omen," Derek warns, meaning it, but he remains relaxed; lets Stiles kiss him. He does lose his smile, but it was already on the way out; at least Stiles got a taste of it.

"Maybe," Stiles says. "Correlation does not equal causation. You've heard that one, right? I think a better explanation is when you do your smiling in Beacon Hills, you're in Beacon Hills. A community where you can figure out the day of the week by what wants you dead."

Derek's eyes are closed, vision unnecessary – not a slight. Stiles needs to stretch his arm again, later. It's had time to stiffen. He slides his other arm up alongside the wolf to play with Derek's hair; pet on him. His eyes drift down Derek, the leg not caught between Stiles' drawn up, but both splayed, posture open. Stiles lowers his voice, speaking quietly, birds vocal around them, wind rustling through the canopy, dimmed dappled light shifting its pattern on their bodies, not as dim-seeming now that there's no sun glaring bright on the open road to compare it with.

"Feels good, right? I kinda hope in not-forever we can have invited guests all the time."

"It feels like..."

No ending to that sentence can be a good ending, so Derek leaves it. Home. Where I belong. It's speaking to me. He has Stiles' trust. Letting the oak under his skin breaches it. The furrow that forms in his forehead and passes tells Stiles he fought it off.

It is his home, though, Stiles' thoughts supply. He bats them away and kisses the wolf again, instead, tenderly. A lot of people might dub his technique 'standard kissing'. For him, it's a novelty. Derek, watching him from heavily lidded eyes, exercises talent, getting him warm and cuddly with leading action from his lips, kissing light, or off-center, or both, in a sneaky way that keeps Stiles chasing him. Smirks at Stiles for not finding his rhythm, the human answering with an accusative huff. Stiles
remembers he's lying on a fed predator stretched out in his natural environment with a high chance of ripping his heart out and crushing it into a limp lump of bloody, dead flesh when their bodies' internal clocks say 'three hours'. Not as literally as he could.

Without warning, Stiles wishes he'd do it. His kisses remain unchanged in timbre; it sounds to Stiles like the sweetest thing the wolf could do for him. Derek would leave free of ties – as long as he refuses to respond to Peter, again. Stiles never has to be responsible for another death.

He's killed one innocent person. How that didn't instill in him a phobia of more than handling guns he doesn't know. He feels solid, in context, about contributing to a couple kills of virulently malicious people and more than one dangerous animal. He could've easily put somebody in the hospital earlier while believing with all his instincts he was in control of himself. When he brings up the memory, they still tell him he was. The idea that human life has no inherently greater value than a sparrow's looks obvious. He rationally informs himself they've come just as far as species in evolutionary time. He could live with recognizing that. Cause a ten car pileup braking for a chipmunk, but that'd be an accident.

(Also, the other cars would have to be following illegally close.)

He mistrusts himself with that degree if moral relativism. He exercised an overabundance before anything got into his head and started changing his brain up. Lying with Derek, working his mouth, one packed arm draped lazily around his body, a hand cupping his face, Stiles grasps an outsider's perspective: He needs to never do anything Derek would be disappointed in him for. Disturbed by. Repulsed by.

Derek basically wants good things for people. Even shanking Jackson, that was a 'Before He Kills Again' call suspicious on the part of his probably-Beta, not Derek. If somebody had to take the flak for preventing the final metamorphosis of an out of control winged lizard beast, the Alpha was willing to be that guy.

Stiles would've killed Jackson with a poison roast beef sandwich if a Scott let him, in theory for the same reason, but he also voted for Derek to be dead, and, of course, Peter. Members of the Alpha pack and other people since. The uniting element is they were dangerous to Scott, not their personal merits and deficits.

"Hey," Derek prompts, startling him out of his thoughts. Stiles hasn't failed to continue kissing him. He went in the opposite direction. He keeps to thinking of his physical attitude in relation to Derek's awesome physique as 'clingy'. It can pass as. He's still soft. Derek's not precognitive, he just has his great sense of smell: Dead leaves, moss, fungi, the scent of soil, the scents of wildlife, the moist scent of living plants, flowers blooming, and Stiles' body started on expressing itself sexually.

Stiles swallows, faced with a face he's as familiar with not seeing it for months as the last time he was with him. He can't ask Derek to kill him any more than he can allow Scott to give him the Bite. He has people to live for; the warmth in his chest and heat everywhere their bodies touch instill confidence Derek is one of the most important.

He's already seen too much pain on his face. Shock; desperation; fear: Those they can fight. The agony of losing Boyd, or that first stricken moment he understands what he and Scott are saying and realizes he's been used again...Repeat performance knowing it for sure.

Stiles pictures himself putting it there, even for reasons superficially simple. They both agree Peter may have to be put down. (Again.) He has no doubt that 'I eliminated your uncle in cold blood' especially 'Unexpectedly. During the sex we didn't stop having. I didn't feel a thing' would impact Derek negatively. Carve the wolf one more open wound to wear the rest of his life.
Simpler. Steeled to never intentionally hurt Derek, he might be putting flowers on a gravestone: Derek Hale, 1983-2012. Accidents.

"I love you, okay?" he swears; he doesn't need Derek to be able to understand how bad he can see things get. He just needs him, is **begging** him to remember that. "I love you. It doesn't make anything better, it's not gonna save me, and that's not—"

Derek cuts the babbling off with his own mouth. Stiles relents. Derek knows how passionately he doesn't want the wolf to shoulder any blame. Stiles sticks to kissing this time, focus refreshed.

Derek can't say it. Maybe he could; maybe he's reached that point in his life. Stiles can't know, but he's grateful getting dumped isn't a complete surprise in front of an audience when unaware of any substantial emotional continuity. Without discussing it, Stiles knows Derek agrees they have been in a relationship. A no longer harmless relationship, leaving them not under the circumstances to talk it out and try again.

The wolf can lay on the precursors to lovemaking like a boss. Does, out here where the trees have eyes and the motion of their bodies drags leaves; snaps twigs; uncovers the immersive scent of fresh soil mingling with scents carried on their body heat – a lot of cucumber-melon. Stiles' soft sound if frustration lacks fight when they eventually trail off. He'd rather do this chest to chest, body on body, than not. He has numerous reasons, the main one reality-grounded: avoiding a feedback look of defensive body language.

"I'm cool, now," he says. "Put it out here."

Derek exhales, brief and heavy. He keeps it to what he has. Stiles hates talking about his feelings, a comparatively abstract hate. Derek dredges up his emotions when he speaks, nightmarish to Stiles. That lets Derek keep it blunt; even so his eyes still try and sneak off to find something to break: "I'm too ready for overcommitment. I'm stuck on repeat." That went well. Derek sounds like he wants to destroy something. That something isn't Stiles. Words are hard; Stiles waits on them, doesn't prompt him. "Cramming you into that mold," he says. No elaboration. They share equal confusion when they realize that covered the whole thing. Derek pegs Stiles for the third or fourth love of his life (depending on Kate); not this week, Stiles inevitably gets cut slack for his minor trespasses – recklessly encouraging Derek's damaged uncle to express himself through Stiles' body; the wolf ends up not only watching things fall apart, he facilitates it. In this case alternatives look possible, whereas Derek has almost thirty years of experience at letting his emotions dictate his decisions, plus a young, uncooperative, super traumatized brain ensuring his sense of self won't win any marathons. Derek leaves off with: "When I get back to New Mexico..."

Stiles knots his fingers in the wolf's hair.

"I'm down one boyfriend. That I knew." He has time to grapple with the misery later. "You have rules?"

Derek's brow contorts. Those eyebrows have untapped individual mobility.

"No. It'll work itself out. I mean, the entire idea is not making decisions when I'm..."

"Unpredictably emotional? Probably gonna stop on the way home and destroy boulders with your fists? Possibly buy a twenty-four pack of beer and smash bottles on the sidewalk knowing you'll never know what it feels like to get drunk? Eat an entire grocery store freezer of ice cream? Work out until you actually fall unconscious?" Stiles lobs off, a beat more space between than usual.
Having scheduled his reaction for later, Stiles can *Aw, there's his constipated face, again* at his liberty. He loosens his fingers; combs them over Derek's scalp.

"No comment."

"Switch from no comment back to shut up?" Stiles ventures.

"Shut up."

"I'll do my own thing. I'm not unaffected. You're kinda the, uh, wronged party here..." That has been established to his satisfaction. Despite his initial emotional reaction, Derek accrued the cred to interrupt his bad decisions. Also to 'meet his family'. Peter — sonnova bitch — did not. "The nightmare of my drunk ass is on Scott," he goes on. "He'll have that locked down. Or up. I'm predictable. I just wanna add some weight to 'Don't worry about me'. Because you brood. You mull. I repress, I blow up, I burn out. Watches could be set by me."


"It hasn't been three hours," Derek points out.

Smartass.

The melancholy can't outweigh the ready availability of physical comfort. All optimism falls under Scott's purview. Stiles plans for the worst. He forces himself to remember 'having a fighting chance' necessitates separation. Stiles imagines he could use self-improvement in the area of not being slimy in the interim. Vengefully waiting Peter out until he regrets his actions and reeling him back in could be worded in such a way, in that way, to reflect unfavorably on him. He's made no persuasive enough arguments against it to cancel.

Continuing partial ban on thinking about Peter until the emotional agony sets in. He's giving it until nine o'clock. Then he's Scott and Isaac's problem.

No kiss goodbye. They're in front of his house past sundown and his dad's home, anyway, even if that remained a possibility. Which it doesn't. They dodge the subject of the condition of the FJ Cruiser. Stiles suspects Peter elbowed at least one window out, besides ruining the paint job. (He also suspects Peter took the civilized approach of throwing paint stripper on the SUV.) Awkward parting gift: Derek's key to Peter's apartment. He sets it in Stiles upturned palm instead of dropping it, skin touching. They play casual.

Derek wants the run from Beacon Hills to Peter's apartment downtown. Stiles tells his dad the wolf wanted to stretch his legs before the long drive. True. He refuses to betray himself in front of his father. Skips dinner. Lies he already ate. Needs the time. Breathes hard texting Scott he's invoking bro rights and throws his phone onto the bed once he beats a safe retreat to his room.

Without Derek here the fucking audacity of Peter using him as a honey trap's free to enrage him. He did that to Derek the one time, except everyone in the (this) room knew what was going on. He knows he's a tool first, person second to Peter, so why the fucking outrage?

*He brings his anger and incapacitating sense of loss to Scott. It freaks Isaac out. Has him assuming he'll get punched at any point. Scott takes Stiles off. Off's better. He can yell without Melissa finding him sloppy upstairs in her house. He yells about a lot of things. A couple even make sense.*

Early May

Rocking up into his own palm, cumming weakly, semen leaking off the head, over his hand, a
couple sad spurts. Frustratingly insufficient arousal.

He lost Derek. The loss maddens him. The loss means nothing.

Stiles pleases him. He wants to snap both Stiles' legs and kick his prone body until his ribs cave in; watch him bleed to death inside. He wants to congratulate him; present him with something desirable – besides himself; leave him flushed, pleased, and in no pain at all.

His option is not to respond. The division of labor changes. Stiles makes up for the deficit Stiles created. Harder on him; his own fault. Peter doesn't know if Stiles kept anything for himself, yet. His nephew left the city. He ascertained that much. He scouted for the abused Cruiser, and around Stiles and Stiles' house. Derek put in no appearances.

An offensive whiff of the junk heap Stiles drives tells the whole story. The human could have kept everything for himself. Derek's emotional attachment. His body. Peter even wagers after spying them interacting once or twice he could calendar a date for and count down the days to Stiles seducing Derek into Scott's pack. Stiles sacrificed. Maybe even chose to make Peter's nephew inaccessible to both of them rather than risk…what?

There's the question of what Stiles thinks he's planning to do. If he chose to cut Derek out blind – hoped somebody installed a dead man's switch – Peter never taught Derek any coping mechanisms. Derek's plan to become less incompetent for Cora's sake, on the other hand, may have gone too well.

If he keeps in mind he wants a Stiles capable of choices of that magnitude, he might work through the fantasies of pulling Derek apart strip by strip that sneak up so effortlessly. He wanted to see the Beta show a little backbone. Not show up, abduct, and fuck another Beta from the heart of Peter's territory and disappear again. A reminder his only tie to Derek is the memory of 'pack'. They have no compelling mutual interest in their present, Stiles an adversarial interest. One with either a laudatory or regretful degree of agency.

He especially can't get enthused about masturbation when it's a reminder his nephew fucked Stiles. A Beta temporarily out of Peter's reach. He left the human angry knowing he could be deprived all access at Peter's leisure. He'll be back around when he's sure the last tug at Peter's waistband, two fingers tucked between denim and skin, reaches the same punishing effect as leaving Stiles to his self-esteem deficits. Add another three days beyond the Beta's estimate, for spite.

Unfortunately, Stiles' calculations are off. Peter's body already won't leave him alone. His scent turns it on. His scent clings to the apartment. For every visceral purpose Stiles satisfies the requirements for indefinitely maintained sexual partner. So much for enjoying ramping up the drive to reproduce. While no one can seriously think humans are naturally monogamous across the species, wolves are. Maybe with the occasional one-off.

The obnoxious physical problems from the lupine brand of serial monogamy crop up from the same sort of anxiety he'd work up unexpectedly falling out of contact with a close pack member. In that scenario, one he's lived, his body stays ready to fend off an attack. Sex drive dampening, among all the other effects. This is much more irritating: interest persistent, too nervy to do anything with it. He's spent so little time alone in his conscious life – even while dead; even if Jenny, his nurse, the hunter, made for awful company – that he's not willing to determine how to cope with it when grousing through it promises to resolve the agitation.

The desire to blame one family member in particular for not informing him of the consequences of a single sexual partner over time breaks at the point he realizes the storm of emotion surrounding failing relationships prevented them from chalking out the purely physical deficits. He misses the variety of mind-addling full-body emotional sensations his body conjured before the trauma more
than he had reason to until now. Other mechanically-oriented functions come with a fantastic supernatural warranty.

He can't get off by himself. He can't get off with a stranger. He can't get off. Not if Stiles is alive and healthy and in a vague sense accessible. In light of his unique misery, he'd shove to the front of the line to be the one to fix the first two for Stiles.

Fleeting rewards. There are no alternative candidates who'll respond positively to having it spoken in their ear he wants to rip open their naked abdomen, carve off a bite of their liver with his fangs and feed it back to them mouth to mouth. There's one person who mutters Come on and Try it or squeaks and squirms – that depends on the sexual situation – when he pours his grotesque thoughts out of his head.

If there's a single irreplaceable feature of Stiles, it'd be linking together symptoms even Peter thought were insane, putting that time in, and coming back indifferent to them. Peter has no particular desire to be alone with himself and what the teen casually labels 'intrusive thoughts'.

"If you think I masturbate to the crazy things you've said, think twice. What, I'm gonna stop and critique you? You've come up with some weird ways to kill me. Permanently disfigure me. Sometimes, in a refreshing thematic one-eighty, to fuck me. If you killed me, I wouldn't be around to gripe about it. I'd be like... That motherfucker. Plus, I'd be dead. Do you masturbate to the crazy things you say?"

"If you think I masturbate to the crazy things you've said, think twice. What, I'm gonna stop and critique you? You've come up with some weird ways to kill me. Permanently disfigure me. Sometimes, in a refreshing thematic one-eighty, to fuck me. If you killed me, I wouldn't be around to gripe about it. I'd be like... That motherfucker. Plus, I'd be dead. Do you masturbate to the crazy things you say?"

Peter has to stop and think, although his hands and mouth remain busy, passing over naked flesh, post-coital and tactile. Not really. Actually, never. He's come over some of them. Say, right now.

"I get that out when I'm inside you."

"Right. And I prefer that like whoa," Stiles says, holding his gaze confidently, motions falling in the same vein without sharing Peter's satisfaction, body worming closer for warmth, catching his hand to nip at a couple of fingertips. "If you didn't explore your homicidal impulses with me, you might actually kill me. Serial killers masturbate to crazy. And when they finally act on their impulses? Their partner dies."

"That's an interesting theory. You should write a book on it."

"If I ever kill you in self-defense, I'll immortalize you in my conclusions."

Peter nods his head to the side, an admission that sounds nice.

"It's too bad you'd die trying."

Being on the receiving end of sexual, not homicidal, aggression Peter enjoys; it's not just attention, a frustrated, determined, and not post-orgasmic Stiles with a vendetta's enjoyable to try predicting. From the teenager grabbing him by the upper arm and being shoved face down – chuckling – into a pillow he suspects he just invited a set of teeth into his body. Probably frottage. He's not gonna be laughing when he's jerking and growling over pinched nerves.

Lacking a supernatural talent for hardening to stone, he's been introduced to how much pain the acupressure approach can deal out when somebody commits to weaponization. The harmless entertainment of the faux-angry human now on his back and his inventiveness when he works himself up trumps some stinging nerves. —shit, that still hurts.

The difficult to resolve part's Stiles has it right. Venting his darker thoughts helps. If he starts to think,
one morning, about cutting his boss's jugular with his claws and watching the blood spread over the desk while he listens to him rattling on – face time when he could just send a damn e-mail – Peter can recognize his brain's overactive, stop imagining the spreading flood parting around the paperweight, meeting again, and snapping together with a release of surface tension, an unbroken sanguine pool again, and think about performing lurid sex acts…or what he's doing for dinner. (Normally more or less equivalent.)

His recent behavioral psychologist agrees it's healthy. She's highly qualified to treat werewolves. He's not in contact with her for therapy. She insists. Persuasive woman, Marin. Hard, dangerous woman, saying: I stayed in Beacon Hills because I have less to teach Deucalion, only as long as you're a Beta you're in no position to negotiate terms. And if you become an Omega? I'll be gone.

Peter concedes to his body its desire to thrive, reproductively, presently outstrips his own. Talia and Alona were having children at Peter's age. With wolves. With humans. He respects its similar insistence. The tenacity.

The only vector freeing him from regret, at least from sustained, instead of periodic, frustration, over cutting Stiles loose and being subjected to his body's protest is the gleeful knowledge Derek's going to suffer more than Peter could have planned. Derek, with all the same urges and all those tragic feelings. Casual, vengeful sex may be in Stiles' character, but not his nephew's. Torment guaranteed. It sustains him. He wishes him months of impotence. A rare sentiment from the heart.

He lies shiftless in the bed, not drowsing, eyes picking over the small details of his surroundings. The dust on the lampshade. His watch on top of the dresser. Stainless steel band: multi-piece with three docks a side, each side fitted with three small links, held together by a series of themselves-complicated pins married to tiny, sliding tubes. An intense 3D puzzle game on the otherwise-ignored dining table after someone rips it off his arm. He gives them scratch resistant sapphire crystal really is. If something finicky and complicated appeared to fiddle with he'd take it. He's not going to create that problem for himself.

He still thinks about Melissa, sometimes, and the things he would've done with her. She's perfect. Even without the Bite. She would also gut him for having had sex with Stiles in his present or past. Especially with the Bite. While paying his visit and respects to the sheriff, he learned the woman has been in the Stilinski household within a week of him. Fucking. That puts her out of the picture for good. She'll know exactly what he's been doing with Stiles. She already knows. By now the sheriff told her everything in a secluded emotional interlude. The man has the exceptional luck that he produced the son Peter prioritizes sodomizing. Otherwise he'd kill him. Scott's father is an FBI agent, less to do with luck and more to do with work ethic, neglecting his family, and shrewd intelligence, making him a nuisance, never a (sexual) threat.

"I'm a werewolf. Ethan and Aiden are werewolves. Isaac's a werewolf— " 'He's right' "—Peter's a werewolf—" a nod and 'Agent McCall' "—the killers? Are werewolves. In fact, dude, just assume everybody's a werewolf."

Agent McCall stares incredulously at Stiles.

"Stiles is a werewolf?"

Scott lets his head fall back, his eyes shut, as if psychological escape's feasible. Peter's glad Allison and Lydia are with Olivia, or this would be beyond complicated. They didn't intentionally split down gender lines. The women are working together as a light reconnaissance unit.

"Stiles isn't a werewolf."
"What he means is assume everyone involved is part of a larger werewolf culture—" Stiles demonstratively traces a large circle horizontal in the air in front of him with the index fingers of both hands "—one in which people respect me more than you and your federal credentials only get you so far. Basically like when you're in Melissa's house but all over town."

Peter points toward the tall – very tall – human man.

"Do we want him dead more than me? I, uh. That'd just be refreshing."

Isaac pulls a face.

"We still want you dead more than anybody else," he promises. He looks candidly to Scott's father, brows rising in what can't be pinned down as an 'innocent' face. "You still have to do anything Peter says. I mean, unless you're cool with your limbs getting ripped out of your sockets. I'm not gonna stand in your way. " Scott fixes him with an annoyed, suffering look. "...I'll stand in your way and do everything I can to keep you alive. But I'll resent it."

Besides Peter having an obsessive personality, 'compulsive' escalated more recently, Melissa is the only woman he might have more children like Scott with. He can smell her perfume, her skin, feel the weight of her hair against his fingers, be so close to imparting his power to her...relive spending half an hour with Stiles for the first time. Coincidentally the first time he wanted to murder Stiles and no one else would do. The first time he wanted with physically immediacy to turn the little weasel. A coin toss would do.

No guarantees they'd ever have been persuaded to be his Betas, less likely with what he now knows about Scott, but considering his enormously better taste compared to Derek he should've just bitten them. No socializing. Forget talking Melissa through the confusion like he couldn't her son. He should have dragged them into the woods, left them bleeding in the underbrush, and seen what turned up. Terrible form. Terrible manners. Better than...Isaac. A volatile, half-feral boy with an incurable attitude missing half the life experience needed to make him whole.

It follows they had no trouble relating to each other. Until he developed a closer relationship with Stiles, Isaac stood the only person who understood the relief of knowing a person's already willing to kill you: no game, no paranoia, no waiting for the heel turn. That greased forming their bitter little triune pack.

Inexplicable choice for the Bite until Isaac dragged that appalling confession out of Derek that he'd been as lonely as Isaac was desperate. Scott's problem, now. Peter doesn't miss his packmate like he should. They overlapped in hollows, in absences. How can he miss a wolf bonded to him by mutual estrangement?

(Lydia. Lydia…So many complications.)

He looks at his hand, semen thickening toward drying. Normally he'd already have unthinkingly groomed himself clean. He doesn't want the taste; goes to the bathroom and washes his cum off, instead; glowers down at but cleans up his softened cock. An expressionless, flawlessly kempt face looks back at him from the mirror.

Four deep, ragged, claw-distanced tears through the cheek without raking his trimmed facial hair. Blood held back by draíocht except for the blood staining his claws.

He feels his cheek closing up; sees it coming together in the mirror. His face stings. Of course it stings. Besides that he might as well be looking at a doll he's put empty but meticulous time into. No point in hurting it further when the injuries won't last. Sex it punishes him over, but not pain. Mutual
exhaustion with each other. The human material has a slim chance of surviving him. Right now he has no incentive to insure its future. Not without increasing its raw value.

Transformed, at full Beta strength, blood pumping and blood pumping in spurts out of somebody else's body, it's pathetic everything he can't do. In those moments he wants to trash this piece of junk as much as he does Stiles' Jeep. Never more than when he remembers again the veneer of Stiles' rust bucket's the color of his eyes.

Renovation on the flesh demands timing. He has to settle for having the dollhouse redone.

He recognizes he has no desire to return to his bed. Already clean enough, next he's stepping into a hot shower, cold water left off, hot never hot enough. He should sabotage the water heater. Steam rises off his body while he fails to find the motivation to use any kind of bath product, water clogging up the air, bathroom fan never turned on.

Settling would be the wrong word. Negotiating space, color, shape, patterns, all that's mental stimulation he fails to find through other routes. The first time Stiles came in he stood at the living room door and after the evaluation period said: Am I in an issue of a home decorating magazine? Did I hit my head in line at the grocery store? He had nothing to answer that with. Stiles would understand it's not a concern with maintaining an apartment, it's fitting the pieces together. An intolerably blunt revelation of his thought processes. He prefers not to find out what, if anything, the boy would get out of meditating on what he'd do differently.

Historically he shrugs when Stiles says I see you spent your weekend antiquing. Stories fill antique stores wall to wall, the scents of hundreds of lives jumbled together, incoherent at first, breaking down into individual narratives as his nose adjusts. For a few hours, mind racing to isolate the smells of one cast away object from the rest, he's other people.

Derek destroyed half the apartment. From a design standpoint, important focal points were eliminated. A good outcome when he's left these couple of weeks by himself. A distraction. Besides, he has to find a few ways to sound proof the place; at least dampen the noise. He's leasing on the top floor, but toeing the line at eviction. His landlord walking in on the aftermath of the category 2 werewolf destruction required a second deposit. He decided to have the bedroom taken apart and by majority replaced, while he's at it, an interior designer he interrogated as harmless executing his ideas while he's at work.

The Milk Moon's on Sunday. He should be able to dispose of his furniture over the weekend. If he convinces himself to spend the night breathing paint fumes while putting that abundance of energy to work he won't be smelling Stiles all night...or finding him and committing something not sexual but brutal to him he'd remember later was inappropriate.

----

She told Stiles to be here at six o'clock, which means he'll be at the door at exactly six o'clock. Even though he's parked down the street out of sight of her house at this moment with his forehead resting on the steering wheel of his completely ancient Jeep, hitting his head against it at least once for driving over at five premised on the panicked thought he'd be late that only made no sense later. Lydia knows boys – and men. Her packmates don't count as either anymore or yet. From the female perspective, she and Allison are burdened by a sloppy mess of hormones trying to put finishing touches on long works in progress – who will delightfully keep at it for the next three to five years. The two of them are already finished representations of womanhood, mortal and immortal.

The last time she slept over, Allison instituted a ban on trying to manipulate the Nemeton to just adult them. It's not like Lydia couldn't practice on other animals with shorter sexual maturation cycles first.
Having no fertility magic bears no relationship to affecting fertility magic through the oak.

Allison put up an argument about sweeping changes in androgen levels giving Stiles testicular or prostate cancer, but he's the one Lydia wants finished. Allison is completely not getting Scott and Isaac as mature adult men under these conditions. Not fair. Not happening.

Sleepovers used to be so normal. Perverted conversations about boys and boys being stupid generated no simple solutions with dangerous moral implications.

Sleepovers have a second disquieting dimension. When Scott, or Allison, or Stiles can't get out from under the influence of the shadow, when the Nemeton breaks into their minds forcefully or too often, Lydia brings them into her home and gives relief, current strong, shadows bound to her bidding. Allison didn't just show up for fun.

Face masks remain mandatory. Because sleepover. Scott doesn't need them – he doesn't need purple toenails either – but there's the option of a minty refreshing feeling.

Watching boys startle every time they look down at their bare feet, wiggling their toes, cautiously enjoying the novelty, is the cutest. Stiles does black when he goes downtown. He doesn't do bright pink or canary yellow and sparkling. Unlike Scott, he'll do hands, stretching them out in front of him, fingers splayed, every few minutes, like he won the lottery.

Sometimes he'll clutch his hands to his chest at the idea of nail polish remover and wear it to school. Staring at his hands trumps English. Proof he books private hours with the school's re-instated official 'hot girl' trumps everything, socially. He only has to say 'Lydia'. Even sparkling pink nail polish doesn't bring him one step closer to 'scene gay'.

**Stiles sits at her boudoir slumping at his painted face.**

"I look like an ineffective clown. Lydia. Don't you dare lie to me."

(Shrieked, but not shrieked, when she achieved leopard spots over gold between his eyebrows and black upper eyelid. She took it up onto his temples. He frowned, pulling his head back, a confused, not negative frown. *I make this butch. You found the one thing.*)

Tonight isn't related to Stiles' increasing dislocations. It's not for socialization, or abandoning changing his body language for repeatedly failing to manipulate his face. It's not abnormal for her to want to hang out. And boys are encultrated not to recognize the same diversity of subtle cues or utilize the same modes of nonverbal communication as women stupid.

Doorbell. Prada tears down from upstairs, hair flowing along her small body. She knows not to bark. Runs in circles until Lydia opens the door, bounding away, tail wagging, waiting for Stiles to come inside in the doorway to the second, casually furnished living room.

Hands stuffed in his pockets, Stiles beams a smile Lydia returns her normal and rehearsed 'cutie smile revealing nothing' to. She allows him in and closes and locks the door. Even human burglars, her last concern, assume doors are locked and come in through the windows. Her mother's house has a big bay window. Glass doors to the back patio. As if that couldn't be completely insufficient enough, it's not the worst way an intruder let himself in.

"Your mom's not home," Stiles identifies. She imagines a younger Stiles; the fact bringing on sudden imbalance a swoon. He's sometime a fainter. Now it's 'Permission to speak freely, Admiral.' He crouches to pet Prada, scratching her behind her butterfly ears.

"She's somewhere," Lydia says, gaze floating across the house. "When I don't want her here she
disappears." She never questioned it in her childhood. She read and played alone. When she started getting hungry, or her toys broke, she skinned her knee on the brick outside or out in the trees playing princess, or she finally wanted company, her parents reappeared, ready to provide whatever she needed. She didn't like how her father talked to her mother. Her parents divorced. Her mother kept the house and most of the fortune. Her father moved across town.

She didn't say anything to her mother about having Stiles over. She's not even sure when her mother left, or where she went. It never bothered her before, taken for granted, the way it's always been. She worries; considers calling and discovering where the woman is, a choice she's avoided repeatedly over the past months. Walking past Stiles down the hallway, toward the kitchen, he rises, customarily falling in step, Prada trotting at his heels. Moving doesn't soothe her nerves. Stiles walking with her doesn't.

"I love my mother, but now I realized she's enslaved to me," Lydia says, brow pursed. She opens a kitchen cabinet, taking down glasses, setting them on the kitchen island and pulling open the refrigerator, breathing in to compose herself, chill in her sinuses heightening alertness.

She hears the contemplative discomfort in Stiles' voice she refused to let into her own.

"There's a definite possibility."

Cool draft from the refrigerator passing over her skin, she pulls out the grapefruit juice, looks at it, and puts it back. Ginger ale. She sets two cans on the counter, still holding them as she scrutinizes Stiles's expression.

"Are we sure she's real?"

His eyes bug. Hm. Bad sign. She punches the soda tabs one at a time. Thinks once. Uses one glass to scoop ice from the freezer, dividing it between the two. If her mother is a real human woman, then she's under some variety of enchantment. If she isn't....

Maybe she's new to this, but that's too complex for a spell put in place since her infancy. If she was ever an infant. Her parents simply never photographed her, even when multiple witnesses including Stiles can confirm she lived here. So her house lies on a telluric current she only now feels now that it ties her to her now-awakened Nemeton. When her own powers were forced alive, she spent days hiding naked in its roots while it slept with her without waking. There's no other power source that could make up an entire fictitious human here. Besides that, even if the high school lies on the currents, her elementary and junior high schools didn't. How would her mother and father have appeared at teacher conferences there?

Definitely her mother's real. The alternative would mean one cornerstone of her universe has been a deception her entire life and she can't cope with that possibility. Which is why they're having highballs now. Wrong glasses. Oh well.

"I want to tell you yes, but I have no idea," Stiles, leaning against another side of the island, says. "You had a nanny. And then a car. I haven't actually seen a lot of your mom unless I'm here." Totally reassuring information. In this area she's not looking for reassurance. She'd like somebody else to break her the truth. As nervous as she may be, maybe Stiles could call her mother. Stiles scowls at the closed refrigerator in front of him. "She has to be real. I'm sure she's real." Attention change. He's been focused on his memories. "We're having whiskey?" He startles her, pushing himself away from the counter, fixated on the bottle before he meets her eyes, his own open in the familiar look of revelation. "Right there! That proves your mom's real. You'd never buy whiskey. You buy only vodka."
Lydia stares down into the fizzing glasses. Frowns.

"You're right." Her mother drinks whiskey sours. Highballs. Occasionally she drinks it neat. Forcing herself to focus past the possibility of a fictitious mother, she looks up. Smiles again. Hands Stiles his drink. He studies it, betraying he didn't actually think about drinking until he had it in his hand. There's the kitchen-adjacent couch area, but Lydia decides on the secondary living room, taking a seat on one of the couches there. Stiles, house broken, sits on the cushion next to her without falling to pieces; into nerves and hormones. Prada, also house broken, trots to her dog bed, circles four times and settles in.

The ginger ale's fizzy, the whiskey adds a kick to the already tangy soda. Or is it the other way around? Vodka doesn't pass when she wants to know she's drinking. The whiskey leaves an aftertaste like unfinished wooden floorboards during remodeling on the back of her tongue. She fleetingly checks her nail polish for chips and wonders when Stiles will react to her prepared inaction. How. She contemplates the blank flatscreen television hung on the opposite wall while she waits on him, thinking how the matte screen poorly reflects the lamps lighting the space. A blurred, black mirror of the room. The sun already set. The moon won't rise until eleven, a waning gibbous. She keeps track year round in her head.

The full moon passed without debacle. They rarely have the benefit of predicting that in advance. She has, once, two days early, but the events have to already be in motion. It helps to know there must be some degree of free will as all living things barrel forward in time toward death. Otherwise her own existence would be incredibly depressing.

Stiles has taken two sips from his highball, one of the television remotes receiving his gaze amped up at full concentration. He knows he's being ignored and bouncing memories off himself trying to put together why. He takes one longer drink, bunches his face, looking her way.

"Obviously I've fucked up. I don't know what I did, but I wanna make it up to you."

Lydia's smile springs to life unprompted. Confused, concerned – most of all pained at the idea he's upset her. Her life would be simpler if he grew up a teaspoon less genuinely sweet. Harder than it already is, but simpler.

"Drink," she says, tapping the air toward his glass. He starts calculating: her Lydia smile, the alcohol, his isolation. He drinks, scanning the living room for clues or traps even as he's mixing and matching what he already knows. If there's either clues to who knows what and especially traps then the maid service has turned against her, in which case it's good he's here.

It is good he's here. She regrets wanting to slap him hard enough to put him in a neck brace since he spent days with his arm in a sling, still favoring it but only occasionally.

Sipping her own ice-cooled drink she can see it his way. Caring intensely. Missing information vital to making sense of the situation she's placed him in. Stiles shares exactly the same psychic powers gifted to her: None. Totally irrelevant. Black hole thermodynamics she can explain. Linear algebra. Multivariable calculus. Biochemistry. Investment banking. The principles of mechanical engineering. Other things have to be felt to stick. He's drinking. Having difficulty between sips convincing himself to take the next one. She did poison all of them with a hallucinogenic preparation of wolfsbane once.

"Starting to get really uncomfortable. Really, really uncomfortable. And a little tipsy. Did you notice you only used one can of ginger ale or was that on purpose?"

Like that needs answering. Better to keep it a mystery. Especially because she didn't. She demurs
with another smile and:

"We're friends, aren't we?"

He blinks alcohol-glossy eyes. In her own defense the high alcohol content of her drink has eased her apprehensions to a shallow lull, one at which she can even accept unwelcome outcomes without interrupting herself.

"We're pack," he says. It means more than friendship. She's no longer certain it means enough.

"You'd take a bullet for Isaac, but friends? You don't exactly hang out, except if Scott's there," she says.

"I thought we were friends," he murmurs, turning his glass around, rolling his wrist, watching the amber liquid passing through the ice.

Lydia's eyes aren't hot, don't sting, aren't bleary, but they're still too wet. She never knew what to think of her demi-human body. Beautiful. She heard it called that since she understood language, which, as far as she knows, takes her back to her earliest memories. Such a beautiful little girl. Precious little girl. Sweet. Perfectly behaved. Her parents should be proud. Her body craves things. Wild things precious, sweet girls wouldn't want.

That used to mean carefully choosing the right men to never be called a slut. Tragically, socially well positioned didn't necessarily mean durable. Sometimes she thought she'd take Jackson apart. Physically or emotionally. She thought she finally had, guilty, distraught, desperate to take care of him. To fix what she'd done. Stiles? Huge upswing in status toward the end of sophomore year that carried on to the beginning of this one. When they finally ID'd the body she left behind she'd have already grown up and moved away.

