The Sundering Kiss

by trilliath

Summary

Stiles is a young adult incubus who has made his way to New York City. After his first makeout session ended in death, he left Beacon Hills to try and understand what he was and protect the people he cared about. But being his father's son, in name if not by birth, he's never been able to accept the idea of killing innocent humans to feed himself. So in order to survive and keep his morals both, he travels across the country feeding on sexual predators.

Derek is a NYC werewolf cop, who dedicates his life to protecting and serving both the human and fae communities - protecting them from each other if necessary. When a string of succubus or incubus kills starts hitting his city, and Derek runs into Stiles at a crime scene, Derek wants to find a way to help this neophyte fae survive under the radar before someone else puts him down.

Too bad Stiles seems to run away whenever Derek gets near him.

Notes

Story for Allonym for an auction.
Though you may recognize the succubus mechanics and the baseline backstory as being similar to Bo from Lost Girl, that's basically the extent of the overlap, so it's not really a
crossover/fusion and you won't be seeing any LG characters or plotlines showing up in this story (though how awesome is that show?!).

Warnings: As a vigilante incubus, Stiles spends a lot of time around rapists and doing rapey things to them with his mojo. The warning is for this, not between Stiles and Derek. But understandably, consent has a complex role in this one since we have characters who can compel sex by their very existence.
Chapter 1

It's been a long night for Stiles. He's hungry, so fucking hungry and it's just his luck but for once humanity seems to be actually fucking behaving decently. So far he is a hunter without any prey in sight. He's moved from club to club, bar to bar, and not once has he heard the sick cajoling of a predator or seen the surreptitious addition of an illicit substance to an unsuspecting fellow's drink.

And that's a good thing, it is. But he's hungry, and if he doesn't find someone the world can do without tonight, he'll be edging into dangerous territory. He's done it before, rather than take someone innocent, painful as it may be to starve. He can do it again, if he has to. But he would really rather drain a douchebag rapist instead.

A stray bit of garbage gets a frustrated kick, bottle rattling down the concrete and breaking the quiet over the distant thrum of traffic and the fainter vibrations of dance-club music further down the block. He shouldn't have taken so much time away from it this past couple weeks. He'd just wanted to feel normal for a while. Not sit around constantly assessing who was a rapist, who he could kill and feel justified for it. He just wanted to go hang out at the bookstore and eat a sub sandwich in the park, or go for coffee with friends. Not that he has any friends now - no real ones, though seducing someone into friendship is as easy as smiling these days. But real friends? Scott is the only person not befriended under his aura and he's three thousand miles away now.

He doesn't particularly like hitting the back alleys and the streets for his hunt. Seriously, nasty smells and cold aside, the ones who get away with it in the public places because they have money and influence tend to piss him off more than the rough edges of the dregs of society. But it's about all he's got left at this point. He curses himself under his breath. He should never have let it get to this point. It wasn't like pretending he was human would make his troubles go away. He knows better than that.

It's his own fault that he's a little cold in the thin white synthetic shirt that's more absent than present really, held together by decorative little chains on the sides. They keep catching the night wind and biting where they touch his skin. But he's never had to worry about the cold on hunt nights, not once he'd had his prey and been juiced for the rest of the night. His tight black jeans aren't much better, though at least the punk-rock leather boots he gets to wear with his getup are warm.

He glances up as a patrol car turns the corner behind him, headlights flaring slowly down the alley as it drifts to a crawl beside him in the wide space with its uneven asphalt and well-worn dumpsters. He watches the window roll down and lifts his eyebrows.

"You being careful out there tonight?" the beat cop says, his eyes lingering a little too long on Stiles's trim body.

"Sure am, officer," he replies with a bland smile to cover the hunger and annoyance he feels.

The low grumble of the well-powered engine is the only sound in the deserted alley, save for the rustling of the mild city wind against the detritus around them. Now would be about the right time for the cop to wish him well and move on, if he were a good cop. Stiles hopes, though he has a feeling it's in vain.
"You need a ride somewhere?"

Stiles glances at the empty horizon, frowning at the mild weather. "I was just walking a while."

The leer the cop gives him turns his stomach when he glances back down. Belatedly he catches the possible implication his words have. It's been a while since he walked the back alleys and his street skills are apparently a little rusty.

"I figured as much. Boy like you on streets like these."

Stiles eyes the cop warily, shifting his assessment from disgust a little higher up towards potential threat. The car hasn't moved on, just keeps drifting along slowly beside him. It has him wondering if the cop's going to harass or attempt to take him in.

Not that a lone human offers him much challenge these days.

The guy heaves a speaking sigh, filled with boredom and impatience that sets off Stiles's red flags.

"Well, you're new around here. This is my patrol. It's not a nice place but if you let me give you a ride I'm sure it'll make things… easier for you around here."

Rage wells up in his chest at the implication. Stiles had already wanted to spit in the guy's face. The temptation is hard to resist. After all, he could just turn and walk away. He certainly doesn't need to worry about this guy's benevolence since he's not actually a street walker around here. He doesn't need a cop's protection or lenience because he's not going to be here in any sort of regular capacity. But…

But he is on the hunt.

"It can be tough out here if you don't make the right friends," the cop prods, voice hardening.

Stiles really wants to punch the guy now.

"Yeah, okay," he says instead, smiling and turning towards the patrol car. It drifts to a halt and Stiles pulls the handle to the door, body warming up at the surge of adrenaline and excitement of the hunt. He slips into the passenger seat with a sinuous stretch of his torso, relaxing into sensuality like the second skin it is. He shuts the door behind him and lets the dirty bastard slide a possessive hand over his thigh and up to squeeze his crotch. It just feeds the anger in his chest, hardening his resolve even though he knows he's being impulsive in his target.

"You gonna get hard for me baby? Or are you gonna stay soft and scared?" the guy asks as he fondles Stiles and pulls out from the alley, merging into the light evening traffic smoothly. "I know I'm pretty tough looking but you don't have to be scared of me, not since you're being so good for me."

No. He's not afraid, and his body is very much ready for the hunt. He lets his hips shift and nudges his dick against the pressure on it, letting himself swell against the confines of his jeans. The guy isn't arousing, and it's not that he actually wants to please him either. Stiles just wants him aroused. He can feel the energy just thrumming under the guy's skin. The arousal that Stiles is going to drink down to the very last drop. And that turns him on, morbid though it may be. So he lets himself ride the swell of anticipation, the feedback loop of sexual arousal his presence can create.

The car ride is short. They're already in a shitty part of town. He doesn't have much mojo to spare to forcibly persuade the cop, hungry as he is, but he doesn't need any to get the guy to drive to somewhere nondescript, hidden from prying eyes. He picks an empty lot just a bit off the road that
crosses under the giant concrete pylons that support the highway far overhead.

He shuts off the engine and Stiles rocks his groin against the groping hand to the sound of the engine ticking over. His cock gets an uncomfortably firm squeeze and then the guy pats his thigh and says, "Be a good little bitch and hop out for me. It's easier out here."

Stiles rolls his eyes. He'd been hoping to tease towards a quick tug-and-chug without prolonging it. But he doesn't want to waste the power to make the guy sit back just for the sake of not having to go anywhere. He pushes the door open and steps back into the cool night quickly, ready to get this over with.

Stiles moves around the car to the driver's side (around the back, thank you, avoiding the dash cam if it's there). He waits as the cop gets out instead of approaching the cab. Stiles leans against the rear window, canting his hips appealingly as the guy approaches, sliding idle fingers over the bulge in his jeans.

"Aren't you sweet, not gonna fuss or nothing," the cop says as he strides closer. "Bet you're gonna whine when I shove my cock in your hole though," the guy says, reaching up to cup Stiles's jaw and push a thumb between his lips. Stiles is more than ready to plant a final kiss to the asshole and be done with this. He nips at it and then twists his head to slip the finger from his mouth as he slides closer.