That girl had been a different Lydia. One imagining a future beyond Beacon Hills. Who planned it in silence, perfunctorily the queen bee. One who never had a garrote tighten around her neck. That boy had been a different Stiles. Fragile, for one thing. Awkward. Shattered. Desperately virginal, for another.

He doesn't kiss like a virgin, drink falling out of his hands, glass breaking on the hardwood floor.

He kisses like Peter, she thinks, hurting and scared the instant of recognition. She's in his lap, straddling him with ease, the resemblance driving needles into her mind, body reliving the touches of a ghost. A boy holding her body close. A skinless hand stroking her curls. All the grave-cool brushes of claws or fingertips on her face.

Stiles' lips aren't the same at all. Softer with more shape. She knows his lips. His hands on her waist and back are powerful, for a human, but not irresistible – his hands incapable of casually bending iron. She remembers it that way, like lengths of iron being bent around her, too intimately contoured to be called a cage.

He's so much larger now, at seventeen. Taller. Big. Bigger than Jackson. Jackson was always a little short, a little light. Not bigger than Aiden, of course. She needs to avoid that thought right now. Between their tempers their relationship's rocky enough. There won't be an Aiden if her bedroom smells like she fucked Stiles, and honestly at that point Aiden won't going to make it into her top five concerns. Alpha or not, Aiden's the actual least of the werewolves with an investment.

When she asks what she'd give to be safe from monster after monster revealing its mien she scares herself. Stiles or Scott or Allison, it's the same. They've killed for her; she's killed for them. Constant
protection? Constant devotion? She doesn't have that. She spends hours alone with Prada. She doesn't believe Aiden is as strong as any of her pack. Stiles, Scott, or Allison? She's asked herself before. Before she realized she wasn't the only way to creep in.

She feels the weight and heat of Stiles' erection through his jeans and the damp of her lace underwear, her skirt pushed up on her hips by spread thighs. His kisses begin to trail off even as she digs her fingernails into his collarbone to his guttural, favorable opining. She isn't any more afraid of making a fool of herself than giving him what she's offering. She's as afraid of both. She's more afraid of Peter.

His hands release her body only to take her by the shoulders. His gaping, kiss-wet face would look dumbstruck except for the rapid movement of his eyes as he checks a hundred details to make sure she's really her, she's her and in her right mind, that and that besides the whiskey he's in his, and she really did mean to kiss him. She did; doesn't mean to kiss him again unless he wants her to. At this point kissing him would be as counterproductive as putting him in a neck brace. The liberating possibility of doing neither lifts her mood. Alleviates her anxiety of discovering a broken window in her packmate to follow a trespasser in through.

"I can't," he says.

She laughs. He looks and sounds so full of conviction. Her cunt has a totally different report for her where it's situated. Mood high, she feels safe enough to flirt with him, and to internalize the reality of their bodies.

If he wasn't tied to her through Scott and through her Nemeton, there'd be no getting back to comfortable with him. Ever. Never again. Not when Peter's the point of contention. Instead, he reappeared from out of sight as if he turned a corner ahead of her and she became convinced when she saw down the next cooridoor he wouldn't be there as she hurried to follow, only to discover with relief she was wrong. Shut off before, she recognizes Me in Stiles; Us inside her.

She always feels safe flirting with him. Girls should be, no matter who they're with. Boys, too, of course. Only that hasn't been her experience.

"You can't keep an erection until orgasm. Inside all this. That's god's honest truth," she says, rolling her eyes.

Stiles' face goes through the myriad motions of disbelief before, mouth no longer hanging open, hands loose on her shoulders, unafraid she'll lunge. He corrects himself:

"I don't want to."

"Don't want to what?" she says slowly, not flirting, waiting on the answer.

"…do that to Derek. Make him feel cheap."

*California Penal Code Section 189:* All murder which is perpetrated by…no, no, yes: poison, lying in wait, torture, or by any other kind of willful, deliberate, and premeditated killing…the next part's irrelevant, and the one after that…conclusion: is murder of the first degree.

Her face falls, annoyance tightening her lips.

It's not a three act tragedy having her thighs open on his hips, Stiles fitting up against her, heat attractive and her friend gone from round-faced teen to stunning. Nor would it be the highlight of her life. At the point they hit her bed, he'd officially be flipping through the telephone directory.
"What about me? I wouldn't feel cheap?"

He's agape again, looking at her like her nose fell off – she has that point of reference; it fell off one time – hands tightening not to shake or restrain her. To restrain himself in lieu of throwing them in her face, no space for his usual huge gesticulations. Her own hands tighten, fingertips pressing in, one lying on her thigh and one still on his chest, frustrated right back at him.

"Lydia, you're getting me drunk. You're on my dick," he says loudly enough she could be rooms away. He's gifted since she can't say she 'Oops. I could have missed that' like last summer to one impoverished boy. " Oh my god! I don't even know what's going on. What's going on? Why are you — " He defuses, no longer trying to change her unbudging tight-lipped expression. "Could you… Maybe if you could—if you wanted to sit next to me that'd be great right now. Like really great. I'd really appreciate it."

She rolls her eyes and slides off of him; down next to him, pressed thigh to thigh, suddenly so much less willing to be apart from him than while she put in a strong performance to invite hours of nudity, tensing as she remembers there's no safety in a home. Not from Peter. Not from anyone.

There's safety in a pack. Distress sweeping over her expression, this time her eyes sting, her voice small, almost a whisper.

"I know that you think I'm insane again. Can you forget that part and hold me?"

He doesn't have to squint at her more than a moment, sliding his arm around her; letting her curl up until she feels less exposed; pull her feet up onto the couch and turn her knees in; rest her head against his shoulder.

"Dude. You were never insane," he insists. "Peter used the werewolf psychic memory transfer when he…Peter." Fucking finally, she thinks, and Thank you. " I am—Lydia. Peter didn't—"

She shuts her eyes and sees a blue eyed boy effortlessly sprawled in that stupid, dominating, take up everybody else’s space crotch flaunting position, elbow all but in her seat. She realizes now he never went through the action of sitting down, already making himself completely at home in her brain. She hears him complimenting her gloves.

Such a relief the actual adult man is up to date on dressing himself, now. Out with the hideous leather jacket. Even she couldn't tell him she hoped he either gave it to someone completely destitute and cold or burned it.

"He doesn't think so. Which means nothing," she says in the quiet that's settled over them.

"He doesn't matter," Stiles stresses, anger comfortingly protective, engaged in time consuming self-searching. She can wait. The thing she couldn't wait on was the two of them taking days or weeks to understand each other. They don't have that kind of time. Something's always waiting. Including Peter. Maybe to take Stiles away from her. Not yet. "I thought you two had worked something out," Stiles goes on, confusion authentic. "I was there, but obviously not for what happened in your head. You guys banter. You're like a sass avalanche. A sassa—That's a, wow, a stupid word I'm not going to say. That and how you make him so interested in the floor. Every floor. And walls. I just didn't think—" He makes apology eyes, still with the lack of actual understanding. He's talking quietly, too, but frank, because he sees she's handling frank and neither of them are interested in missing each other in the details: 'I think Peter and I think 'Lydia's bitch'."
smoky eye shadow with a faint sheen of glitter. Nods to him that she's holding it together, resting her head again. She doesn't want to think, let alone speak…

She probably couldn't, except that Stiles was there and she realizes in shock she has no idea what happened to him afterward. He must be as distraught not knowing what happened to her. Assuming 'It couldn't have been too bad' doesn't line up with reality.

"I thought he was going to rape me. That he was some human psychopath planning to rape me. When I saw him coming for me, why would I think anything else? Shoot you, maybe stab you, and rape me. Even after I saw his face, what kind of sense was I supposed to make out of that? When he threw me onto the field, he was on top of me and I didn't know—There were just his hands pulling me underneath him. I had no idea he was biting me. I didn't put it together. Not until later. Whatever was happening it hurt so much more than I thought it could, and his eyes couldn't have been glowing, and I passed out."

She rubs her elbows. She feels her body hitting the grass. Pain exploding through her nerves where he tears into her flesh. The most pain she's ever suffered, amplified by incomprehension. The loss of consciousness coming on, the stranger moving on top of her, not knowing if she'll ever wake up or what she'd wake up to. She can't completely rely on her choppy memories, they didn't match up perfectly with her wounds. She remembers her emotions perfectly.

Stiles puts his other arm around her as she turns and presses her face into his shoulder. Her cunt remains soaked and aching, arousal left to slow dissolution.

"It doesn't matter that he never raped me. I've dreamed he did. I dream he does," she says, her hoarse words above all accusative. Her nature turns insult to wrath. When her eyes fly open in the wake of nightmare, alone in her room, his weight and crushing grasp disappear. In the dark, and she remembers she can strip his soul from his corpse.

She's come as far as her key ring gripped in her closed fist standing at the door of her car, looking in. She recounts his exact crimes to herself. Has never climbed in the driver's seat. Knows if she ever is barefoot in her nightshirt driving from the foothills into Sacramento he won't be alive at sunrise. He'll let her in. Even if he knows, he'll let her in. He's a coward but he doesn't have to die like one. Slamming the door to collapse against it, lying there until someone smells him putrefying from underneath it, the police ramming it open to roll him over behind it? He won't tolerate that conclusion, but he'll be under her touch before he reaches the door.

Lydia practices wrapping the shadows tight to him in flickers of thought. He's felt her do it. He always ends up at the same in-the-lurch expression. Some instincts say homicide and others that it's the only time she smiles at him. She feels powerful. It's alone she remembers when he had her power and her body under his draíocht last year.

"He knows how helpless I felt. I've made him helpless. He's been helpless before. It's not the Cuban Missile Crisis. He disarmed," she says. Strain creeps back into her voice. "I don't think he can understand why I'm so afraid he'll rape me. He'll say 'But Lydia, I never did that' like it's not his fault. Like he didn't assault me, or he never touched me, or doesn't want to touch me."

The way Stiles nuzzles at her hair is nothing like Peter's fascination with it. It brings him protectively closer, not because her hair smells like everything else he wants but because he'd take a blow to the head for her. She likes that about him. There's no good way to say that. That would sound terrible out loud: I love that you'd let somebody bash your head in for me, Stiles. She leaves it implicit by staying close; allowing him that.

"Why haven't you talked to anybody? Allison?" he wonders aloud, sounding cogent while speaking
slow from the whiskey.

The ugly answer may unsettle him, but it's his own fault. And Scott's. And Allison's. She steels herself with the fact she has the right to say it, no matter what else happened at the same time. The wrath comes into her, the wrath of a flood or a lightning storm, impartial to hurts dealt.

"You abandoned me. Everyone except Peter abandoned me. He tried to take care of me. He was younger, and gorgeous, and he was the only one who asked me if I was alright after he attacked me in economics. He did everything right. He was sweet. He knew how shitty Jackson was treating me, and the rest of you. What he was doing to me. He uses violence to stick to a timeframe, right? He doesn't feel anything when he wounds somebody. And then when he wants something he's…" She clenches her teeth. Digs her nails into Stiles' shirt.Breathes out the fury. She doesn't hate the boy of her dreams. Wants someone to know, speaking from her past – the moment just before: "He's the first boy I held my breath for when I kissed him."

Stiles doesn't answer her except in the brief tightening of his arms that promises he hears her side. He knows what she means. Naturally he would, seeing he's seen as much of Peter as Lydia with some fraction less of the helplessness and confusion and without Peter literally changing faces. Right now, she doesn't blame him for collecting and keeping Peter's flattering qualities. Minus her ransom for giving him life.

*Her hand in his. His touch on the small of her back standing together looking at the mirrors arrayed around his open grave at his command but by her approximations; Peter nuzzling into her hair, lips above her ear saying It's perfect, Lydia. You've worked so hard. His fingers dig greedily against her back.*

*She refuses to turn, staring ahead wondering what the Rube Goldberg machine she built can be for. Her arms and shoulders hurt. She brought out previously unknown strength to tear up the old floorboards, ignoring her own limitations. Peter begs Lydia at her ear. He'll take her away. She wants to go away. To see the blue eyed boy she gives her smile.*

*She could have her desires filled. Satiate herself. Her prince who took her away from her guilt and isolation, his castle restored around them in a place outside of time. The boy who takes the snide or self-centered declarations she masks herself in as games not of one-upmanship but wave propagation. She thinks about performing a Fourier analysis. Unfortunately there's no sufficiently high resolution method to record synaptic signaling in the brain.*

*She stands unmoved by the promise of never wanting for anything again. She wants revenge for all the misery she's in. He begs Lydia to her again. He's ruined, burned out, and he doesn't know where she called that boy from his past who answers only to her fears from.*

*She has his smile. She's never giving it back.*

"I'm tired," she says, numb except for the pain his teeth left piercing the fog. She's more savage and more primal; more heartless; draws on an amorality she didn't know lived in her. She isn't the princess in the tower. She's the forest of thorns. The wilderness ensnaring and reclaiming the toppled castle where he lies sleeping. For a moment it seems clear; her consciousness is always in flux. The body may crawl out from here, but not the boy. "I want to go home and go to sleep," she says.

"That's too bad,"he murmurs, sounding just like the thought he was pursuing slipped away. Are her veins full of pleasure or poison?

She wonders, now that she knows her own power, if she could even restore what she denied to his black-crisped body or if she allowed the ravenous souls in the Between to tear at his identity and
memories before she brought him into the corpse his ritual revived.

She prayed to herself as she killed Stiles that all of him would return. If she could stand across from herself now she'd shriek at that girl. Disable her unhoned gifts. Death and the roaming dead are separate forces. Snatching back the toll paid to the ferryman isn't just nasty manners, the coins have already blackened in his grasp. She made crude choices wielding greater power than she can control.

She's smarter with her power, now, than to loose it carrying another wish. But a dead person did get into Stiles. It is still a problem. This is the first second she's cared exactly what she did to Peter. She's not sure she does care, except that it's one more thing affecting Stiles, who's taking himself back to the time in his turn.

"I thought I was protecting you, trying to figure out what was going on with the kanima. We thought you were a werewolf at first, and then we thought you were the kanima," he says, a potential ramble looming. If she wasn't half-drunk she'd cut him off, but if he's talking he's not just a warm body. She isn't alone. "I'm not defending literally abandoning you. In the parking lot. I was kind of as in actually treading water in the pool for three hours holding Derek's paralyzed ass up, and my cell phone was destroyed. And you have a house. Where you live. And I have a motor vehicle. And then I had weeks. I totally abandoned you."

Nestled into a more comfortable position, maybe the primordial vengeance switched off but the wounded girl crying in the car still waited an hour in the empty parking lot.

"When I saw him under the ice skating rink, you held me. Of course, you were there trying to score with me," she says. "When you left me in my car, the sun had set on the first day he spoke to me. You told me I'm really beautiful when I cry."

If she sounds snappish, at least his head isn't snapped to the side.

It takes him a couple frozen seconds: "In retrospect that's one of the creepiest things I've ever said."

He's still a strong, solid body. Still with her. Her sex drive shut off. She shares a moment with him and her smile. Not the excited, delighted one that used to top out 'genuine'. Warm, familial, learned. They're new people. And, okay, maybe the old ones died way too literally to be healthy. At least they're mostly not still neurotic, attention-starved hormonal disasters. Her smile falls off her face, adrenaline floods her stomach in waves paced by the beat of her blood, when she remembers why he's here. He shifts beneath her, automatically trying to make her more comfortable. Her scratchy voice comes from a tightened throat.

"Peter got up out of his grave and he just...disappeared. But I knew he had wanted me. I didn't know if I'd wake up to him raping me. I had no idea. He could find me anywhere. If he ever wanted me, in the flesh, there wouldn't be a single thing I could do. Not back then," she says, emotions human in intensity but beyond interpreting: chaotic; paralyzing. Her words become frantic. "I have it so tangled up in my head, Stiles. In my dreams it's horrible, but when I'm awake? When I'm alone, or I'm with Aiden, sometimes I pretend I'm with him and his. I'm afraid of him but I would know anything that tried to hurt me should be so much more afraid of him." Tremulous words: "I've had this idea, thought for a long time 'At least I don't have to be afraid of Stiles'. You don't even know when I took the attention and cut you out and when I really didn't pay attention. Then I find out...Peter. Now it's you I'm dreaming about. Stiles, I really didn't know if you'd fuck me tonight. Luckily you care about Derek."

In that repeated flash of insult she finds no need for fairness, facts, or any assessment at all about what Stiles deserves. He deserves something; no science to emotional recompense. In her dream he forces her down. She tries to scream, when it's Peter, but it isn't. She thinks she has to deserve it. Ate
up his attention too long, and then she cursed him in death. She's crying. He has his long fingers inside her. A long time; no time; she's glad, glad, glad it's him and not Peter. She still fights, blindly violent. When he wins, when she has him buried in her, burning along the walls of her vagina, a searing heat she keeps telling herself her liberally flowing cum's only trying to douse, while she's crying and his soft lips are everywhere but hers, the hands her body flinches under, away from, persuasive, her body arches up underneath him; she gasps.

She never enjoys it. She never enjoys the idea of belonging to Peter. But when she finally looks at Stiles he has the same sensitive, intelligent concern he shows her time after time and she remembers she committed this, everything her fault. She's helpless, confused, but his mouth closes on hers and then they're animals.

She doesn't wake up until morning. Uses a harsh bar soap until her cunt's no longer slick. Drinks coffee. Has no appetite. The house closes in on her until she flees it, goes to Beacon Hills' 'lifestyle center' if not for school, a more expensive way of saying 'shopping center', and sits on a bench without entering the stores, unless she goes to movies she barely remembers.

The Stiles of her nightmares isn't the wounded packmate holding her now. Lydia withholds any apologies. He can't do that to Derek. She's still unhappy, even though he thought she wanted to take advantage of his recent promiscuity. She did, if she had to, but only to sever him from Peter. He apologizes at halting intervals. She remembers when he left her to Peter and stops feeling guilty about anything.

"Stay here," she says, question unvoiced.

He has no idea how her mind works, never has, probably never will; she's looking at him now and he's got his brow pulled so close together, he's almost cross eyed, lips just parted.

"You sure?" At least he doesn't sound like he thinks she's crazy. More like he thinks he has to be.

She blow air out through her cheeks. Gets her face together – whatever's left of it besides red blotches and puffy eyes – serious when she's composed:

"I can't sleep by myself tonight. It's not a test. I just can't." Strain in her self-deprecating smile.

"Sometimes, last summer? I picked up boys for that. Which doesn't actually make any sense because even if you're more likely to be assaulted by somebody you know that leaves the other thirty-three percent of assaults. Not to sound that haunted. It's not usually like...Anyway, I picked most of them up because they were promising recruits."

Stiles looks fond over her; not so fond the piercing intelligence doesn't show through the intoxication. Always on task. He stays latched to topics like a from the genus Ceratophrys, a pacman frog, famous for being physically incapable of release their prey if they bite on more than they can swallow and choking to death. She wonders if she can find one that looks like Stiles. What attributes would even make a frog look like Stiles? Can she find one that looks like it has eyelashes?

"You wanna call Allison?" he asks, already glancing down and back like he can see to his back pocket to find an easy way to get his phone out without dislodging her.

She shakes her head. She has a better idea.

"Let's get really drunk and watch Freeway. Or, get really drunk while watching Freeway. Maybe afterward. Holding my hair while I puke and waking up with severe dehydration, puking more, and figuring out which one of us the least hungover to drive us to school tomorrow will be the least sexy thing we can ever do."
He runs that by himself one more time and can't disagree.

"Freeway?" Not familiar, then. "I was expecting, uh, not to jinx it, Water For Elephants. For the sixth time."

She smiles her perkiest seditious smile.

"Hmm. That also has Reese Witherspoon in it." Coy eyes. "Aren't you still mad at Peter?"

"Yes. Yes, I am." No hesitation there. **Good.**

"Trust me. You'll love it," she promises. She starts negotiating their space to get up, more difficult than she anticipated because she's more intoxicated than when she last tried to move. He moves his arms to try and steady her; not a great performance, either, but she makes it to her feet, avoiding the broken glass, which seems like the kind of thing her mother pays the maids for. By then her vestibular system has compensated for her slower movements. She's steady on her feet and her proprioception's one hundred percent when she looks back and down to see the gravest face he has out and on. Not actually sobering, but it brings her to the same place as he's saying:

"I'll stop. I won't go back. I swear."

She squints at him. **Boys.**

"Have I asked you to do that? Why would I take the first person who ever fell in love with me from the first person I ever fell in love with just because I want him dead?"

He reins it in, double-taking, again, which is what they get for ginger ale spiked whiskey, reaction uncompromised by the delay:

"Hold on. Which one of us do you want dead in that sentence?"

She pauses. Is that really a question? Not to say she left unintentional ambiguity.

"There's no right or wrong interpretation."

"That's semantically impossible," he says, on point.

"Only in dualism," she says. Shrugs. Pitying look, because 'boy'. "I'm mad at you, but I'm not mad at you. I'm sympathetic to you wanting Peter, and Derek, and me, and...Danny, right? You've been less sexually frustrated around Danny and Ethan the more sex you've had so if I had to guess I'd say you're almost past that one. You're a long way toward over me."

She picks up her un-destroyed glass, heading to the kitchen contemplating cutting whiskey with vodka. Maybe she should make a pitcher of something or else he's not going to see the whole movie because they'll pass out. That would be disappointing. Getting trashed in an orderly manner is hard. She decides to keep it light. There's always shots. Finding out if Stiles can do shots sounds entertaining. Yes if his other friends let him drink at their apartments. Otherwise, no.

After the movie, which he soon latches on to, after she encourages him **Feel free to take inspiration,** and after they wake up for the first time because his stomach turns on him and her mother comes to the bathroom door and asks if he needs a glass of water – Lydia says **Please** – lying together in no particular way, thoughtless of limbs, and Prada asleep at the foot of the bed, she remembers death, asks cautiously:

"What if I'm the reason you're with Peter?"
She can't rule out the whole 'making Stiles appealing to the departed' idea. Or Peter taking interest in Stiles only because she won't engage in truce-forging and he wants an eye on them as much as they want an eye on him. Especially when she's equipped to kill him.

"The reason I'm with...?" He doesn't sound like he grasps exactly what she's asking. She's not sure she grasps exactly what she's asking, anymore, as if uncertainty's contagious. "Nah," he says. "I met him first. He attacked you because you're a bean sí. He picked me up because I have too much personality. Freaking seriously. He proposed to me like he hadn't just mauled you right before he kidnapped me in the 'Be pack with me forever and ever' way. Which in no way worked out for him." He groans, but comfortably, the groan of someone who just evacuated his stomach after waking up in urgent pain. "Heeeeee's still hot. for. my. brain. The only thing that you could add is eventually he eats it because actual zombie."

Lydia scowls, anger penetrating the relaxation of intoxication.

"I won't let him eat your brain."

"Not if I don't let him eat my brain first," Stiles contends.

She's falling asleep to the thought of Not my fault when pain shoots through her entire abdomen, she's on her feet, and then she's in the bathroom. Sugary drinks. She has yet to encounter something more terrible in alcohol than puking from sugary drinks. Stiles succeeds at keeping her hair out of her face, or the toilet, and fills the glass with tap water while she sits against the bathroom wall with chapped lips and bile eating the back of her throat.

Stiles looks terrible. Or he looks great. Great because he washed his half-yellow-and-green face, fading bruise an irregularly colored and shaped Phantom of the Opera mask. A few more days and it disappears. She takes the water, sloshing it through her teeth to rinse the acid off, making it taste totally foul. She chokes it down and drinks the rest, thoughts wave-rocked but Lydia regretfully aware how hard it can be leaving behind the emotional intensity of contentious relationships. She specializes in them. Aiden's a step up. Her emotions tell her, maybe unfairly, they spend almost as much time needing time apart as they do together. Sometimes she can't explain why she's upset with him. Can, admitting it to herself harder: She's making sure he'll come back.

Reasons one through seven to leave getting Stiles to open up about his relationships to Isaac. She's not ready to call the little more time the two of them seem to be spending together 'hanging out'. She can't talk. She and Aiden, Allison, and Isaac do 'double date' activities, and he has an open invitation to tag along with Allison or Scott most of the time, but one on one he finds her confidence intimidating.

She shoves Stiles like people rattle broken televisions to get him to stop snoring. Sighing, looking at him with floating, thankfully not scrolling, vision, lying on top of his arm and, mischief coming on, twisting his nipple – aww, he squeaks! – they both seem so harmless that her clear-enough but unable-to-sustain-multiple trains-of-thought-mind can't remember how either of them could be terrifying to anyone.

Chapter End Notes

Milder Chapter Warnings:

• Discussion of non-human anatomy/knotting; any knotting, if I'm suddenly inspired,
will be posted fic-adjacent.
• Mild to moderate hetero/bisexuality. Hide the children!
• (I run down some common content concerns in the extended author's notes: X)
Chapter 5

Chapter Notes

In which this fic remembers it began life as uncanny amounts of PWP.

Peter's Midtown apartment complex has a parking deck, but that's for residents. Stiles ends up parallel parking two blocks down. On Friday nights the jumble of restaurants, businesses, residential complexes, at least one gallery show, and bars attracts a mixed crowd. Lavender Heights, hosting Jungle, lies indeterminate blocks away. It seems to Stiles like he should know, but he's never driven from one to the other.

He passes the other half of the apartment complex, two story townhomes he thought Peter would prefer for autonomy's sake. Later he realized Peter would rather put as many stories and civilians between himself and a threat as possible. He can smell the chlorine off the pool Peter doesn't care about and he wouldn't want to be asked questions like 'What's your apartment number?' using. He's not permanently turned off the one at school, but it's indoors.

The entrance requires a pass card. Peter acquired him one of those early on. He prefers not to be buzzed. It's not hard to get in without it, wait around for someone going in or out and catch the door, which he did before and does when he forgets the card. Security wise, residents should hope somebody's watching the cameras. Obviously nobody asked Derek if he lived there. Sum total, the fitness room and laundry room which require an additional swipe to enter are marginally secure.

*Friday. Eight. I have Derek's key.*

Peter never texted him back. Stiles has his righteousness on but still feels jumpy. He should, inviting himself over to a werewolf's living space in the shirt the guy's nephew wore when they slapped skin. He shouldn't have to. First: Peter gave him space. He took it. He considered his situation. He talked to Isaac. He talked to Scott about talking to Isaac. And to Lydia. He can't shake being frightening to Lydia.

Maybe having a guy obsessed with her, who charted out how he would marry her in elementary school and stuck to it, who sometimes resented when she didn't spend her attention on him on cue, telling her things like he's the only one who knows her secrets, that's she's beautiful at the wrong times, a guy who even thought about letting her come onto him when she was on that much Lortab, and, maybe the most discomforting thing, has masturbated about her more times than he has even a rough estimate for, doesn't end up looking as harmless closer to adulthood. They both thought of it as. His certainty he would marry her was a kid's belief; thank god he adopted it before he knew what sex was. Even when he realized he wanted sex from her, a part of him remained anchored in ideas about holding hands, getting to show her his collection of Transformers and legitimately caught and traded full roster of Pokémon she would undoubtedly be won over by, love the flower patterned teddy bear Beanie Baby he intended to give her once she started talking to him.

If he resented knowing Peter sent or sends her texts she never responds to before, it's gross, now. He has no tactic yet for telling Peter to stay the hell away from Lydia without revealing anything as private as her fears. He can't escape he's projecting. If she'd found out about Peter any other way and made the same play, then he would've had sex with that her she didn't want. Sufficient to scar him for life.
He’ll take projecting when his gut says if Scott dies or he or Allison die, the right combination of circumstances, Lydia will come to Peter because she's right. He's the second safest choice – not safe for Stiles, but safe for her. That'll still be true if Peter stops being a fucking creep.

Second: Peter never asked for space for himself, or said he had anything to consider. Ergo, Stiles deserves to be comfortable coming back over. Neither of them ever hinted at having an exclusive relationship.

That holds up to the point of Stiles' vindictive flaunting. If Peter gets to send skin pics of him to Derek, he can wear Derek's clothes to Peter's. Except for those meta layers about scent, territory, and the exaggerated dominance hierarchy that arises between three Betas who share no pack ties.

Stiles never expects to get used to the spontaneous appearance of a werewolf, Peter in the center and at the front of the choke point between the entrance hall table and the rest of the hallway running down the apartment like a seam, terminating at the closed bedroom door when Stiles turns back from locking the door. The whole place smells like fresh paint.

Still to the last muscle, the wolf wears reaper's eyes, empty of sentiment, unblinking. Stiles' case of nerves intensifies; he holds his unapologetic expression by willpower, walking feet closer, stopping in easy striking distance but far enough it'd take a lunge to get violent with him. He rehearsed this in his mind for days. His pulse rises; survival instincts cry out. He already ignores those all the time.

"You miss me?" he asks, dropping asserting his equality for a beat for a gentler voice, betraying himself. Forcing himself to recognize the breadth of pain he's caused his pack, caused Derek, he still missed Peter. Over two weeks and no contact. Never happened since he took him up on tutoring last November.

Gushy second-first-crush emotional-car-crash making him all quivery, the frequent focus of all his attention and his fantasies, and so little contact with Derek – until April 27th in his life daily without tracking the buildup took priority because hurt and pining he took over rage, guilt, physical gravity, and the absent conversation partner.

His resentment toward Peter came packaged with rubbing his thighs together, legs curling up closer to the warmth in his junk under the covers in bed when loneliness and missing his stupid taunting, bantering voice, the unhealthy amount of attention, coming out of a fight proud of himself swelled too powerfully to ignore. Not only that but the great body he can usually touch whenever and however he wants, all his negativity a fiery streak through pining and ‘I'll take it'. Add to that only being able to masturbate over Peter or source-vetted porn without covering his conscience deeper in soot.

The wolf moves without sound. Circles him: smooth, dancer's steps walking the edge of psychopathic, viscera-strewing dismemberment. Stiles drops the idea of getting an answer; communicating at all. The thing pulling the history of his time spent with Derek from the air with sharp attention to Stiles' body language isn't Peter. Not the denial it sounds like. He can't afford to think of it as Peter. He thinks of it as the thing that looked up from Lydia's fallen, bleeding body the first split second : undiluted purpose, personless, not a human or a wolf – only violence and reflex.

Stiles walks himself through Stiles-to-Stiles advice: Breathe evenly. Keep it casual. It just wants to know if you've turned on him. Don't tense. Wait it out. Pretend it's not there.

He's not about to become a homicide for carrying the scent of sex from a werewolf Peter last fought. Thanks to Scott, he came psychologically prepared for the predatory reaction. He follows Peter's hard eyes to the edge of his vision; picks them up again when the wolf comes around the other side, even though they're not matched to his, fixed on his body. Especially because they're not matched to
his. If Peter wanted deference he'd follow the floorboards next to his feet, instead; anything less would be read as, and be, a challenge. He plans not to roll over for Peter, the only message he has not carried on the air.

Derek changed his style, which by itself is unremarkable. He's gonna show conformity with the guys on his shift because repeat first half of sentence. Hours spent together, actions coordinated, Derek a pack animal, driven to more serious investment than humans moving between human cliques.

Being evaluated for execution Stiles realizes this isn't the t-shirt he wants to die in, a three tone screen printed crew neck t-shirt. It's got a deer skull with a heraldic cross on its forehead and illegible shit in calligraphic Old English plus a skewed background pattern, there's some roses, and the back looks like the designer did so much blow he reached another dimension. In theory Stiles so approves of Derek owning shirts like this. Before he moved to solid colors, Derek used to dress like Michael Jackson and drive a Camaro. Stiles has his suspicions, but you don't just ask people if they're recovering hipsters. (It was New York. Things happen.) You pray for them. Like Stiles is still praying not to die in this shirt – at this point in his life not to any specific power. He wants to die wearing a piece of clever humor.

"I had sex without you," Stiles 'confesses' when he sees a slew of minute concessions, signs of reason re-engaging, of personality. The wolf maintains his distance. Stiles realizes he won't touch him. Not with the sex shirt on. One that smells good when Stiles, under stress, has stopped, snagged it up from its place in his drawer, and pressed his face into it. All kinds of soothing Derek!pheromones. The same ones repelling Peter. Attacking a shirt in his own apartment? That wouldn't scream insecurity. "I can do that," Stiles points out helpfully, in case there's been confusion. "I still have my penis and the rest of the equipment when you're not around."

"Take it off. You smell repulsive," Peter commands, voice too calm.

Stiles refuses to acknowledge the danger. A practical strategy eliminating retaliation for coming in here a walking diss. From a social pressure standpoint even though Stiles is making eye contact he thinks from teaching Scott self-control that acting normal at a riled but socially associated werewolf makes it tough to find an excuse to attack a guy.

"This works for me. It's like kryptonite. I'm not sure if red or green." That takes a second to reason through. "Ugly brown kryptonite," he concludes. "If you think I'm gonna put myself in a position where you'll shut me up you must've forgotten a lot about me in like no time at all."

Peter sighs as if he's painfully inconvenienced; all Stiles' Peter. Stiles objectifies him, fixing in mind he has sex with the man before something happens with his temper. Being one of Lydia's two shopping bitches he accidentally clothes, and Peter's got on an especially-long run of buttons at the neck short sleeve shirt, but he's treating the buttons as decorative, not functional. So much chest, shoulders diving in under his collarbone, the cords of his neck, the way his pecs slope out, plateau, chest less like a statue, more like a flat slab of rock. Hales can't fit jeans but the shirt went one size up, stretched over his chest and biceps, loose where it hangs off them. New. Good find. A lot of the time Peter's split between loose fits and then slim fits boasting he's prepared for a surprise wet t-shirt contest. This shirt has even got something decorative going on, steel grey with a breast pocket hemmed in darker grey across the top, just like the collar, sleeves, and lower hem. Perfect for making out with his upper body and getting his hands up his shirt to enjoy the abs. Hot. Peter's hot. It'd be better if Peter stayed sexy and alive, not eliminated by Scott, although in banish-that-thought-immediately he could be taxidermied.

Peter's eyebrows work through the being fetishized, falling into accepting that Stiles won't let him physically, sexually annul hostilities. The body as leverage has a better exchange rate if it can be
applied instead of just displayed.

"Stiles, we can avoid arguing," he says, sounding sweet plus already starting in on using a conversation partner's name, exerting social pressure of his own. Stiles likes the sound of his name a lot more if it's coupled with Peter undoing his jeans with his teeth. Not at all as dirty pool. "You outplayed me on Derek," he says, shrugging amiably, face so sincere. "You won. That's what I get when I bid for him using a third party with separate interests. I'm not interested in complaining to you, or blaming you, or punishing you."

Stiles' mouth tightens at the corners. His teeth clench. He scowls.

"And he's lying out the gate. We got to a good place where you mostly told cruel truths." Peter lacks tells. Stiles doesn't need them. He lifts his brow. "I can be bribed to naively trust 'not interested in' if you fork over six hundred dollars cash money."

Peter rolls his eyes, automatically rejecting the option of a blanket concession of defeat out of his wallet. Not about Stiles making bank, instead: forcing a human concession. Stiles gunned for Peter turning it down. He'd have to drop his arguments if he got what he asked for out of the guy.

"It's not completely untrue," Peter gripes like a kid. "I have complaints, I blame you, and embarrassing you in front of the two people you least want to see you in a negative light doesn't cover my losses. I'm prodigiously interested. I'm not planning to act on it. You understood my gist. Why make a big deal out of this?"

Stiles vets and accepts the authenticity behind the question. Parts of his offense require some clarification for Peter to understand them exactly. He's getting snippy, trying to rein in his expressions and the volume; how aggressively he gestures.

"You harassed your nephew, beat on your nephew, gave me to your nephew for his sexual recreation, plus embarrassing me 'in front of the two people', causing friction between me and my whole pack, plus treating this as a performance review. Of me. Don't think I don't know you're as interested in where I'm at with as you were Derek. Not when I'm going into fugues and try to kill you. You always cover your losses. You're insured. Second chance to settle: Tell me what by I'll drop it."

No eye-rolling but Peter stays annoyed. Stiles likes it. Even if Peter sees acting out as a viable strategy, which it is when Stiles isn't interested in playing the sweet-talk game, he has to produce enough real complaints to warm Stiles up to it. A strategy invented for compelling Stiles. Itself a fact with appeal.

"Please. I'm in the red. What have I gained from any of this? You all imagine I'm some kind of sadistic, megalomaniac tower sitting villain." His head pulls back as his expression charts the ridiculousness of that. "I don't even have a lap cat. The apartment complex is unfond of me; insecure as a tower. If I wasn't so damn personable I'd already be evicted. What is there to be megalomaniac over? As if unseating Scott's the key to regional stability." Moment for thought; nod of concession toward Stiles. "I am sadistic. That's true." And back on to bitching. "I'm a social pariah. Take the shirt off. That's the area my most unattractive attributes are fixated on right now."

"No," he snaps. Peter failed to make him tractable. He doesn't even know what it would take to make him tractable. He didn't come here to negotiate. He came here to yell at Peter. His temper leaps. The yelling: "You're training me for something. Someday? You'll be finished with me. You gave me a free sample what that feels like and now you expect me to lay off you? You gave me a free sample of being used, too, like it was fun figuring out where you had me applying the pressure for you? If
I'm not dead when we settle this shit down, settling you included, and Derek doesn't hate me, odds there's still an offer on the table here looking pretty solid. If you can't stand me when I smell like somebody who loves me, you better take my sweet ass out on a date. You don't know what I gave up because you physically can't understand it."

"You think you're in love with him," Peter calmly considers.

_The shit that comes out of your mouth_, Stiles thinks, face accusing, taking the few steps into easy striking range with the straight shoulders and open body language asserting his right to be in the apartment wearing whatever he wants. They never set limitations on how he gets in. Peter holds off emoting, waiting in place.

"I don't 'think'," Stiles defends. From a foot and a half off he can use incrementally-taller.

"You're right." Peter's smile at its most smug. "Lovers aren't famous for thinking."

Stiles closes his eyes until the temptation to go from yelling to screaming passes; until he's back down to 'voicing biting anger'.

"I come back here to you, and you're just gonna stand here and make fun of me?" He remembers Peter saying they didn't have to argue. Maybe the wolf changed his mind.

Peter eyes him cautiously, tilting his head away for a different perspective, squinting from the side.

"Versus running the risk of becoming the alien host of your love for my nephew? Pretty much, yeah."

_You just asked him out on a date_ sweeps aside _What are you talking about?_ leaving that to be carried off by the wind. In no iteration of angry at Peter did he intend to do that. He files it under things he wants someone to do to not disassociate from Derek. Peter's right. It's Derek he wants to go on a date with. Not only would Peter be a shitty date, before even that he should not draw public attention to 'I'm jailbait for seven more months under your human laws'. He already cost his dad his job once.

'If I'm old enough to kill Peter I'm old enough to have sex with him' is an effective proposition to his father, to Derek – one impaired in a court of law by Peter's post-mortem mobility.

"I asked you if you missed me," he grouses, shoulders slumping. That has nothing to do with anybody but them.

"I remember that. Little preoccupied with the smell of home invasion at the time," Peter says, voice cool. "I think you've said what you wanted to, so if you want to make yourself smell less like disgustedly rutting with my nephew."

Stiles said as much as he wanted to leveraging the shirt against Peter. Logic points to Peter pushing him out the door and into the hallway if he keeps at it. He breathes in Derek all around him one more time; peels the shirt over his head, breath quickening while he folds it and puts it in the drawer of the entrance hall table where its scent won't circulate as widely.

If Peter won't stoop to attacking an article of clothing like it's a wolf while it's on his body, then he won't attack it when it's off him, sitting in a drawer doing nothing. Probably. He's petty. Stiles' chances of getting physically commandeered by a werewolf are now one hundred percent.

Yanked away and back into his arms, skin on skin where Peter folds them around his chest and at his open collar, shoulder blades against his pecs – not to be mistaken for a hug. Proprietary, one hand stroking his abdomen. Expression still tight, teeth still clenched, already breathing fast, Stiles shuts
his eyes; lets the blood rush to his cock. He couldn't stop it, anyway, when Peter's jealousy raising the quivery feeling of having his stomach touched, ineffectively but symbolically replacing with his own scent the traces of Derek's pheromones soaked deep into the fabric of the t-shirt, carried on his sweat, that rubbed off on Stiles' body, Peter's so many bad points have Stiles' kink for the wolf's obsessive need for him to battle with.

"Don't act like you didn't want me to sleep with him," Stiles says, wolf looking down his body from over his shoulder. He can read Peter's displeasure without turning.

"To keep him around. Now he's gone and all I get is a rank stench and you mocking me," Peter says. Exasperation as much as twitching abs backs the sound from Stiles' throat.

"And me. If that matters. Because you would not have detached me from him, except by violence, if he did hang around."

"Hnn."

The impression of being guided to his execution falls only so far from the mark with Peter cinching him close with a hand on his hip, the other on his near shoulder. His right shoulder. The one that the wolf twisted and strained into a mess. There's no apology in his touch; a touch that doesn't restrain him, either. Coupled with Peter more interested in his face in profile, and neck, and shoulder, Stiles relents the wolf's not being more insidious than taking a turn checking him out.

Hnn. He gets Hnn. Stiles has no reason to put out for Peter. Besides the emotional desperation driving his desire to have at least a couple hours of sex with Peter.

He halts hard, Peter stopping reflexively before the arm around the waist bulldozes him forward.

Kitchen on the right of the open doorframe, living room, longer, on the left. All of it unfamiliar. Except the refrigerator, the cabinets, the kitchen sink, the other utilities and the wall-mounted flatscreen. Even his human nose can smell the new on the furniture, given long enough to tune out the smell of paint.

Something wrong. Something is definitely wrong. He plays for time.

"I thought they wanted to evict you. Why would they let you renovate the place?"

A solid question, one that Peter makes a face over.

"I had to double my deposit after everything that's happened, but the landlord likes my taste. I have over a year left on the lease. If I refurbish the apartment, get evicted, he keeps the deposit, and he leases the property to somebody else he makes a considerable profit."

Corner couch. Corner toward the door. Past the couch, new chair, upholstered with he doesn't know what fabric. Normal. Peter likes not to sit with his back to a door when he's less than fully alert. Big, squat coffee table. Dark wood. A couple open spaces waiting for yet-to-be-purchased furniture. Something off about the wall decorations. Geometric shapes cut to stand out from the wall, one set in modern colors, another in greys and an earthy brown going on. A couple ceiling-colored and ceiling mounted panels. None of the paintings have frames. Because none of them are paintings. Soylent Green is people. Everything's an acoustic panel. Low. All the furniture's low. And deep. The chair. The couch. Another foot deep.

He backs his indignant shove with enough power for Peter to take it seriously; to let him go; step back from beside him and turn to face him. Stiles pushed himself further into the living room pushing
off of Peter. Concerns can form a line. He throws an arm back demonstratively.

"You bought furniture it's easier to fuck me on. Noise control I can understand. There's been a lot of noise. That stuff. All the rest of the stuff. That stuff you bought for sex. That is sex furniture. Why the hell is this place about me when I never said I'd come back?"

This look of frustration says Peter wants to cuff him. Maybe because he's shouting at full volume. That sounds different in here. Clearer.

"The noise proofing's already paying for itself." Peter, inconvenienced again. The anger Stiles worked up goes on burning. Anger leads to action, whereas probably-appropriate hysteria would derail it. "We both knew you would," Peter says easily, playing it calm, expressions from the glib, removed, mocking, patronizing go. "This place is about me. Or should I not remodel my home around my interests? Those include lying prone, which I do more often than I have sex." He waits. Stiles waits. Peter breathes out heavily; looks pained and annoyed Stiles won't settle for implications. "Yes, it's sex furniture." Now dry criticism. "You're acting like I turned it into a dungeon. Is this actually upsetting to you, or are you just being emotional?"

Stiles wears a disbelieving look, scowling above it.

"For it to be upsetting to me I would have to be emotional. I'm emotional and the emotion is distress. I only said I was planning to come back before you told me to keep my distance to pawn me off on Derek to have relations you probabilistically determined would happen."

The wolf folds his arms over his chest, turning his head to the side, skeptical, feet still spread shoulder width, always with the domineering posturing.

"Stiles. I bought the furniture after Derek left town. Not the next day. Not even the next week. What do you think I'd 'probabilistically determined' by that point? Later, when you're being rational, this isn't going to be a problem."

Two strides into his space. Two fingers against Stiles' lips stop his rebuttal, Peter's hand on his shoulder; a warning squeeze.

"I liked this shirt," the wolf continues. "Which is a shame. Now stay quiet."

The fabric rips as easily as any shirt versus a werewolf. Future reference: A functional gag requires minimal resources. Not even tape. If Stiles stays quiet it's because he's gaping at him in disbelieving offense. For the short duration of the swift motions of his hands partitioning the shirt Peter looks bored – shirtless, he looks shirtless, nipples hard – not vindictive. Stiles has time to consider that a plus as Peter spins him around by his arms, stops him, both hands holding cloth. Any confusion the wolf clears up, stuffing wadded up t-shirt into his mouth, job half-assed, some of it still hanging out when he actually pulls the thick strip of fabric tight over it, knot at the back of Stiles head like the pressure of undersized swim goggles. Fantastic. Wonderful. Resisting the decision to gag him would mean getting his jaw pried open by superior forces. Peter's more likely to be careless about restraints when he's not playing sadist, when he's not focused on the pain he's causing.

Half-assed? Careless? Reevaluation. Stiles could easily yank the unpleasantly dry, too-much cloth soaking up his spit out from under the gag. A nick of his claw and Peter could make it all disappear like turning it to air. Is he making too big a deal out of this? Stiles isn't sure anymore. Are Peter's hands rubbing relaxation into his shoulders? Is that a naked chest behind him? Has Stiles gotten more or less hard since he had that hand on his stomach in the hallway?

"Lose the distress," the wolf says. "It's my turn to talk." Stiles hears him wetting his lips. "You went
in the boy's bathroom...after school, far away from Scott," he narrates correctly. Stiles has no idea how Peter expects him to be any less distressed if he's dragging this one out, but a warm hand on the small of his back guides him forward and around the end of the corner couch. "You lubricated yourself," Peter's continuing. "I smell it. Leaning against a bathroom stall – or was it the wall? – stretching yourself?" Stiles groans to protest the topic, the only answer he can give. The sofa looks pretty comfortable, two conjoined couches. He's being pushed onto the one running along the wall, not the one he came around with its back to the kitchen; submits another complaint, rolls onto his back, and stretches his legs out. Peter sits on the edge – there has to be three feet and change in cushion – expression of concern. The hand on Stiles' chest pets him with its thumb.

"Stiles. I'm not happy," he says, frank in place of foreboding. "You could have been thinking two things." He raises his right hand and one finger: "That we might not make it to a usual surface, but I don't think that's it." Finger two, and commiserating but disappointed eyebrows: "Because you thought I might get angry and get violent with you." His thumb stills, eyes following Stiles' abs and his not-exactly-happy trail down from his belly button. He turns at the waist, Stiles fantasizing about gagging him until Hey Peter's body, dimples forming in bunched muscles, other side stretched smooth across his ribs cage, narrow valleys in his flesh.

"Which, first of all...I hate dry sex," he lodges a complaint, gaze flitting to Stiles long enough to bury it. "You know I do." Grimace. His hand passes from Stiles' chest to his jeans, toying with the denim fly between his fingers. Stiles' hand slides over his own thigh, down between his legs before it's pulled up, cupping the bulge lower in his jeans. Not to keep Peter away For the satisfaction of bringing the heat up to his skin. Peter's cause and cure of the emotions in conflict inside him. The part of blame the wolf shoulders for allowing the painful, unstopping pining over Derek, for being the root of Lydia's trauma, as the source of the stress that plunged into violence in front of Coach and his classmates – the ferocity of the grudge Stiles holds will only pause for Peter, by tuning in more closely to his voice.

"Knowing that about me didn't calm you," Peter says softly and damningly. His hand skirts across denim and skin, covering Stiles'. Blood rushes to further firm his cock like somehow it could reach him. The wolf's attention and gaze remains there. The human studies the acoustic panels on the ceiling – as if he could even pretend he isn't listening. "Somewhere in your head you were scared of me. Or you are," he decides. "There are times you should be very afraid of me," he supposes. "This isn't one of them."

He bats Stiles' hand away, closing his own over the teen's full fly. Stiles pushes up into the kneading, whining, only in part because he hasn't been touched in forget the calendar: an eternity. Peter couldn't play stupid enough to beg misinterpretation of the whining and groaning from behind the soggy gag.

"The gag stays on," he chides, bringing Stiles bucking up in rhythm, the closing of his contour-exploring hand paced at even intervals. "I'll pass on the two hours of babbling through it and skip to your conclusions." Fair, Stiles' biggest complaint his 'babbling' held back. He's gone off following leads across a wall of push pins and post it notes, circles in red marker, memories like photos, like clips of video, like sound bites. Internet pages on post-traumatic stress filter through his mind; ones he applied to Peter and Derek – a pause at the thought of Derek; it passes. His trauma does not register on the Hale Richter scale; but it could in the moment be more dangerous. He's the one turned on to murder. How far off is he from bringing a weapon?

Normal reaction to acute trauma. Manage the anxiety. Breathing, relaxation techniques. Someday he might be successful at those. Revisit the event. Talk it out. Peter'll love that. Reframe it.

Is it because Peter threw him? Really hurt him? Hadn't they been fighting? Hadn't he started it
harassing him? Thrown out a challenge? Peter screwed his arm over. Let blood flow from his busted nose to puddle on the mat. He got cold and if he could he would have killed him and that's why Peter gets up in his face when he starts something, right? Is that right? But that's not how fear works. Not in clean logical lines. Do their actions and how Stiles explains it to himself sync up? He went over that exhaustively with everyone alive. Did he pick up fear off Isaac? Or is not just afraid of himself around Lydia but afraid of Peter after seeing her cry? Which'd be shit because maybe Peter would consider that situation close enough to consenting and maybe he wouldn't. If he recognized it'd be trouble down the line he'd take the opening but play the good guy, then at least seduce her. Stiles is the idiot who could have.

One arm braced over him, the wolf captures his attention, sucking on his upper then lower lip before they dry completely, lapping both wet again with his tongue as he holds them between his own lips. Stiles could either use some Chapstick or swear off it forever.

Peter moves down, begins to lick his chest, pasting hairs in the wrong direction, explorations normally the domain of hands and fingers performed orally without regard, except circumstance demands he sometimes dips lower, again, to re-cover stroked flesh with a slicker tongue. As his tongue leaves saliva behind on Stiles' skin the damp muscle feels pebbly-rough with taste buds; returns again liquid soft; the same temperature as inside Peter's mouth.

Peter on his knees in the shower, water running down Stiles' cock, pouring down on Peter, flattening his hair, racing over his forehead and cheeks, run through the strainer of his facial hair, channeled into streams, muscles whole river systems.

Even though he tries not to think too hard about Peter's actual age, but adult man, a little husky, stress won lines traced in his skin – as if 'stress' starts to cover it – and whatever else and everything else he gets into it's morning, not even breakfast yet, Peter rode his ass hard last night and for what Stiles draws out a few minutes the werewolf decided it's worth his time to let some stupid, seventeen year old not-even-wolf Beta from somewhere else thrust his cock into his skull and all the awesome, body-hot muscles and soft surfaces accumulated in it who knows how many degrees Fahrenheit above a helping hand.

He closed his eyes, said Really? An uninterpretable look in still frame with shower water running animated over him. Stiles still missing something in his personality; his judgment. Peter can lower himself to his knees without touching anything for balance, muscles tension wires. Stiles' thoughts stuttered and fell apart. Mouthy, patient, shallow suckling until he's hard, not just sporting off a semi. The pink of the head peaking above his foreskin, Peter's thumb easing his flesh aside, and then a tongue pushing his thin, loose skin out, drawing a circle. The downstroke of the wolf's hand smoothed cooled water droplets, pleasure at the touch, warmth in the shape of contact and the glide of skin over his shaft, head fully exposed; tongue lapping in half-time beneath the head, water running over it to spill down Peter's tongue; pulses of arousal sometimes flooding down the shaft, sometimes rising through it.

The wolf relaxed, still looking just-woke-up, a look Stiles has gotten to see on him two times before. Still a closing schism for Stiles between his real life and sex defined as another space he crosses into. Peter's only grooming him, doesn't care it's his penis, how much he's willing to put into it the one lonely factor. The wolf opens his mouth, brings him in, action still all in his tongue, licking firm caresses up the whole exposed frenulum now. Stiles braces his hand on the condensation-covered tile wall, for a second woozy. No mouth, now, tongue low on his shaft, sweeping up, folding on itself, underside passing over him on the downstroke; flips again; up. Stiles thinks he says Peter three or four times, means Thanks, bro, and The fuck, and Don't stop that yet. When he puts a hand on Peter's head it's not a taking charge thing, doesn't pull his hair. He just wants to be standing up. Tile wall, surprise concussion. He's unwilling to back up and slide down it because it's raining on Peter.
from above and that's beautiful.

Effort over. Mouth closed on him; no complaints from Stiles. Tight strokes with a few turns of his head Stiles' heart jumps at. He doesn't look like a dude doing a favor, not with those perfectly smooth, sinuous twists. Looks, instead, like the patient Peter sidling up to a kill. Use of his polite teeth near the head. Polite can mean I'm tolerating you or I'm setting you up. Stiles still nuts. His chest swells; Peter's being cute with him, drawing back while he's sucking him until his lips smack away, the odd strand of cum landing against his moustache, oozing down slow while the water picks them up, carries them down to run liquid off his chin; Peter sloppily picking his ejaculating cock up in his mouth, playing that way twice more. Stiles expresses a lot of congratulatory, satisfied things with his throat. Always right when he thinks the art show's over. Peter doesn't wanna look good, he wants flawless.

Stiles gets deep into his vocabulary of What the hell is that, Peter? expressions when it grows obvious the licking of his torso will not cease and trying to figure out if the wolf actually intends to bathe him this way, which would take forever, or if this is mostly a sexua—At the moment, it's nipple fondling.

Arms. Unmonitored. He asks himself the chances that pulling the gag will coincide with the self-control not to launch off onto an interrupting train of thought. Slim chances. Poor. Dry's no longer a problem, but he rates the limp, heavy, compact wet folds of the not-ball part of the gag as unpleasant. Peter hates toys forever. As if if he can't do it with his body and household items it's a personal affront.

The younger Beta chortles into the gag as Peter licks up the underside of his pectoral, up the line that forms when he jerks his arm up reflexively. Protests come in the form of Nnnn Nmmnnph NnnNnnn with his tongue pressing the mouthful of ruined t-shirt to the top of his mouth because licking his armpit is gross or at least it's taboo and it tickles. He doesn't smell like Derek there. Much. The first, most obvious reason Peter nuzzles in aggressively. That stops tickling sensation building on sensation; arousal floods his cock in answer; he groans, nothing about Peter being gross in that one. He should be used to the wolf putting his mouth wherever. It makes no sense he'll roll over, push his ass up, want a tongue up his anus, yes, when body language hints the older man has an interest in his ass, yet armpits? Out of bounds.

The wolf stops and considers. Gets off the couch, unbuttoning; unzipping beltless jeans; pushing them down, briefs, too, uncovering an erection tucked toward one o'clock, cotton holding it tight to his belly gliding down its shaft, cock falling away from his stomach but not too far, hanging stiff after the bobbing as his clothes pass down his balls. Maybe not ridiculous but rounded ass uncovered at the same time, muscles in motion, fabric riding the contours. Stiles hand going south, handling his own junk. With Peter bending at the waist to pull his legs out through the fabric, stomach bunching over muscle, his thick legs naked, Stiles opens his fly to drag his own erection out, head above the waistline of the boxer briefs, pressed close to his stomach as he strokes it – like petting a cat, hand back to the base without touching and up; comfortable pace, drawing the heat up, not getting thicker, no thicker to get, only harder, arousal rising into his stomach like a curl of smoke.

Peter looks as elated with him as he gets, meaning he looks like a jerk, crinkles under his eyes; left handed tilt on his smile. Not happy like 'joyous', happy like 'satisfied' even 'exhilarated' which for whatever reason doesn't look like a stretch.

"I'm having a hard time understanding why your ass is still in those jeans," Peter says, he might also be teasing but foremost he's criticizing. "I'd ask you to walk me through it…but." Stiles'd love to say it's because he's having a hard enough time breathing through his nose alone when sex. He makes a noise toward that point, kicking his shoes off over the back of the couch toward the kitchen and
empty floor. He's mastered getting his pants off from prone, pushing them off his own hips, down his thighs, pulling his knees up, sliding the fabric over them and off his feet, dropping them on the floor, socks stripped one knee drawn closer at a time.

Status: Naked. Peter's got his own cock in his grasp and he's stroking it, mutually considerate of Stiles' body. Unlike Stiles' it really thickens out. Corollary, Peter still has a thick cock. Fully detachment from his grievances. A word like 'forgive' may never apply to Peter Hale. Stiles understands him. Follows from one idea to the next when given enough information. He has to keep his disapproval of so many of Peter's actions close to the breast. If the chance to erase that arises, the older Beta won't hesitate to help him at least misplace it. He learns from Peter picking him apart. Wants his arguments, except the one before last, to be with Peter. Sometimes somebody needs to shut him up. Not to punish him. Thinking before he talks even a fourth of the time more ranks among life skills to acquire. He responds poorly or more often not at all to verbal reprimands.

Isaac sits across the picnic table from him, eating fries one at a time. It's cute the way he holds them while he's talking, between his thumb and index finger, tapping them against the air. Still no reason for him to be wearing a scarf. It's seventy-seven degrees.

"Tell me if I have this right. You're both manipulating the relationship to your advantage, you both have serious abandonment issues, you both want to kill each other at different times, or the same time, but you...mutually admire each other's intelligence?"

Stiles makes a face at his hamburger, condiments leaking from one side starting to make it hard to handle. After review he looks up to Isaac, squinting against the sunlight from the star moving into an inconvenient position. Earth moving. Whatever. It's getting harder to see.

"Uh, yeah. I think that's everything. And I'm so sexually attracted to him I'd chew my own arm off. Which totally made sense before I said it but it's missing so much context. I wanna have a lot of sex with him all the time, is what I'm saying."

Isaac moved several fries forward. Bites off half of this one.

"And, this is the most flattering part for me, part of the attraction is you both think the rest of us are stupid."

Stiles throws his hands up at the accusation, luckily he set down the burger.

"I didn't say that. I said he can keep up with me. That's different. Look at you: You're pulling your weight with the research. You make the right conclusions. But, you're not frantic about it. His head happens to be free of distractions because he's empty of humanity inside."

Isaac finishes his fry; doesn't pick up another one. Looks dejected, which for all his pessimism isn't so much one of his looks. He's leaning heavily on his elbows.

"I'm not gonna say 'He's abusing you'. I really want to but I don't lie that well. You're fucking each other up and you should stop. Peter's already dangerous enough, and so are you."

If he can figure out the motivation ordering and directing Peter's actions – and inaction – then he can remove Isaac's (...legitimate) concern from the Go table. Focus on them habilitating each other. He has no reason to believe that could ever happen. The circumstances under which his motivations are laid bare intuitively double up with Peter finally be mentally; emotionally destroyed, crippled beyond recovery. Stiles only knows one thing: Motivation, singular, for sure. The motivation to pursue an objective that can be achieved and put in the past. Damned if he knows what Peter wants.
He has Peter over him, the most natural position his body recognizes, lately. He drew his legs up before the older Beta ever climbed on the sofa, both knees folded, one resting against the back of the couch, the other hung out to the side. He would have blushed two months ago. Not anymore. The only way to make his signaling more blatant would be to take a Sharpie and write 'This is a sexual display' on his abs. Lubed up, petroleum thick on his anus, inside him, smeared in the crack of his ass – oils are messy; oils can handle teenage and werewolf recovery times if they get too enthusiastic – Peter could lower his hips, his body, press past the eased up breach. Mutual-or-not abstinence over.

Stiles' hips say not only Yes but Now. He's horny like Peter's the only guy in the history of Earth and he has a terminal disease that can only be cured by Peter's skin and his semen and the wolf with his eyes and blondness and the tiny hairs almost invisible in his nostrils, all the parts, have him riveted. He'd stick his tongue up his nose and enjoy making contact. That horny. For all his earlier demonstrative inconvenienced Peter looks on the same page. Turned on and turned up, light sweat on his skin, a subtle change in how the light touches him. Synonymous with conjuring hormones Stiles can't consciously pick up on. Translation: Peter wants to rub his body on him. His delay can't have anything to do with the jungle of sexual signage, so, it's his refusal to keep anything simple.

"Can I take you from the back?"

The jolt of fear provokes a full body flinch. Residual trauma confirmed. The gag suddenly frightening. Yeah. Because talking would get him so far with the wolf. Once Peter says that, it guarantees he will get inside him from behind. Stiles' is familiar with 'skin crawling' feelings known to Spider Man as his 'spider sense'. His skin would book it, leaving him behind, if it could crawl. His legs shift to open wider, silently pleading not to be flipped over, offering alternatives an unreliable tactic that still sometimes works. Did not work when Peter latched onto his cell phone and Derek.

"Shh," comes soothingly out of Peter, shushing sounds have eased Stiles into enough situations it softens the edge on his nerves. Peter's face produces so much sympathy even Stiles risks buying into it. He jumps when the wolf touches him, but then splaying his fingertips over his stomach hits an excess of nerves on vulnerable skin. "I'm not asking to put you face down into the couch, little boy," he croons.

The pet name Stiles continuously fails to resent spreads over his body like warm balm. Threat always accompanies those two words. A threat is always a promise. Peter's promise to rob Stiles' of any semblance of control coincides with another: The promise to take responsibility for his actions. Torture couldn't pull that second one out of the older Beta. Stiles' desire and apprehension balance.

Stiles swallows around the gag with the same difficulty he's had with it from the start. Forces himself to calm down. To at least listen. He'd need to take a photograph for anybody else to picture the softness of Peter's face, lax as it ever could be except for the upturn of his brows and his eyes fully focused. Subtract beguiling smiles; any twinkle of mischief; any sign of aggression. Stiles allows himself to believe the sensitivity adopted, to be soothed by the understanding in Peter's blue eyes. He thinks how no one has blue eyes, the color a product of refraction like the daytime sky. Peter has fantastic eyes. Blue and bluer.

"Are you alright?" the wolf asks. "Just shake your head. We'll do something else. I'll make it up to you."

He's the sweetest person Stiles has ever met within the story he's acting out about the character he… confabulated. A word he stretched for; not sure he has the meaning right; thinks it's the only word he knows close to capturing what Peter does. Stiles suspects he's lying; holds his ground. Not difficult on his back already exposed, stoically silent because he can't produce actual words. The whole gag's drenched in spit. His lips are staying moist, but Peter dips in to bring them back to wet,
again.

Story over.

"Now, get up and put your elbows on the arm of the couch," Peter says sounding like it's a suggestion when it's a command. The number of times he's followed his humble requests blur together, partly because of the actual number, partly because the sex they've had is better measured in hours than days spent. They could only catch so many days, sex long, unbroken stretches of time.

*Almost summer,* Stiles thinks, nerves dancing. The twenty-fifth. Peter never uses his vacation days, he thinks, body torn between apprehensive and excited. No considering that now. Elbows. On the couch.

Peter offers no help, leaving him to somehow unfold his legs while turning over, army crawling out from under an unbulging werewolf. There are pillows between him and the arm of the couch. Almost all of the pillows in sight. Somebody lounged here playing with his iPad. That makes Peter's idea more physically forgiving than the majority of Peter's ideas.

He'd make him do the same thing if there weren't. He loves fucking with his ass. Stiles briefly pushes the pillows around; lodges his elbows into the padding on the couch's arm. Even high on his knees his body angles upward, lower back saved from a pinch by the cushions. He thinks one more time about taking the gag off. Reaches up to do it but Peter snatches his arm.

"I think 'No'. You just can't feign noises as helpless as that."

Stiles hopes body language can communicate a belligerent *I am gonna dick you so hard you asshole because it makes you wanna throw up your intestines.* There's an idea, owed to a malleable Derek, an image he conjures despite the emotions surrounding it. Peter's a werewolf, so maybe his body language can articulate every word. Yet here he is with his knees sinking into Peter's new couch, flush on his body, breathing so hard to make up for restricted air his head rises and falls with his shoulders. He feigns nothing in the frustrated, whining sound demanding to know when Peter plans to deliver on his half.

----

Peter awards himself accolades first for not killing Stiles, second for not forcing him to the hallway floor and slaking himself on him. He would have if his nose hadn't warned him to be cautious of something more than the musky, musty smell of Derek on Stiles almost three weeks ago.

He scared Stiles. He has to deal with it, and he knows Stiles catching more than a glimpse of how very badly he wants to hold him pinned underneath him for days won't provoke a better reaction than the one to the furniture Stiles already forgot he's supposed to resent in vocal preference of having his ass stuffed. That a given, Peter has to control what he sees.

The wolf could assure the noisy thing he wants sex...as soon as he schools himself to show restraint, his eyelids drifting, the only smells that matter fresh on Stiles. His maturing body looks to his instincts like it can take more than it can, the instincts that on more than sufficient evidence read Stiles as a wolf and not a human easily snapped or crushed.

Thickening forearms and triceps leading up to his wide shoulders, muscles amassed over his shoulder blades, deep line down the trunk tapering to his small waist, hips squared off. From where Peter's kneeling they could be no more *perfectly* squared off, falling off sharply into strengthening thighs, all of the teen softened by curved lines.
Besides scoring a mathematically impeccable SWH ratio, good for Stiles, with his knees at shoulder width he completely bares his anus, a gleaming, slippery indention under the light insufficiently warded by skin drawn in tight except for the dark coin slot sinking deep from when he plied it with his fingers until whatever paranoia eased. Balls hanging below, waiting to swing with his thrusts, and erection lower than, long and firm, waiting to lose precum in strings of liquid carrying tiny bubbles that thin and break.

Not helping with restraint. In the time spent paused he makes a convincing case to himself for trapping him in the apartment for the next four days until he's reduced to a smutty, receptive mess. Until one of them is. Both of them are. He'd been thinking clearly until he caught Derek's scent. Now he's motivated. A sentiment more naturally paired with slowly advancing plans, not a slurry of action and spent fluids.

He takes his chances with 'now'. Stiles sounds surprised when Peter climbs his hips; had given up and waited. Nothing more to wait for. The boy groans and makes a couple aborted yelps from his usual but also broad range of noises. Stiles toyed himself open…maybe an hour ago? After practice. Close enough. Peter goes slower than he wants, where that means not burying himself as soon as he's on him, but the point when he pushes through still stretches Stiles' anus from resting comfortably to a slick, tight-edged circle contoured to his penis, its shaft and the broad ridge beneath it, and he still ends up over his back, balls deep, in a single slide, each millimeter more desperate than the last to be touched by the teen's skin.

May've been a little eager. That's recognizably Stiles cursing his name, or his competence, or what's happening to his accommodating anus. Hm. Better in the long run if Peter's knees line up across from each other; if he comes from a lower angle; a couple of other details that have his mouth hanging open while he works them out against, over, inside Stiles, his hands pulling on the boy's hips until there-it-is. He only shove in hard on Stiles from two or three different angles before he found what he set out after. Sets in on.

Loses control of himself, if he's even had it. Atypical throaty outburst on his own part. He grimaces through reining back contractions of his ass that don't intend to be interrupted plowing him into Stiles. He gains some focus; disallows himself an immediate, heavy orgasm crushing Stiles forward that he has no explanation for; hedges against his human partner grasping he's wound up and every angle to it's copulatory lust. Futilely. No amount of sexual frustration mutes the knowledge behind the pretty lips and dark lashes Stiles is a devil. Peter's sure as hell not looking to get taken advantage of; except, this distracted, his gut tells him he'll regret doing more than one by tomorrow morning.

(Can't two people just fuck anymore?)

Not breaking Stiles' hips with his weight and the strength of his arms. Tonight. Lays a hand on his back, the other he braces on the couch. Don't break the couch, either, he snips at himself. Keep the action in his hips. Don't suffocate Stiles. He reaches up – claws, but briefly – slicing the gag off; bringing the claws back in relying on practice, not ease. Stiles pulls it all out of his mouth; thanks god; takes a second and then throws it away from himself nowhere in particular.

"I appreciate you've accepted me as your god," Peter says.

"What?" The boy's focus lies on taking in air and controlling his drooling with nothing to wipe his mouth on but his shoulder. "Oh. Definitely not." Peter can tell he's still working on that same train of thought; prefers that distracts him from the groans that start in his own chest, contort his throat, his palm sweet talking how incredible it would be to rub his body against the skin of Stiles' back; or fuck the depression splitting his ass, pool cum on his back on the flat span of skin between the two shallow dimples right above that cleft. That would bring him closer to fixing that damned lingering

Almost worth it. Not Stiles' false gratitude. Letting his body fuck at its own feral pace with only clutches of his buttocks; the hard tightening of his abdomen. Corporeal sensations. His living body as a physically grounded fact sustained by the animality-driven thrusts of his hips. If in fact he is alive he had better accept the absurdist notion he's having sex with Stiles Stilinski, a schism between the ridiculous things the boy yelled earlier and shoulders broad as Stiles' flexing in pace, the force of their bodies in motion bearing down on his elbows.

The wolf recognizes the slim distance to orgasm – putting together the closed distance between his chest and Stiles' back, breathing down his neck, and the hand he only vaguely remembers permitting dropping from his back holding the boy's genitals close to his lower abdomen for sake of not leaving them jerking sharp against the air from the inelegant way Peter's arching back and snapping hips fell out of synch, convulsive. Fast and heavy. Fine. He never promised anything.

After the break in his consciousness, shifting his hand to close it around Stiles' cock, buying time alone while he replays in his head as much of the empty physical bliss as he can capture, he glances down and he notices the cum smeared thick on and leaking past his lubricated shaft, boding poorly for the ultimate amount of semen ending up on his couch. He's used to cleaning up. Stiles doesn't help.

The boy starts to say something, cut off by Peter with No. Given a short time, the right strokes of Peter's hand, he's slamming himself backward on Peter's dick, head dropped between his shoulders, Peter jerking him off high on his erection. He smells the boy's ejaculate; feels it on his hand; hears it splatter on the fabric. Relieved, he pulls out before he gets hard again without gaining some mental distance, semen running freely from Stiles' stretched body.

Peter needs to stop touching him before he throws him on the floor and fucks him there, Stiles under him gaping and gasping for air. He remains close, despite that, hand returning to and rubbing his back, eyes on his expanding; collapsing ribcage. His lips haven't touched the boy's skin. A slighted Stiles will accuse him of manipulation if he kisses his body now. On another day, good fun.

"What the fuck was that?" Breath recaptured, his teenager turns his head back as far as comfortable, glaring, teeth bared. "That wasn't sex. It was a handshake between your dick and my ass!"

Peter frowns at the accusation of performance issues. Those he doesn't have.

"I wanted to orgasm," he confesses in all innocence, point blank.

The boy makes a sound more frustration than anger.

"I didn't. If you're not inside me in—"

Peter obliges, everything he needs to end his dry spell bared in front of him, so eager his cock's not going soft. He drives Stiles wide the way he didn't before, a splitting slam, cock passing swiftly through lubricant and his own cum, buried, now, and there's no less pressure from the contoured grasp of the boy's anus.

An appeased groan from Stiles as his head turns away, pleasant to hear. Shivers like storms of needles bloom across the wolf's skin as he picks back up, post-orgasmic sensitivity taking him to the borderline of pain. No challenge to keeping, to recalling an erection through the discomfort incidentally schooling his body to behave. It thrills at turning the machinery back on, whether or not
the ripple rolling through it stems from his tortured foreskin, reaction magnified at the head of his
cock, shocks no longer coming in surges there. He couldn't be less enthused his glans feel like an
agitated, vibrating beehive; grudges it even more so helps build focus and control.