"Hey, I ain't a fag," the guy spits, shoving Stiles back and cuffing the side of his head hard. He shoves him up against the side of the car, bending him down over the trunk in a practiced motion, a cop restraining a suspect against the vehicle. Stiles doesn't fight. He doesn't need to make it any harder than it already is. Even still, Stiles is weaker than he thought given the way the guy is able to manhandle him up against the car. The cop shoves his hips against Stiles's ass, grinding his hardon against him, and for a fleeting moment Stiles lets himself indulge in the fantasy of being taken, of not being the literal sexual predator that he is and for once being the prey. But this guy makes him sick. Stiles heaves a sigh of frustration as he fumbles for Stiles's belt.

He'll never get it open. It's a point of amusement for Stiles when he lays his trap for his 'predators', watching them fumble and more often than not cut themselves on the complicated metal-worked buckle. It proves advantageous again tonight, making the guy distracted enough to not actually bother pinning Stiles down after a moment.

It just takes a quick drop of bodyweight and a sweep of leg to the knee and the guy goes crashing down to the concrete. The years of self-defense seminars his dad had insisted he take had long since proven their worth. Stiles is straddling him a moment later, clamping hard hands on either side of his face as he opens his mouth over the predator's surprised gawk.

Only he's the predator now.

Sometimes he wishes he could see it, the way his eyes are probably glowing blue. He can just barely see it in the reflection of the other man's wide eyes as he breathes in, sucking in an entirely different manner than the guy had intended. He can see the edges of the wispy tendrils of the man's life energy tangling around their joined mouths as he pulls. And he pulls hard, fast, sucking the life out of him with abandon.

It's hotter this way, turns his body on full when he just drinks it down like this. He doesn't particularly feel like having a raging hardon for a predator he's executing, but it's apparently just how his biology works. It's probably why some of the historical tales of his kind feature the vain as victims of the incubus's kiss. After all, who doesn't like it when their food looks good? But this isn't about him. It's about the other kids this douchebag would have molested under the guise of
The man spasm, likely ejaculating in his trousers, though Stiles doesn't check. He lifts his head and wipes his mouth on the back of his hand. Dragging every last drop of life energy from the guy has left him with a hideous death mask. Stiles grimaces and sets about getting up. As he pushes away his erection rubs hard against his too-tight jeans. He grunts in annoyance at the unsatisfied organ. Sometimes if the person's attractive or he's already got a half-full tank it'll be enough to push him over in the throes of the feeding.

Not tonight. He groans, skimming fingers through his short brown hair and resisting the urge to put his hands to pleasurable use on his cock. But his frustration is going to have to go unmitigated. He's at a crime scene, one that could mean quite a few pissed off people putting in overtime to catch a cop-killer. He should know better by now than to let his particular hatred for dirty cops to get in the way of his better practical judgment. But then again, wisdom is relative. Being a supernatural vigilante in the first place isn't exactly the wisest thing he'd ever done, but it gives him solace. And if that means that sometimes a kill is harder to handle then so be it.

"Fuck," he mutters under his breath, staring at their surroundings. No obvious cameras, thankfully. He'll probably have to leave town if this guy isn't already under suspicion. And it definitely means he can't jerk off and risk leaving his DNA evidence around. He needs to get the hell out of there and soon, but there's another problem too. The officer's service weapon and the patrol car are dangerous in the wrong hands and there's no fucking way he could live with himself if he didn't fix that.

After a few moments of quick thinking he pulls open the door of the idling car. He lifts the officer easily enough, now that he's got his strength back. Moving quickly he puts the guy back into his seat and shuts the door before getting back into the passenger seat. It takes some doing but he gets the car oriented towards the brick enclosure for a dumpster instead of the highway support they'd been angled towards. Then he shoves the guy's stiff foot down against the gas and charges them straight into the brick.

The impact isn't really so bad. The way his head aches after being forcibly introduced to the dash is a little uncomfortable but with all the extra energy he's protected against physical damage and easily alright within moments. The car and its other occupants are most definitely not. Shaking it off he reaches for the center console to see if the radio equipment still has power or functionality. Being the Sheriff's kid has its perks, one of which being that he knows how the police radio works. He intentionally screws it up a little, making some frustrated sounds until someone tries to talk to him.

"He-hello? I… this cop needs some help. I think he had a heart attack or something," Stiles says breathily, voice higher than normal. "Please help, he crashed his car and I don't think he's breathing."

Dispatch asks him for more information but he ignores her. When it becomes apparent he's not answering, she starts calls for status updates from her assigned units immediately, trying to source out who it is that's in trouble.

He smiles, pleased at his solution as he slips out of the car, ready to disappear into the shadows and watch, making sure nobody else comes along to steal what they shouldn't.

His smile is short lived as an unmarked SUV pulls off the road, attached police lights flashing to life as the headlights drag over Stiles's form. He throws a hand up to shield his face from sight and
spins on his heel, bolting for the darkness beyond.

He hears a man shout after him, telling him to stop for the police. Yeah no. He just runs, knowing that the guy will likely deal with the injured officer first. He laughs, giddy and breathless as his excess energy spreads through his body, every pumping muscle fueled by his life-high. It's not a familiar part of town so he takes a few quick turns at random, ducks through a couple mostly empty alleys before he slows down. He's warm but the night is getting colder, the wind hissing and moaning as it slips through the narrow, angular paths of the city, catching on sharp corners. He tips his head back and laughs to himself, still so high on all the excitement, dick still more than half-hard in his jeans despite the discomfort of chafing against the denim. He's actively considering whether or not to whip it out right here in the empty alley and let himself enjoy it properly when out of nowhere, he's slammed bodily against the wall.

He yelps in surprise and scrambles to get his hands under him, to focus on the present rather than on his dick. But actual fear doesn't cross his mind. Nothing truly scares him right now.

"I said, 'Stop. Police,'" the voice of his assailant practically growls against his ear as his bodyweight pins Stiles to the dirty cinderblock wall and his foot kicks between Stiles's, automatically shifting him off balance and hindering his ability to move. "Or didn't you hear me?" he murmurs, voice low and argumentatively taunting.

"Seemed like more of a guideline than a rule to me," Stiles says, laughing at the way he only gets harder in his jeans at the force. Everything feels like foreplay right now. The guy's scent is richly earthy, a little sweaty but it's good in the way of the tangy heat of erotic exertion. Sandalwood maybe.

He shudders at the way the cop draws in a deep, scenting breath of his own against the back of Stiles's neck. It's not exactly normal behavior but then again just his presence tends to bring out the fetish in people when he's high from a kill and especially when he's scared. It's a physical defense mechanism he's sure.

The man draws in another deep breath next to his skin. "Why did you run?"

Stiles grunts, pushing back against him lightly. He's strong - not likely strong enough to hold Stiles if he actually wanted to get loose. But for the moment he's in no real danger and he's enjoying his incidental frottage.

"Gee, I don't know, maybe because it's really hard to tell which cops are rapists and I've already had more than my share of that bullshit tonight. Gonna prove me right and keep grinding on me?" he demands, rolling his hips blatantly against the other guy's lap.

The hands on him loosen immediately and the officer steps back. Stiles immediately twists around so he can get a look at his assailant. He's startled when he does, seeing dark hair and sharp cheekbones accompanied by pale eyes that contain too many slivers of blue and amber to be accurately described as merely green. Then come the attractively downturned lips which are surrounded by a beard so sexy he has to bite his lip against a needy sound.

His eyes narrow as he searches Stiles's face. "What do you mean? What happened, are you alright?"

Stiles straightens against the wall, letting himself wobble a little so that it is easier to land a hand on the cop's arm without sending his defenses up. He seems like a decent cop, not like the bastard he'd just taken out. He doesn't want to have to use more force than necessary to allow them to go their separate ways now.
Stiles offers a wry smile as he lets his hand linger on the man's wrist. "It's no big deal. I mean, I'm pretty sure it won't be happening again."

He slides his thumb up past the cop's glove and under the sleeve of his leather jacket so that he can touch skin. That makes it a lot easier to use his powers of influence. More-so if the guy finds him attractive at all, and the way his eyes dilate when Stiles leans into him a little tells him he's well on his way to an easy escape to freedom.

"Look, I know you've got a job to do and all, but don't you think I've been through enough tonight?" Stiles suggests, tilting his head and looking up through his lashes at the guy, putting his heated mojo into their joined skin.