He reaches down, running his fingers over his new pillows until he touches Stiles' cum. Sighing he
touches Stiles' unseen bow-shaped upper lip, cushioned lower until Stiles sucks them in, tongue
bathing the pads of his fingers.

"Look at the filthy mess you've already made," he rebukes in cool tones behind him. "Dribbling my
cum all over; ejaculating on my new couch."

Stiles has a different, no less satisfied moan saved for teasing, as invitingly submissive as sick of him.
He braces his arms more firmly, grinding backward into him, his hips make tight figure eights in his
own interest but in line with Peter's. Peter withdraws fingers wet with spit instead of cum, keeping
the pace.

"You love cock more than anybody I've met," he chides, which isn't remotely true. Truth is pointless
to play. He kisses him now, on his neck, chastising in a whisper in the same cool voice: "Greedy
slut."

"I don't love your cock more than you do," Stiles says offhand, flippant unaffected teenager, one still
working his body against Peter's hips. He exhales with a satisfied groan, considering: "Pretty
egotistical for a meat dildo with some dude attached."

Peter's 'Oh', an unvoiced catch of his throat, has Stiles swallowing, anticipant.

Peter's rigid again with the less pleasant sensations starting to fade. Stiles' pushback dies off when
Peter plants his arm alongside his ribs, palm pressed into the couch, a hand touching his neck,
holding him, thumb resting at the nape not inches above where he lays down not chaste but slow,
whiskery kisses, knowing the effect the touch of facial hair has on Stiles.

"Don't talk about meat," he scolds after a quiet minute spent urging Stiles toward a second erection.
"I have you drawn up in butcher's cuts in my head," he warns. True. Mental exercise. "If you're
interested, I can chart them out on you."

"On the kitchen floor?" Stiles wonders, laughing. Peter safely assumes they're both thinking of the
rough tip of the marker leaving smooth lines on his pale body. "That's kinky I'll go in on, but then
you'd be bitching and crying about Sharpie getting all over your stuff," he says, mentioning: "I'm
already rubbing one out anywhere you don't make me cum."

"Remember not to get dehydrated if I hold you to that," Peter 'worries'; that's a wonderful idea as far
as sleeping especially restfully knowing he left Stiles performing sex acts to be graded later. "But I
don't think I'll be done with you before you're falling unconscious," he says.

His thrusts finally reach the point of pleasant distraction, last nerves sinking from prickling to primal
heat, the sounds of withdrawal and riding the mess he made back in entertaining him, sucking sounds
and squelches, Stiles as soaked as a woman.

"You expect me to buy you won't nail me like a creep when I'm unconscious?" the boy nags,
distracted for the same but not only that reason. "—you better fit some downtime and not just your
dick in here."

Peter grins, pulling himself up; tucking close, leaning on the one arm, withdrawing the other to hook
it underneath the boy's chest, hand a loose fist, knuckles digging in.
"If I ever got really motivated I could pound your ass for fifteen or sixteen hours," he muses aloud.

Stiles voices his tortured misery; drops an arm back over and past the one against his side, clutching Peter's hip, making sure his relentlessly pounding tormenter rides him the way he wants it.

"I got it already. You missed me," he says, breathless. "Put death by snu-snu on hold."

Peter makes a safe assumption what that means while he shifts and tucks to the cues of the boy's fingers, diligently coordinating until synchrony becomes effortless.

"Who told you I missed you? Has my body been talking?" he asks wistfully through arousal's hot haze.

His partner may hear him, but he's finished with words, throat preoccupied by different sounds.

Instinct rewards him for pursuing its interests to the point he almost disappears but doesn't. Important details strike him: the roll of the boy's hips in time with his thrusts and the intentional moments where his anus closes tight to him, the slide of his cock against Stiles' anus the reason Stiles enjoys penetration at all; the silkiness inside his living body where muscles contract on their own schedule. Sex defies reason. His body craves Stiles' skin, not his voice, not his wit. Stiles' pulled to his chest by demand of his arm, chest caressing his shoulder blades, friction eased by sweat when his hips hammer forward; Peter's thighs brush over Stiles', more and more simply pressed against them, their calves already held together, legs overlapping at their ankles from the start, feet alongside feet. His first orgasm by itself heightens his experience of Stiles' body.

So many miserable weeks tormented by his scent; a scent proven to be worth nothing unless it brings them skin to skin where it rises fresh when he plies him to undress. The death of romance in his opinion.

His second ejaculation takes him as far away as the first but builds slower and lets him follow right up to the peak. The teen's making all kinds of pleased noises when he comes down. A relief to know he's happier with his performance – he'd have a cutting remark for that if he wasn't sliding his hands over Stiles' body and indulging in the taste of his back, an approximation of wet kisses.

"Hands off," Stiles murmurs, reaching down to swat at the vicinity of Peter's hand before he takes his cock up, again, arousal in his voice; may have different plans, may want to stay hard – practice in endurance; putting the 'bait' in 'jailbait'.

Peter gets off him, pushing his hips forward, easily slipping out; flips him over; pulls him down until his body rests among the pillows, smearing cum on the boy's back isn't a concern. He thinks fleetingly of laundry and fabric cleaner and what 'maintenance' means. Stiles only seems 'low'. The wolf stops, glances over him, his eyes with their thick lashes patient, desiring, demand steady, lips waiting, while down his body his cock stands over his stomach, length and straightness aesthetically pleasing, his legs fallen open both by habit of inviting and because his glossy anus isn't puckered tight anymore, a dark open circle debauched by Peter's semen pooled at its mouth and draining off it, his scent still advertising his body's demand for a partner.

The wolf sets in on him, catching his lips, Stiles' back arching when he takes his hip in hand, promising a first fresh bruise on the unbruised skin marked with long white scars and pink, healing flesh wounds that may disappear. He put many of those scars on him. He saw the wounds from his bite raised above the skin of Stiles' back, tattoos there to stay on each side of his spine. He rarely draws Stiles' attention to reminders left until he turns or until he dies but still browses them with his eyes, especially when the boy is asleep or isn't looking. Stiles treats them and covering them as needed as a fact of life.
The blood's leaving Peter's cock, letting it soften and lose size, not because lying on top of the boy, embraced by his thighs with Stiles' erection rubbing his scent on his stomach as their bodies move, lacks erotic stimulation. The urgency has diminished.

Not for Stiles. When they part for breath Peter politely brings out a worried face. He did do a lot of things a couple weeks ago and then gag him so it didn't take three hours to get him naked. Pupils dilated, aggrieved and aggressive, hand sliding up Peter's body to take control of the cant of his head, tongue brazen, access ceded, the wolf devours what he's given in place of criticism; falls for the attention.

Stiles' rough kisses, chased by teeth. His other hand joining the first. Heads tilted, mouths open, tongues sometimes licking, sometimes plunging in and sucking; bodies dipping and shoulders riding up, heads rolling, noses switching sides, wet to the point Peter's current moustache-soul patch-goatee-beard variation's sopping. Peter wants to handle him, wants to push him around, snarl and snap, at least fuck him enormously harder. Stiles' lips say he has stiff competition on that one.

Later he'll remind Stiles of his case of nerves. See if he tenses up. Hopped up on hormones, never leaving contact with him, in control, the teen's forgotten them. Thinking comparisons, Peter doesn't react violently unless a fire's there and burning. Stiles pushes his fingertips into the cropped hair at the back of his head. Peter's thumb plays in circles at the boy's nipple, a plush little toy even when pebbly. The surprise is not attacking it. He pinches him at the ribs; other side of his body. At the same time Stiles' body jumps; hips buck up into Peter's; noise of surprise escapes him, he rakes the soul patch beneath his lower lip, pulling it between his teeth, incisors buried in the bristles; doesn't hold him tighter, can't kiss him any deeper as he plunges back in.

He runs his hands up Stiles' body, a body that rises in a slower, sensual arc following his hands back down, muscles of his stomach contracting as his hands break off toward either hip, leaving his erection untouched.

That settles him, youthful body falling away, kisses slowing to the point past the excitement where it remembers he's human and needs air. He combs his fingers through Peter's hair as he lowers his hands, the wolf cocking his head with curiosity when, after a few last kisses, he takes advantage of the permission to break away.

He's hard again, explicable but not completely fair; querying face asking a panting Stiles if that's the end of his bout of ferocity. The Cheshire smile Stiles' returns needs no teeth; wide eyes promise volumes of diablerie. The wolf's brow adopts a skeptical cringe even as the boy switches up to honest and sweet. If he can be either of those, he isn't right now.

"If you're in heat I can help with that," he flirts. "I'll only put the tip in."

For fuck's sake.

"Nobody believes that line, and I'm not in heat," Peter says, bowels twisting at the thought, letting all his displeasure show in the deepening cringe of his eyebrow and curl of his lips.

Stiles studies his face, nodding. Peter doubts he could pull off a better 'I'm not considering a thing you said'. He sweetens up again like stevia extract or something else just left of sugar.

"Got it. How about: Let me bang you?"

"Not on my couch, and not right now," Peter says, sour, his own bullshit knowledge he has to weave Stiles' trust back together battling with grounded physical unease. His own approximation of exchange value demands he delay 'No'.

"If you're in heat I can help with that," he flirts. "I'll only put the tip in."

For fuck's sake.

"Nobody believes that line, and I'm not in heat," Peter says, bowels twisting at the thought, letting all his displeasure show in the deepening cringe of his eyebrow and curl of his lips.

Stiles studies his face, nodding. Peter doubts he could pull off a better 'I'm not considering a thing you said'. He sweetens up again like stevia extract or something else just left of sugar.

"Got it. How about: Let me bang you?"

"Not on my couch, and not right now," Peter says, sour, his own bullshit knowledge he has to weave Stiles' trust back together battling with grounded physical unease. His own approximation of exchange value demands he delay 'No'.

"If you're in heat I can help with that," he flirts. "I'll only put the tip in."

For fuck's sake.

"Nobody believes that line, and I'm not in heat," Peter says, bowels twisting at the thought, letting all his displeasure show in the deepening cringe of his eyebrow and curl of his lips.

Stiles studies his face, nodding. Peter doubts he could pull off a better 'I'm not considering a thing you said'. He sweetens up again like stevia extract or something else just left of sugar.

"Got it. How about: Let me bang you?"

"Not on my couch, and not right now," Peter says, sour, his own bullshit knowledge he has to weave Stiles' trust back together battling with grounded physical unease. His own approximation of exchange value demands he delay 'No'.

"If you're in heat I can help with that," he flirts. "I'll only put the tip in."

For fuck's sake.

"Nobody believes that line, and I'm not in heat," Peter says, bowels twisting at the thought, letting all his displeasure show in the deepening cringe of his eyebrow and curl of his lips.

Stiles studies his face, nodding. Peter doubts he could pull off a better 'I'm not considering a thing you said'. He sweetens up again like stevia extract or something else just left of sugar.

"Got it. How about: Let me bang you?"

"Not on my couch, and not right now," Peter says, sour, his own bullshit knowledge he has to weave Stiles' trust back together battling with grounded physical unease. His own approximation of exchange value demands he delay 'No'.

"If you're in heat I can help with that," he flirts. "I'll only put the tip in."

For fuck's sake.

"Nobody believes that line, and I'm not in heat," Peter says, bowels twisting at the thought, letting all his displeasure show in the deepening cringe of his eyebrow and curl of his lips.

Stiles studies his face, nodding. Peter doubts he could pull off a better 'I'm not considering a thing you said'. He sweetens up again like stevia extract or something else just left of sugar.

"Got it. How about: Let me bang you?"

"Not on my couch, and not right now," Peter says, sour, his own bullshit knowledge he has to weave Stiles' trust back together battling with grounded physical unease. His own approximation of exchange value demands he delay 'No'.

"If you're in heat I can help with that," he flirts. "I'll only put the tip in."

For fuck's sake.

"Nobody believes that line, and I'm not in heat," Peter says, bowels twisting at the thought, letting all his displeasure show in the deepening cringe of his eyebrow and curl of his lips.

Stiles studies his face, nodding. Peter doubts he could pull off a better 'I'm not considering a thing you said'. He sweetens up again like stevia extract or something else just left of sugar.

"Got it. How about: Let me bang you?"

"Not on my couch, and not right now," Peter says, sour, his own bullshit knowledge he has to weave Stiles' trust back together battling with grounded physical unease. His own approximation of exchange value demands he delay 'No'.

"If you're in heat I can help with that," he flirts. "I'll only put the tip in."

For fuck's sake.
Building Stiles’ confidence, his sense of control, speaking promises that Stiles had control of the situation, admitting he had no way to make him give up Scott's GPS login in formation in time… That didn't work.

Peter's starting to have trouble remembering the smallness to the round-cheeked, weedy boy with the slender neck, man's dress shirt hanging untucked off a skinny body who he offered the Bite. The one who sucked in a breath through his mouth to call him back as he climbed in the stolen car but held it in his throat – the sound he thought meant coming around later to pick up a prize but had to really be the decision to act with murderous intent.

He wants Stiles confident, feeling powerful, not trusting but secure in his relative manipulative prowess. That Stiles will be fully equipped to pursue the course he sets him on. The crucial difference? Even imagining getting permission. After the previous mistakes with Melissa and Stiles, he won't consider it. Not the ruin of how they relate toward each other it could be. No matter what happens to either of them, Stiles knows and will know if they're within these rooms he doesn't have to ask, may take and give what pleases him.

"I'm hearing 'In your bed, and later,'" the cocky bastard gloats. Peter rolls his eyes, laying a closed-lipped, social sort of kiss on his mouth.

"You eat?" he prompts. He knows he did. Can smell his whole food itinerary within his mouth. It's a human nicety, and Stiles asked for downtime. Peter's already looked desperate enough for sex for a lifetime.

"Yeah," Stiles says, pausing to think if he wants to eat anything more before he's subjected to repeated dicking. "I'm not forfeiting my right to eat again," he says, "and I'm getting some water. You can lie here and look pretty." He pushes a skeptical Peter off him and makes a face as he remembers he's covered in cum; gets off the couch anyway, only to be yanked back, off his feet, into Peter's lap, legs spread over his thighs, freezing, breathing jumping to heavy.

"Breathe, Stiles," Peter says. If he hides himself in shadows, this will become a different situation. "Shh. Breathe," he urges. He smiles as reward when Stiles recognizes where he is: not in danger. "I want your body tonight. No tricks. Besides the ones you like. Hmm. Milking your prostate through your taint while I'm fucking you.

"You're the worst," Stiles gripes, meaning the opposite, obvious when he pulls Peter's hand to his cock and lets him masturbate it until he gets close, makes a frustrated sound and chases it away again. Canny; purposeful – now the teen wants to build his semen back up. Adopted an intentional approach to sex over time. Peter filled in he already had an economical approach to masturbation with small clues like Right! Finally, somebody else to massage my prostate.

Peter follows him and looks pretty. He likes the wolf leaning against the new dark-finished table they'll continue to never use, eyes tracking him through the otherwise normal series of events that result in a glass of water. His erection's threatening him with mutually assured destruction, an empty threat even while his pulse pounds inside it like his dick replaced his heart. He counts his breaths, drinks his water, and reminds himself more than once it won't orgasm hanging there by itself like it is until the throbbing need to come loses its keenness. When he's horny Peter's obvious plan to have sex with him repeatedly like at least one of them is in heat doesn't have to make sense.

He refills the glass halfway, turns, startles, but barely, and wonders how long the wolf's been standing so close. He ignores the man and enjoys the nudity. Besides the slick shine marbled with cum on his erection and his no longer neatly groomed hair, so far Stiles wears all the sex, semen
drying on his back and trickling down his leg. The wolf's not molesting him on account he's getting Peter's rocks off by visually appreciating.

He can't miss the places Peter and Derek share a resemblance. He can let them go. They're continents apart sexually. Stiles has no time to get his pining on when Peter's all but on him. He barely thinks about Peter. He should. He's standing in the guy's kitchen holding an empty glass of water staring at the body, the muscle mass, wondering how hard he's about to get it when there are other things, like the unhealthy reasons he came back here after getting jerked around, and that he still needs to talk at least one part of it out. Not yet, for reasons visible to both of them.

The wolf steps forward; touches him at the waist; smiles like an okay guy, as if he's at least fond; reaches out for the hand holding the glass, four fingertips drummed across the bone between Stiles' first and second knuckle where they rest at contact. Look of inquiry.

"You have outstanding hands. Have you ever played an instrument?"

His fingers crook; fingertips draw closer to the second knuckle. Stiles never realized how sensitive the back of his hand was, but nobody's ever touched it sensually. He silently enjoys the intimacy of the touch. Peter asked a question.

"I played the recorder in elementary school. Did a mean rendition of 'Hot Cross Buns'. I totally would've been in band to get out of gym class but they thought gym was a better fit because I was, um, 'disruptive to the other children'. I also disrupted the other children in gym, and yet. Uh, so, no instruments for you to watch me play while fetishizing my hands."

Peter takes the glass out of his hand. Sets it aside on the counter.

"My loss," Peter says, touching him casually again. "—you haven't seen what I did with the bedroom."

"I'm already getting skanky here. I wanna do something sexual with you because at this point? Blue balls, but I should probably—" He doesn't need to finish the sentence because Peter turns to acquire a spin of paper towels. Now he's pulling the length into sections. "Whoa. Look at you not using your mouth."

The wolf's eyes roll; he runs the tap.

"I'm not felching if it's not fresh."

"That should be a t-shirt," Stiles says; jumps. Wet paper towel pressed to his body. "Dude, that's cold."

Peter goes on undeterred, cleaning the cum off him. His. Stiles'.

"I have a remedy for that. Behave."

Stiles experiences another moment of confusion over what to do when Peter isn't giving his ass tongue. Brow knit he turns around and puts his hands on the counter. Draws a shivering breath as the cool paper strokes his inner thigh and up. His anus is hotter; the water the illusion of colder. Unpleasant. Over. He rubs his face with both hands, cringing behind them at his body protesting letting that happen at all – not being cleaned up but not being cleaned up by Peter's mouth. Using paper towels is so strangely impersonal that for a second he feels like a doll. Not so inaccurate; Peter's tugging him away from the counter by his hips. A poseable doll. One now bent in half. Not spooning. Spoon bending. Déjà vu. The few times Peter
pulled into this kind of mess never involved his participation. Or consciousness. He sleep talks; sometimes but rarely walks; he'll sleep have sex. How those factors combine remains mysterious, Peter swearing *It's confidential* when Stiles wakes up to realize he participated in sex acts less mysterious than exclusionary.

In a different relationship with gravity he'd be spread over Peter's lap, sitting reverse cowgirl. Peter's lap underneath him, the wolf pulled his right leg up and back, no arguing with strength, and hung it over his waist, Stiles' foot resting against one buttock, Peter's knee raised disconcertingly high, meaning on the right side his inner thigh's stretched out in an untrustworthy, vulnerable way and also trapped. Stiles' left leg drew away by itself as his anus stretched open to fit Peter's cock a third time, making room. The present status of his ass: Hanging where Peter can give it some action.

But Peter hung the upper half of him over his neck, first. Pulled Stiles' right shoulder in toward his chest, took hold of his upper arm, forcing it backward – just backward – as he ducked his head under it, leaving pressure to hold it against the side of his neck. That seemed like a great idea at the time. Leaning toward, trapped face to face with Peter. Mouths for kissing. Biting on each other. Whichever. Stiles arm totally out of the way, Peter freed himself to play with his chest, his stomach, his cock – play rough, but the idea of lying like stretched canvas appeals to Stiles.

Their lower bodies were at that point pooning. Only *after* that did Peter haul on his leg while Stiles realized his ass'd hang toward Peter at the same angle as his shoulder, and for Peter to put it in with Stiles hanging from him like a flesh hammock, to get his dick up under him, some compacting – bending – of a Stiles would be required.

His arm's stretched too far behind his shoulder to do a damn thing with it. His leg's hooked too high and at too sharp an angle, forced in place by Peter's raised thigh, to even *think* about trying to move *it*, hips flattened as far back as he could press them with some maneuvering if he *was* sitting in the man's lap. The hips beneath his work him at a leisurely roll, nothing like what he knows for a fact will happen to him when the wolf gets going. Peter's right arm draped over his abs, the smugger-than-thou attitude and predatory eyes, the red welts of raked fingernails on his chest, and the fact that in the bedroom no one can hear him scream add up to trouble.

He accused him of painting it black. Off-black, Peter said, It's trending. Stiles either has to believe him or catch up on interior decorating publications, where 'catch up' means 'look at one ever'. Peter painted the room black. The bed has no headboard, fits in against three plush grey, vertical mounds of acoustic foam, instead. The bed sits square on the floor, low black frame situated on four square white feet. Doesn't make a sound. Only the black and white pattern of the comforter made Stiles think maybe this actually is trendy. Peter griped he ran up his credit card on the acoustic foam and couldn't actually decorate his place yet. Looking at some kind of six month anniversary if people fucking had anniversaries soon, Peter's interests still don't knit together for him: design, following a losing basketball team, his third generation iPad – not games, magazines and things like the Weather Channel app, and Netflix, never watched on the television.

Sex he gets. Past tense. Present tense. Whatever makes that cover the indefinite future. Peter's fingers travel down his body, stopping for one finger to stroke across the dark trail of hair from his pubes to his belly button, skin less sensitive than above and below it, his erection hangs toward the bed, close enough for him to beg for it. He's not begging. He wets his lips, holds Peter's eyes. Wonders what lies behind the crinkles at their corners and the smirk on his lips. Remembers trim blonde hairs on the soft underside of his lips, the sounds his teeth make combing them. Peter grows curious, a slightly deepening smile, the rise of his cheeks narrowing his eyes and adding to their creases. Stiles thinks for a minute what makes his expression look softer this time and realizes he's minus the line of a sneer.
His fingers reach the skin Stiles is most uncertain over where his thigh stretches up from his hips leaving the skin open and flat. A pang of heat races through his erection with Peter only touching him. Stiles breathes faster as the wolf's fingers curl in, hardness or uneven edges of blunt fingernails unfelt, four furrows of pain just off sharp, instead, the warmth of Peter's fingertips beside them, a sharpening edge to the pain develops as fingers curl still deeper, pads beneath the nails pulling Stiles' skin back, stretching it tighter, the hurt Stiles feels at the first moment of a stab wound stretching forward in time indefinitely; swallowing Stiles' physical attention, Peter's thrusts backgrounded, remaining steady.

He makes no sound, Peter's face close but offering him no clue what shapes him into a sadist. His gaze passes over the smile on his lips, tracks his full engagement back to his eyes. Understands with an ache washing past his arousal he's looking into a face that can never share those movie moments, two people recognizing the same intensity of emotion mirrored between them. Not even if Kate Argent never burned the man, once a feeling man, away.

Peter can't even tell he hurts for him as much as his body hurts. Not enough or the right kind of tells.

"What do I – what does it do for you?" Stiles asks, quiet.

A twinge at his own awkward question. What do you feel when you hurt me? He can't ask that. Nothing. Peter feels nothing. When Stiles mock-attacks him, bites, twists skin, claws his skin, he knows intuitively Peter gets a thrill from the idea of not fighting back, a moment of excitement. He may not get another for weeks, bored. And then there's causing pain, and he's never bored.

Nails crush crescent bruises into Stiles' skin; finally he flinches; whines. A sharp intake breath while Peter calculates.

"I see what I do to you. I hear it. I smell it off you. That's it," he says, candid and conversational. "I hate to disappoint you."

'Hate'. Untrue. Stiles' lips press together; brow tightens. He has no expectations for Peter.

"You never disappoint me," he points out. "Just piss me off."

They reach mutual ground when they kiss. Peter's fingers let up, Peter distracted, now idly petting the area flooding with blood from broken little capillaries. The pain, still sharpest in the imprint of his nails, spreads through Stiles' skin as if Peter had held it trapped. His breathing remains heavy, anticipating more, with his body all scored up likely from the wolf's hips. He still hates pain, but if he learned to love it Peter wouldn't give a shit about him – that hasn't changed.

Nothing changes except Stiles' move from heaviness to happiness, spontaneously unburdened, comfortable draped over Peter, left arm folded under his own body, the little weight he's carrying resting on his elbow. He can't pursue the wolf's mouth upward; no impairment to his eyes-closed kisses. He pulls his own head away, instead, making Peter come after him. A few moments' pleasure until no physical sensations, however abundant, can wrest him from the memory of Derek underneath him flashing so acute the teenage excitement, impressions of his body, and the bitter aftertaste of loss left behind strike him simultaneously.

Peter frowns, withdraws, examines him, raising his hand to drag his thumb beneath one damp eye, mimicry of wiping tears but clinical.

He thinks back, remembers how sure he'd been Peter wouldn't punish him if he left him, hopes the t-shirt didn't push it too far, and he could not be more embarrassed. He tries fixing in mind Peter doesn't care. About anything. Unless his draíocht kicks him up a notch, in which case 'caring' isn't
the word, something birthed from violence, instead. Low arousal to negative stimuli echoes from the

"Derek," he says, relieved when Peter only continues to study him, combing Stiles' hair with his
fingers. Social grooming. Good dog. If it calms Peter and Stiles doesn't end up bleeding it doesn't
matter that grooming's self-soothing; no apology here. "I remembered Derek." Stiles scoffs, brows
sardonic, tone acidic. "Don't panic. I won't get disoriented and buy you a promise ring."

Black room. Their tones clear here where the walls eat sounds. A man idly having sex with him, no
attachment to the act itself; Stiles' body still hurting, contented to receive it, eager to take on more. He
wishes he could smell what Peter smells. The wolf smells like Old Spice aftershave, the usual, unless
he's right off work, wearing cologne. Peter grins – understanding enough, it looks like, to be able to
call up his own experiences past. He drags his nails across Stiles' chest, crisscrossing swollen skin.
Not grooming, not wounding, but grounding.

"Not sorry I'm not Derek," he teases, affirming the smell may not be completely effaced but it's better
masked, not gonna set him off. His voice drops into a lower register, confidently sensual: "I
understand that I'm phenomenally good looking. Try to tear your eyes away. I want you watching
me fuck you, Stiles."

His mouth hangs open, caught by surprise. The takeaway moral: He takes anal sex for granted. Not
when Peter first puts it in; he'd love to tighten up again to do that one a few times in a row. He loves
getting his ass stretched open. Confessed. Otherwise he's hanging out enjoying the strokes in a
comfortable lull while Peter gets off unless the werewolf's fucking to break his hips apart, Stiles' exci
ted, ecstatic awareness limited to his body overpowered, the carnal intentions he reads off the
wolf, and whatever other pain Peter may inflict.

He allows himself to look away from Peter and down his body: his own splayed hips, thin skin to his
thighs on display, marks left by Peter's nails visible through his pubes trailing off over them, erection
obeying gravity, resting on his left thigh. His balls block his line of sight. He sees enough: Peter's shaft
exposed when he pulls back, the shine of fresh lube on it, the balls drawn up under the wolf's erection
tucking beneath Stiles' when he thrusts in, the muscles of Peter's legs at work beneath him,
sinking in recoil and then pulled tight, launching his thighs; his hips forward. His upper body flushes
with heat, not shame.

He watches Peter's hand pass down his stomach, pass his cock and the bruises in his skin to lay his
fingers behind his balls, incapable of holding his breath, already lightheaded. He knows what Peter
said he'd do for him, surreal in the present, Peter humming to himself feeling over him with light
fingers and then pressing in, allowing Stiles to guide him with pitchy whines as he works closer to
triggering that deep-inside pleasure, drawing it out. He knows just where to go; how hard to massage
him.

Stiles gets dizzy, asks; prompts, Peter. The wolf obliges him, finding his prostate beneath his skin,
adding on the pressure until Stiles chokes on his breath and Peter's touch changes to delicate circling,
pressing, rubbing, steady hand unimpeded by his body-wracking, shortening thrusts centimeters
behind. Stiles stares down at them. Beside him Peter wonders idly What if I was never done with
you? A question as terrifying as it is any other one thing. Stiles rebukes a strangled Peter! except he's
only an audience.

The force behind Peter's hips builds until his impacts pound through Stiles' whole immobilized body,
his awareness led around by those tiny motions of Peter's one fingertip or two. Stiles sees it
happening in between his consciousness turning inward and his eyelids falling shut, the punishing
thrusts of Peter's hips so close to his body he never sees his cock, Peter's fingers out of sigh below his
tightly pressed thumb's pressed at an angle along and above Stiles' balls.

It felt unbelievable at first touch, prostate held between Stiles' own firm flesh and the pressure of Peter's dick, never easier to transmit force into, but that first warm feeling built and now his cock's second place, the hot coals of his pleasure burning bright deep behind and above the usual sources. Muscle spasms and tremors. Temperature rising in swells. The dam burst wave of overwhelming sensation wiping his perception of his body in space off the map except Peter's touch has left and he can feel his cum running out of his cock; he keeps orgasming past that. Before it's over and however long afterward the wolf's hand closes, pumping him with long strokes; he's aware of getting slammed from beneath while he cums, ejaculates, gets hit with a second orgasm, maybe, or his attention lurches, and this stuff pumps out in gushes.

Dazed, hips awash in pleasure, Peter's hard-thrusting cock; the crash of his hips as good on his electrified skin as his finger had been, the older Beta's head turned in toward his, moving in synch with his gasps for breath, nuzzling and more, rubbing his beard into his cheek, from a place of satisfaction the idea the wolf spoke has more legs than it did when he voiced it.

Stiles' eyelids droop. He turns his head to rub up with the wolf's, foreheads butting, noses brushing noses, not kissing but breathing him. The eye-sore feeling of the verge of tears stuck around; the tears left him. His erection, getting softer, still feeds him hits of body-weakening arousal. Peter's calmingly stroking his trapped thigh except those moments Peter's driving an orgasm into him, impact hard, Stiles' body not going anywhere – freedom of motion trapped at a couple inches. Something to celebrate, force his body can't give against, only absorb, an earthquake through a body awakened everywhere when he came.

Both of them go lax when Peter finishes, waiting to breathe less like bellows. Stiles develops the presence of mind to feel sorry for Peter. He's wired to hate what's the summit of pleasure a guy can achieve. If that guy was on cocaine, then the greatest thing that could happen to him on cocaine would still be orgasming from his prostate. Getting banged that hard kicks up his emotions, clues him in to the uncomfortable fact he's lying here, recovering, thinking he can still give him enough to get by on, it just takes creativity, as if, yeah, he'll have forever to do it.

He might love him. A quiet, warm, regret-tinged reverence he leaves untouched. Cluing Peter in would be one of the most dangerous decisions he could make under any circumstances. Knowing it estranges him. From himself, not Peter; letting out a deep breath he pins the wolf's lips down and kisses him, once. He had fun with the restraint. Now he wants to really relax his muscles. Biting at the wolf's jaw communicates as much. It takes another minute for him to oblige him. He rests on his side coming back together, demanding something about Peter covering him up which happens more promptly seeing the guy has similar motivations for a breather. He pulls Stiles away from the lake of cum he left on the bed in front of himself, remarking he's a sanitation hazard.

Covered, he rolls over, pushing Peter onto his back wriggling himself somewhere comfortable against his body…smearing a secretly cum-bearing index finger down his nose, grinning, mood elevating over Peter's paused-mouth-open 'So that's how it's gonna be?' face. Stiles sweeps his messy finger sideways across the wolf's lips; gets the finger caught in teeth before Peter, not-bothered, sucks on it; sets it free – sucking his upper and lower lip in and lets them go with a smack. Stiles realizes after a beat that since his tongue can't reach his nose that's too much effort to deal with right now.

"I can give you something to match that," rolls comfortably off his tongue, provoking that 'done with this' expression, but if Peter is he's not going any further to demonstrate it.

Stiles' stomach flutters nervously no matter the post-orgasmic pleasure weighing down his body. He's
had the time. Needs to give voice to the answer existing. He speaks softly, but not uncertainly.

"You threw me, you could've broken my nose; you really hurt me. You almost really hurt me – if you let something snap. That's frightening coming from a werewolf. You know, not being able to tell how serious it'd gotten. That was the worst. We only get into it…out there." In the real world.

Outside Peter's territory where he places himself in physical and existential danger entering Scott's. When whatever the interaction the weight and consequences aren't the same. Stiles brings his hand in to give Peter's near shoulder a shove, muttering, "I want to take responsibility for my half of it, but you never do anything wrong in your stupid head."

Blood or no blood, arm strained or sprained or ligaments torn off his shoulder he still challenged Peter for dominance and that demanded a response. Not specifically physical assault. NOT a digital camera. Not physical assault during sex; his emotions still at odds with themselves after review because he pushed for rough sex before he threatened Peter. He wants to undo it but he wants as much to burn it in his memory and remember what lines each of them shouldn't cross.

Peter thinks on it, lifts a hand to swipe up half the congealing semen from his nose and...smear it on Stiles', leaving him to never know if that's a taunt or an apology. Stiles' face says Give me a break but he lets it go, resting his hand on the wolf's chest after rubbing his wrinkled nose clean with the back of his hand.

"If or when I kill you, you won't know it happened," Peter offers amenably. "First of all because Lydia, or you, could realize I'd made the decision, but whatever the circumstances are speed's on my side. If somehow you're conscious, you won't be for long."

"Thanks," Stiles says. He wishes he felt strongly hearing something like that instead of just weighing how much he can trust his word. In the most forgiving scenario where in the white light he finds himself with a weapon, Peter may himself; Stiles may die. "I hope I can be that not-petty if it's the other way around and I'm not, you know." Purely looking to destroy him without aggression or reason. Stiles' reaction time to negative stimuli rests between immediate and preemptive. It comes paired with emotion.

"I feel like I'm going to have to remind you of that," Peter muses aloud.

He wants to ask what Peter meant about never being done with him. Knows the difficulty level of wringing a straight answer out of him. Peter wanted him. Peter chose to save his own skin instead of take a gamble on him when he sank his teeth in Lydia. End of that flirtation. From this distance Stiles gains certainty You must be Stiles would have been the last four words Jenny ever heard. Peter could use Scott's best friend. Kate's assassin, he's secure in his running assumption, passed her expiration date. He knows because that is what happened, add in the delay of Derek getting his ass kicked. Derek seriously has no luck.

Peter trying to become an Alpha again sits high on the list of things Peter might want, in which context reaffirming his loyalty to Scott right now versus 'never being done sounds like a real bad move. He lets it go.

----

He's had Stiles lying on him for maybe half an hour. He has not run out of libido. On the other hand, the kid's rubbing on him, being handsy, swapping spit, flirting casually. That also has merit. He has yet to find out how long he can keep him coming with a finger at his prostate. Something to do some other time when his interest in penetration ranks lower.

"...what did you just say?" He's sure he heard that correctly. He's also sure Stiles will be happy to
repeat it, but there's always a slim chance.

"I asked if 'now' is the 'now' when I can bang you," Stiles reiterates, playing cute and acting sexy and inherently evil.

"I thought you'd let me off with a warning," he hedges, scowling.

"You had advance notice. It's too late for you now," Stiles apologizes as if he just passed a death sentence, and he might as well have.

Peter looks at the kid. So fucking smart. Real aggressive. Not fearless until there's action; suddenly he doesn't care what he runs toward or his chances. Bulky. Abundance of beauty marks a fair warning on the angle puberty would hit him from. Fast on his feet. Reflexes trained. No longer falling over himself. Killer instinct purified by death; the Nemeton. A weapon. Peter's. Grenade pin concealed. He could say the same to Stiles. He wants to stay skin to skin with the boy's body; he has repairs to make, socially. He knew he'd regret something tonight.
Many apologies. Back after completing my Master's!

Chapters 6/7/8 were intended to be one chapter, until I realized I was going to go on maybe 90,000 words. Please take pacing of in context when I finish them. (Timeline)

The big sexy grouch lying next to Stiles in a bed already swampy with ejaculate behind Stiles bypassed verbal confrontation, or getting surly with the sarcasm. Stiles knows it from the resentful squinting eyes and dour twist to the lips beneath a pair of eyebrows storming with criticism, none of it defensive, Peter's body, even his head and neck, relaxing heavily on his new mattress with its black fitted sheet. A burst of enthusiasm takes Stiles and his smile soaring; he wriggles his hips against Peter's side, not in charge of the pair of upward, inward thrusts twice staggering his squirming, sexual rush accompanied by Stiles' body relocating blood. Again.

The wolf reaches new lows of unimpressed. From everything Stiles understands about why he hates anal – one of the swift-onset nausea crowd, real-time simulation of some kind of fatal intestinal blockage – he totally gets he's committing great evil on Peter's digestive tract. Not yet, but he will be.

That doesn't bother him. Not because Peter deserves it. He does, but Stiles leaves the variety pack of bad karma unopened. Because getting to spread the wolf's body out's like Peter bearing his neck to him times one hundred ten. Leaving here without remembering through playing it out that the wolf obeys him, that he wants to, that play submission is not related to and exists separate from never being done with him and makes up a part of lupine socialization on the regular, will help when he actually has a freakout.

Stiles already triggered a huge whitewash two days ago, objectively and subjectively terrible. By his gut feeling, now, he feels safe about this. Darkness tinged the edges of his mind when he put on Derek's shirt at home. How his perception had shifted to see it as a weapon dissipated before he left the house.

The sulk is strong with Peter who, lying relaxed beside him, offers an at-leisure vista of the neck, the jaw, the animalesque sloping shoulders and twice as large as life mastoid muscles holding strong to his low clavicles that make it attention worthy. All of Peter above the covers. Actually, the line between 'relaxed' and 'inanimate' can be hard to chart with him.

"I don't know how you expect me to get excited about this."

If Stiles' bearer of bad news face looks more like a surprised-at-Peter's-entitlement face, it's he's surprised at Peter's entitlement.

"You don't." Peter's lip twitches, his brow drawing closer together, no sign of plans to lunge or even snap in his upper body. Definitely inanimate. "Hear me out," Stiles appeases. "If you're turned on, then you'll feel more of it than if you just, uh, relax and let it happen." Things that sounded better in his head 101. "That sounds threatening. I meant—"
Peter looks like sour milk.

"I know what you meant." Lip twitches higher, flash of teeth, still at odds with the absence of muscle tension anywhere else; the expressions of a face just-turned Stiles' way. "Try again," he says. Sulk off. Instruction voice. Teaching moment. Stiles takes him seriously when he poses: "Why in the world would I want your dick in my anus?"

He's going to get at that ass one answer or another, but that doesn't make failure to sell it an option. Because he hates failure, not because it isn't an option. Stiles' expression hardens. He reaches out, following the wolf's near muscle from where it begins behind his ear down his neck, fanning his fingers out over his collarbone, pinky resting on that separated, knife-like anchor to his sternum.

Blue eyes sharp as Allison's arrowheads boosted when critical, unconcerned, narrowed or anything else that doesn't lift his brow with the crease hanging to the upper lid – rarely circles, instead that contrarily tight crease underneath them, the extra factors that pull all attention to his stare bent on spear-fishing an answer from Stiles'. The human doesn't play along, eyes wandering to facial hair saucy even at his most comfortable or considerate, the lips which are not standard issue because they suck his dick and look fucking amazing with saliva-thinned cum on them. His dick. Can't over emphasize. Peter's no longer focus-faced, touch of the 'innocent' inward rise to his blonde brows. Below the neck where his fingers still rest his blonde curls beginning a soft-enough triangle down his chest, softer skin and contrarily rugged muscle split wide by the flat of his sternum and Stiles' imagination fills in the rest, covers obscuring nothing.

He knows the right answer; isn't ready to impress the answer on the mature body lying with him. What if I was never done with you? rasps in his ear as if Peter said it again. Only the whole apparatus of carefully orchestrated physical control shut off and stayed shut off for going on forty minutes, Stiles shivering, at least half arousal, the idea strung together with an incredible orgasm – what Peter wanted – and the younger Beta having a harder time telling himself he'll grow out of this. The rest Cold terror he's having a harder time telling himself he'll grow out of this. Maybe it shows; he presses into Peter's hip, humps into him hard a few leisurely times in counterbalance.

The wolf's one pretty bastard. Stiles never takes that for granted, masks and changes in poise in infinite combinations like a copy of The Neverending Story but a hot guy. He keeps Stiles reading. What he takes for granted is the hands. They're not what they look like, all squarish and dudely for such a high Dex score. Does not take for granted how they get him off in that they refuse to be ignored. He forgot months ago they touch him when and however they want, his own body taught indifference between a hand on the shoulder, one digging between his legs to tool around with his anus, one or both grabbing, shoving, spreading, gagging, healing, cleaning, choking him. Choking him. In porn people choke their partners through their own orgasm. Not Peter, unless it lasts that long. His impaired ability to breathe, his crushed windpipe either cuts off his ability to talk or, usually, momentarily disorients him into a helpless toy.

He's looking at a man who interferes with his bodily functions, decides not just when he bathes but breathes, who he'd let hold his cock while he pissed and he wouldn't notice he'd ceded that in the regular course of staying out of the way of Peter's hands as long as he has no motivation to redirect them. He might not know if the dude ever already did that and that thought doesn't bother him.

Now he has Peter. No rules. Just the pickiness and complaining about uncharted regions so limited the only thing for Stiles to take seriously is how he's gonna fuck them. Right now. Interfere with some bodily functions starting at the stomach, one way or another maybe his esophagus, trachea. Something he's cool with. He's not even dealing with letting Peter do an enema because he's not waiting like half an hour. An hour. Bigger problem for Peter than him.
"Sometimes there are gonna be things I want that don't get you hot," he says. Confidence. Warning tone; confidence rising; teeth clenching – gradually harder, gaze fixed on Peter's, now, until his senses switch tone and show him another Beta, illusion of any other roles evaporating. One to subordinate. "If you want a fuckhole go buy a stroker. Masturbation sleeves come in anal. Hand me the lube. I'm gonna fuck you. Know what, fashionista? You're starving to guzzle down the attention whether it's your throat or your ass."

Peter's expression blanks except for raised brows and pouty pursed lips, innocent of everything, except his eyes slide away and with the arching of his back, side-shift of his shoulder, and a reaching arm with an incredible tricep and those hard, rounded muscles under his shoulder – lats, yeah, lats, Stiles has none – secures the lube. Stiles wishes he had a camera. He does have a boner taking his stretching body seriously.

"Thanks," he says, choked up, handed lubricant. Choice one had been: So u lifted all dis new furniture up stairwell alone y/n?

Peter swaps into performance review mode, knocking aside Stiles hornier preoccupation for attentiveness drilled in across months.

"You talk like the bolder and choppier your emphasis the better you'll sell it," the wolf chastises, although Stiles generally gets a knotty joy in his chest when Peter lectures at him so even failure's a reward. The internet calls it ASMR. "You have no clue how to switch your strategy up when your mark doesn't know they're a mark. You have to leave a mark breathing room, the sense you're not bullying control from them. Next time you come over we'll practice lying – because in the real world you get caught at it all the time. All that hitting the mat when you fail'll make for your exposure therapy."

Predator's smile. Stiles breathes in against the flash of fear in his stomach knocking out his physical enjoyment at 'hitting the mat'. Peter dismisses his fear, purposefully unconcerned. Peter knows he'll hit the point he's more angry over the impact of failure than he's afraid. The impact a stuck on repeat: This is where you died fucking it up.

Breathing still heavy, the wolf hasn't forgotten who has control. Stiles takes the gloat off his face swapping from attentive to intent; moves on top of Peter; switches hands with the lube, lays his hand where it last rested; watches it slide up the wolf's clean shaven neck until the wolf lifts his chin without taking his eyes off Stiles, who presses down as his fingers close, couples it to a flirty grin; takes his confidence back, shutting Peter up, grin disappearing. He gets warm in his chest, it's not ASMR, as Peter's lips curl up at one corner; breathes his body; dips and licks the wolf's contracting pec as his grip tightens. If Peter tensed his neck he'd push his hand off. No question of if he will: He won't. Gasps like a fish. Stiles draws back; watches. Peter's gaping uncontrolled framed by all his tidy self-grooming, eyes wide but disoriented.

A violent second not of darkness but human carnality when the dominant Beta thinks about crushing his throat until his body lies unconscious. Unlikely. Peter's impaired, but he'd be thrown off further and recklessly because of that, too big a risk as long as he's unpredictably an immediate threat to Peter's life. He lets off, satisfied, memory with him he's only accidentally blacked out, himself -- and then the annoyed werewolf later -- still knowing he's not alone with the urge because he's been told I want to hear your cartilage crush and watch you suffocate, so beautiful, waiting to know if you'll live or die. If you lived I should take you around to the hospital but I really think I'd want to bring you around. Go back to our sexual arrangement while you recover.

Nothing Stiles wants, but an extension of. He gives Peter the wolf went after the only thing that could work: not trust exercises, trustless; months of practicing not killing each other on repeat. He
permits Peter's hands because he knows first-hand if Peter chooses to hurt him, he'll be hurt. If he chooses to kill him, he'll be dead. And Peter, taking on his first, light sweat sheen permits Stiles' based on a running threat assessment. Stiles breaks out in a goofy smile, leans in and takes his mouth, secure knowing a surprise-eyed Peter wants his touch.

His hand traces down his chest, fingers spreading to pass over his lats, thumb at the other extreme, down the center of his belly, leaves himself at rest as his hand turns toward Peter's side, riding his breath instead of sneaking lower. He drops his hand and gives him a pinch with a twist right above his hip when they break apart. Peter retreats to his resentment, pulling his head back incrementally; swapping masks like he's holding them on sticks.

Stiles' grin relaxes to an even-sided smile; thinks back what feels like a long time.

"You are so beautiful," he says, fully cognizant. Not just he's grouchy, not just he's being obedient, not just when he's flirting, or serpentine smiles – none of that's real. Peter purposefully creating reasons for him to come back. Stiles enjoys the art by which his wolf survives and endures a dangerous life through avoiding wasting effort. Peter lying under him: the now mostly intuitive but carefully measured result of fine-tuned weights system of weights and measures easily mistaken for a Rube Goldberg machine. What satisfies Stiles sexually, what's too much trouble to satisfy him with, how favorably Stiles views him, how favorably he needs to be viewed for whatever he wants him for, how to socialize himself as much as he needs to socialize without creating obligations; be appreciated as much as he thinks he deserves.

The calculated actions, results of the same machine, look ugly at other pivotal moments where their gruesome execution couples to benefit, especially when he's a hulking beast punching into and lifting Derek by his broken spine and flinging him against the high school brick to make yet another bid to secure who he mistook as a potential Beta, Scott, early days; when Olivia's guts hang out over her hips, Scott roars, Peter scrambling off her, what was a mountain lion triage and Stiles with Allison putting torn things back where they think they probably go. Right now, when Peter has missed him, making effort for Stiles' sake because his nature as a social animal's just as much a part of everything that keeps him alive, the amorality of the creature offering himself speaks to Stiles, especially to checking his own logical actions.

Peter doesn't look incredulous over the compliment, just grouchy. Grouchier. Comfortable in that guise. Derived Stiles wouldn't enjoy faked up desire; lodging more realistic complaints about how inconvenienced he'll be, instead, without ruining Stiles' bloodsport – wrecking some damage.

Stiles doesn't kiss his lips, now, he kisses his near shoulder and down the dried-sweat salty, iron tasting skin of his chest, hand stroking, covering, laying possession by scent onto his dense body along with climbing lower between his outstretched but parted legs, until the displeased wolf's eyelids drift lazily in acceptance.

(Acceptance that he's getting a ton of attention this way.)

"You have something in mind you wanna do with your legs? I'm cool with 'whatever I want'," Stiles relates, drumming his fingers on the wolf's hip with a suggestive wag of his brow. Peter's fresh scowl makes it clear he resents him more than he's resented anything living or dead in the history of the world. Peter wets his lips, arguing against that.

Stiles laughs, leaving it up to Peter, who pushes himself further up the black pillows, Stiles can sketch out through his own muscles it'll be worse on his stomach the more he doubles up, decides that one's about level eye contact although Peter turns his eyes away to focus on what'll annoy him the least, exhales through flaring nostrils like an angry bull but draws up his sprawled legs, dragging his feet up the mattress beneath the sheet held over them by Stiles' back; digs his heels into the bed;
lifts his ass, pulling it forward, stretching out his back, sending Stiles head spinning watching his abs stretch up and stretch out, belly button pulled wider. Peter hangs his thighs to the side; coolly rolls his hips up, expression sedate, nuanced with challenge, daring Stiles to show enough initiative to go through with it. Part of Stiles clearly knows dominance, subordination, and submission are toys to Peter in the bedroom, even remembers in the real world, for now, he's the ranking Beta, and he still can't—

He interprets from the quivery-belly sensation he skipped so many levels of graduated sexual discovery to get here. No exploration. No fingering. He plays with Peter's junk he keeps his fingers tucked close under Peter's balls. Only grabs his ass to get a better angle going, usually mid-coitus.

He pulls his head back together versus the incomprehension of how little Peter moved to make himself all his.

He pauses, meeting Peter's evaluating stare; scrutinizing it; letting the wish that he could give Peter what he gets out of anal pass. He can't. He sits up on his knees, the sheet falling off his back, and closes his eyes until he steadies his breath. Hears Peter laughing at, not with him, except that's good; hits his cock with a throb.

"I understand some of that Aguilera song 'Makes Me Wanna Pray', now," he says. O Lord Jesus by the intercession of the glorious Virgin-Mother of God and Saint Joseph... and: "Shit, no, I meant it's that was kinda overwhelming and...my place in Hell is locked up so tight."

Like Peter's ass usually is. (Straight to Hell.)

The degree of exposure isn't 'eagerly on display', Stiles' personal default, but there is absolutely displaying. Too much vanity in Peter not to flex his anus and those sweet thigh muscles when Stiles lays ambitious eyes on him.

Down from the pubes below his balls, Peter's hair mostly smoothes out, last lingering curls and fine hairs laying away from his anus, not obscuring anything. Unlike Derek and unlike Stiles, definitely not like Stiles in ten years. Peter left him no anatomical mysteries. No question he wants to bone that, either. Put his cock right through the flesh pulled tight at Peter's anus. Excitement rallies. Laying on, holding, torturing but not hurting a Peter from inside him. Up inside him, and the torment sticks; big change from chewing on a werewolf who's humoring him.

Peter done laughing now he's looking, reaches down to get his disengaged junk out of the way so that his limp dick lies on his stomach, resting toward one thigh, adjusts his loose balls by not much, languorous in the face of dismantlement. Stiles volleys his own challenge: As if he'll keep that face up.

----

Peter's too-ambitious teenager make the bright decision of lubing only his cock. He never wants his spider-leg fingers playing with his anus unless Stiles makes up submission games. He's opening a door to brazen behavior.

He takes the alluring masturbation, Stiles hand stroking his erection with light twists, thumb circling and stoking beneath its glans. Foreskin pulled down to smear lube underneath it, his hand glides smoothly over the rest, mouth gaping, eyes blinking blankly, head moving loose in the way he's only ever seen Stiles' move, chin falling upward, head tipping to the side, brow open above the uncontrollable eyelids.

Stiles can't avoid making masturbation into event. When personal pleasure's his goal he collapses
onto his back, mutters approvals, self-encouragement, or sticks with incoherent, the rest of his body moving, rubbing against itself or anything near him, to the pace of his variety act of self-pleasure, hips jerking away from his own grasp the first few times he sets himself off.

Peter jacked off to that the couple of times. Jacked off onto it in good humor, Stiles lying dazed, dark line of belly hair and what should be otherwise smooth, young skin broken up with scars, wearing all sizes of moles, painted in his cum, room dark but sheen on the contours from the lights outside the windows, debauched, loose limbs looking slutty, arms lying over his head, knees of both legs turned outward, one drawn up, other strewn out like he'd take anybody who got around to mounting him. Aiming for somebody in particular.

Horny teenager's request for one more before bed denied. Peter didn't feel like making the effort, but the erection Stiles brought on he could resolve without wrestling resting on his knees over the stretched out leg, looking down at the hips he's fucked more than any other pair. Stiles instigating with him. His signals and his demands and absurd, relaxed obscenity – folding his arms, resting his head on them and watching television with his bare ass at the end of the coffee table knees a continent apart 'waiting' for Peter to finish with his e-mail.

As much as he felt ownership of the body carrying the weasley brain, Stiles thinks Peter's body exists to stretch his ass out. That was evidenced by his pouting partner only having eyes for his dick, like he was waiting on it to do a circus trick, but a mediocre one. The boy still licked his lips, invited Peter to douse him at the right time to bring his orgasm up through his cock, stretching on the bed from his legs up, pushing his welcoming belly higher, his shoulders into the pillows, arms still lying above him baring his body. Peter's semen surged to cover Stiles'. He came back after the upward, lengthwise roll of the boy's body completed, Stiles smiling frisky puppy like under him where he lay right before, streaked with overlapping strings of cum, milky puddles oozing together.

Stiles didn't let him clean anything up; protested with a new, deeper frown That's mine! Peter rolled his eyes and returned to the covers he'd been under, aware of the criticism carried in the rebuke: Stiles isn't going to sleep keeping his ejaculate warm overnight inside him, however much slowly leaking out. He let him gloat to sleep with the covers only up to his thighs.

Abstractly Peter has a front row seat to a well-rehearsed live sex show. The attraction steams underneath a thick outer skin, the anticipation of his oncoming misery. Stiles moves as if he's still lighter weight; skinnier than he is. Nobody expects reactivity from every muscle spanning shoulders as wide as Stiles', arms as thick with their prominent veins under tension, like his hands, only the knots of his first knuckles giving away their strength until he clutches like he's clutching at his cock, the muscles bulge and veins rise. However thick a neck he has his head, always in motion, distracts. Distinct pectorals twitching, packed abdomen flinching in on itself, legs long and narrow but holding their shape, hard packed, jumping or jerking when pleasure washes beyond his hips. Across his whole body as many small movements as on his face where his nostrils flare, lips keep changing shape, he swallows, and his brow runs commentary on every change in voltage of his sexually charged excitement.

The idea of working up anger over frankly inevitable anal sex or saying 'No' in a situation Peter placed himself in by playing rough for too long both sounded terrible. He has him few enough days a week not to just let Stiles stalk out and drive home. He didn't bring Peter to that impasse. Closed a hand on his neck, though, that said he could play cruel, too, and Peter realized, haltingly considering the asphyxiation, that he wants Stiles' proactive and reactive mass crushing his body. Not to be fucked, the deep tissue massage an unfortunate side note. To play object to Stiles' intense emotions, to his entire body lurching over him, pushing and dragging him with it, maybe even shutting up the mind he's trapped alone with.
He has no ability to intentionally provoke emotion in Stiles. No act in his repertoire Stiles would believe. A rare sense of deficit, searching himself for something missing besides the emotions turned to char, besides the ever-present detachment from his immediate surroundings, inability to identify with his body. A fleeting instant of desire for Stiles to bleed into his skin. The scent of dry leaves and empty rooms; Lydia's perfume. There had been something more between them when he kissed her than he can find now. Forgettable. He likes his chances he won't have to beg to win it back.

In his minute with himself so much less pleasant than Stiles', tension released from his muscles, expression carefully not-unpleasant, Peter exudes anxiety a wolf could smell in the hallway, his immune system, biological and draíochta, running at high capacity, body erecting the same triage unit it erects to respond swiftly to injuries taken in a fight, a normal fight-or-flight reaction left stewing unresolved. Peter blames Stiles for making himself an aesthetic distraction, leaving Peter's nervous body with no intervening voice of reason. He wonders if Stiles would be as zealous or even more zealous if he could scent the readiness to result in no action and understand his resignation, his body already reading all of it wrong.

His teeth clench – he withholds flashing them – when Stiles' warm hands close below his inner knees, pushing his thighs up the enough-more to not to put his ass in a pinch. Recognizes, can't appreciate more experienced hands, burying his shoulders deeper in the mattress, masking the flare of hatred, of revulsion, at having his legs spread, an act not demeaning but repulsive, and the urgent impulse to maul him he passes over.

Stiles ignores the disquiet, eyes apportioning the wolf into manipulable parts in the absence of instruction, except for his hands tightening and relaxing as the danger passes off Peter, as almost-invisible a tell as whatever let Stiles read his fight reaction. He's not approving so much as vindicated. He excised gangly, sloppy, uncoordinated Stiles and insinuated something in its place that might have rolled out of the way, Stiles in a superior position to act. Naturally. Stiles clutches the upper end of his own slicked cock, thumb on top. Peter slides his eyes to the side, sigh proportionate to his regret and annoyance at passing over the mauling.

Motion on the mattress; the boy 's mid-thighs touching each buttock and Peter's thighs. Stiles takes grasp of his outer calf, knee cupped by the flesh between index finger and thumb, pressing his leg outward and down. Stiles squints up at him, dark brows narrowed, brown eyes dark, too. Lashes sometimes-beautifying play off the black of his widened pupils. Peter concedes not to assault him, lips a firm line, not thrilled about it. Stiles' eyes fall away as soon as he has assurance, clearly more interested in a hole to fuck.

The boy lowers his cock to his anus, angled down even if he's ass up, its head pressed between the muscle and fat of Peter's buttocks, degrees hotter than his skin. Unwelcome. Contempt fills his head, inflamed by it – of all the things to still feel acutely – focused on body heat bathing his hips and thighs, radiating off Stiles even where their bodies don't touch, a looming promise of not only penetration, noxious by itself but repeated penetration underneath a hot, then sweating body.

Rationally he knows and has known resistance is pre-emptory, to give way to real physical complaints but objective acceptance. He might even find himself a degree of entertainment. Either he lets himself be repelled or he disengages from 'relaxing and letting it happen', turns physically defiant given no other outlet, his body willing to betray him either way when Stiles hits his intestines, nausea exploding like a burst of gunfire.

A last, suddenly-possessive flare of Stiles' eyes has reflexively opening his hips wider, reading another werewolf, intuiting the danger of a degree of force Stiles just can't put out, his vigilance – paranoia – cutting through his contempt. In that moment the kid reminds him of himself. He's already blaming Stiles for being the one who'll rut the illness into his body, destroying any other physical
Head of Stiles' cock forced against his anus; Peter's flesh sinking into his body with it, stretching over the slick, high-temperature, stiff but skin-covered rolling pin introducing itself to his rectum. Pain, even for him and even with Stiles' cock dripping lube onto the fitted sheet, lube forming the start of a trickle down his asscrack: unsuspecting inner muscle spread by force all directions at once. The softly swollen glans can't pass through him soon enough, squashed by the same flesh and muscle Stiles forces open. Peter makes an unpleasant analogy to parting for an enormous earthworm; nose wrinkling violently, forgetting anything else for that instant. Clears his thoughts, not so unfortunately:

He otherwise would have missed the teen's widening eyes, his eyebrows spreading upward, mouth gaping; his overblown disbelief as he stares down at Peter opening inward under the pressure of an inconveniently long but rigid-enough dick, gliding both across Peter's skin and through his own guiding grasp, excess lubricant draining along Peter's skin. The wolf scoffs one laugh, contempt spent, the lull before harm done.

Stiles eyelids shutter out visual overstimulation as he voices a shock-spurred *Oh my god*, holding his cock still the instant after both rings of muscle give way without warning. Then his eyes are doing the gaping. Peter's amusement at his partner's incomprehension of this intermediate step where Peter's holding his erection in his ass not two inches in, as if the two of them holding Stiles' cock between them defies the laws of nature. He likes seeing *his* buried in Stiles' body.

Obvious difference. One of them only *after* the moment grasps penetration means his penis is in the middle of somebody else's gut. Peter responds blandly to Stiles' triple check he in fact knows and is allowing what's happening with genuine condescending disappointment, pleasantly rewarded by a blush covering Stiles' face and upper shoulders. His gaze drifts from Stiles with an exaggerated sigh. The hand below his knee tenses and relaxes, boy gutturally protesting being left to work it all out alone, a concern dismissed. Beyond the surreality of the minute lies the guarantee of an *inconsiderately* passionate Beta – still a partner but playing competitor, and he's competitive – forcing his physical submission, driving agony into his gut.

He wants to have to care. That would be an experience. One he can't by his self-preserving nature prime. His body lies heavy, legs forced apart, arms lying beside him. Stiles will focus; drive his cock in. He glowers at the freshly painted black wall, but the boy has started reeling his attention in by making himself a presence inside him.

----

Stiles gives up on getting some direction on what Peter doesn't want the most, inside Peter's body, and he is about to do things to it that it's gonna respond to poorly. He doesn't rub in he's got 'just the tip' in, so far, making good on his word, after goggling up at Peter who smacks him with embarrassment. Of course Peter knows where his penis is going: all the way in, maybe not in one push; into his colon for sure. He has more than four inches to give him even kept in check by the shapely Hale ass shtick.

He starts at making tiny thrusts, hissing in through his teeth where he normally vocalizes, still staring down, hand relocated to the sharp upper edge of a hip. He remembers Peter's former size, his power, the close brush with the Bite. Questions if that wolf, an Alpha, would allow him to ride the smooth clutch of his ass. Yes. A single legit body issue, not one plagued by shame. He does let a long sound groan through his throat thinking actually the sliding action, the pleasure drowning him from the better-than-anything taut strokes on his favorite body part -- the peen -- right below the drive-him-nuts erotic-action-gearied skin of his stretched-out frenulum and flesh as soft as Peter's throat holding his head... All this could've been his. Repeatedly. Peter would've lived his days picking up an
unknown multiplier less stress. He remembers the eyes on his and the even greater horny of sixteen. Yes. PostScript: He has no complaints he's getting it from him now, thoughts starting to elude him as arousal takes the wheel.

He has to bust a nut in here or he could actually die, now a groan of delicious misery. Fuck Peter's nausea; he asks What would Peter do? Fuck himself like heat's a thing.

Idea of Peter's comfort routed by swapping to the wolf's reality, he lets go of his knee, still holding his hip, leaning into him, forward, other hand braced on his upper abdomen, not pressing into his stomach; framing his situation, physics, universe not in the wolf's favor. He lets his erection penetrate deeper, thinks angles, thrusted until he touches the bend where his rectum takes a turn into his intestines, stroked not just by Peter's anus, he realizes, but his lubed up butt cheeks now that his leg's not pressed out as far.

Stiles, despite his classic dude ass without that added cushioning, knows almost nothing about what he intends to do to Peter except from anatomy charts. His large intestine's something Peter barely gets a piece of and only in the right positions. Derek got a little more. Kinda weird, then he got over it.

Therein ugly truth: Not much of an upside to having a long cock. Hell yes he loves to double fist it; then jacking him while he's going down – awesome. Getting up toward eight inches doesn't offer a single favor to Peter. He knows that. Knows. Trivial. Freudian slip on 'trivia'. He's decoupling from running deductions, words swapping out for intuitions; unevaluated hunches, the pleasure rolling through him rocking his sense of space, of direction, like a ship pitching on the waves of a storm.

Consciousness of Peter's body in his hands and swallowing him up smashes past his thoughts from beast-like depths overfed on violence and hard sex by the werewolf himself. Now it's the wolf who hisses, Stiles' gaze snapping-to, catching Peter snap his head back like the impact of a cock pushing past the bend, opening him up again but worse, could be released to the pillow. Stiles how violently the impact hits his stomach, just sees those wide abs make some sweet contractions, bunching together, definition coming out; rippling in synch.

He stops breathing watching three pass in rhythm, dizzied realizing he provoked him to be dangerous enough, submitted to him working out the rough edges of his urges completely enough, got it far enough through his skull he fucked up to position Peter to let this happen, decision made before he seeded the thought in the wolf. He accomplished this, a plotted, tangible outcome he brought Peter into, grudgingly complicit. This has gotta be a riff on the thrill of achievement Peter feels when everything's coming up Peter.

Another thrust smacking the wolf's small intestines through his violated colon; Peter's protesting body; the orchestrated protests of Peter's contorted face vanished in place of more visceral reactions. Stiles' lips hang parted. He doesn't think he underappreciates the matured Beta's blowjobs, but they'll never reduce Peter to the kid of wreck Peter leaves him. Peter hates the nausea that comes with anal as much as Stiles hates pain. Reevaluation of how far he can deconstruct something with Peter's power.

He narrows his eyes, full of the animal impulses the wolf heightened with careful attention and intention to be worthwhile in a fight, he said back when – not to be used against him, never for this; intelligently and purposefully tests his power, braces himself; slips an inch out; plunges deep; slides out; hits him hard, pace lube-smooth. New expression for Peter, eyes open to the maximum, bewildered, totally awareness of what he got himself into. Mauling Stiles dropped off the list. Special moment here of Peter self-identifying as deluded; insane. For not mauling Stiles. Stiles accepts that realistically without losing the triumphant glee.

If he had to pick three he'd call Peter built like a monster as a man (in the best way) and a monster (in
the worst), homicidal, and Machiavellian. Stiles Stilinski: bad grades, hyperactivity, just above lowest jock in the social hierarchy in Beacon Hills since he switched to lacrosse until this year – pack strength, speed, coordination, but he earned it making Scott from a dumb puppy into a real werewolf; he’s stripping off the second two, Peter’s whole torso heaving around his organ-focused misery, muscle spasms desynchronized.

Stiles went into this carrying sick of his own curiosity about how nauseous nauseous meant. He read people talking sex on the internet, things like wanting to do anal but when the dude puts it in they’re stomach-sick like they wanna cry like a magician waved a wand, also less bad things that get worse as the partner in discomfort carries on by persistence alone. Curiosity he decided to declare his territorial rights to explore because Peter riled him up with the gag, because they were kissing like trying to disfigure each other, because he learned to hold his own months ago, and, hand off his hips, fingers passing over Peter’s suffering, he’s fueled by nothing more malicious than pursuing the power the wolf gives up to him to its ultimate destination, in the grips of fascination and daring.

Stiles thinks back to lying wanting to puke with Lydia. Thinks about their weak, co-reliant bodies pathetically supporting each other at different hours of the night. How their stomachs took turns stripping their control, driving them out of bed; touches on the weird intimacy, a pair of alcohol impaired bodies dehydrating together mutually promised to lend zombie-like uncoordinated support, more all-night physically intense than having sex and sliding apart; gets a rush realizing this one time he can render Peter legit helpless – stomach a mainline to an otherwise impenetrable brain. Proprietary aggression crops up, Stiles so certain for so long the theoretical principle of equal ownership was impossible in practice.

----

He’s had worse ideas he can’t remember, tears stinging at his eyes not from pain, not from any answering emotion, in symphony with the surge of sick in his stomach – his tear ducts priming to wash the vomit out of his nostrils. He hears his own unplotted laugh that he ever agreed to this cut off; buried. Turns out he anything but wanted to contract the muscles at his solar plexus. Eyes now shut he watches the bursts of light and color on the backs of his eyelids, struggling to get a handle on the waves of nausea he invited in – receding further each time in the way the tide runs out before a tidal wave, or in the way each crash hits more intensely than the last but the base, persistent level of illness a rising tide, leaving them indistinguishable from the general state of his stomach sooner.

Peter already conducted a mental catalog of the room and Stiles' capabilities; his true faith the sarcastic, bratty imp won't get distracted. The disturbing contemplation of what his body will do, what going all the way means for it, can be answered right here where Stiles has no way to kill him fast enough even with the advantage. Wretchedness and violation are separate states, even when suffered together -- neither he has much experience in. Better to fill gaps in his knowledge one at a time. Peter has no problem with

Stiles' shaft's a clean line of erectile tissue when swollen hard, point in his favor as, having a taste of his physical effect, Peter may not recognize his force of muscle but his abdomen's going straight downhill the way he's getting slammed like he's a wrecking ball. Great news for Peter that he only wallops him on impact; can be anticipated; counted out punch by punch. It could, worse, lurch unevenly through his gut. His gut has lurching unevenly covered on its own.

When Stiles planned to get this far, Peter's bowels had been an abstract concept absent the reality of his body creating three-hundred-sixty-degrees of pressure inside. Something Peter loves about anybody who isn't him. He’d be pushing down on Stiles belly until Stiles did cry, but he has reprieve from that, and able to picture the alternative, appreciate—
There it is, hand pressing in. He snarls the boy's name, gaze swearing remarkable acts of violence in retribution for Stiles knowing him, flash of one cocked brow and a devious smile saying You did that. He realizes he did, pulling in his abdomen, losing track of tells. Otherwise, his slip of control finds no traction against Stiles' return to even and patient but watchful eyes. The hips delivering the ramming force turning his gut catch the wolf's attention. His breath, unreliable, still picks up; can picture Stiles' glutes contracting, two perfect humps narrowing in at the top, hipbones visible on both sides, spreading in a curve into the lower width of his low plateau of muscle, preserving the tuck above his thighs, even while they contort to pound out driving force.

Queasy. Disoriented. Hallucinating his younger partner's ass. Bad position? Fantastic one? The human divides his careful focus between Peter and Peter's gut as his hand presses down so slowly instinct urges allowance, pressure uneven, rolling from his fingers to the pad of his thumb, then to the butt of his palm, trading back to his fingers before he rocks his hand side to side, pressure on the edges. The wolf follows it not on his skin but inside him, through space, the size of the pain greater than his body's, escalating bursts booming through it on time every time. Pushes himself upright from the pillows; roar low, short duration, collapsing into snarls – instinctively warning him off simultaneous with his stomach's illusion, insensible warning, of bursting; killing himself creasing his waist deeper and pressing into an unbudging hand. Even he knows that's his own fault as the pillows and mattress take his collapsing weight back, his breath shaky, pressure off, and Stiles laughing at him, which really should enrage him. The complete, terrible insistence any movement could kill him wiped the rage right out of his social conduct, descended fangs gone.

He cleared his own head spending up social signaling. Limbs leaden, head, too. He's taken injuries that laid him out and a venom months back that introduced him to a new idea of damnation when consciousness idiotically tried to return. The last two times his limbs were too heavy to move...Stiles provided the first one, too with flame. The other captured as a memory of waking up buried beneath feet of soil, wolfsbane weak, at first preoccupied thinking It's Lydia and What's Lydia?; Lydia there, stroking his face, not always sitting of the same side of him, instantaneously mirroring, sometimes fleetingly on her hands and knees behind his head, a hallucination reminding him he should move, than he could move, dig, saying Take your poison. Except when she lay on top of him, kissing him, flirtatious smile; flirtatious voice cooing she accidentally brought him up from the ground but found an absolutely perfect spot to leave him dead, that he could only grow more tired of living and she'd hold him if he'd only sleep. That time he moved, despite the horror of the things he imagined, remembered, only wearing Lydia's face, trying to drag him back to strip his soul down, leaving nothing behind but their own single-minded starvation.

Here in his bedroom he succumbs, no danger, no decisions to make, waking incapacitation separated out. No immediate consequences inflict themselves on him for choosing to grow heavier. The boy changes into a new expression, surprised appreciation. He stopped laughing but leaves his pleasure at winning a werewolf potentially subject to an emulated deficit of mercy.

The smaller veins in Peter's skin are closing up; he begins to feel cool as Stiles takes control of all the growing-fevered blood in his body, re-routing it all toward his digestive tract one threat level at a time, immune system hell bent on killing any hostile bacteria that could be exploiting the internal violence. If that doesn't crank the sauna all the way up surrounding Stiles’ lucky cock.

A hot palm appears to correct him if a leg starts sinking down the bed; a thumb passes over his drying lips; Stiles touches him lightly, playing at explorer with his body, cool-fleshed limp dick not exempt, picked up, foreskin overhanging and protectively puckered over the head pulled back, moved around by a thumb for being so loose before the pest who's slowed up on the steady but shallower penetration pulls it back over him, purses his mouth into a pout and tucks it back together over his glans to the roll of Peter's eyes, every step disconcerting, his penis he thought he knew a thick, vulnerably soft, and manipulable mass of alien, disinterested skin hanging to his body. Nothing
added to, nothing subtracted from the still-distressed stomach.