The cop's frown deepens and Stiles pushes harder, using more energy than usual. "I didn't really see anything important. You don't need me. You should forget you ever saw me and go back to your car."

It's not long before he sees it happen. The guy's lips part and his eyes shift into a slightly glassy, aroused state, dragging over Stiles's form more blatantly, though this time Stiles doesn't find it offensive at all since he's encouraging it rather forcibly. Stiles smiles at him, rubbing his wrist just a little.

"Maybe," the cop says softly, eyes getting caught lingering on Stiles's mouth as the tips of his ears start to redden.

"Definitely," Stiles says, lifting a hand to the guy's jaw to cement the word with another push of mojo, way more than usual. It has the guy sucking in a shuddering breath, his eyes slipping closed in bestowed pleasure and not for the first time Stiles wishes he could actually share that with someone. That he could actually know what sex with someone else would be like without killing them. But he only goes the dangerous route of actually teasing his sexual pleasure with people worthy of a premature death - people decidedly unworthy of his having sex with them at all. So maybe it's ironic for what he is, but as it turns out, he never fucks anyone.

Ever.

But oh, oh how he wishes he could have sex, just once, with someone like this man. He shifts his hips, drawing a low, pleased sound out of the man and it's then that he realizes that he's lingering dangerously too long, basking in the sensual press of the cop's body to his instead of making his escape.

"Who are you?" the man whispers, gloved fingers brushing slowly against Stiles's throat.

He wants to tell him. Wants to stay, to do more than touch. But he can't. He knows he can't, so he slips away from the cop with a low, "Don't follow me," heading deeper into the night, leaving both of them very, very unsatisfied.

Chapter End Notes

And so the chase begins!
Come [hang out with me on tumblr](http://example.tumblr.com), ramble about headcanons with me, doodle incubus!Stiles, just whatevs :D
Chapter 2

Being a police officer, the late Fred Cahill gets bumped to the front of the queue for the attention of one Dr. Lydia Martin, Medical Examiner and fae historian. Also a Banshee. Not that many people knew about the latter two points. Even still, when he and Erica head down to the morgue the following night she's only just begun the autopsy proper. No morgue ever seems to have the resources to get through the cases a city this big engenders.

Lydia rolls her eyes when she sees them, hands full of brain as she strides over to a basin on a scale. "No, I don't have the labs back yet," she says, setting down the fatty grey matter carefully. "But I can tell you what they're going to say."

"Good enough for us," Erica says.

Lydia flashes the edge of a smile at her and then tilts her head as she recites, "Massive quantities of oxytocin and serotonin and dopamine in his brain, among others. Basically an emotion neurotransmitter salad. Just everything getting released and triggering subsequent releases. We see something like it in high doses of MDMA, a serotonin cascade."

"It's why partiers sometimes wake up with a massive headache and case of the blues," Lydia says. She purses her lips, emerald eyes tilting upwards behind her face shield. "That and dehydration."

"So, what, this is like, super ecstasy?" Erica asks, crossing her arms and squinting at the lump of fatty tissue that had once held an officer's mind.

"Something like that, yes, though determining what, exactly, is going to be more work than I have resources for, unfortunately. I'll just have to rule it an apparent overdose of an unknown empathogen," she says, flicking a meaningful glance Derek's way when Erica isn't looking.

"Designer drugs like these pop up sometimes and get spread before we fully understand the side effects. The lab isn't really equipped to source out the details," she says with a dismissive flick of one gore covered hand.

"Would that be important to figure out?" Erica asks.

Lydia shakes her head. "Not unless you've got a dealer you're trying to convict with the substance in his possession to compare against, which is rare given how small a distribution circuit these sorts of things tend to run on. I'll just pass on a report to vice that there's something odd going around. Nothing new really," she says with a tilt of the head and dismissive shrug, though her eyes flick up to meet Derek's.

He nods in agreement and understanding. Something worth sweeping under the rug then. But what it means, what sort of fae, that's another story. The cop's face is still contorted in a horrible death grin and Derek crosses his arms as he puzzles over the question. For all that he lives in one of the most diverse cities in the world, and he isn't exactly a historian or waykeeper. Fae are diverse too and they aren't exactly keen on sharing what they don't have to. There's too much risk in talking too freely or even writing things down.

Lydia, on the other hand, will know. He leans his thumb against his lips and lifts his eyebrows at her in question. She just flicks her eyelashes away and lifts a finger that Erica can't see. Derek waits as she continues rambling about neurotransmitters, and he's completely unsurprised when Erica's phone starts to ring a moment later.
She checks the readout, then smiles and flips it open with a sultry, "Hey baby."

Derek cocks an eyebrow and a smirk at her and she promptly rolls her eyes and haughtily ducks out of the morgue to go make plans with her lover, as usual. There are definite benefits to being partners with someone for so long. Small manipulations are done without hesitation or difficulty, on both their parts.

When she's out of hearing he turns his gaze back to Lydia with a snap. Her eyes are already glowing an even brighter green as she stares down at the corpse, a fond look on her face as she examines the specter of death.

"Someone feeding on life energy?"

Lydia cocks a delicate fawn-colored eyebrow and tilts her head with a smile. "Sexual energy, to be precise."

He frowns over that a moment, wracking his brain for any other options than the one that would explain the way he'd been so manipulated by his arousal last night. He comes up with nothing. "Incubus then."

It explains a bit about the doe-eyed young man who'd flirted his way away in the alley and stayed on Derek's mind ever since. He'd been caught off guard but even still the fae man had been able to redirect him without an obvious show of effort. Though wolves weren't the most susceptible creatures, it had been unexpectedly easy for the man to affect him. He might very well be stronger than Derek, even when he hadn't just fed.

"Looks like," she says with a wide smile. "They leave such pretty corpses," she muses before the supernatural glow of her *sight* fades. She takes another swab from the corpse and goes back to her workstation, packaging it up for the lab techs.

"I didn't think they were real, or at least not still around anymore," he says with a grimace, looking away. The dead man is more on the ugly side of average to his eyes, made worse by his mode of death. But he knows she sees something completely different when she looks at death through her banshee eyes.

"No, they're very, very rare. Long-lived but they don't mate easily. Takes a great deal of energy to procreate and they're fickle creatures by nature. I'll send you some information, but so long as he goes back to low-profile targets and spreads it out in different precincts now and then it'll just be another strange designer drug out there causing trouble for those foolish enough to partake. Most any M.E. should come to a similar conclusion."

He nods his thanks but abruptly she pauses in her motion across the room, twisting back to look at him. "You've already met him."

"Who?" he says automatically, though he knows he's terrible at hiding things from Lydia, not in the least because she's a Banshee and has a certain degree of prescience even for everyday things.

She just smiles more. "Everyone goes to succubus for their first thought. You went for incubus, meaning you have someone in mind already."

Erica pushes in through the double doors again, ending their side conversation.

Lydia turns a frown on the dead policeman. "From what I've been privy to, none of the other recent overdoses of this kind have been odd except for the designer drug itself. Most of them were found near a night club or party of some sort, and most of them were habitual or social drug users. I'd
hate to smear a cop, but you may want to look for some evidence that he's not so clean. I'll let you know what the long-term drug results say," she says with a dismissive shrug.

"Thanks Doc," Erica says with a flirtatious wink, one which earns her a slow smile from Lydia, as always.

Lydia's eyes skim over Derek's briefly. They'll talk later. Derek nods to her and turns to head out, Erica taking the cue and leading the way out into the tiled hallway, holding the door long enough for him to slip through, then letting it swing shut, rubber edging making a muffled sound as it drags against the frame.

Erica sighs, pulling her long wavy blonde hair out of the ponytail holder now that they're out of the morgue.

"So, just another drug overdose, huh? Cap's not gonna like that," she says, slinging her hands into the pockets of her trim leather jacket.

Derek shrugs. "Of course not," he agrees, pulling his cell phone out to check his email as they near the stairs and he regains signal. He smirks at her when he adds, "But they can easily spin it as heart failure."

"Because technically it's almost always heart failure," she finishes with an eyeroll, snorting at the old joke that isn't really a joke.

"We'll check into his history I suppose, but honestly I'm more interested in calling it closed and getting back on that Walker case."

Erica frowns back at him as she turns the corner in the stairwell. "Yeah, but what about that kid?"

Derek pulls his face into a mask of boredom. "You heard the tape from dispatch. Good Samaritan, petty thief, either way it's not a big deal. It'd be a waste of time trying to track down some kid"

She waggles her eyebrows at him and shoves her fingers against his shoulder. "You're just pissed he got away. That he outran you."

Erica had looked surprised when he'd come jogging back onto the scene alone. She's not wrong. It rankles, because he almost never lets a runner get away. He'd just shrugged it off, not interested in trying to explain. After all, until Lydia had confirmed his suspicion, he hadn't even really known what happened himself. Derek had never seen an incubus before, never gotten a glamour like that laid on him.

Erica will come to whatever conclusion she usually does when he's vague about things - which is fairly often. She's used to it by now. More importantly, she knows he has her back, absolutely, so she's good with letting things lie. She has to, because otherwise he'd have moved on to another partner. Because he might trust her with his life, but he can't trust her with the lives of fae. With advances in society and technology, being fae is getting harder and harder to hide. Hunters, on the other hand, have thrived on the advances, so it's more important than ever that Derek be cautious.

He scowls for her benefit. It's not hard to do. He hadn't exactly been pleased to be bested by a scrappy little incubus who'd made his pants too tight for the rest of the evening. "Maybe. Fine, I'll take a couple extra patrols around the area and keep an eye out. Might as well ask some of the local walkers what they thought of Cahill. You got a date?"

"Yep. We're going dancing. Boyd looks quiet but damn he can move, if you know what I mean," she says with a dreamy and lecherous smile as she sashays up the last few steps.
He grunts in exaggerated distaste. "Seriously Reyes I do not need to hear about your sex life. Ever."

She just grins, hitting the push-bar to open the door with her hip. "That's because you're jealous that I have one."

She's not wrong. But she's like a sister, and frankly nobody wants to hear about their siblings' sex lives.

He does go back to the street. He doesn't hit the crime scene, exactly. Instead he goes through the back alleys to the point where he'd been pushed into letting the young man go. No, not a young man. An incubus. Which probably means he's older than Derek. He reminds himself not to get distracted by youthful features and underestimate him.

The incubus' scent is distinct enough from the dust and the grime and it's actually rather easy to follow it for a while. There's a heady spiciness, like chai brewed with fresh ingredients, and a tartness that reminds him of fresh fruit that isn't quite sweet when its juice erupts in your mouth.

And isn't that a mental image.

There's definitely a sensual, inexorably primal edge to the scent. After having come into direct contact with it the other night, he'd spent most of the sparse remainder of that night jerking off in his little loft apartment. In the shower. In bed. And yeah, once as soon as he'd walked in the door and been sure of his privacy. He'd pulled his cock out and stroked himself to a quick completion right there in the hallway like a teenager in heat. His wolf is lapping it up like a happy puppy, but his cop side is wary. He's going to have to be very fucking careful around this one.

The scent trail takes some unexpected twists and turns that would have a visual search floundering. But the incubus is clearly not expecting a fae tail with a nose forty times more powerful than a human's. He eventually ends up in a decent part of town when the scent finally fades to its weakest, interrupted and displaced by other people going about their lives, crossing the path. The places around here are not nice enough to have a doorman, but not bad either.

He wanders around for a while, trying to pick up the scent again but gets nothing. Still, he thinks he might be close, since there's no real reason to come to this area except to take up residence. Close is enough to satisfy him, for now.

Or so he tells himself.

-o0o-

There are fourteen cases with similar odd overdose rulings as cause of death in the past two months. It's a lot.

He returns to that neighborhood during the days when he can, sampling the mediocre local diners and coffee carts while hoping to catch the incubus' scent.

At night he prowls the streets that end in back alleys and the heady pounding thrum of nightclubs. He goes inside the rooms full of neon lights and too-loud music. He drinks alone and watches the gyrating crowds looking only for amber eyes.
It takes a full week before he catches it, the scent. But it hits him with full force even though it's faint, leaving him closing his eyes and sucking in a deep, savoring breath. His instincts warm to the scent, the pull of the chase, the - not a hunt, he realizes belatedly. Lydia had sent him some information on Incubi, but there wasn't exactly a section for how they interacted with werewolves specifically. At least not that he'd found yet.

The files do say that it's unwise to ever approach an unfriendly incubus or succubus in their home territory. They often craft their nests in ways that emphasize their seductive and entrapping powers and leave themselves quick escapes if need be. But he has no other point of contact for the man and he needs to talk to him about the too-high body count, warn him before he has to step in with more force to prevent hunters from catching wind.

The scent leads away from the coffee shop he'd been approaching. He foregoes the coffee in favor of following the scent. The sidewalk is half full of people but he's been searching for the scent for so long, with so much focus, that it stands out like a neon sign. He's so intent on it he almost neglects to stop at the curb and cross the street properly at the crosswalks, despite the heavy traffic. His nose leaves him tempted to walk across the road in the middle as the incubus had done when the traffic must have been lighter earlier in the morning. Instead, he crosses the street properly, and upon arriving on the other side picks up the scent again almost immediately, much to his relief.

It leads him right to one of the modest apartment buildings, to the front door. He continues past the building, scenting carefully to the next place over, but it's clear that the incubus has not gone any further past the front entrance of the previous building. That confirmed, he meanders back to the building in question and waits for someone to open the door to leave the building. It's an easy thing to slip in when the woman fumbles with her dog, trying to make it through with her too-large purse on her arm. He holds the door for her and flashes a charming smile and she never notices that she's just let a stranger in at her neighbors' homes.

Though he prefers the privacy, there's something to be said for someone guarding the door against outsiders. Of course, for an incubus, the lack of interference would likely be a bonus. He follows the scent up the stairs to one of the larger apartments in the building. The door is shut and locked, but the scent clearly leads only here, and when he concentrates he can clearly hear someone moving around inside.

So he knocks. Waits for the door to open. He arches an eyebrow when it opens without enough hesitation for the man to have even checked the peephole. Confident in his abilities or foolish. Perhaps both.

"I really did mean 'Stop, police' you know. Probably best if you stop running and actually talk to me."

"What?" the young man says, eyes wide.

"I'm Police Detective Derek Hale, by the way," Derek says and tries not to be too amused by the incubus' myriad facial expressions.

"You… how… what?" he stammers, hands curling against the hem of his tee.
"Your scent is quite distinctive," Derek says with a shrug. It's also spiking with fear and lust at the moment, though lust might just be his natural state of being. He strides casually past the young man and makes his way into the middle of the large open living room space. Looks around a bit. The furnishings aren't extravagant and the wood floors need to be refinished. He's not sure what he'd expected, exactly, but this isn't it. Still, despite its modest location it's been conjoined with an adjacent apartment making it a huge double space that must run for a hell of a lot of rent. Not that incubi or succubi were likely sorts to pay rent. He glances over his shoulder as he stops by a worn leather armchair.

"I'd say nice place but somehow I doubt it's actually yours."

The young man goes oddly still by the doorway, then his fingers tangle in the edge of his shirt as he swallows and studies Derek. Derek waits for him to make his assessment, to calm down and perhaps simply give him what he wants. Some of what he wants, anyway.

"Oh, I earned it," the guy says, voice going softer, lower. He's starting to relax, but it's not quite the way Derek had been hoping. He moves slowly closer to Derek, bright amber eyes curious and flicking slowly over his form. He really is stunningly attractive, eyes that look like bourbon in the sunlight, a mouth that is mobile and wide and impish. Though he's lean, he's got enough width of jaw and neck to put him firmly in the category of young man instead of boy. His dark hair is a perfect counterpoint to his pale skin, matching the smattering of moles that decorate his skin, highlighting his fascinating facial features. He's tall, just a hair shorter than Derek. Trim but well-muscled, form fitting tightly in his baseball-cut tee and jeans. Definitely not his clubbing wear, but still appealing. Perhaps even more-so than the obvious charms of the night's ensemble.

But more than the appealing nature of his physical features, there's an energy about him, a special thing that ties it all together and turns it from attractive to absolutely devastating.