Peter's capacity for contemplation rapidly diminishing, when the teenager isn't thumbing on something, his cock, his pecs, belly button, knee, but the details, now, when his eyes grow dark and his hips pick up, nails rake his body, the same thumb presses at his anus, pushes it up, proving it can open wider, threat warning shooting through his abdomen louder than the whole mess of pain and sick, and the kid out of nowhere with the help of a hand fucking bit his inner thigh.

He liked that.

He'd wondered if memory exaggerated how miserably he takes anal sex. No longer wondering. It started with clenching abdominal muscles creating the illusion of an unknown force dealing blunt trauma to his abdomen from inside. Stomach turning, convinced the unimaginable had begun deadly work on his lower digestive tract. The wolf gasps acute breaths when his oxygen demand increases in case the next step is vomiting. He never vomits, that discomfort falls short, plummeting into pain. Right here where they are now: his abs crushed together, pressure of his compact muscles forced against the organ doing the suffering, full with pain and sick that gets louder and quieter across time, spreads further into his body and withdraws, but stays with him, a special never-going-to-expel aura of a body become zealot to the conviction that given time it can uproot the large and small intestines from their last connective tissue and vomit them out. Magical. A real bonding experience.

He grits as much to Stiles. His words arrest him, his teenager slowing further, not out of consideration, muscles packed tense, doing a touching impression of a girl in passion at an erotic video shoot, three hard, truncated gasps shorted matching high pitched cries when his upper body curls over, roaming hand grabbing onto Peter while the attractive creature forces himself deep as slow as hot wax drying, bites his lower lip, and slides back into the gun-cocked position of muscles relaxed solely to snap together with force.

Peter wets his dry lips, Stiles sticks to moving at him with little pushes, looking up post a moment for recovery, convinced of his own self-control, smug smile, bright eyes, impudent slouching thanks to resting all his weight on Peter, hair sticking every direction, nodding to himself in approval. Patronizingly affectionate in his rebuttal:

"You'll remember it completely different. Dude, you're trashed. I get you now. And I'm gonna nail you — and you've never been nailed before."

Peter scowls. He does sound a lot like that, speaking down and the touch of disbelief he has to be. Sexually, he has no self image to dent, which is different than resenting Stiles stealing his act while looking stupidly smug over the quality of the reproduction. Peter wants to check his ego and stolen pride; it makes a perfect opening for the take-down. He can't. Move. The self-preserving heaviness, the borderless stomach pain, intermittent shudders and instinct-forced gasps, boy's weight bearing down and the uncanniness that a benign overlap physical space, when it hits his intestines, effectively disables him when lacerating his intestines doesn't falls in place as a complete picture. Ridiculous. So ridiculous it's entertainment. He scoffs off the impersonation, but picks up interest, Stiles' teenage enthusiasm, uncheckable, bursting out like it never has inside the apartment before.

Maybe it is. Special. Not magical. Not special in any sentimental way; as a rare circumstance. A younger Peter would work men up and make a big deal about letting them dick him without a condom to the point they didn't last two minutes. Stiles he let fuck him. His body is taking every measure at its disposal to try and kill Stiles, a fact that brings him no physical but intense intellectual pleasure – in its evolved brute stupidity not as another animal but as an intrusion, potential infection married to the threat of tearing his gut, Peter's body bent on homicide to his full capacity in a way he can never express with claws. Extraordinary physical violence; defenselessness to any real threat, the
rest of him cut off from communication but never mistaking the happy boy in his bed for benign, all
his senses attuned to the human he trained who with any weapon in his reach could kill him. He
could manhandle him for unknown moments, long enough, weakness in Peter's body part-
bloodlessness, ironically part psychological self-preservation. No idea when that would disengage.
He welcomes the prick of mortal danger sharpening his focus. No sense of time, poor idea of his
body's boundaries, unrealistic physical convictions beyond conscious control. Trashed.

He hears everything, down to the minutest sounds of Stiles' organs, his nose sharp on hundreds of
scents – all from Stiles; aggression isn't missing from that menagerie, likely to escalate. He's always
being touched, he has a ranking Beta's complete focus. Crippled of the ability to enjoy himself under
any circumstances, hate and aggression still darken him in passing invisibly, less often. Underlying it
all, Stiles right that he craves the engagement.

The boy rapidly changes mien, starving animal with his own carnal priorities who moves higher on
his body, Peter's grunts and sighs coincide with the boy falling out and stabbing at him once before
he reaches between his legs again to fit that unwelcome thing back in. It takes him once to learn, he
moves over his upper body from a lower angle, taking the measures to slide his knees back
simultaneously. Lifts his narrow hips on one side, then the other, to dangerously brace his knees
wide on the mattress.

At first both hands are on Peter's ribcage, pushing himself up, intensity of Peter's annoyance
unacknowledged, boy as black and deadly as under the shadow—No. Shedding every emotion for
raw physical intention, mistaken first impression enough to send Peter's heart beating at heightened
pace, telling him to let the transformation come on. He doesn't. Catches the fleeting he's not too old
but too dead for Stiles' ambitions, but shifting, shoving Stiles off him, dealing with Stiles' burst dam
of emotion, mostly anger, he just patched up, suffering the exhaustion it would leave him in
alongside physical misery…

All aside from the fact he wants to see what his partner, now over him, now relieving him of his
weight, an arm beside him, palm on the bed – now, that'll be doing some pushing – kid lying on top
of him, would be face to face, Peter still propped by the pillows, except that Stiles drops his head
beside him, other muscled arm brought up to lie next to and beneath it, reaching around to spend its
length and fist his hand in the longer hair at Peter's crown.

Smart enough not to kiss him, and here he wanted to get a bite in. Dick building up force, wrecking
violence, impaling Peter, running him through, no exaggeration the distance the impact travels. Sad
situation for Stiles' instincts, tuned to match Peter's more closely than they did already. This one time
he holds all the cards but one: he's still powerless to leave his mark on Peter's body the way Peter's
scarred his. The wolf comes out unblemished.

---

Even though he's no longer looking Stiles can see Peter wearing his cold, bloodless skin, lips dry but
not chapping, continuously healing, sweating from sex but clammy, too, eyes stained with color at
their edges, wet eyes like Stiles saw on Lydia and in the bathroom mirror, no flush surrounding, not
holding back tears of emotion. Peter's eyes betraying a focused mind disappearing fast with Stiles'
own hips set loose.

Without a clear mind, appetites dominate his jumbled emotions. Make Peter his, Peter incredibly as
disabled as Peter disables him. To exercise ownership, already did, still going to.

Cumming in Peter: Barrier to endgame. The wolf bankrupted him last orgasm; he's taking a long time
to build up anything to shoot. He accepts his inevitable future where his balls ache more than they
ever have after masturbating two or three too many times, price worth paying.
All of it buys him time to soak up the pleasure that what started as the hot of intimate skin, the
temperature of Peter's throat, rose to an inferno. Cock brought to the temperature of the feverish,
melting heat, the blood pumping back into his body has him basking like a lizard happy under a
sunlamp. He can't separate it from his hot-like arousal except when that spreads further in floods or in
spikes.

Right when he gets it going he runs into the ragdoll physics working on Peter's hanging legs. He
slows down to the point hinds words to put to his thoughts. Sucks at Peter's ear, the whole spread
and lobe and he licks it before he drops his voice low register, teasing not taunting and feeling clever
raising the bar on the wolf feeling his breath as his cold ear chills further.

"If you had those legs around me, I'm not saying but I'm just saying they might not pull your stomach
apart with the fish flopping." He keeps talking low and slow currency, spent on gripping Peter with
stillness and convincing him he wants something other than what he's going for. He already has him
still; surprises himself with the wickedness of his own tone. From the way the sidelong glimpse he
has, Peter's face asks Peter why he didn't think of that. Stiles places a bet with himself he got any
other dudes in and out like a car wash. None of them were subject of his endurance-building tortures,
either,

A gap in time between Peter seeing the practicality and moving any limbs; sound of strain in his
throat that pulls off sounding pissy, too, when they first break their physical stupor. A lot of time for
Stiles to think he's lying on Peter Hale, moving on Peter Hale, every completed motion not just a gift
to his penis but an act in successfully not dying.

No fucking-Peter fantasy even **touches** the wolf's legs locked at the ankle around his waist. Peter's
calves actually pressed against him, wolf shuddering with the escalated pain of motion – all the
muscle, no control. Stiles can't picture his own expression, just knows his stomach dropped out in the
middle of the iron furnace of his stomach.

When he understands the thing that is happening, Stiles catches his breath and keeps it, body still,
errection urgent, pulse throbbing inside it – second priority. Moving stiff, arms long inactive, the wolf
hangs them loosely over his shoulders. Stiles only sees the edges of a couple of his slew of
expressions of discomfort. The eyes are key, unchanging, exact knowledge of what he's doing to
himself. Stiles turns his face back; exhales; allows his body to lurch back to motion. The mystery of
either Peter's practicality telling him to get some control over his upper body, or Peter realizing he'll
get closer attention, or if for a second he got possessive, or all of the above Stiles'll get over
remaining unsolved. In like three weeks.

**Dude, I think you're a man, now,** Stiles' brain offers his own numb brain. Something rings off.
Doesn't sound like a thought of his own. The civility. It's fake. **His** civility. A play to get Peter's legs
around him while stepping around reaching down and pulling them where he wanted; risking
startling Peter to teeth and claws.

Civility breaks. His hunger to consume the other Beta never left him. He's on him like a wolf again,
physical sensation and pleasure his sole guides, a pair of legs tightened against him. He wants to sink
his teeth into skin, leave it torn up by blunt fingernails, create bruises, colorful reminders in Peter's
skin. He wants so much more than his own human body can exert. He bites the ear beside him,
dragging on it; sense of possession, hears Peter curse in surprise. He lets his body try. He lets his
voice spin on like Peter's, full of gravel where the wolf whispers, pulling his ear tight to his lips, still
biting and pulling, still licking: **You're not fair, I'm supposed to stay off of you? Mixing up your
signals. You really want me off this more than you want me on you? Now you put crazy ideas in my
head, Peter—seeing you bent over. Bed. Couch. I could get you up on the back of that new chair,
knees jammed against the arms? Everything you wanna do to me. You think I'm immune? 'Cause I
think you look good. 'Cause I think you could use a little more energy in you—Somebody with a little more energy in you…

Stiles had no idea Peter was having this much fun.

----

The teeth. Something so normal when the boy gets worked up, after he learned Peter likes teeth, never taking it this close to ripping his ear off. His voice, kept under lock and key, after he learned Peter likes his voice. Suddenly he's talking; Peter can't, at this point in his night, keep the open-mouthed, stunned to paralysis if he wasn't already there expression from appearing; sticking around.

The kid lays down two patterns on Peter's ass that Peter thought he can't appreciate; he won't ever reach to describing himself as 'hard' but 'aroused' has his body more fucked up than before and his twitching left eye reflects the valid consideration all this must really be happening to somebody else. The kid's switches up between his cock driven forward ahead of hips by only the muscles of his not-so-sweet little ass, his thrusts short, jarring, smacks slicing the air in close succession, not real loud. Elbow sunk into the pillow, kid pressed to him, possessive, the lesser evil, and there is a hell of a lot of possibly welcome evil. The wolf's gut churns. What's churning to getting lanced?

Other times his strokes grow longer and hit harder, no single moment he gets back to rolling into him. Sinking down and thrusting forward, letting up on the elbow to free up rocking with the motion from his legs. Momentum and lubrication. The action that skyrockets Peter's stomach's distress; sends pain tearing through him like arrows. Stiles pushes himself down, arcs his back, drops silent – missed – opens Peter's neck and shoulder to his teeth, sinks them in, jerks at the skin, it fucking hurts and more than his ear – even if Peter rallies enough effort to tilt his head to the side. Mixes up the pain filling his body.

The half-wolf takes that as intended, that You call me a slut growls exasperation in place of gravel – …fair – a stationary printed dare to go farther; break his skin. It pauses him. Pauses him the exact time it takes for the glimpse of his face curling up, the warning he's about to express himself. He does, with his mouth par usual but not his words. Skin tears; barely. Skin heals. Thinking in threats, he failed to recognize Stiles' advantage. He'll never come apart: Stiles he never has to stop. He closes his eyes in silent relief. Body liquefying like the plague inside, Beta tearing at his skin – the high of physical stimulation reaching a volume drowning out the emptiness.

He lets in his separate breed of homicidal fantasy. Cravings confessed to only mirrors. His own body to break, a bone to snap, to actually fall off the side of the bed from uncontrollable vomiting, his skin torn off, shoulder crushed by teeth. To be afraid for his life. To prove he's alive. To be forced to rip the other Beta apart with his teeth. A Catch-22. He'd never put himself in this position if his partner became capable of that.

Stiles knows that. Doesn't hide his understanding of the sudden frustration when the boy gets rough on him. Meets him harder. Stiles would force beyond the impasse if he could. Use this young body, its physicality and enthusiasm, to grant that wish, provoke the awareness brought by mortal terror when Derek stood over him and Peter saw his death. Then he died.

Bodies in animal reality. Sweating together, cold and hot, the teen worked up to violence, scattered energies now tightly joined, whole body in motion, pitted against Peter's breaking resilience, werewolf sick too long. He shuddered, before, now goes rounds with periods of quivering. Good effort without his body temperature rising any higher than it is, skin's only warmth what Stiles shares. Leaden, quivering, disabled body. Stiles, mounted on him, covering his shoulder in spit, drawing a little blood.
Stiles' words coming back. The kitchen table. In his litany, the kitchen table. The teenager he trained to allow him full control the same creature supernaturally, unrelentingly purposed to kill him in cold blood. The uncertainty whether he could transform through the disorientation and the pain and what that creature would do to him with fifteen seconds to itself and a knife. All his painstaking exploitation. This unexpected need. The fact he means the young Beta to pass beyond his control. Not yet. Not now. Not the dim heat remaining diverted to, still warming his cock matched to even the idea of relief through cacophony repeated even once, an avalanche in poor judgment, a risk of undermining himself deferring his desires too long.

Blinding thrills – mistakes of danger at the borderline they've come short of crossing. Thrills colliding with the fact of a helpless body close to relief from relentless battery, not close enough, experimental change-ups of Stiles' thrusts haven't brought him to coming; Peter's doing. Acute onset memories of the twice he split from Scott, his pack, specifically a seventeen year old human armed with a high caliber handgun whited out, fully motivated to kill him in an open environment and could. He imagines futures. Thrills through his body at dangers beyond his physical present spaced apart and only four, fourth compelling enough to convince him if he's so scared to die then he has to be alive.

He stares at the ceiling, too far away to touch, but real, solid, and separate from every other surface. Brings a breath into his body, diaphragm drawing down but ribcage opening wide around an agonized stomach, both pulling against the organ, the way it screams a guarantee he's breathing. New information: It hurts to breathe.

So easy to ignore any physical thing he has no control over since he detached; crawled mindlessly from the fire, only minutes ago carrying his niece, Natasha, not breathing – carbon monoxide – but a wolf, possible to revive, until he saw the narrowness of the passage separating himself from the tunnels, no passage without at all without contortion, laid Natasha aside, already numb from dead pack ripped out of him by the flame, seeing her coming in two, organs falling out, sizzling, if he pulled her, and spent half his body for the chance of no more, at that time, than the rite of revenge, animated by fury; remained detached when he woke up to the full moon in his sad hospital gown; after he took Laura's power. Then he completely dissociated, although resurrected.

He's in a bed. He owns an apartment. Has a human professional occupation. Why? Because his family is gone. Except Derek, and Derek left him twice. There's a Beta that's only a human completely covering his body, blood-warm skin in contact, weight on him, so little weight for him to feel it so heavily. He's spending all his strength trembling to heat the scarce blood left in his skin, body relenting to an erection pushing and pulling at his anus, a concrete distance away – the measure of his bent torso – causing all the misery inside him. Welcome to wreck it. He recognizes, delayed by re-orientation to his space, that he discounts any contact with the very young human as an intrusion. He drinks the familiar scent of him, every note distinct. He's hugging him in his legs in a way he wouldn't be, legs as liable to tremble as every other frigid part of him. He knows better positions than this. The explanation for laying himself out in a ridiculous way comes instantly: He didn't care where his limbs went like he didn't care he could be smarter about his stomach.

Eyes falling to sex-mussed hair an afternoon's sweat finally took the product out of, soft where it brushes his arms, he feels nothing – still nothing – except the urge to see that face with its moles and lashes and lips distinct, a face busy donating teeth to his neck and shoulder, single acute pains. He is alive, provoking another living body to engulf him, amazed to watch his fingertips move across the skin and flexing muscles of a warm back—

Empty. That and nauseous. The wolf suffers mild, passing frustration, set back again. He remembers depth to the room, his body, Stiles', and distinctions between sensations slurried together again. Realizes the distance he experiences his body from, and that in some almost-imperceptible and terrible way his disembodiment makes moving through life like and still isn't at all like in a dream.
Feels nothing about it, only crabby Stiles keeps dancing around climaxing, his deadliness at other times no longer intruding on Peter.

Nothing here could work him up again. He's sick of being sick. Only the teeth and saliva hold his interest, the will driven to latch on the opposite of abandonment for weeks. He'll still want to vomit out his organs for hours after Stiles gets the hell off of him; still wants to start his gut on realizing there's no emergency in it. He no longer even appreciates its determination to kill.

----

Stiles blisses out, not like before, not like Peter goes blank but effort-addled, humping up on the wolf's body, stolen by the weird sensation of cum rushing through a penis going cold all over, not cold like the wolf's skin, chemical cold like it plunged into liquid menthol, helped on by the pain. The pain in his testicles. The pain his testicles are now experiencing. Whatever noises he made or didn't are between Peter and the acoustic panels until he tunes in to his own pained sounds over weak ejaculations, sore muscles spasming for nothing. Head falling weakly on the wolf's shoulder he tastes fresh blood; sucks it off his teeth; so he bit him, maybe kind of hard, but that already disappeared. Makes a note there's no such thing as too much lube. (Ha. Not true in all situations.) Even with oil, he's pretty sure he survived a brutal chafing his everything leaving enough of it inside Peter to keep slicking himself up.

His hips sting from colliding into Peter. No difference between having a huge orgasm and a body so into Peter's body it's determined to bang one out running on fumes. The wolf's body still holds him, inner heat sinking back into his cock. He needs to change that situation but he puts it off one moment. Two. Makes a memory, then he slides out.

Peter tight on him without a pause, rippling over him, smooth up and down and hotter than Hell beats fucking Peter's throat, except the dude's as shitwrecked as Stiles' whole reproductive system. Anybody could see that. Nobody but Stiles will ever see that. The excitatory possessiveness; knowledge through experience of absolute territorial rights, fuel the need to return all the incidents of grooming. He kisses the cold skin under Peter's ear. Grins, touch of ruefulness, a lot more gratitude, aggression gone, safely passing adoration off as nothing more – Stiles having love for him so beyond Peter's imagination – and flirty.

"Alright beautiful, now I owe you."

----

Peter's been seen saucy little expressions like this more than once, never so elated: brows arched, wide eyes lit bright – except for his irises, still huge – the open-mouthed smile, barest hint of teeth, right side pulled up higher than the left, like a smirk but all delight. He would love to take those words and make them into something delightful to him. He doesn't even trust himself to remove his legs from Stiles, although he removes them, the tremors and the illness kicked up in his gut from the motion ignored, the kid surprisingly attentive to staying still until that effort's over before taking his weight off him.

"My night ended at the point of anal penetration," he says, flat; accusative; the truth. He can say with reasonable certainty Stiles will still be aching in the morning.

No deterrent to the overexcited puppy on hands and knees above him wriggling its shoulders with impatience to deliver.

"I'm pumped. I loved that. So much so I'm willing to revive words like 'rad' and 'extreme' to express that I've never been so hyped over something since I was eight."
"Two, three years ago?" Peter accuses dryly.

Stiles rolls his eyes, grin falling off, slightly-exaggerated frankness coming on.

"That's not the way to talk to the guy who's ready to perform you adult services."

Peter twitches, ready to do him extreme violence. His circulation's already coming back, nausea sticking around but not the crisis state.

"If any part of you touches me..."

The authentic threat does not impress the boy, whose explanation starts off with extra articulation:

"Laundry, Peter. Imma do the laundry." Oh. "And clean your couch. Run the dishwasher." Peter takes a second trying to determine if he trusts Stiles with these things. "Single-parent household," Stiles reminds him. "I can do all of that without ruining your new stuff, and cook fourteen different meals. Only fourteen. Fourteen exactly. Steep learning curve. I have a bad time with instructions like 'a pinch of'. So before you pass out hating me with all the loathing in your loathingful body, I am going to change the fitted sheet, because my side is swampy and with the not touching you I want somewhere to eventually lie down."

Peter tries to find the loathing. Stiles supplanted it delivering novel information.

"I'm highly attracted to the idea of you doing my housework."

"I can't," the boy shoots back with what sounds a lot like teenage recalcitrance before he's back to rattling off with confidence: "I can't do your housework. It's one of the few things that keeps you moving. You might accidentally fall into hibernation which I guess has upsides for everybody but my penis. But, no. In the zoo they call activities that get animals moving around 'enrichment'. On days when I'm not here you need to be, you know, enriched."

He only misplaced his loathing. He found it.

"Get the sheet," he snaps. "And bring a towel for the mattress."

"As if it wasn't my idea," Stiles intones as talking to himself once he's out of reach; as he heads out for the linen closet.

Peter can sleep. He can always sleep. His intestines, which have probably shed their lining, are going to wake him up, flushing every last thing to ensure against a repeat or poisoning. It happened one time before. He's rapidly healing except for his just shy of riotous stomach and the one remaining knife blade of pain in his gut which will disappear, then reappear repeatedly for maybe a couple hours before the real pain...

He unhappily gets out of bed, standing, glad there's not semen running down his leg, acceptable drizzle traveling down his left thigh while he watches Stiles change the sheets; towel off the mattress; swap in the other linen set. Efficiently. Peter grudgingly comes around to believing he can trust him to not ruin his clothes or the bedsheets, that he knows how to use a washing machine and can clean the couch. Stiles smiles with pride over the re-dressed bed; Peter tells him to take the clothes out of the hamper and go away, no vindicating dismissal, since, yes, that was Stiles idea, but the lights are out, the door is closed, and he tissues off his ass and retreats into bed where he can finally leave his stomach lying still.

Settled under his new covers, he may be sullen but satisfaction as deep as all his complaints comes sneaking back.
Not a groan, or a whine, not a whimper of a moan, not a whiny sound, or a cry, but a dry sob jerking through Stiles' upper body with the first compulsive, pre-orgasmic thrust.

Stiles isn't making his cute little noises, exhalations harsh, forced catches of throat – what from Peter would be growling. He orgasms into him, fast jerks of his hips; slapping sounds cracking through the air; pleases Peter extremely, a dark, proud thrill when his teeth, never unlatching, rip through his skin, canines then incisors and the sharp points of premolars, no matter how wretched the kickback from his gut at taking a hard dicking.

Peter has no lunar fury to work with except what Scott gives Stiles, satisfied with himself and with the younger Beta over the raw and jagged, now healing, now healed wound as the boy starts to groan at what he's demanding from his own balls, hips still jerking into him. Stiles sounds like he's hurting almost as much as the impacts hurt inside Peter. **Good.**

----

From the window light Stiles wakes up a couple hours past daybreak. First sign Peter's still not back to himself: Stiles should wake up alone. If not alone, only because the wolf heard him waking up, in which case he might be lying beside him but on top of the covers. Stiles suspects he did wake up, multiple times, even, for a few bleary seconds to a bleary minute. However long it took to come around to telling himself to go back to sleep. An abuse of power nap anytime abilities.

Stiles smiles at his unconscious face, the one kind of in his face. Possibly Peter remains asleep because, um, Stiles thinks his intestines had their revenge, never fingering Stiles as an accessory to their torture. He loses the smile.

Peter can disappear from his arms. Instead, he shoved him a couple feet. No sympathy from Stiles, not with the history of enemas. Confusion from Stiles. Apparently he got dragged and grappled and then held some point after passing out – it took him a second to remember that instead of infer it from context like usual. Peter woke him up with the dragging, the grappling, scary thing said. The wolf has said so many crazy things about murdering him and fucking him it had to take a realistic goal to shake him. Physical appropriation, some feeling up all the places – probably messing with his balls, which still kinda hurt, thanks, brought him around – some nibbling, having to open his stupid werewolf stupid Peter mouth with the murmured fantasy *I could eliminate anything between me and keeping you here all summer.*

He shut his eyes and ignored Peter back to sleep. At some point the sun rose on them. He has a faceful of werewolf, not clock. Stiles distances himself from the emotions he can suppress exactly as long as he's naked with Peter. Identifies them. Deduces. That Peter's had a massive tectonic shift in attitude? Obvious. Why? Not obvious. Increasingly more obviously dangerous to think through around Peter.

Moving away. Went with the usual alarm clock, Stiles decides, seeing there's a healthy color to a sleeping Peter's flesh. Trés normal. Not exclusive to 'while naked' but sleeping through the TV turning on and off to wake up instantly if Stiles gets off the couch.

Second sign Peter's not back to himself? After however long before he climbed back into bed, the wolf's the one on him, Peter overlapping. Stiles had clingy on lock. Peter. Clingy sleeper. Wrong. Not a single audience member would write it down for the Family Feud question: 'Adjectives describing Peter Hale'.

Peter clinging could be sweeter. Fingernails rest in a line at the soft bottom of his belly where Stiles' abs end; he slid his arm up under his shoulder and *those* fingernails lie along his jugular. He's woken up and shifted around to get more comfortable in the dark and had Peter's sleepy hands drift those
kinds of places; yeah, fine, Peter can be insecure about people trying to murder him. Touching Stiles in bad places has never been a phrase associated with his crotch. He's seriously not digging the illusion of being torn apart if he refuses to cuddle, or any future in which that becomes his reality.

His train of thought brings out a sigh, sighing body pressing his skin into Peter's nails all the more acutely, his face subsequently screwing up, now moving fluidly paired with his thoughts. He left the wolf alone a couple weeks. Had been told to do it. He would have anyway but if Peter hadn't owned it he'd probably've flipped out over losing control. And Stiles' brain's spinning and he thinks there's a hybrid primate-canine structure to werewolf packs and then there's actual wolves. *Those* mostly mate for life.

He knows a guy who acted as crazy as Peter. His name was Scott and he ignored things like Stiles, controlling being a fucking wereewolf, or any concept of personal safety because of this new girl, Allison, who he totally didn't even know. Fear of Peter contrarily drops from top concern.

*Shit. Derek. Shit.*

His thoughts stumble through a reconstructed dating history. Derek is in love with him. Peter is only in sex with him. He hasn't heard from Derek. Who is in love with him. Who he loves. Who he totally loves back. A guy with some depressive episodes in his past who he may have left alone to his next round with depression truncating his emotions; isolating him socially. Or not. Maybe Derek's not depressed. Exploring the same depths of irrational misery Stiles watched Scott plumb with no time for that shit to hold living his life up anymore. If Derek can anything, he endures.

Peter's in sex with him. Peter does not care if Stiles ever leaves his apartment. Stiles cares. Like, he cares a *lot*. He cares enough he refuses to consider that logistically. He has about a million needs Peter doesn't meet. A pack. Lacrosse. Video games. Taking care of his dad. Preventing supernatural murders. Doing whatever Lydia says he, her, and Allison are going to do. Making it up to Derek for being a little shit. Peter's needs sometimes come first. In Peter's head, Peter always comes first. When Stiles comes first, it's because many times he likes to restrain him during sex up to and including choking him on the shower floor. Not that Peter would even want to have sex with him every night but there's no way Stiles could be cool with a situation where he gives it up any time Peter wants any day of the week forever.

Right now he needs a plan of escape. Good morning? Sharing foodstuffs? Not scenarios he wants to stumble through. He'll give too much away. He refocuses on the older Hale beside him. The guy Stiles *thought* factored rational compensation into last night besides being horny as all hell. In hindsight Machiavelli hadn't been in the building, and he *can't* mean that to Peter. Cannot meet a responsibility to Peter as huge as possessing him being the focus of Peter's taste in interior decorating. Strike that. His naked body *is* the guy's taste in interior decorating.

Hold. Not to act like Peter and only think about Stiles. He had Peter with his already erratic behavior blindly putting himself in at least one situation he consistently asserted he's on the other side of the world from interested in. Double blind scenario: Peter doing anal for longer than he's ever done anal before and Stiles never questioning it. Was Peter okay with any of that at any point? How would he ever know? Peter lies. He lies so much truth is relative in his head. He can accept justifications he just bullshitted as realities. Great strategy for acting without hesitation somewhere besides a relationship, whatever species of that they have. Stiles has gotten good. Not good enough he could spot Peter lying to himself. He has enough problems catching *himself* lying to himself.

Dude looks good sleeping right next to him, semi-conscious but not motivated to wake up. The moustache. The soul patch. Incoming shadow of stubble messing with his art. Brow smooth. Eyelids looking so big on his slack face compared against a significant fraction of his life spent with them
narrowed. (Maybe the same percentage Derek spends with his arms crossed.) Stress wore its way into his face over the years. Prematurely, probably, even if he broke forty. Lydia's better at graphing mathematical concepts like dog werewolf years. Neck muscles still ridiculous. He's been shoulder charged by Peter and he would call it an experience, but right now the shoulders and the arms are executing the clinginess. Hair a mess. Hair a mess because Stiles pulled on it. He's handsome; he's all his; he could keep him. He's terrified.

What Stiles would've given to have somebody just want him he gave. Pushed like cocaine. Cocaine the wolf took. He'd go as far as to say his body is Peter's erection's natural habitat. Actually, that sounds sexy. He wants to say that but it not be biologically true.

Freak out later. Get out first.

The best way to dodge suspicion, seeing how right Peter is he sucks at duplicity face to face, may also be what he still wants most, what Peter wants dumbfoundingly more. The wolf lets him off the death sentence for moving toward him, into a kiss, Peter's hands moving to kinder, sexier places without leaving his skin. Catnap off. Nudity. Bed. Partner who's instantly on the same page. The guy he fits up against so easily he doesn't know which part of rubbing up to him causes their several trial changes in position.

What he'd give now to rewind to being sexual but inessential with no responsibility for the sway he holds over a werewolf without the best track record in mental health would bankrupt him and not brush 'enough'. The mutters of Peter so needy among kisses the outpouring of having gotten his way with the wolf's body, right emotion and wrong motivation knowing he owes him even though Peter owed him. Blank check on offer. He can't even play that straight, blank check – swiftly filled out for a phenomenal sum – signed by how badly and selfishly he craves the influence Peter holds over him. The wolf's singular power to vanish everything in Stiles besides staying close to and getting even closer with his body.

Peter doesn't care he snags Derek's t-shirt out of the drawer when he walks himself backward out of the apartment. Managed to get dressed keeping despite Peter all over him, playing at stealing his clothes, ransoms ranging from Kiss, an easy command, to flirting Finger your ass, which he did, but a certain somebody else took over before he got his pants back. Peter wears his knowledge Stiles dodged any form of conversation without accusation, caught up in participation, by the time Stiles kisses his way backward to sliding out the door. He stands catching his breath staring at the closed off apartment unaware he had it in him to stay in sexual contact that long, seguing with petting and stroking, licking, kisses, pressing his ass to Peter while he pulled a shirt from the drawer on, turning him on to rubbing off between his cheeks.

He still feels the wolf all over him. Inside him. Yes, definitely inside him. Really, really inside him. More Peter inside him than usual because in he let him turn and had no ability for an unclocked span of time to be anywhere except on his cock, which might have been a little more substantial than even usually, in a lot of positions. So many positions he didn't count. The clock he turned away from them before he ever looked at it. Indication of availability; inevitability.

He totally dug that, scratched up by the claws and having nicking his tongue a couple times aside. Knows he made a giant mistake, seeing he's standing in the hallway staring at the door terrified of taking it too far with a couple of werewolves.

He acknowledges he should leave, still rooted to the hall floor in terror. The emotional terror of not having sex with a werewolf again, whereas when he just had sex with an actual werewolf with the fangs and the claws, the glowing eyes, the bestial face, he was not terrified (often). Adding that to the list of proofs of serious wrongness.
Now he's let Peter in on what Peter suspected, that he's freaking out, because Peter can easily hear his hammering heart from the other side of the door where Stiles knows he's still standing. He assumes Peter standing a foot in front of a closed door staring emotionlessly ahead – probably, by now, smelling his fear. That should be freakier than it comes off to him. He can relate to the idea of freezing to collect data without interfering with the sample. This isn't Peter offering him the Bite, even though he could go back in because he has a key and Peter doesn't care he has a key and Stiles locked the door behind him but he could unlock it and forget everything …until he left, back in the hallway, nothing changed. If he didn't leave, he'd eventually be hunted down and carried home by his Alpha. Right now, that's good to know, whereas Derek carrying him home he resented.

He looks down at the t-shirt in his hand, breaks off from planted to the ground and heads for the elevator. He lets the doors close before he presses his face into the fabric. Still abandoned Derek. Ignoring that by letting Peter go a couple miles past intimate with him makes him so much more shitty a person, without starting back on anything with Peter. He leave his nose pressed into the third Beta's t-shirt until he reaches the ground floor. Didn't mean to, but undeniable Derek's pheromones A-to-Sex calm him down.

Sex is stupid, he decides vehemently when he's slamming the Jeep door, tossing the t-shirt into the passenger seat; slamming his fist down on the steering wheel.

He feels shorted on things to slam to emphasize the point to himself as if he's listening.

Tuesday, May 15, 2012

Scott got two texts.

You at home? and Isaac around?

Yes. No. Isaac's with Allison. Stiles lets himself in with his key to the house after about ten minutes. No surprise. Neither is his Beta throwing himself on his bed like he owns it, carelessly discarding control of his limbs without saying 'Hello', even though Stiles missed school yesterday.

Stiles smells. A whiff of Peter, no big surprise. Besides that, stronger than usual, but not like he's been hitting the gym. In fact, Stiles doesn't smell anything like that at all. Just a strong hasn't-bathed buildup of his usual body odor. Scott smells anxiety. That doesn't match up with Stiles' inanimation. Face down and dead weight, he looks like the bed's actually starting to consume him. Anxiety has Stiles burning calories.

Hanging out with Stiles usually means doing non-werewolf things. Catching new movies. Hitting the arcade at the bowling alley. Maybe lacrosse. A couple study sessions. Going out for wings, or pizza. Tonight no exception. Scott hears in his breathing he's not passed out, so he can only be gearing up to go off on something by lying corpse-still. Scott can't hear the clockwork motor winding inside. He can't tell by looking at him how long it's coiled to go for. He sets his computer to hibernate, turning his chair toward the bed. Waiting for it, brows expectant. Waiting. Getting nothing.

Right when Scott's thinking the breathing-like-he's-conscious Stiles needs a physical intervention to turn him onto his back Stiles contracts his limbs; rolls over; scoots his way back to the center of the bed again, but folded in, hands laying on his chest, feet no-how in particular, face animate. Scott catches himself leaning in, like he'll hear or smell or see any new clues to ease his impatience an inch or two closer.

He looks exhausted, eyes dry and red-rimmed. No bathing. No sleep. But his brain's at full throttle, because those are alert eyes despite dullness.
Sometime tonight he'd like his Beta to acknowledge his existence.

"How monogamous would you say you are?" Stiles asks the air he's squinting into. In theory at Scott, if was oriented above him. He sounds croaky and sleepless, to boot.

That's not a question Scott was expecting. Relationship issues ranked high in his expectations along with fight with his dad, possibly his ultimate elimination from a gaming tournament he got sucked into that ran over into Monday, whatever he did to get out of school. He tilts his head, critical at an emotionless-due-to-lax-face Stiles from up under his brow, trying to guess where this is going. He gives up on that. That's always a bad question.