Devastation licks his lips and says, "Sorry I didn't stop to... chat."

The arousal and excitement fills the air, making the scent even more heady. Dizzingly so. The desire in Derek's belly flares hotter as he realizes that the man is much, much closer now than he'd expected or even realized. Almost within touching-distance before Derek's warning bells had half-heartedly chimed.

Definitely an incubus then.

The incubus reaches slowly for his wrist but Derek pushes through the haze of arousal and jerks back out of range.

"Don't try that again," Derek growls with a hard snap of head that leaves him displaying his fangs and glowing golden eyes.

"Holy fuck! What the hell?" the incubus blurs, fumbling away from him, landing on a loveseat in a heap of limbs with wide eyes. "Fucking fuck. What? What are you?"

Derek blinks. That he hadn't expected. It's not artifice, the question is genuine. The guy pushes a little further away, gathering himself a bit and still staring at him in shock.

Derek tilts his head, then carefully says around his teeth, "I'm a werewolf."

There's a broken laugh. "You're a cop," he says with a jab of finger into the air between them. A long, articulated and yet strong finger. Attached to a broad hand and a trim wrist that flared into a well-developed forea-
"That too," Derek says with a shrug, letting the wolf fade from him even more as he meanders further away from the sex creature and tries not to breathe through his nose. "What's your name?"

The incubus stares at him for a long moment, then twitches his shoulders as he rights himself on the sofa properly. "Stiles."

Derek lifts a skeptical eyebrow at him, then tilts his head over the odd name, wondering if it was an assumed name or an original name from a culture older than the 'new world'. Lydia had said they were long-lived creatures, after all. "Well Stiles, I'm a cop because it's necessary. Even in a city this big we're only a marginally organized group."

He drifts a little to glance over a bookshelf, reducing his threatening stance as he explains. "It helps keep this place running smoothly for everyone if there are a few fae on the government payroll. First line of defense and so forth."

"Fae," Stiles says, testing the word out on his tongue like he's never used it before. "Fae. Like... shit. Like fae. As in. There really are more of... of us out there?" Stiles asks.

Derek pauses. Frowns. "Of course. Didn't your family teach you anything?"

Stiles snorts. "My family wouldn't have known anything to teach me; muggles the lot of them." His face is smug, pleased at his witticism for a moment before his brows narrow again in thought.

Derek tracks the reference, but frowns, revising his thoughts again about the incubus. "So no one..."

Stiles's expression grows more shuttered again. He gnaws on his lip a moment, then says, "I guess it can't hurt to tell you I was basically adopted. My mom died when I was just a kid and my Dad's not my biological father. So I never knew until..." He shrugs, amber eyes skittering away a moment.

Until it was too late. There's a bitter sadness layered under the studiously neutral expression. He's seen it before enough to intuit its source. Unguided Incubi wouldn't have an easy coming of age story. Derek frowns his understanding as he tucks his hands more casually into his pockets.

Stiles's fingers play idly over the neckline of his shirt. But there's a light of curiosity, of hope in his eyes as he gazes at Derek again. "I mean, I read stuff at the library and on the internet and figured out what I was. But I've never met anyone... fae."

Derek lifts a skeptical eyebrow. "How old are you?"

Stiles eyes him for a long moment, like he's hesitant to give Derek any more information. "Twenty one," he admits grudgingly.

Derek rolls his eyes, "No, how old are you really?"

Stiles's piqued curiosity seems to have left the air clear for a moment and Derek relaxes a little without the taut sexual pull flooding the room. It also makes him believe more easily what Stiles says next.

"Twenty one," the kid repeats, eyeing him strangely. He runs his lip over his teeth before he forges on with, "Why, how old are you?"

Derek pauses, then responds with a taunting quirk of eyebrow and mouth to accompany a droll, "Thirty two."
Stiles rolls his eyes, catching the dissembling. "No, how old are you really?" he deadpans in a mocking impression of Derek's earlier words.

Derek snorts at him despite himself, shakes his head as he shrugs and says, "Hundred and seventy two."

Stiles's grin fades as he takes in the words, fingers stilling in the tattoo they'd been tapping out on the couch. "Are you shitting me?" Stiles demands, squinting at him.

Derek sighs, scratching at his beard. "Hundred and seventy two. No wonder you're causing so much trouble. You're really just a kid, aren't you?"

Stiles tilts his head, baring a little more of that taut throat in an instinctually sexy move that has all thoughts of his youth slipping quickly from Derek's mind. "Maybe. But I'm legal," he says, voice dragging over the word sensually. It swirls around Derek like a siren's call. Stiles watches, smug as Derek's eyes flick down to his throat and to the strip of skin bared where his shirt has ridden up. But he breaks the moment by twisting the moment and pushing off the couch in a lithe motion.

"So, detective, any particular reason you're in my space with all the looming and the threatening?" he asks, moving closer again, aura of sexuality curling up around him firmly like a shield.

Derek takes a tight breath as Stiles slides into touching distance and then slowly angles his body away instead of approaching. He then begins a slow slink around the perimeter of Derek's personal space, lets his fingers trail through the air like it's a visible bubble, casting interested eyes over Derek's body.

Derek looks away from the sensual movement and focuses on his mission. "I'm here to point out the obvious. You can't keep taking out humans this quickly, especially not people that are noticeable, even assholes like Cahill. I've come to tell you what the constraints are going to have to be on your hunting or else I'm going to have to take more drastic measures to stop you before you put the rest of us at risk. I'm not the only one who's noticed," he contends firmly, making it sound a bit more dire than it is for shock value.

It doesn't work.

Stiles's posture tightens and his eyes turn suspicious on Derek's face. "And what gives you the authority to tell me to do anything?"

Derek sends him a withering glance and lifts his fingers superciliously to start counting off points. "One, I'm a cop in this city, sworn to protect and serve its denizens. Two, I'm a hell of a lot older and more experienced than you with this stuff. Three, I-"

"A sanctimonious prick. I really don't see what your problem is. It's a big city and a guy's gotta eat. Believe me, I work my ass of to make sure I only pick people who deserve it," Stiles snaps, twisting to face him full on again. Somehow he's ended up even closer than before without Derek noticing.

"Oh, so it's for you to be judge, jury and executioner? Just like that?" Derek snarls in return, falling back on the argument on reflex while his hackles go up, eyes flashing in warning at his proximity.

Stiles glares at him, though there's a light of interest, anger, and wariness behind it. "Every single one of them has attempted to rape me or someone else in front of me before I took them out. There's no reasonable doubt there. And as for the punishment? Well it's not like you guys are doing any better. Our 'justice system' lets rapists off after a couple years - if they bother to convict them
at all. That's not okay with me, or anyone I know."

Derek laughs at that and Stiles lifts his chin defiantly. "What?"

"It's just..." he laughs again, shaking his head. "That's an ironic thing for a rape demon to say," Derek says.

Stiles goes stiff and Derek feels the energy in the air shift sharply as Stiles turns and moves away, arms coming up to curl over his waist. "Just because I'm capable of raping someone," he says, voice icy, "Doesn't mean that I do."

Derek folds his arms over his chest with a raised brow. It seems a little hard-line and idealistic for a fae. Their kind are usually a little more pragmatic. "Are you really going to tell me that you, an incubus, have never used your influence to get someone into bed with you?"

Stiles tips his head back, eyes flashing bright with a spark of anger. Derek tries to pretend he doesn't find it damnably arousing.

"What, all incubi are insatiable horn-dogs that drag anyone they want to bed and fuck them to death? Prejudiced much?" he tosses back.

Derek's eyes narrow but he holds his tongue, giving the accusation a moment's consideration.

Stiles tugs on the hem of his shirt in an agitated move that unintentionally bares a flash of perfect bowed collarbone before gesturing firmly. "And fuck. Maybe others do that, how would I know? But me? No way. And so I ice a few pieces of scum-"

"More than a few," Derek interjects with a sharp eyebrow.

Stiles glares at him and forges onward. "I may not be able to control the fact that I need life energy to survive, but I damn well have never seduced anyone I didn't think deserved to die," he says firmly. "Yeah, I do rapists, not rape."

Derek almost finds himself convinced.

Stiles's face falters then as he turns his head. "Except Heather. And I had no idea what was happening then so I think you'll allow me to not count the murder of one of my closest friends a seduction."

Derek frowns. It's been so long since he'd been a young Were, and even then he'd had a family to guide him through his transition. He can't imagine what it would have been like going through that alone.

Stiles is still moving closer, still tilting his head and curving that erotic mouth as he gazes back at Derek. "So that may not be your brand of justice but it seems pretty fair to me. And seriously, can you honestly tell me that you've never used your talents to your own just cause?"

Derek glowers at him but he can't deny it. Nor can he continue to deny the waves of powerful arousal that the incubus is sending his way, especially not as they resonate with the inherent attraction he already has for the fiery young man.

Stiles smirks triumphantly, sidling closer. "Who was it, detective?" he cajoles, moving right into Derek's personal space. The air is suddenly exploding with desire, hot and tart and swirling around his head. He backs up a pace but Stiles stays with him. "Some pedophile? A drug dealer? And yet here you are arguing with my choice of prey." His voice is getting lower and heavier with desire,
pupils dilating as he closes in on Derek and Derek wants nothing more than to throw himself into Stiles's body and rut until they're both too tired to move.

"Stiles." He backs away instead but it's not going to work for long. Stiles's hands are sliding up under his jacket and over the thin material of his tee shirt, tingling wherever they go, riding along the ridges of his abdominal muscles.

"You trying to boss me around… all that authority and sexy voice you've got going on… it's kind-of hot, Derek. Really, it is. But I think you'd rather back off and forget you ever found out where I live."

The waves of arousal and desire are powerful. Overwhelmingly so. But it's not going to play out the way Stiles expects, Derek realizes, when he understands just how quickly his control is slipping. Almost unbeknown, Derek's hands grabs his wrists and twist, pinning him back against the wall.

No. His wolf does not want to back off. His instinct to claim, to mark is a steady, vibrating thing that's been brought hot and spitting to the surface. Stiles's eyes widen as Derek grinds his crotch down against Stiles's hip and drags in the scent of him against his neck. That spicy, tart scent is a thousand times more intoxicating at the source. Stiles moans, body twisting up against him, riding his thigh back. He practically melts when Derek nips at the soft skin underneath his jaw. But he stiffens away after a moment, cursing under his breath as he tries to shift away from Derek's mouth.

Derek just pushes him tighter against the wall, watching the way his eyes flicker with need when Derek grinds their hips together.

"No, no-no. As much as I want you, you really want to back off," Stiles says, straining his head away as Derek nips none-too-gently at his neck and he lets out a stuttering breath. He makes a pained whimper even as he grinds his erection against Derek's hip. But he stiffens again and curls his hands down to touch his fingers to Derek's, gripping back hard. "You want to let me go, Derek. You really, really do. Because I really don't want to kill you and I'm pretty sure you don't want to be dead."

Irrelevant. Doesn't he know? He pushes his hips more roughly to Stiles's and presses his lips to Stiles's firmly. Stiles makes a sound of protest, lips clamped tight. He doesn't respond to the kiss so Derek tries licking slowly at the tight seam of Stiles's mouth. He licks harder but Stiles's mouth doesn't open even the slightest bit. Derek lifts his head and glares, annoyed at this resistance.

When his mouth is free Stiles's panicked eyes flash an ethereal blue and his voice vibrates through the air when he demands, "Let. Me. Go."

A while later Derek finds himself standing in an empty apartment with a raging hard-on and no clear recollection about how he had ended up alone in the room.
Chapter 3

For a while he doesn't even know where he's going. He's just walking, mind's eye far too focused on the memory of lips being pressed against his too well. Something he wants and abhors at the same time. Derek had escaped but Heather…

Heather. At the beginning there had been nerves, and the sort of tenuous boldness that had led them out to the privacy of the Preserve in the first place. She'd kissed him, ever brave, and it had been great. And then it had changed. She'd been so happy, so deliriously happy as she'd kissed him again and again. And so had he, sprawled in the back of his jeep, his best female friend in his lap, stripping out of her clothes in between passes of her mouth. He'd been so surprised at first, so excited that her request to make out had been upgraded to nakedness and beyond. After all, he'd been prepared; he had condoms and lube in the glovebox and plenty of arousal for her to use however she wanted. But when she had started going too fast, had stopped responding when he'd said her name and instead torn at his clothing until he was exposed, he'd known. He'd known something was wrong.

But when she'd touched him… when she'd wrapped her little teenage hands around him and thrust her tongue into his mouth, it had been too late. Too late, because all he remembers after that is her stifled moans, of drinking a blue light, of feeling the most exquisite pleasure of his life as he'd come over her fingers in an orgasm that seemed to have lasted for an eternity.

And then she'd been dead.

He'd learned a lot of things that night. He'd learned that bare breasts really are as soft and wonderful as they look. He'd learned that CPR is a lot harder to maintain for more than a few minutes than he'd ever believed. He'd learned that there's a sort of silence that only exists around death. And worst of all he'd learned that death lived closer to his lips than he'd ever fathomed was possible.

Just like that night, he walks for hours, full of fear and arousal and just a rattling tension that lives somewhere between his heart and his throat. It isn't until he realizes that even rough-edged tough-guys are gazing at him with soft and simpering smiles, that at least one person has started following him with a glazed expression, that he's letting his emotions get the better of him to a dangerous degree.

He finds an alley, finds a corner to put his back against and breathe in. But the memories keep coming. The hours of walking along the road after he'd come to his conclusion. That he needed to go. That there was no way, no way that he could go back with Heather dead and not end up in jail. He'd thought it through. There would be an investigation, which his father wouldn't be able to head. There'd be the slow and inevitable decline of his father's faith in him, a man of evidence and law. There'd be Scott's loyalty but that very loyalty to Stiles would make Scott a pariah. It would be horrible for everyone. If he got caught, then so be it. But if he stayed…

So he'd walked. Stared at the gash he'd made on his arm as it had healed far more rapidly than should be possible. And he'd discovered more and more that he was changing. That he was different. When he'd easily been able to persuade a guest bedroom out of the woman who'd stopped to give him a ride. When the Food Mart attendant had stared dreamily at him as he'd bought a few supplies for the road. They had been difficult days, haunted by dark memories of Heather's too-wide grin. And he'd begun to weaken, not knowing what he was, what he needed.

The only time he'd felt any relief from it all had been when he'd stopped his first assault. When
he'd begun his career as a vigilante at a motel he'd stopped at. Its proximity to the local bar had been a downside given all the noise, until it had proven his salvation. He'd had the window open despite the cold, because he'd been sweating, feeling sick with hunger even though he'd just eaten. It had been late in the night by the time something changed.

He'd heard them arguing in the back alley, his attention pricked at the vicious insults. He'd gone to the window to see just as it had turned violent. Instead of calling the police, his body had reacted. At first he'd been horrified at the twinge of arousal he'd felt coinciding with the sound of the woman being slapped and the man laughing, but he'd decided that it was just a reaction to the adrenaline and his fever and had rushed out to help. By the time he'd stumbled down there and hopped the fence, the guy had the woman in the back of his car, sobbing with her skirt around her ribs and her panties in shreds in the dirt. Stiles had run on pure instinct, spinning the guy around and slamming him back against the door before crowding into his space with a vengeance. There'd been sharp words exchanged that he doesn't remember now and before he'd known it he'd been kissing the guy, palming the dick the stranger had hanging out in the open. Stiles had drunk and drunk until his hand was wet and his cock was hard and then it had been over. He'd committed his second murder and, even more strangely, had felt well again. Hard as fuck and free of that aching hunger. He had run then, but he'd heard her calling thanks to him as he'd slipped away and it had changed everything.

After that he'd chosen motels near clubs with a purpose.

And now he hunts in them. Now when he walks into a club he spots potential rapists with alacrity, the benefit of a practiced eye. He trails them, watches them, even lets himself be their victim, and it works. It gives him purpose and sustenance and everything had been fine enough.

Until Derek.