"Dude, I've had one relationship," he points out, trying to feel out some kind of answer to the question, remembering back to Allison. He thinks it's answerable. When he was with Allison he didn't think once about other girls – women. He figured that'd been the grips of first love, but there were those times monogamy had been a problem.

"Right," Stiles is continuing. "But you've dated people since. And you've had sex with them," True. Also true. "Why'd the dating stop? Why, when there was dating, sex with the same chick maybe twice and that was it?"

Scott sits back in his desk chair, arms folding across his chest, still studying Stiles who's still intensely fixated on the same nothing coming off uncomfortably as staring into Scott's soul, Stiles busy subjecting Scott's life to pattern matching inside his head.

He tries filling out those facts, himself: He kept having sex after he rose to Alpha status. Never with two different girls in the same timeframe. If he looks at it from a standpoint of monogamy, he picks out he didn't look at any other girl than the girl he was with until it broke off. Not a manwhore. He's been off the hook-up scene at least a month. That because it got depressing how far a cry it was from what he'd had. His skills at juggling supernatural incidents and selling the (authentic) sincerity of his apologies had matured in parallel. He lets his mouth loose:

"None of that was going anywhere." It sounds right. Girls at school, one girl from another school. He liked them. He'd been into them. Sparked. Shamira Sobel he stayed on the phone with for six hours after school and her he thought this is it, I'm doing this, this is happening. She just Scott. I think if I let this keep going I'm going to try and make it last. My brother's so sick, and I feel like you're only half here. If things are different senior year…

The sparks winked out. It didn't take him over five months to get over even Shamira like it took him with Allison. More like a couple days – that, a week. Captain of the lacrosse team or not he hasn't even come out of it as a player. He doesn't try to be invasive but it's hard not to pick up his own name. Jacklyn saying Scott McCall? He's the sweetest guy. I never got the fixer-upper vibe off him. There has to be something going on with his family, or one of his friends. I wish we'd connected. He was…Don't give me that look, I mean like amazing in bed.

He came out of it knowing just the one thing: Women love the scent fixation, smell tunes everything out – you can look away from a girl, there's no escape from pheromones – the athleticism, the Alpha confidence. Now he knows.

Stiles bolts upright, pointing an accusative finger, come to life in a scowling fury that has Scott jerking back against the back of the chair even if his Beta's not furious with him.

"Wolves are completely monogamous. Look at Isaac, Ethan, Aiden. They've all done at least one insane thing to keep those relationships working. Aiden more like three insane things a week because that should've ended at least two months ago. They even said that in front of everybody. All of you
are crazy monogamous. You can't hit it if you're gonna quit it, Ethan dials it way down to not stress Danny's roll with it, Isaac tries to act like a person and not a machine of death with disarming curls and his soft, approachable scarf riff."

And Stiles is angry about it. Scott doesn't need to be in Mensa to see where this one's coming from. His blood turns cold.

"Look at Derek," Scott says, carefully continuing the string of wolves into wolves unnamed, pre-empting the railing. "…and Peter."

No matter how convincing the variation of the argument that Peter should be put down, the one he's heard from more than one party, one he's heard from Stiles, he can't and won't go downtown and kill somebody, even Peter, for going to do something in the future. He's not cool acting out Minority Report. He points to Deucalion, who has removed himself to Sweden to put his life back together. Relaxing architecture and fishing. He can hear his voice over the phone one of the two times he's called like a half-estranged uncle: I've found it's difficult to get angry or plot in Sweden. The last full moon, after six hours, I caught a tremendous pike. I only wish ice fishing had lasted into May, but then if you become temperamental on a boat there's hardly anything you can do.

Deucalion is on Scott's back-up list and off his list of concerns. He's made 'excellent' friends and introduced himself to two packs he's on 'wonderful' terms with. He's sure at some point in history class he'll impress somebody with 'Sweden hasn't started a war since eighteen fourteen.'

Scott sticks to the point that Gerard destroyed both Deucalion and Peter and one of them already fixed blame where it was due. There's no way he believes Kate got to that mental space on her own after what he watched happen to Allison. He hasn't approached Peter with the idea of vacationing in Sweden only because he doesn't want him dragging violent memories out of the older wolf. Not because he didn't think Deucalion and his soothing English accent couldn't manipulate Peter in Peter's isolation, Peter salivating at the chance to make a powerful ally.

When he'd been sure, because Stiles was sure, that Peter couldn't form some kind of permanent fixation on Stiles because Peter looked at everything at his disposal as a tool. Before right now, Stiles not speaking but pain; distress, two things Stiles converts to angry words or yelling, on the air. No chance Peter could do something like…develop a potentially permanent monogamous attachment to Stiles.

Something Derek could do and did; Scott cringes at the thought while keeping an eye on the combustible Beta on his bed. Derek's gonna suffer for the same five months Scott took. Maybe worse. He's family oriented and the repeated devastation has made him stronger, more independent, but Stiles didn't evil out on him. Peter's not anything like Derek. That's not exactly true, but it definitely is in how they connect with other people – or don't.

The heat of Stiles' anger comes down on Scott. Combustion. Stiles more aggravated when he set himself off.

"I never said we were looking at them." Scott needs to stop pretending anything stops Stiles from railing. "Just werewolves," he bites out. "Werewolves I never turned on to sex. Who aren't in love with me. Or the ones not complicating my life with the emotional dependence I caused on purpose." Scott can sit through this. Weather this like a natural disaster. He's not convincing himself but so far deep breathing and his pained wince are holding up against the facial contortions of self-condemnation; when Stiles slams his fist into the bed. "I thought Derek had kept out of contact because I kept pressure on him like a douchebag. He's radio silent suffering constantly like crazy people like you."
Scott lets that one roll off. He acted delusional. Plus Stiles looking around for something to throw has more of his attention. The emotion hitting Scott with force is too...big for Stiles to claw his scalp, press his hands into his face; nothing to slam his head into. Scott stakes Hasn't slept into his brainflesh, fortified by the knowledge. He forgets to take care of himself. Scott thinks about the nights he must not have slept researching werewolves and planning against his shitty behavior while he dicked around, blew Stiles off, hardcore made out with Lydia. He hopes he's never caused that kind of self-neglect since. Stiles doesn't stop until he passes out. When the problem's big enough, he doesn't pass out. Great thing it's big bed; except the throwing switches back to 'of words'. Physical exertion would've calmed that down. Even reminded his body it can shut down.

Toned down this round, like burning energy hating objects for being out of reach actually did the trick.

"I can't handle that responsibility, Scott. They should've come with disclaimers! Big red warning labels. Fine print burned into their incredibly smooth skin. Any kind of self-awareness! They're both stupid Hales. That doesn't come standard in any Hale package." Rant hits the end. Stiles slumps, head nodding to the side. He blinks enough times to get his concentration back; straighten his neck; grit his teeth with determination. "I need to change my name and leave the country, dude. Be out of their lives."

The possibility that, sleep deprived, if he can get his hands on more Adderall, enough caffeine, he might make it through at least half the legal change of name paperwork calls for an intervention.

"My mom has Xanax," Scott urges, softening his voice, partly caring brother and Alpha, partly handling an explosive device. He's not that comfortable with matching drug solution for drug solution; also not comfortable with pinning Stiles' limbs to the bed until Stiles passes out, for no other reason than enduring bloodshot, accusative eyes. He gentles it up more. "When's the last time you slept?"

Stiles sways back, thinking hard for a second.

"Friday night. At Peter's."

Scott's eyes widen.

"Do you know what day it is?"

"Maybe," Stiles hedges defensively.

"Tuesday," Scott says. When he texted Stiles why he didn't turn up for classes he'd gotten a Totally didn't finish my report. Have malaria. Still half true, Stiles just omitted a few things. Like a nonstop freakout Derek's in the fits of what Stiles watched Scott go through, probably scared calling would make it worse. And then whatever it's like imagining spending the rest of his life with Peter Hale. "I'm getting that Xanax. Stay put."

He has to get the space before Stiles' frantic worms into his head. He has jitters from watching and listening to him. Not only because of Stiles' situation but from recognizing forces controlling his own life he's been totally unaware of.

He finds the pills at the back of the medicine cabinet in his mom's bathroom. He doesn't know how long the stuff stays potent, but he does know Stiles has the potential to keep freaking out until tomorrow even without stimulants. His mom can get onto him later when he tells her he dosed Stiles up. They were prescribed for anxiety and insomnia...just it was hers.
In his room Stiles gives him a pet lip, two pills in one hand, water-full washed-out ceramic rinse-water glass in the other.

"I resent my emotions being controlled with your drugs like in Equilibrium."

Stiles protesting just to protest has no effect on Scott, especially with Scott already flummoxed to the capacity of the verb.

"I don't even know how hard that's gonna bring you down."

"Because you're not qualified to prescribe it," Stiles says, smile bringing his whole tired face alive. He downs both pills. "We'll find out in an hour if I hold out that long," he says, faking innocence. Panic attacks. He totally knows the doses. Scott hopes he knows Scott'll put him through hell if he took more than he should have to get blitzed. By put him through hell, he means let his mom loose at him.

"Yeah. Get comfortable," Scott says. Stiles does, ditching his shoes; aggressively rearranging Scott's pillows.

An hour. More than enough time to cover werewolf ground. Anger passed, they've moved into the griping stage.

"I can't stop thinking about Derek," he groans. Derek. Not Peter. A fist pump and Called it are not appropriate here. Relief he's more fixated on Derek's emotions than whatever Peter substitutes? Appropriate. "I can't call him. He's barely online and I don't even know if he knows what's going on with him because you didn't know and I'm not even sure what Peter knew. I'm so, so positive Peter did not know he'd get attached to me. No way he'd've given in to my increasingly manipulative desperation for stringless sex if he thought that was possible." Sitting on the side of the bed, being a good friend, Scott dis-wants the change toward Peter – it doesn't matter he already knows the Derek rundown – before Stiles launches off again. "He acted nuts. And not murderous. Un-Peter-like things happened sexually. Repeatedly." Scott asks him without asking with just the I can't believe you widening of his eyes and his new interest in the door if he has to hear this. Stiles puffs his lips. "Shut up. The point is Derek's been alone just as long as Peter was. I want him back. I'm missing him. My laptop is already empty without him. Like the hundred eighteen gigabytes of porn and streaming websites don't exist. Now I realize I sent the guy to Special Hell. I don't know what he's doing, Scott. I don't know how he's handling it. And I have two of them. I have psychologically unbalanced two werewolves who have never, ever since I met them been balanced. I'm a bastard. A bastard positive there's at least seven ways this could lead to my death."

Scott focuses on the fact he was just this or more annoying about Allison while and after they were together and he tries not to think about what Peter does and doesn't do to Stiles in bed – usually or unusually.

"Derek can cope," he promises, more sure than not.

Stiles grumps, yanking one of the two firm pillows into his arms to hug for security, crushing it in teddy-bear-crushing facsimile like firmness ratings mean nothing.

"But I want him," he says, entitled; aggressive; miserable; sleepy. "I wanna be with him and hold hands and file joint taxes."

Scott closes his eyes, rooting around for patience. That feeling he knows. He's never been torn over two accidentally intense relationships at the same time.
"I'm not the person to talk to." Sudden, complete conviction. He lays it on Stiles. "You should talk to my mom. Just tell her the problem. Maybe ask her how she handled our dads."

'Dad"s still an uncomfortable term to stick to Rafael. Demonstrated by the fact he still calls him Rafael to his face.

Stiles grunts, hugging the life out of his pillow-friend.

"She's not gonna tell my dad everything I say. I don't want to make that more awkward than I manage to make that when I come home and she's over and I'm like 'Oh, god, they're gonna do the sex.'"

Scott messes his own hair up with his hand, wishing Xanax worked a lot faster. He shouldn't think that about Stiles but right now the dude is awake only to complain. He can't walk out on him; dick move when his brother's reeking insecurity. Maybe forming a third relationship with that pillow.

"Stiles. You're having sex with a really old dude," he tries out. If anybody could imagine two adults having sex…

"I am not," Stiles snaps without venom; sounds elementary school; swoons. Promising. The expression he comes into arrests Scott immediately and totally, the Alpha, now; waiting. Deadened, far-away eyes, lax lips, and Scott can't pin down if it's sorrow or regret, only that there's more not okay than he realized. "Scott, he still wants me. I don't think it's ever stopped. I mean, to Bite me. To make me a Beta. I took a shower when I got home and I was looking in the mirror… That scar on my spine's not going anywhere. He got so close the first time. He already had a thwarted lust thing going." His brow tightens; legs curl in. Sorrow. Regret. Now, fear he almost hid. "Dude, I'm not old enough to do scary-permanent."

Peter – who doesn't look like a wolf planning to be anybody's Beta. Never again. Peter, who left him with the Bite in the dark, urged him to murder his friends. Switched up to threatening everyone in his life one by one. Who tried to kill Allison, totally innocent of Kate's crimes. Peter who ruthlessly manipulated Lydia. Peter who they all know refuses to accept the status he has. Peter with monogamous sexual attachment. Peter: who wants to Bite Stiles.

The rage leaps, vision going murderously red. The sight of Stiles' sudden-onset of terror, not Scott second-thinking his own intentions, stops him at the height of gathered momentum, at the fragment in time between tension and the lunge and lighting on Stiles; sinking his fangs in, finally. They're silent, neither one of them risking moving until the outer manifestation of Scott's draíocht, the almost-human wolf with bigger changes sneaking in, disappears. Scott letting go, simultaneous with his still-human Beta on the cusp of hyperventilating, certain of his own helplessness. Fear and helplessness Scott erupted to save him from doubling. Terror of Scott, just not his fangs. His muscles contracting with the terror and panic of regret.

Scott heard two things. One of them angered him. The other, a choice. Riled or not, Scott can take Stiles choosing to blame him for the pain protecting himself will take.

"Don't. Please. Scott. Please don't take him," he's saying, voice weak with strain and terror, eyes searching the room wildly, uncoiling from the pillow to push himself back from him on the bed, still holding it loosely in one arm. Back hitting the wall. Lungs out of control but visibly aware of his situation when his eyes land back on Scott. Not tipping over into total panic, drugged up enough. (So. High dose.) Trying not to escape. He'd be off the bed, even hyperventilating, and even though he'd fall on his face before he made it to the hall. The potential for freaking out set up hours ago – Scott doesn't have to just tell himself that; he knows. He has his own litany while Stiles simpers through an inevitability Scott wants to give him the chance to accept – I'm not old enough to do
Some of them are werewolves and that doesn't matter. Peter's in one stage of his life, Stiles made a lot of mistakes. None of them brought him there. It's not him and Allison. That has nothing to do with Derek. The Bite doesn't matter. Peter can't give it out, and Scott picked up the impression Peter wants what else he wants now.

Scott's own body regrets violently. It hurts. He wants his partner to come down. No matter how much he wants it, Stiles can't do that. Urging him to has passed cruelty. No regret. No doubt. Even with his pulse up, his breath hard again like when he wolfed out, he has to keep pushing that off over and over. Stiles gets to doubt. His whole body's rabbit-scared tight; jerked inward once; slumped to the original sate of tension. Went back to the pillow as his shield and friend. He kept control. He's still right there, back of his head against the wall; unmistakable as subordination through every conflicting signal, the racing heart, the sweat. That's their decision.

It's not the oncoming Xanax keeping his head in the game. It's his Alpha forcing he keep a clear head to choose. Scott holds firm to his place like he has his hands on a rope tying down the hatches in a storm, fibers burning across a sailor's palms, popular sight on film.

He's the Alpha.

What Peter isn't. Peter Hale has no right to fantasize about taking Stiles. Scott doesn't have to kill him for that. He'll get the message.

Eyes wet, swelling red, Stiles suffers in place, staring at Scott, eyes as charged with emotion as when they first met in elementary school. The boy from his class that punched him in the shoulder from behind at recess, demanding to know why he let the same boys shove him around every day.

"Stiles must have watched the whole time and didn't help him. Suddenly it's like it's all Scott's fault, the boy he barely knows keyed up, demanding he give up an answer."

"I don't wanna fight anybody," he asserts despite the pressure. He makes a face when his classmate squints across the playground. "—I don't need anybody to beat them up for me," he stresses.

"You like gummi worms?" Stiles asks when his eyes snap back to Scott's, already digging around in his pants pocket, producing a crumpled bag.

"Scott stands there confused. There's no sign their conversation just happened the other boy's expectant face. It's not important anymore, anyway. He nods and digs his hand into the bag, worms all warm and a little gooey from Stiles' body heat.

Scott pushes himself over the still-made bed, crawling close in Stiles' space, Stiles, who's communicating he wants contact, physical support for the body he has no control of. Unable to describe what's scent, sight, sound, or touch of psychic bond in the plea, but he answers readily, dropping himself back into the pillows, hauling his Beta up – not into his arms, but beside him. For one thing Stiles has anchored himself to the pillow, which Scott gets. It's the one thing that's remained completely predictable.

Stiles doesn't fight him when Scott clasps hands. Scott never has been the guy to experiment with subtle tweaking; he opens up to suffering and then he deals with it. Pain explodes out from his chest like a physical blow; he heaves through it, losing pace with his own breathing even as some of Stiles
panic subsides. Scott can't imagine the full brunt of what his brother's feeling: frantic; overwrought from days and nights of sleeplessness, weak and sore everywhere and now with a chest aching from bringing oxygen in. Scott has an imprint of it all.

He releases his grasp, Stiles somber, dejected, even, his breathing calm. Scott lays a hand on Stiles' arm. His expectant eyes remain human, but he speaks in edicts.

"End it. No sex. No visits to his apartment. No arranging to be alone with him anywhere else. Never let yourself be alone with him, period, unless it's life and death."

He watches his brother's eyes go out. Stress, defensiveness, pleading, and hope dead.

"He needs me," Stiles says, words certain, words apologetic toward a man who isn't here; voice fatigue-weak. "He doesn't have anybody else."

"I trust you," Scott swears. He'll take control if he has to, like with Isaac and Isaac's anger both now and before his eyes even took on a permanent red. With Lydia when she's been nature's heartless queen, or a soul-hungry hag, her intentions pure venom, Scott's roar bringing her back, power visible to Scott whipping in like wings snapping closed around her, disdain still burning but death averted. Not Allison. Not Stiles. Not because they're human but because they were there that night. They exist at the heart of him.

"I guess I text him," Stiles says, numb. Getting number in that drugged up slow-responding way. Which, right now, Scott's all for.

Scott gives his arm a squeeze, no pretense of command in the raise of his eyebrows, to the brotherly advice.

"After you sleep."

Scott starts to move from beside him, mind on getting the covers over him. Stiles clenches his wrist with unexpected force with a motion so violent Scott almost recoils in defense before he's willingly caught.

Red-rimmed eyes, and he's crying, his teeth clenched and a scowl dominating his brow. Scott swallows any reaction but to take the blame, apologetic, body language turned submissive – not subordinate. Permissive.

"You can't just take him like this. You don't know anything about us!" his Beta barks, edges of his speech slurring, curled lips, drug-hazy eyes. "I'm the only one who's ever seen him!" he accuses. Swoons on the edge of unconsciousness; comes back sad and desperate. "You've gotta go into this with me. I can't do this. I can't cut him off by myself. I will, and everybody'll think it's so great, and it's just me and the guilt and what I did to Derek and you know it's all been on purpose."

Scott blanks as to what Stiles wants for the first few seconds. Stiles with his drooping eyelids, worn out enough for the drugs to win before they max, looks like he's sloshed but his hand remains tight, clenches again when it starts to fall away.

When it clicks Scott doesn't grind out 'As if that is safer than Biting you'. Scott sits nervous, has moved back in, side pressed alongside a body that lost all that, weighing the possibility of something going wrong. He's never been unsuccessful. He can't make a choice based on Stiles crying, but he reaches over with his far hand and brushes his knuckles soothingly down his cheek. Lets his hand drift back. Finally nods consent.

Stiles releases his arm, Scott's hand sliding over Stiles' neck. He always follows the same guide,
memory of Peter's series of wounds explicit. He's terrified. Putting it off isn't an option. He wouldn't
go in with Stiles with his Beta's brain at full steam. It's bad enough brushing up with that, like he's
sitting at a train station and the trains fly by, never stop for him to board one.

Scott holds his tongue at the roof of his mouth; doesn't say what could never come out right: *I know
Peter better than you think*. He knows a part of the former Alpha. He woke up alone on the shower
floor damned with profound knowledge of his greatest tragedy. Sentiment didn't move him to accept
Peter's beliefs and tactics. That doesn't mean he's unaware of where the wolf's coming from.

He lines his claws up, realizing self-consciously he wants the knowledge in Stiles' head – not to give
him *power* over Peter. Not for reasons Peter'd understand. It pains him how far they are from
understanding each other, pain so much worse already knowing he may have to kill him and not
understanding why. He knows by now when people refuse to be saved, those aren't innocents. Don't
blemish his soul – or Isaac's. Worse, he knows in his gut if he killed Peter today he'd lose nothing.

He has selfless and selfish mixed up with his claws pricking Stiles' skin. Stiles needs him to
understand what *he* feels for Peter. Scott needs to know more about Peter than he sees to make final
decisions on his lifespan. His eyes glow like brake lights, Stiles' face bathed red. He consciously
chooses not to take that as a sign and pushes his claws in.

Images in chaos, coming in and out of focus, blurred by the Xanax. Peter's mouth pressing down –
please not that one – and then Stiles' gloatling sense of total possession fitting it into perspective. Peter
desperately alone. So desperate Stiles tastes it. Black pain traveling up Peter's veins while he Stiles
lies sweating, defeated, on an exercise mat, captivated by the older Hale. Not just his body, or his
sweat, but the calculating eyes not assessing the damage, flickering to every remembered blow he
dealt; remembers them all; effortless brilliance. His teeth in Peter's flesh; the rush of having an
unresisting werewolf to pick on, the other Beta off defense, prideless but entertained at being
harassed and subjected to domination signaling, as safe from being subordinated as Stiles from his
strength. The hollow man; deadly. The empty face, expected and unexpected; waited out; caution
and calm demands of survival. New furniture. Brand new furniture. The recognition of Peter's
desperation; Stiles physical submissions, *Scott pulling away from sharing them as if stung*; Peter's
social submissions, *Scott gaining control of this, holding a memory of the wolf exposing his neck
between himself and Stiles*. He lets it go.

He pulls his claws out, blood flooding from the back of Stiles' neck. He covers the wounds, his hand
a tighter compress than a compress but all his bedclothes probably bloodstained except for the one
pillow in Stiles' arms.

"I'm sorry," he says, instead of *You really love that guy, don't you?* His eyes say it clearly enough for
even an addled Stiles to recognize Scott accepting the one emotion in every memory, with it honest
recognition Peter completely depends on Stiles for social recognition. He's sorry. He wants to take it
back, spurred by Peter's pain from the day he lost so much and so much of himself. Scott only has to
think to it and he feels his skin sloughing away under a hot shower.

Scott is still Stiles' Alpha. Peter's dangerous and Stiles Scott's to protect. A man who's lived so long
with nothing is a man who won't stop taking. Nothing changed besides how much it hurts.

Stiles lies mostly-limp while Scott waits for the bleeding to stop, for the blood to gel deep enough in
the wounds to staunch escape. Some of Stiles' crying is definitely sleep deprivation; a lot isn't. Then
he's completely unconscious. Scott has no hope of tucking him into the bed except as a human
burrito, making sure blood gets on every last thing. He opts to pull the throw at the foot of the bed
over him, up to his shoulders, beneath the wound. He gets a fleece blanket from the linen closet and
puts that over him. Decides he'll be warm enough.
He doesn't go anywhere for a while, petting Stiles' hair – remembering Stiles stoned a long time ago and physically obsessed with Scott's. Guilt for wanting to dig through Stiles' memories and not telling him or being able to tell him much of anything about Peter until Stiles finds his emotional footing lingers. That doesn't change one fact: He now knows too much about what it's like to have sex with Peter. And to have anal sex. And he both gets why women can be into anal and knows for sure before guy muscles, guy pheromones he's not branching into.

Debt paid for ditching Stiles for Allison and the one time with Deucalion. No guilt owed. That guilt has been replaced by fresh guilt, even though Stiles came to him for help. One day he's going to make a decision like this and feel like he knows what he's doing. Maybe. Just he's starting to think unless there's a cause in front of them nobody else knows what they're doing either. They're all just guessing at what's coming next; trying to spare themselves from pain.

Scott feels protective – rip the face off anybody but his mom or a pack member who comes into the room protective. They're not exactly exposed here, even though once he leaves Stiles to sleep it off he checks, unlocks and relocks the windows while he goes around and closes all the curtains; came down with a bad case of Stiles' nerves.

Peter's at work. He has no idea Scott severed his partner. Plus, the oldest surviving Hale's gonna do whatever it is he's already going to do. He has a cause. Scott knows better than to believe he'd blow it to have a day to day sex life with Stiles. Just…Peter may go into it angrier than before.

He starts on his homework at the kitchen table, tensing when the lock rolls over inside the front door. The flow of air through the house brings the scent of his mother coming home from work, smelling like the hospital, like other people's bodily fluids and chemical sanitizers. She smells like anxiety. He calls I'm in here, Mom.

The couple draíochta exchanges with Stiles left him with difficulty focusing on his homework. Phantom muscle tension aching throughout his body; fading chest pain. He can't tell if he picked up any psychic anxiety from the first brush or the pain he assumed itself triggered nervousness in him in reverse. That second deep pass has him miserable.

He hears his mother set her purse down in the living room, coming into the kitchen, eyes alert glancing over the kitchen, hands raised in preparation for any variety of action, fingers curled before her chest.

"Where's Stiles? Why are all the curtains closed?"

Scott looks appropriately abashed for putting the house on lockdown – for freaking her out – leaving her standing puzzled if she should be relieved or resentful. He sets his pencil down, sitting up, dropping his arms beside him, his back into the embrace of the chair.

"Stiles is asleep up in my room," he says. He cringes. "I pulled his anxiety off and got, uh, paranoid."

"Nothing dangerous is coming? We're not actually hiding?" his mother double-checks with raised brows.

Scott laughs, embarrassed to remember he did not miss even an obscure window.

"Nothing dangerous ever lets me know, but we're not actually hiding," he swears. Frowning, he digs into his pocket for the pill bottle, looking at the label like it'll tell him anything new before offering it to his mother with more serious apology. "He hadn't slept since Friday night so I let him take two of these. I don't think he was on anything else, maybe the tail end of Adderall? Caffeine? Everything
smelled normal."

His mother examines the bottle a few moments before turning to set it on the counter, moving on to maternal skepticism.

"I need to have a talk with Stiles. Four milligrams is a high without recent exposure, but he's been on benzos before. I'm not that worried about contraindications. I hope you stayed with him? No signs of a sudden new allergic reaction?" Scott nods and shakes his head in order. Her eyebrows drift higher "I'm telling myself you didn't call me because...?"

Scott shrugs, wishing he could have.

"He would've freaked out that you'd call his dad. I figured since he, yeah, knows the meds I didn't need to pile that on."

His mother sits down at the table across from him, elbows propped and fingers knit. What he's starting to think of as the 'debrief me' position. Separate from the arms-crossed Bring me up to speed position. He gave up on sidelining her. Better for her to know what to expect – an oncoming surge in hospital patients, home invasion by supernatural forces, at least one of the pack seriously injured.

"What happened?" she asks, staring him down expectantly, someone between mother and professional – not to intimidate him, braced for bad news.

"I wanna tell you," he promises, resting his folded hands back on the table; fidgeting against the chair leg. "You can't pass it on to Sheriff Stilinski."

"It's getting weirder and weirder for you to keep calling him that," she says, light rebuke. Her expression only grows more serious. "I can't not tell Laurence if Stiles is in some kind of trouble."

Scott goes full teenager on the Seriously? face, rubbing his fingers together, two separately fisted hands. The lack of physical danger doesn't worry him less. Round one of friction with Peter made enough trouble.

"He's not. He's upstairs. Asleep," he says. He holds back, a minute of solidarity, but he caves, because he has to tell somebody at least some of this and his mom makes a safe confidant. He knows Stiles needs advice. He doesn't know if he needs advice, or to have more time to feel it out. Stiles had days. "I guess the worst thing is I've never pulled the 'Alpha' thing on Stiles before," he starts off. It's convoluted but ultimately concludes from there with his mother's startled pause at: Maybe he needs a mom who's been through some break-ups.

----

Two werewolf teenage boys who play sports makes for a laundry nightmare, even though she expects them to help. If it's not dirt and grass stains it's blood stains and claw marks. Holes of all different sizes from the splatter of acidic venom and boys growing their skin back upstairs.

She hates all of it. Especially when interest lures her further in. Allison, her own superficial chemical burns treated, explaining a horned serpent moved into the preserve: water-dwelling, breathing and drooling acid, scales like armor, weakest, like werewolves, to electricity, and werewolves and water are a bad combination, fight hinged on its slicker, weaker belly scales. A "dragon" – before they went extinct in Europe and descriptions were free to become marvelous.

"Some of the Native American nations and the Chinese seem to have had good relationships with them. Maybe it hated running into other supernatural creatures. Oh! And Scott wants you to have this."
A dragon. She didn't see the corpse, but the soccer-ball sized stone from its forehead Allison pulled out of what she'd assumed was a weapons-packed bag she has on her bookshelf. Red shot through with veins of gold invisible until they flash, catching the light. She kneels in front of it, rests one hand on it; looks into it wondering how many other dragons there are. They gave it to her because she's human. She and Stiles are the two best candidates for using it for magic, only Stiles hasn't been reliable under pressure. Or, Scott corrected himself a couple minutes later, he's getting too reliable.

Melissa's heard more from Laurence than she's seen. She runs into Scott with his head in the "veil", one day standing at the window, explaining to her how decay clings to everything around them. He looks at his own hands and tells her they're clean, turning to examine her gaze to gaze. He told her she and Laurence should leave Beacon Hills when they're so frail, close to death, and she wastes her years closed inside a monument to death, a building full of dying bodies waiting for the toe tag and refrigerator. She looked and never found her son in the fascinated eyes she realized, shaken, had focused on her slowly dying from age as they looked down her body.

Scott jerked to life in shock and started his apologies a minute later, staring at the floor, not ashamed – confused, concerned, trying to patch things together. He says he never remembers it exactly. She remembers. Her son all but motionless; the certainty in his voice. She turned him toward her, her hands on his shoulders, thinking, too, withdrawing her arms to fold them, saying:

"Some people spark brighter than others. That's almost all I've gotten out of Deaton besides recipes. If I help just one person in that hospital hang on, and if I can protect you and your friends...pack, then this is exactly where I need to be."

She's thinking down those lines when she hears Stiles moving around upstairs. She waits. Like she thought – if later than she thought – he sneaks down the stairs, not spotting her standing still at an angle across the room. He's much better at sneaking than he ever was before, when the words 'almost incapable of' applied, except he doesn't actually think anybody's home.

"Should I put on coffee?" she asks when he's unlocked the deadbolt, his hand, actually, just the long fingers on the doorknob. Stiles screams; backs into the stairs; falls – not the same clumsy way he used to, he falls instead of turning, scrambling backward out of eyesight. She waits, the seconds passing. He creeps as many steps back down as he needs to see her through the railing, still crab-walking – luckily for her nothing out of The Exorcist, eyelids peeled back.

His skin's already so fair she can just see the bruise-like tinge of his blood. Drained of color his eyes float on the black. He not only looks scared, he looks underfed; overstressed; whatever Scott said about safe, his upper body soaked in dry blood. She feels a humanitarian need to feed him before even taking their personal relationship into account; likewise her obligations as a nurse.

"No more coffee, ever," he dictates, snappish enough it surprises her, his goggle-eyed expression falling off his face, sulking, instead; suspicious of her. He really sees her as the enemy who's going to put concern in Lawrence, inevitably, in his own mind, leading to a heart attack completely his fault. Three different therapists left her translating jargon laden reports all running Unresponsive to intervention. Displays overt hostility to engaging in any conversation, actively deterring discussion of traumatic event. Symptoms remain consistent with early diagnosis of ADHD with indications of comorbid oppositional defiant disorder. Now additionally presenting with panic disorder without agoraphobia to be treated symptomatically, but it is too early to speculate if episodes will decrease in frequency with distance from trauma. Patient should be considered at elevated risk for the development of major depressive disorder and post-traumatic stress disorder.

The years of sharing knowing looks that she watches him the same way he watches his father passed, taken for granted. She should have watched him closer, but he and Scott own vehicles now,
they don't stay at the house playing with Ninja Turtles on the floor.

She gestures him up off the stairs and toward her. Up close the amount of blood on his neck and shirt and matted in his hair, becomes more alarming. She spins him around, checking the wounds don’t look infected. They don’t, but obviously they need to be cleaned. She turns him back around, used to maneuvering looming teenagers – especially with Isaac who both has no idea where to put himself and assumes too quickly he’s committed a serious offense for too long a list of words and phrases that trigger a fright reaction.

"Scott told me what happened," she says, Stiles freezing under her hands. "—and to let you be the one to talk to your father," she says more gently, coaxing him toward calm. "I agree."

"Shouldn't you be at work?" he asks with a nervous kind of politeness that comes with childishly harboring unrealistic hope of escape.

"And leave a feloniously intoxicated teenager not guaranteed to return home unconscious in my son's bed?" He thinks about that one and stands down. Caught. Shoulders slumping. "How are you feeling?" she asks as she guides him through the kitchen and into a seat at the table.

"Um. Sober?" he tries, the one handling the chair, its feet dragging abrasively across the floor as he pulls it in under his weight. Melissa sighs but chooses her battle.

"You can give yourself the substance abuse speech in your head. You didn't need four milligrams," she chides, taking the chair next to him, pulling it in before she sits. Stiles Stilinski has been given every speech an adult can give three times or more. In that arena he's already the adult that knows better while acting out the part of the juvenile delinquent. "How are you feeling?" she asks as she guides him through the kitchen and into a seat at the table.

"Um. Sober?" he tries, the one handling the chair, its feet dragging abrasively across the floor as he pulls it in under his weight. Melissa sighs but chooses her battle.

"You can give yourself the substance abuse speech in your head. You didn't need four milligrams," she chides, taking the chair next to him, pulling it in before she sits. Stiles Stilinski has been given every speech an adult can give three times or more. In that arena he's already the adult that knows better while acting out the part of the juvenile delinquent. "How are you feeling?" she asks as she guides him through the kitchen and into a seat at the table.

The childishness vanishes. He clasps and rubs his hands together, cards and uncards his fingers, and pushes one hand through his hair, restless in his seat. His vacant, resigned eyes are new on her. Melissa can usually see the ideas flickering by on his expressive, now slack, face. For once, she's not sure he's thinking about anything. Maybe it's all emotion, but still disturbing to see after knowing the same boy over a decade. His fingers lock together, hands falling into his lap, dead weight. Now his eyes are worried. Scott was right. He needs someone who's been through more than a few break-ups.

"I haven't left him yet. Not technically," he insists; last ditch vehemence. She lets him know she understands with a nod and he finds the self-confidence to keep going. "Not until I text him that we're no longer having relations." He watches her face until he's sure she really gets it, and that the loaded phrase 'having relations' hasn't scared her off. "Which I'm gonna do in a couple," he submits, unknitting his hands, groaning, rubbing his face until color comes into it. His sympathy fishing comes from the knowing, although young, adult: "Why'd I let Scott grow up an' be responsible and able to set boundaries?"

"He didn't do it by himself," she says. From his grimace, that's exactly what he was afraid of. She sighs, going through last night with Scott in her mind before fixing her gaze on his, as almost-unsettlingly steady and attentive as they are. "If I understood this...When somebody wants more commitment than you're going to be able to give, you're right to break it off early." He wets his lips – nerves, attention unwavering. She lifts her brow, letting the gossiping tone come out she still uses socially at the hospital. "There was a boy in high school I dated for eight months. He decided he was going to marry me, and he bought a promise ring. The thing was so expensive I felt like I had to wear it. I kept dating him and dodging the subject for two months. By then he took so many things for granted it was the worst breakup of my life..." No. No, that's not true, and she sighs, adding: "Until the divorce."
Stiles squints at her a second, one elbow on the table, turned in to listen to her, head resting on folded knuckles.

"Since when do you talk to me like I'm an adult?"

The ugly truth she put out of her mind all morning shows itself. Her face asks Seriously? peer to peer. She's suspicious Scott learned that expression from her.

"Stiles. You're breaking up with a man I went on a date with intending to…" Melissa's not completely sure she wants to put words to that.

"Get lucky?" he tries.

She shakes her head, disconcerted by the truth and willing to disconcert Stiles. She kept her concerns to herself because Scott and Lawrence accepted the situation. Months past too late to try to protect or coddle him.

"Have sex for the first time in years with. And keep dating. I was so excited, I mean ecstatic, that someone who looks like that would flirt with me with my hair hauled back into a ponytail, mirrorless, three times and in my scrubs past the halfway point of my shift. I bought he was perfect for me. I still feel like an idiot."

Now she sees Stiles thinking: flickering, wandering eyes, nuanced movements of his eyebrows, tapping foot, drumming fingers. He exhales, still focused on her even with his mind moving fast. That's unsettling. He presses his lips together, then confesses:

"This is the wrong thing to say. I know I shouldn't say this. But he has a huge crush on you." His fingers splay out above the table, a startled jerk. "Not like a gross, creepy crush! He thinks you're better than other people. I'm not saying like…I mean, he's a sociopath and so fucking hard to live with and you're with my dad." A pause. His mouth hanging open while his brow scans his thoughts. Eyes panicked with apology. "I don't know if this is going better or worse than when I opened my mouth. What I really mean is that he has a giant crush on you which you could possibly use as a weapon if he makes trouble and when he makes the trouble you're in the line of that trouble. Or at any other time. He will be totally weak to you because coma and then the extreme social isolation for making all the other werewolves angry."

As glad as she is to have had a sober, mature, but more familiar Stiles at the kitchen table she tries to figure Peter into her life, more like figure out how Peter imagines her in his life, and can only think how little they've seen of each other. At least, how little she's seen of him and how oblivious she made herself to if he was looking, aggressively ignoring him unless interacting's been necessary.

"I don't know how to deal with that," she confesses back, shaking her head, still unable to imagine Peter thinking anything about her, let alone figure out how Peter imagines her in his life, and can only think how little they've seen of each other. At least, how little she's seen of him and how oblivious she made herself to if he was looking, aggressively ignoring him unless interacting's been necessary.

Who she's talking to. While she misplaced the fact that that seventeen year old is about to break up with him. And that while they're all guilty of speaking in assumptions that she and Laurence are simply together, that it's for the long term, she planned to have a better situated conversation with all three boys about their ringless and surpriseless, serious discussion under their complicated circumstances decision.

"Stiles?" she prompts when he hasn't moved, reaching out toward but not to him, unsure if he'll shy
He stares back at her with shock-wide eyes for a second time, much less comical in this context. She knows that he heard son louder than any other word. The emotions pour in, barely restrained in his voice, his shoulders tight:

"I hadn't thought that far."

She withdraws her hand. Is it better not to push it? She doesn't ever want him to feel like she's trying to be Claudia to him, but she never wants him to feel like she'd do less for him than for Scott or for Isaac. After everything they've lived through and his inseparability from Scott, that's impossible. She sees them interact. That losing either one of them is losing both.

"You know it's going to be fine with me if you keep calling me Melissa," she says with no possible way to say everything and Stiles' deductive reasoning faster and more accurate than if she tried.

He takes a second, grins, starts laughing, laughter uncontrolled but sentimental.

"Yeah. Seeing we dated the same guy."

A rush of relief overwhelms her. She laughs, too, pressing a hand to her forehead; shaking her head, embarrassed, glancing up at him, saying earnestly and with a smile:

"I think of that as the night you saved me from being turned into a werewolf by the man I've been scared of you seeing."

"I saved…" She sees him turn it around from his point of view to hers. "I guess I did that." She guesses it was just another day in a life of herding werewolves. He pauses again. "We weren't actually dating." And now he starts to overshare: "Actually we were just—"

She throws up a hand in self-preservation.

"Stop there."

He straightens, realizing where he was going, and breaks into diplomatic coughing. Something about the surface of the table catches him. He lowers his hand, looking at the wood grain like there's something terrifying in it.

Veil episode? No, his eyes stay enlivened. He escaped it for almost an hour between his time in the bedroom and since he came downstairs: *How are you feeling about leaving Peter?* She watches patiently as he moves through terror to broken-hearted upset, turning, broken, to look at her, in pain but not crying yet. Lost. She remembers holding the papers to serve Rafael, her husband already gone but sitting in the car in the motel parking lot about to lose him.

She turns toward Stiles, moves forward in her chair before he falls out of his, her arms closing tight around him. He lets himself sink into her. He's gotten so big, his upper body heavy on her shoulder, but as he relaxes she's able to lean into him in her turn and not suffocate under Laurence's son. Her son. It doesn't matter if he calls her Melissa or 'mom'. His tears matter. Her compulsion to protect him from the full brunt of the emotional blow matters. It's awhile that he cries, and when his body temperature suddenly plummets she holds up against that, too, putting him upright and telling him she's making him breakfast. She pretends to ignore the unsettling way he watches her despite the fact she can't tune out his not-dead-but-devouring stare. An inevitable first brush with what Scott called 'whiting out'. She considers if he's thinking about killing her, but she's seen too many things that are thinking about killing her to mistake it for that. She remembers Scott talk about decay; shivers at her best guess that he's not only watching her die but savoring it.
"Eat the pigs," she orders, setting the pan fried sausages in front of him. She pretends the accomplishment she feels refocusing him on...eating dead flesh...isn't as horrifying as it is if she examines it too closely. She stands away, watching the fork slide into each plotted piece; his knife precisely vertical, sawing mechanically through the sausage with the same ripping pressure one bite at a time. Forcing herself to look away she gets him a glass of water. He looks up, evaluates, and then ignores it.

His hands fly off the fork and knife, fingers releasing in every direction, what must be the moment he comes back to consciousness, leaving them midair to fall to the plate with a clatter. Melissa swallows. Realizes she's been clutching the thin strip of counter to the sink with white knuckles, back against the edge. He'll start apologizing. Apologizing for saving her life the day the Darach took her. She still vividly remembers Deucalion on the roof of the hospital and what led up to it; the sick shock of hearing Cora Hale hadn't been evacuated; Cora in her sickbed; a new perspective on Peter's impossible attempt to disappear out of her way to let her do her job; their attempt to move her; taking the shock paddles to the twins. She remembers ropes binding her tight, rope burn to rash, in a cold root cellar waiting along with Laurence – then came Chris --- for their deaths.

Stiles sacrificed himself to end it. Scott did. And Allison. She rests her hands on his shoulders, squeezing them.

"One obstacle at a time," she suggests and hopes as much as borrows a touch of the 'mom' voice that sometimes means security even to teens. She can't see him, can only dig her thumbs into his shoulders as the fresh tension eases. Right now, his voice is steady:

"You mind if I'm sitting around with you when I send that text?"

"I don't mind," she promises, wincing looking down on his head. Parental dictation: "You are going to shower, change clothes, and be fed. Somebody might set up an oil refinery in this hair."

Stiles tentatively reaches up to touch his hair in new context, a half second's stroke before his fingers unfold away, face screwed up.

"Gross. Yeah. Okay."

He wets his lips, shifts his shoulders, nerves and necessity, pulling his phone out of his back pocket, eyes already damp, the beginnings of a flush rimming them. He mechanically thumbs open a text, leaving the cursor blinking until he can admit:

"Sorry, this may take me..."

Leaving a hand on one shoulder she steps beside him, no smile to offer him, but empathy.

"Take all the time you need," she promises, memories of breakups littering her history. Scott, Stiles, their pack – they haven't had the chance to have all those life experiences. She can't think of a worst first relationship than one with Peter Hale. She presses her lips tight into not-quite-a-smile. "Why don't we go enjoy some daytime television?"

Stiles thumbs, the screen of his phone off, drags his limber legs in and gets up, following beside her, despondent but not dangerous. He sits close on the couch. She sees what he's doing but lets him shift and fidget his way inch by inch to press beside her. She has her arm protectively around him when he does turn on the phone, thumbs unerringly fast, message composed in his head. Fingers stilled, he looks at it. Melissa politely looks away. When the phone confirms it sent, he turns his phone off, hunkers down against her, squirming to lean at an angle like he can become child-sized. He fails, but keeps up a spirited commentary on the soap operas. Forced at first, easier with time.
The guy doesn't look a thing like Stiles. That matters. Not the way he wanted it to matter. He's older, what Derek might call his own age if he knew what that meant comparing himself to a human. His partner – he really needs to remember this guy's name – has his hand down the back of his jeans, pushing it deeper over the natural curve of Derek's ass to stroke up the split, up both cheeks with friction, pull without shoving his fingers deep.

Maybe Derek wouldn't take to that from a strange hand, or maybe the werewolf's getting impatient he's not shoving down between them, being less gentle, sticking a couple blunt lubed up fingers in – forget how tight Derek's jeans are – when they're already in his bed, sheets subdued-purple, silky on Derek's skin. Never turned the lights on, bathroom light left on before the man went out a wedge that misses the bed. He caught glimpses of what looks like local art, hand numbered photographs of abandoned industrial sites or found object, on the walls. The romantic in him fails not to put himself in context. Guy has a type, blind to the metaphor.

He can breathe under the stranger's touch, as if visiting Beacon Hills crushed all the air out of his lungs. He only now realizes he's been suffocating; still short of breath but taking it in. Holding the back of the guy's head, digging into his hair, not enough to hurt him; sucking at his mouth, robbing from the air of his lungs, slow but not slackening on his strength relieves the tightness in his chest. Not enough, yet. Not close to enough.

Redheaded. Curly hair. Heavy jaw. They've both let their beards grow in; the guy's starts lower on his cheek. Squarish hands; shorter fingers, ginger curls on his forearms. Big forearms; he made the grade before Derek even met his eyes, resting them on the bar beside him. At that point he would've let him slam him over the bar just from the arms, the size to him with the smell off him that said he's washed and mostly sober. Derek doesn't want anal sex, oral sex, penetrating some body, letting a couple or more dudes fool around with him. He wants somebody to touch him. The rest was minor details. He thought.

After an hour and a half of looking twice as available, or twice as desperate, as he imagined, forcefully averting his gaze from guys the right height, build, hair trim, moles, lips, slim fingers, even if he caught theirs, reminders why he's here and not somewhere the younger guys go while he's getting offers that put him in foreign head spaces imagining sex acts he can't place himself in, this red haired guy sits down next to him, says You have no idea what you're doing. Man, you've got this vibe coming off you like I've never seen, but I hear you're not looking to freak so maybe I've got a chance? He laughed at Derek's stunned relief, but laughed with him – wolf's smile sheepish, laughing, too, and ducking his head and gaze. The whole thing had him thrown to just short of getting up and leaving. Not to go home to Cora but to dig himself a hole and get buried in it. He knows his way around bars just college campuses. No frat boys in that one.

The guy who doesn't look a thing like Stiles bought them both a couple beers. Didn't in their first two minutes of conversation offer to suck him off in his truck if he'd let him bend him over the front seat, door open– which considering what that man and some of the guys wanna do to him came as a huge relief. He had an idea from the co-worker he asked for direction exactly what he set himself up for. Strings-free dive bar fishing. Then there's whiskey breath and smarm reminding him too much of Peter letting him know how pretty he'd look taking it from both ends. Making an effort to forget that.

He left the apartment, drove a town over making more of an effort to forget the sound of his name off candy-colored lips that want his fangs sunk in them in an alley in the back of a Jeep, the Jeep, seeing one anywhere sends him crashing back; hands working bruises lying underneath scars every time Stiles can't bare enough of himself to reach the next peak; the rest of the time, more than pleas, pressure for violence fended off, all the skin pressed to him carrying the scent of the person he...
loves, the same best friend whining and groaning and begging and squeaking and giving those shouts. Somebody in the world actually makes that much noise during sex. The pressure from the body language and the begging but loving him meant No. Bringing the feral urges up; he's the one that has to keep it under control, the one of two in the Jeep aware Stiles can't handle sex with a werewolf.

All that gets him hard, the images mixed up in his dreams…and the sexual frustration is only a tiny facet that glints the color of the rest of the longing when he remembers tears falling from the body above him, Stiles relentlessly demanding more, knowledge of what Stiles keeps trash-compacted inside pricking at Derek until he surrenders the rest of his emotional reserve, losing track of time transfusing comfort from his flesh to Stiles', accepting the gratitude and the admiration he has no defense against until even though the boy he's so in love with may be crying out his own stressors, frustrations, self-accusations, burdens he compulsively hides Derek feels good giving to him after months of still-unrecognized dating mostly Stiles belligerently installing hobbies besides 'reading' on him.

If masturbation was a chore before Stiles brought him into his body, twice, even bruised, exhausted and, putting up with muscle strain, it moved into 'less frustrating not to try'. But with the rest of it driving him out of his mind he thought if somebody would just touch him it might take the strain off. He really likes this guy. Whatever his name is. The man has a tongue ring, rides a red tour bike the wolf fit comfortably between the backseat of and his back, has a few tattoos of his own, is in a band – Like everybody else. You should never hear us play – finished college, works water conservation for the Office of the State Engineer, a Fed. Has a name. Derek was making his final decision, he was locking into place he'd go to this guy's place when he introduced himself. He remembers saying Derek back; delayed reaction.

Between the two of them only Derek has his shirt off, but he remembers the change of Stiles' expression, thighs straddling him, Derek in him – not in Stiles' mind, his tongue passing across the back of his teeth, Derek realizing that, arms over his head, panting, back arching off the bed, vision coming and going, he's getting himself eaten alive in somebody nearby's imagination. Real hard to mistake with the couple thrusts forward made on top of his hips; against the base of his heat-soaked cock.

Derek-really-hates-he-forgot-his-name wants to go that way. Subtract the emotion – adoration and a possessive streak – he has that same look on him. Derek turns up no problems with that, skin heated where his partner scouted him out. He's stuck with one problem, and it's got nothing to do with the burly redhead he's going mouth to mouth with. Two if he counts not shutting Stiles out.

Weeks later he still stops short of pulling up IRC. Has nothing to open with. With Stiles. Who's met him a couple times with Hey, asshole as some bastardized term of endearment. All he's got is the apology he owes Scott for making his life hell over Allison now that he remembers what it's like when they're perfect for you; at least that's what everything's saying. Add that to the slew of private messages he'll get asking where he's been, if he's alright, if he needs anything. He's never have so many people to worry over him; hard to stomach.

Forgetting all that, as if he can forget all that, just because Stiles never made that recommendation doesn't mean Derek hasn't followed up on everything they talked about in the shower together during the grace period before he realized how much pain hung over him, waiting to crush him. Prostate gland. Found that. He knows his body, knows what seemed for a second like pain turned into something good. The guy has his hands on his thick obliques, slid down, has sucked kisses down somebody's abs in between before, flattening fanning hairs, stroking up valleys between, extra saliva pulled onto his tongue, attentive muscle never dry. Maybe Derek even wants it. The petting's already
great; that's all it is.

He's attracted to this man. He thinks. That has never bed unclear like this before. He knows he has no problem with huge and ruggedly handsome taking him for a drive for one night. Tonight. All night. And here he slams full stop into the question why he can't even get a semi. A question that has him sliding further underneath the ox-massive shoulders he'd be cold on if he thought he used roids but no steroid flush, pale with freckles on his arms and back and his whole frame big. Even as Derek uses the fist already in his hair, urges him back, gets a hand on his skin and pushes up against his chest to catch his mouth. Leaves that maneuver to be too obvious.

Playing with a tongue ring, captive ball like the one girl in college who did some things to him with her mouth chiseled into his memory. Erection under this other guy's fly one Derek moves his hand down to, works over for a couple of strokes, offering it as a role model to his own disengaged penis. He lets his mind descend toward one animal up against another, imagines width, thinks skin, feels it hard, full of blood, remembers the mindblowing way Stiles suddenly opened; brought him in. He could be that, let this guy open him, hold him the same way he held an inescapable seventeen year old in his own arms, with the care due somebody's human body balanced against how hard they want it. Derek can take more than this guy can give, doesn't love him, and won't treat him to Stiles' riot of sound. His dick flushes across the skin as the memory of hearing his name shouted sweeps through him, APB he just hit his stride at 'hard enough' but a protest he won't turn out more. One sluggish pump of blood heats his cock from inside, amounting to nothing.

Irate, starving to really get physical, stuck at a point he can't breathe relief in any deeper, suffocation hauntingly promising to return he turns the situation over; slams his partner into the bed, his grasp on the man's biceps discouraging any immediate touching, claws itching at his cuticles, forcefully restrained. Guy's into it, loosely holds the wolf's waist when Derek lets up on his arms while Derek tries. Tries at getting down to sloppy tongues. Provokes the man into biting at him, and when they've both grown beards it's a new kind of fun; for a minute he's even laughing. Rubs his chest up against him, wrinkling his tee, friction bringing their temperature up, bringing his scent out and leaving Derek's on him, humping a body with his pecs a brand new concept.

The You have a problem hangs obvious on the man (whose parents named him something years back) when they collapse; come down from the wrestling match. He looks concerned. Derek's sick of concern.

"There's a difference between a man building up to apologizing it's not happening today and, uh, trying to make me forget he's got a dick," the guy says, gentle about it but skeptical – the kind of skeptical where Derek may not have told him he has a medical condition, is ashamed of it, has a complex of issues around it and wanted to convince him to have sex before he came out with it.

He's never going to rank high in social skills, but he stalls, hanging on to allowing the lie by omission to play out. He can lie. The worst lie, the one that his conscious takes every chance to prompt he should apologize for. The truth here is he wants the redhead to rub himself all over him, inside him, fine, that's fine. He doubts his own ability to fake arousal that long. Pointless, messy lie that'll fail in the end.

"Right," he says, wincing, studying his partner closely. His skin remembers everywhere the stranger's hands passed. He's still curious where the guy's hand slipped under the waistband of his jeans and worked his ass – 'wouldn't mind past-casual contact' curious. He doesn't know this guy. What to do with him.

"If you're embarrassed, I can try," the man offers cautiously. Maybe his hard breathing and unbroken eye contact could intimidate a human. The wolf tones it down. "Nothing happens, nothing happens,"
the guy says, relaxing without knowing why. Try something sexier than making out.

No talk about ED. No intimidation factor to anything the man could pull. Derek's concept of unacceptable risk outstrip anything the human's capable of. He's everything but that last inch of caution positive this is a human.

Maybe he doesn't have a lot to say, but showing off his body, that always got a good response with the co-eds. Derek doesn't have a routine, but gets off the bed, pushing his waistband down with both thumbs, down over the hair coming up from his pubes, thicker, dark, not curling yet, slipping the button free, holding the one side, pulling his fly down. The same thing he does alone. Apparently, still popular.

Naked looks good on the redhead pitching his own clothes off. Still buff; still big; freckles; cock stiff; taken in hand, slowly stroked as he longs over what Derek wants to give. Unable, here's more to touch; both more purposeful and more accidental contact between bodies.

Anger with himself lies under skin. If it wouldn't scare the man he'd let his inner nature act out. See what happened, then. Except lube. And condoms. Neither of those are out, fact nixing getting tackled by a werewolf more sexually frustrated than when he left his apartment in sexual frustration in the first place.

He recognizes an eerie predatory edge lying down with the human in the unmade bed knowing he could kill him. Paige, Kate, and Jennifer are dead. His best intentions turn on him. No matter if it's an attractive human caressing him gently; no matter how hard he pushes on him -- and he gets told to ease up; even though he's warm and the body he coaxes or claws arousal into, fingertips only, smells good to him, promising, smells turned on, signaling him to respond in kind his cock never mounts anything substantial. The couple insubstantial efforts it makes fade back to skin temperature, guilt stinging at him for bathing in the attention paid him, his own hands strong, unhesitant, but dispassionate. The man whose apartment he's in, who's every kind of turned on, who's drawn toward him now every time he touches him, whose name Derek gave up on, Derek has heaped his personal failure to move on onto.

Supplies are out now. Derek mutters 'Come on' and finds a condom, pinpointing the foil with his nose, catching it up between his fingertips from the bedside table without looking. Ignores what the guy says because the guy's turned on, still a little drunk, and cut off easily with Come on, again, no matter what he's asking or telling him. The redhead rolls on the condom not so much with Derek's encouragement, captured eye to eye with him again. The wolf's aren't glowing. Still he knows he looks like he'll consume him, leave him rent to gore by claws and teeth and inhuman strength. He closes his eyes.

He passed over into something he shouldn't be doing. The human wants sex. Derek can't lose the contact. The human rubs alongside his hips; side, Derek's body rising to follow their warmth. The fingers annoy him in the way his ass doesn't mean much here; like it's the other guy's business. The man's fingers, one, then two; big fingers but slicker than water. He makes a sound at them moving inside him together and the momentary, reactionary soreness. Bad idea to shut his eyes. Stiles looking down on him, the first gaze kicking up ideas of fitting anatomy together in ways he didn't know he'd ever want. Long hands with long fingers kneading at his buttocks, pulling them apart. Not subtle, Stiles.

If Stiles had had the physical strength then he would've let him jungle gym on him until Stiles decided what worked for him. He wanted and he wants Stiles to have his body however he decides to get inside him. But Stiles. The right body, right scent, right fingers, right dick.
Here, tonight, he found somebody objectively gorgeous with more objective potential than needed to start a casual, continuing thing with. Not a chance he'll come in gorgeous' bed, but he could switch it up with Stiles for hours. All he's getting behind closed eyes are ideas about the only person that matters to him right now's silly bubble-gum headed cock that'd rapidly feel more serious if it took a dive into his bowels. He remembers the taste of it, and only getting so much of the actual thing into his mouth; swallowing the bitter semen flooding his mouth.

He opens his eyes to the stranger's apartment. Still just fingers massaging into him; those stop and then withdraw, Derek's body rigid. He hopes remote from himself he didn't break any bones – he’d've heard that, the crack and some kind of yell. There's a degree of trying to understand what Stiles was playing at, maybe pretending to be Stiles here that's not going to work out when it shows its face. This human can't do to Derek's body what it's angling for.

"I can't," the wolf apologizes, pressing his lips together tight, letting a long exhalation out his nose but keeping his annoyance between him and the ceiling.

"Okay," the human says. At this point he doesn’t sound comfortable with him but at least he doesn't sound frightened. Derek listens to him masturbate in his bathroom, the moans of a throat clenched tight echoing inside the shower, shower pouring down his body; raining against the door and walls; the hard tile floor; gurgling as the drain takes it underground, eventually the stranger's semen, too. The wolf pulled the sheet over himself, separating the sight of his own from his willing phantasmal double reciprocating in the echoes, a human and not a mental wreck.

"You're still here," the man says, confused, when he comes back out, tucking the towel he'd been scrubbing his hair with around his waist.

Derek startles, up on his elbows, looking around the room. They took the bike here. Should he have theoretically called a cab but actually hoofed it? Moved to the couch? Done something else besides lie naked in a guy he didn't have sex with's bed and occasionally scratched himself while he listened to the redhead masturbate over him and thought as little as he could help about a body he can't touch?

He hooked up in college: There were no failures. He's feeling like the world's ninth or tenth biggest asshole. He knows the competition he's up against. He inhales, chooses to keep his calm, and looks toward but not to the robust, attractive human man he's not going to have sex with.

"Let me get my clothes." No shame. Shame isn't the reason for avoiding eye contact. Suspecting that he already looked at the human in ways humans don't look at each other has him wary of triggering instincts of an animal prey to leopards and wolves. Of leaving the man shaken.

"I don't care if you sleep there, as long as you go in the morning," the guy says after a minute's indecisive, frustrated silence. Then, with the care of any social animal at comfort: "Are you okay?"

Derek looks at him for that one, eyes widening, mind spinning not to catch what he means.

"Did I do any drugs? No."

Now the man slows it down for him, he's older, in years and otherwise. Derek's young and an idiot. Stiles says there's years left to grow; he wants them now. He cringes away toward the mattress, letting the guy correct himself:

"I think I meant more like in a safe situation with your partner. I'm glad to hear that, too."

The aggression that came off him and canceling the sex he ferociously egged on would make him
look like an abuse victim. He sees that.

"I don't have a partner," he says, words and chest numb.

"Sleep here." Authority of age, of territorial rights to the space, of Derek taking a submissive posture, pure primate. "I don't want you going back down there for your car with your head spun," the guy goes on, control established. "I bet it was bad enough already when I brought you home, huh?" The wolf hears him combing back wet hair with his fingers; scratching his shoulder; shifting his weight. He allows himself not to look at him. Somebody he might nod to in passing if he ever in his life sees him again. "The door locks itself behind you." He lightens it up, Derek glancing to catch his smile: "Don't steal my stuff. I'm in with The Man. Somebody as good looking as you doesn't exactly blend in."

The levity hits Derek with as inappropriate emotions as he's come up with all night. *Sleep with me* dies stuck in his throat, because he means *Help me breathe*. Abandonment of living care smothering *Thanks* underneath it. Instead Derek stares at the stranger like a werewolf incapable of making human conversation until the human gives him a broader smile, reassuring, grabs up his own clothes and leaves him shut in the bedroom.

Nobody to sleep with, but everything smells like somebody new. Derek pulls somebody he doesn't knows's sheets and covers and pillows in around him until he accomplishes his own fortress of privacy and the pathetic illusion of a hug without a single familiar scent except his own to brood in.

Tomorrow he gets up and texts Stiles "What's going on with you?" an hour before Stiles ever willingly reaches consciousness before this gets more toxic.

It doesn't matter if it hurts like performing open heart surgery on himself with his claws and a stapler. If he drops out of Stiles' life he's leaving him to Peter. However messed up he got, he has no excuse for leaving it this long.

Messed up: Missing endless casual nattering he's never suffered. Embracing a body he's never slept beside in the dark, kisses trailing off and Stiles stopped making sense fifteen minutes ago. A hand riding in his back pocket places they've never walked. Being coerced into movies he'd never go see. Trying to read, Stiles unable to shut up, finally shoving and elbowing his way into his space to take a nap, forcing Derek to read around him. Ending up at the drug store at four AM because Stiles came down with something and he wants OTC medication *right now*. Groaning over the new levels of embarrassing Stiles has yet to text him at work with the hope somebody else will see it. He already got caught by Liz's phone-answering reflex, *SNOOCHUMS KITTEN PATCH YOUR CLIENT WHEN YOU GET BACK TO YOUR KITTY COZY* read to the shift aloud. Letting the weeks pass, the months pass, wait out the time when they can have halting conversations about pain in their past man to man. Wanting to be with him bodily, sexually, frequently, but that's a small fraction of it.

Even before Laura died, even assuming someone showed him a Stiles at seventeen, he would be losing a bet that he'd never like him, not love him, absolutely never suffer from yearning for him. That his primary obstacle would be Peter, assuming a conscious Peter, would lose him a second bet – Peter more likely to snap Stiles' neck.

It makes the better side of him sick thinking about his uncle and Stiles, more of a problem, Peter in Stiles, their family, their pack bond irrelevant. The predatory, furious side of him still wants Peter dead for what he's doing. But it's still not just the sex. It's the monopoly on Stiles' attention; on sleeping beside him; on sharing food with him.

He doesn't see Cora until dinner the next night. He showered, he shaved, he actually wore cologne; he's not wearing the smell of sex, but that doesn't change her first question as she roots into her food
while she examines him; returns to it to take a bite:

"You have fun?"

Derek can't make her believe a lie, but he can lie, disappointment and regret left carelessly on his expression as he mechanically makes work of chicken breast and pre-made sides.

"Sure. Yeah." No, saving due credit for a couple smiles. He never wants to think about it again. "School?"

Cora looks down at her food as if the next few bites demand planning to be separated from the whole, flexing and relaxing the fist on her thigh underneath the table before she looks up at him, fork still, eyes steady. He's not gonna want to hear it.

"Everybody's making plans for summer," she outlines.

He has his elbows on the table, thoughts circling getting back to his cellphone. Not buzzard-like. Holding himself at a distance. Like buzzards. Buzzards all words from texting Stiles this morning. He sure as hell doesn't need to lie on his bed waiting for Stiles to text him to get online, holding the phone above him counting down the time Stiles' errands leave them before work in his head. That's not something he should be doing however he counts his age. That's infatuated behavior he has to stop before it takes hold.

He swore to himself he wouldn't come off like he's in this distress he still doesn't understand.

"You?" he asks Cora. Maybe she'll say she's going to the East coast with the guy he hates. That'd put him back in perspective.

"I'm thinking about working a part time job." It still brings him up short, her skepticism shield and armor from his glare. "A thing normal teenagers do," she reminds him as if he's a younger brother, or the subordinate Beta.

He exhales heavily, sourly putting down a couple bites of his meal. He wants her to go to the beach. Have fun. Have nothing to think about. Him to do the work. Her to spend the money. Unless he hates her friends. In which case he wants to be as controlling as instinct tells him to be.

He offers her a smile carrying his apology across the table.

"Sick of me yet?"

"No," she says, softening. Her brow furrows. "Just. We're werewolves."

He stays silent. What she means. What she wants. What she needs. All the things he abrasively literally lacks the strength to give her. Seeking a pack. Proving their worth and their place. He has to build the power to take point outside this territory. He hasn't, yet.

"I'm not ready either," she promises, voice soft as carrying him a secret.

That ends dinner conversation. She finishes her meal, puts the plate in the dishwasher. He watches her go.

Two Hales courting any Alpha.

Werewolves generally with their loose affiliations, separate territories, have to hear sensational news to call anything a scandal. Even as Deucalion traveled from pack to pack, every other pack of wolves
thought of him as a problem for the wolves whose territory he haunted.

Then there's the Hales. Born werewolves passing the Bite, if history has it right, from Lycaon's son to heir to heir, the wolves who became the Hales have gone underground before across two thousand years. It doesn't matter if it's a legend. Two Hale Betas might be worth their bloodline. That idea repulses him as much as, for any Alpha, it makes sense. If they trade on their name, it wouldn't have to be 'any Alpha on the market'. There are a handful of packs besides the Hales who claim Lycaon's blood.

If they reach out to one of them, they cut out all the risks. Receive a member of the family here to negotiate, a Beta, preserving their own Beta status a part of the exchange. An exchange understood by all parties before they meet their Alpha. Giving his baby sister to another wolf not just for sex, as a bitch to build a powerful next generation on, is a medieval tradition that belongs in the past. Bitterly, for Derek himself, it'd be a real break knowing the dark twist to his latest partnership upfront: Every other failure pardoned, he never proved a natural shifter.

That's the waiting game they're playing here in New Mexico. Both of them know it: Cora lying in bed asking herself if she can accept an unknown man, male, of unknown age in her life, if instead of returning to a strong new Hale pack she saves her dying line's name by surrendering it to add prestige to another lineage. If the pack they court finds out Derek doesn't have the talent, she'll be the wildcard. The valuable one. Selling himself like a used car, omitting a transmission problem. He can't wait.

Cora's too young, just like Stiles is too young. They're both older than he was at their age in life lived. Not old enough. If he gets sick at the idea of Peter on Stiles, but he can't always pick it apart from the nightmare of Kate, the nightmarish power he felt trapped stripped under her gaze, the trash he felt like the different ways she touched him last year. The beast Gerard created slain by Peter. Some days he thinks he shorted his uncle, that maybe the sense of powerless beaten into him that drove him to take Peter's power for himself came at the expense of the small detail his uncle, whether or not he murdered Laura, might have come to rescue him. Book closed. Shelved.

Derek was the last Alpha to inherit. The Alpha that destroyed the Hales. That put himself and Cora in the situation they're in now, hoping for an unexpected escape. He'd make the same choice, sacrifice history and legacy for Cora's life, every time in every situation.

Besides, he looked on the black beast he faced with Scott and Jennifer and knew Talia Hale, Peter Hale, maybe even Laura Hale in a lunar rage would have laughed at Deucalion, the 'Demon Wolf'. He feared for his own life at the prospect of Kali.

Chris may hate to talk to him but told him one thing before he left. He told him his feelings for Jennifer might not have been real. She took virgins first, and then she seduced him. He recognizes that as he came into his power she may have subverted his strength.

He didn't answer Chris with the cliché truth: *It was real to me*, as lonely as Isaac thought and unable to reach out until the Darach broke in. He hates the possibility, the silently shelved certainty, a volume in a growing collection, not the woman. He has Kate to compare her to. One of them loved him so much she shaped her rebirth to be a woman he could love in place of the love he lost. The other was a sociopathic killer and everything that followed from it.

He did mourn, once he unraveled Peter's incapacity for sensitivity from the other shocks to his system. Planted a Chinkapin oak deep in one of the nature reserves; something he'd only ever tell Stiles. Weird to think the guy might be mature enough to remember the lurch Peter threw him to ask. He hasn't answered all his own questions. The Nemeton gave Jennifer a Knight's Charge like it did Scott, Stiles, and Allison, but not him. Can a druid invested by a Sacred Grove be a Darach? Deaton
and Morrell never acted like the sacrifices disturbed their 'balance'.

Scott may have subverted his strength, Derek too young, instinct suppressing making himself a threat to a more powerful Alpha. He hates that possibility, too, and not Scott.

Facts that feel linked by unseen strings. Facts for Stiles. The duty of looking in on Beacon Hills from the outside he failed at so far by keeping the thoughts that strike him from their owner.

When he's cleaned up the floor and is on his bed, does have his cellphone, illusory grime on his skin that won't ever shower off thinking too much over himself, Kate, and Cora, he scrolls through the conversation this morning waiting for Stiles to get online. It feels like Kate's curled up behind him, arm over him, a hand squeezing his ass, her tongue running up his ear. A ghost on his back. Spirit syndrome. He doesn't have that problem.

He immediately failed at the slow move back into things he planned in his head, but lying in the bed of a failed one night stand was not the least emotional, most secure moment in his life to be communicating anything to somebody he'd drop his pride to attach himself to when Stiles blasted to fully awake the way he never does, Derek's texts slower coming, faced with finding his sarcasm to interdict his blandness with Stiles' words appearing instantaneously in response – that sarcasm harder to fish out than usual; impossible to ignore the selfish happiness of being missed.

[[Swazzle]]

Awesome!!
I'll be on after I get this shit for my dad done.
Subtract unscheduled disaster.

—He gives the screen the tired smile he couldn't share with the guy two states away. Thinks unprompted holding him; to coming on the whole back seat of the Jeep, even more sudden, out of synch, Stiles pulling him into the shelter of his body, an arm hooked protectively over him. Safety. Not against all comers. Emotional, but he could use that; holds on to thoughts of that body, those arms, that mouth, Stiles's scent, holding the phone like a religious charm.

*Bet you've been reading way too many books.*
Books should be illegal. I should burn them.
Damn it I almost had a reference,
The one with Jesus selling stuff on TV.

Fahrenheit 451.
Good try.
I get the idea.

*Waiting on the movie version.*

That doesn't make sense.
You already read it.

*Yeah, Derek, I did.*
Those things are only valuable for witty rejoinders.
And kindling.
All of literature.

What do I even like about you?

*Hey.*
Get Call of Duty 3: Modern Warfare.
That's what we're gonna play.
Rob somebody if you have to.

I'm good for it.

Sweet.
I have so missed
The unfair advantage of your werewolf reflexes.

I'm gonna get ready for work now.

—If Stiles can misdirect by omission, Derek can leave out that that demands returning to the bar, making the drive home, and then leaving Stiles' game downloading while he does get ready for work.

For what now?

What grownups do for money.

Right. I keep forgetting.
What is it you do, again? Pole dancing?

That's Wednesdays.

I only wish that was Wednesdays.
Smooches.

—Forgetting the flirtatious, sexual undertones regular to texting Stiles presents him with a problem about getting back to texting Stiles, like he never stopped synonym for like we didn't break it off.

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!