It had taken every ounce of his strength to send Derek away, to not open his mouth and take what was being offered because of his sloppy coercion. Derek had been so close to becoming the next Heather and Stiles doesn't want to think about that anymore. He wants to hunt.

It's a few hours till the clubs open but he also needs to scrounge up a club-worthy outfit, so he takes his time and begins to settle. He focuses on the hunt, chats with people in the stores about their favorite places, about the horror stories that he wants to prevent. By the time the night is in full swing, Stiles is one hundred percent predator - not that you'd know by the way he's leaning against the bar, indecently clad in tight jeans and a scrap of cloth that passes for a shirt. He favors those who talk to him with bland smiles, keeps his aura reined tightly in as he watches for other sharks. He encourages no-one and drinks what gets brought to him, no more, no less.

He wants justice, not entrapment.

But justice is slow in the making. When it finally happens, he almost wants to cry with relief. He's never been so happy to have someone drug his drink before. The guy talks at him and he just smiles and nods, waiting as the drug slides into his systems to the point where he deems it appropriate to let his head start drooping. Not being human, the shit doesn't affect him except to relax him a little, make him a little more high on life as the guy pulls him out toward his car. But he feels it enough to know the dose had been strong so he plays it up as though he's barely conscious the way a human would be in his place. He lets the guy stick his fingers in his mouth, lets him drive back to his place and 'help' him inside and into his apartment. Letting his head hang sells the illusion and keeps anyone from getting a good look at him. He's gotten good at this, like he was born for it.

He laughs. So does his rapist. His dinner.
The world has an ethereal edge to it, an amber haze that clings to corners and lights. Falling back onto the bed is easy, and so is squirming a little so that his stomach is bared and his thighs fall open. Letting the guy grope him isn't supposed to be easy but it is, because to his body, sex is sex and sex means food. He hums as the guy pulls open his pants, groans as the sexual energy fills the air as the guy starts stroking his cock as he kneels on the bed beside him. When the hand lands on his cheek and pries his mouth open, only then does he make his move, surging up to plant his mouth against the sagging lips of the would-be rapist. He makes his move, surging up to plant his mouth against the sagging lips of the would-be rapist. He takes it slower this time, closes his eyes and savors the energy slipping into his body and the way it pulses straight to his cock.

He lets his mind slip away into his fantasy space, to thoughts of pleasure. It's not surprising where his thoughts land. He remembers it distinctly, like his body has memorized it. The way Derek had felt. Hard and hot and oh so ready to pin Stiles back against that wall. He groans and rolls his hips against the memory. His body is thrumming with renewed sexual energy, heat and hunger and relief all crashing together as he rubs his palm over the ridge of his cock in his jeans as he loses his tenuous grip on control and draws harder and harder on the guy, getting close to his own edge. He writhes, so close, so-

He's startled out of his reverie when a splash of liquid hits his bare shoulder and the flood of pleasure cuts off abruptly.

"Aww fuck," he grumbles as the guy orgasms to death and crumbles beside the bed, leaving him unsatisfied in more ways than one.

The gloom of the dingy room replaces the glow of ecstasy in his mind and though his dick is hard as hell the idea of physically finishing himself off without the perfect thrall of feeding seems…

empty. Especially here. A hand down his pants pushes his cock into a more comfortable position. He wipes his shoulder on the already dirty bedspread and hops off the bed, ignoring the guy where he'd fallen. It's just a carcass now, a spent meal. The man had stopped being a person when he'd chosen to become a rapist.

For all that he's not satiated, he does feel energized. He pokes around the apartment, finding nothing much beyond typical rapist douchbaggery. Too much porn. Too much self-obsession. As ever he is careful of fingerprints and leaving any trace evidence of himself anywhere. Between too many hotel-cable rerun episodes of Law & Order and his absorption of his father's tidbits of wisdom, he knows the drill. In an odd way he hopes his dad would be proud of how well he's done so far. Not that his dad would ever approve of his vigilante behavior, but… He puts thoughts of what he's lost aside, resolving to call Scott again soon to see how things are going back home.

Accusations of vigilantism aside, nobody can ever say he isn't efficient. Since he's killed the guy he might as well make it easier on the rest of the world by letting the guy continue to bear the burden of Stiles's other needs. Not that he has many. He doesn't keep many things anymore, always ready to go on the move at a moment's notice. But there are disposables he can use that would otherwise go to waste. It's something else he tries to pride himself on, since there's not much in his life worth dwelling on otherwise. He finds a good chunk of cash holed up in the guy's desk. A few prescription pill bottles, ones that don't belong to the dead guy anyway, reside in the bathroom cabinet. He takes a few of them back into the bedroom and smashes a lethal cocktail's worth into powder that he adds to the dusty remnants of other pills past on the bedside table. The more plausible the scene, the less hassle.

The less likely Derek would have to hassle him, which… is complicated, he has to admit. The fact that someone knows him now, knows what he is, where he is… it's way past the point where he should have left town. Regardless, he's not quite ready to cut and run. Stupid, he knows, but he's simultaneously terrified and thrilled to see another fae in existence. It's not much but confirming
that his isn't, in fact, some sort of freaky X-Men-style mutant, and really is some creature that's been part of the earth for a while… it's comforting. Freaky, totally freaky. But comforting nonetheless.

The bachelor pad reeks of nasty asshat so Stiles gives up his search rather quickly after finding the spare key (seriously does everyone keep it in their silverware/junk drawer?). He locks up after himself, adding just one more layer of plausibility to a self-induced overdose on the guy. If he's lucky the investigating officers won't even seriously consider foul play.

As usual he takes a bit of a circuitous route out of the building, avoiding whatever witnesses or security cameras he can find. He goes back towards his apartment in a relatively random manner, doing his best to stay uninteresting and pass by the denizens of the night unheeded.

He's always liked the night, but ever since he'd developed into… himself, he's felt like the night is where he belongs. Where the life of the city starts to vibrate on his frequency, with heavy music and heavy-lidded eyes, less talking and more moving, more expressing. There's nothing quite so wonderful as losing himself in a crowded dance club, riding the same vibrations as everyone around him. His transition has also made him skittish, more likely to run away than ever before. He's always been cautious, but now… he always feels like an outsider, like he's in someone else's territory and can never be sure of his welcome. He isn't sure whether it's his nature to feel this wariness or the fact that he is actually different than the others that makes him feel the stranger. But that's a contemplation for another day, especially one where he isn't about two funny looks away from bolting.

Tonight the vibration isn't quite harmonious, despite the triumphant frequency the commandeered sexual energy in his body wants to vibrate on. There's discord inside him too, like a bitter aftertaste. It's something he's felt before from a too-abrupt feeding, from the dirty alluvium that seems to sometimes come along with the scummiest lives. He hates that he has to live off of that, then just as abruptly he's desperately glad that he isn't callous enough to take sweeter lives. That he has found a way to live with his nature that lets him look himself in the mirror at the end of the day. But none of it relieves the tension in his belly.

He drifts for a long time, zig-zagging his way closer to home, but he continues to feel a sharp itch on the back of his neck, the kind he's learned to trust. When he sees shadowed figures on the sidewalk near his apartment, he gives up on it for the night. Another detour takes him back away from his apartment and this time he stays on the route away, avoiding going back to his apartment altogether.

It's hardly even an effort, taking his new wad of cash for a spin at a nearby hotel and splurging on room service, taking all of it over the top. It relaxes him, the indulgence. So does flirting shamelessly with the bussboy who brings him his dinner and then the concierge whom he sends off to bring him one of the computers from the business center to borrow. Then he finally gets to triple lock the doors and strip out of his dirty clothes so he can slip into a plush robe as he puts on the tv in the background.

The food is good and leaves him feeling full and pleased. Getting on the internet and searching out the police department websites, finding Detective Derek Hale's profile, leaves him feeling… interested. In more ways than one. It doesn't make him feel any less hunted, looking at the department photos and whatever else he can pull up on an image search, but it does make him doubly horny. The sight of him just brings to mind their last encounter, of being touched, of Derek riding his thigh and licking his mouth, wearing Stiles's control to a thread.

Still, every time his hand drifts to his crotch, he starts feeling the urge to check over his shoulder,
feels that wariness edging into his mind that tells him to run. So for the moment, he gives up on that and starts focusing on gathering info. He learns Derek's department phone number, learns that his partner is a vulpine-looking woman whose messy blond hair and sharp eyes make him wonder if she isn't some sort of fae too.

It's exciting, that potential. The good kind of exciting that's slowly edging out the residual wariness in his body. He learns all he can about them, though it's not much, then he moves on to new searches about fae. Knowing that they're real puts a whole new spin on his searches.

The reruns of NCIS immerse him in another world for a while and he sits there watching until he feels good again through-and-through. When the wariness fades altogether he finally feels safe enough to consider jerking off, alone in the pristine room with its industrially clean sheets.

It's a nice hotel. He likes hotel room showers when they've been remodeled recently enough to be all glass and silicone. He likes to imagine sharing the too-big shower stall with someone else, using the sturdy support bars for convenient handholds and grips to get into all sorts of fun positions. He's half hard by the time he even gets into the shower. His erection is almost painful when he finally lowers his fingers to slide down his abdomen to wrap around his cock. Though he's been teased and stalled for hours, he doesn't want to rush it, doesn't want to let his kill's energy interfere with his pleasure.

It's Derek he wants to think about tonight. He brings to mind the werewolf's earthy scent, the leather jacket and the heat of his body. It's just his fingertips that get run down his length, tracing the veins that run along it and down to the edge of his foreskin. After a moment he presses his length against his abdomen and rolls his hips, reimagining Derek's body pressing against him.

With concentration, with slow teasing, his arousal builds into something pure and swelling. He pours some of the hotel bodywash down his torso, uses it to slick up his body and ease the glide of his fingers and starts stroking himself in earnest. The eucalyptus scent of the bodywash is bright and earthy and clean as he imagines Derek's hand doing the touching.

He soaps his other fingers and slides his hand behind his back. They slide easily down the cleft of his backside and he presses at his hole as he jerks off. The angle is too awkward and on such precarious footing to do much more than tease, but it's enough to make the fantasies that much more vivid, the idea of someone slipping into him as he leans against the tiles that are so cool in contrast to the neverending supply of hot water. They could fuck till they were too tired to keep going, or till their skin was too pruney.

Maybe everything he knows about werewolves comes from movies and paranormal romance novels, but if they're anything like the stories… He has to rest his forehead against the wall as he imagines it. Derek would growl at him and maybe bite him and it wouldn't matter because he heals that shit like it's nothing. When he comes it's still dissatisfying in comparison to the high of feeding, but not as badly as it would have been earlier.

He feels cleaner now, for more reasons than just the fact that his body is clean. Good fantasies leave behind good emotions, and the simple, powerful attraction he feels for Derek is a good mental space to be in. One of the few in his life.

And yeah, really he should not reinforce his fantasies of Derek. It had already been difficult enough walking away the first two times. When he sees him again, he might lose himself to the pull of his fantasies, and that scares him. He turns off the shower, running smooth hands over his body to sluice the water off as he wonders how long he could hold out in Derek's presence.

Still, there's also a fair chance he'll never see Derek again anyway. Not going home tonight is a
severance strategy, one clear step towards slipping away again into the shadows. So if he's going not to see him again, then he's definitely going to squeeze the memory for every drop of its non-rapey goodness. He runs a finger down the length of his over-sensitive cock, shivering at the sensation, at the impossibly dichotomous anticipation.

He shakes his head as he steps out of the shower stall. If he was really going to blow town, he'd be thinking about locations, about plans, not sitting here wondering what fucking a werewolf might be like.

Besides the whole death-by-Stiles thing.

That reminder sends him into a sour mood as he towels himself off. His reflection shows him a pale, scrawny creature with circles under his eyes. It leaves him feeling isolated. Lost. He's fairly certain it has something to do with the neurochemicals rushing around in his system after a few extra masturbation sessions without anything real or warm or honest to bond to. By the time he's turned off the lights and wrapped himself up in the crisp sheets of the hotel bed, he's almost shivering with the cold despondency.

The phone receiver is in his hand before he processes his intentions, and at that point the thought of putting it back down, of not calling the one person who still believes in him… he dials the number with familiarity of more than a decade of practice.

He'd made Scott promise never to get rid of their home line without telling him first.

But it's not Scott who picks up the phone. Melissa answers the phone to the McCall house and he doesn't hang up immediately because it's nice to hear the sound of her voice as she repeats her greeting.

When her voice goes soft and worried and she says, "Stiles?" he slams the phone back into the receiver and then unplugs the damn thing in case she tries to call it.

The morning arrives with a sense of bitter emptiness that has him gathering himself and heading out well before checkout time instead of staying and wasting the morning watching reruns of NCIS on the hotel room's cable TV. His clubbing getup gets a few sideways glances as he walks through the bustling city streets back towards his apartment, though they're probably more because of his irrepressible sexual aura than because of being out of place. It is New York, after all. Oddity is somewhat of a norm.

Being temporarily homeless isn't at all a problem for someone with his abilities. But eventually he's going to have to decide whether or not he is ever going to be able to come back to his latest home. At the very least, he hopes he can get in there long enough to grab his computer. All his notes, all his research on what he is… he doesn't want to be exposed if the wrong person gets their hands on his computer. He has the most important stuff in the password-protected cloud at least. But the other stuff…

He approaches his apartment cautiously, waiting for his instincts to warn him off. But nothing happens besides Mrs. Sato walking her dog and stopping to chat with him for a bit. She's nice, and he wishes he could actually talk to her, actually start to make a friend as himself and not just as a function of his aura. Instead he says his goodbyes and walks inside, keeping a careful eye on his way up the stairs. The feeling of coming home is stronger than wariness so he heads for his apartment, stepping carefully still on the faded hardwood floors, keeping his tread quiet until he's gone through the whole place. Only then, finally, does he relax.
Derek has been there, at least on that first day, long enough to leave his card of Stiles's bed. Stiles takes a slow breath and closes his eyes against the onslaught of fantasies the juxtaposition brings. When the edge of arousal softens, he reaches down to lift the card. He recognizes Derek's police-issued phone number on the front, but there's another number, his cell number, presumably, written on the back. It feels both comforting to see it and threatening at the same time. He moves away from the bed and hovers in the living room for a while, turning the paper over in his fingers.

Sleeping on the problem hadn't really resolved anything. He's still straddling the divide of safety and opportunity and it's not easy. It's home, and it's empty, but he doesn't settle in. He drifts and makes plans, munching on a slice of cold pizza. He doesn't want to leave. He should, but he doesn't want to. He likes the energy of the city, the easy access to clubs and the way he can get little hits off the sexual energy of the full dance-floors without killing anyone. And he fucking likes his apartment.

And then there's Derek…

Either way though, he has to be prepared to leave. Maybe not the city, but this apartment's no longer a safe house. He gives up pretense and goes to the drawer where he has his meager things stashed, pulling out the small stack of photos. It kills him to look at the one of his mom and dad looking at each other in the background of a photo of him and Scott making a face for Melissa's camera. They're sitting on a picnic blanket and smiling, so happy, so open.

And then there's Heather, her school photo with its message on the back, exchanged at the end of the year for his own since they went to different schools, had different yearbooks. The edge is ragged from being torn back out of the yearbook page he'd pasted it into. Scott had been careful but he'd had to be quick to sneak it out before the police had confiscated Stiles's things.

Everything about the photos is something past, something he can never have again. Clinging to it, to the same desperate longing his sixteen-year-old self had felt crossing out of the city limit of Beacon Hills, never to return… it's a waste of life. He's been running for five years and doing nothing else, really, and as much as he misses home, it all would have changed by now even without the whole fae thing.

He packs up the things he wants to keep most into a backpack to take away with him. He's not giving up on the apartment entirely yet, but he is going to put the precious things on neutral ground. A train station locker perhaps. Then he's going to find another place to live - a back-up option, a safe house. But he's not going to hide there. He's not going to hide at all this time.

It's a compromise, which, if he's honest with himself, is the only choice he was ever really going to make once he'd met Derek. Running would be the smart thing to do if his safety were his only concern, but living life just to survive isn't the choice he's going to make. Not anymore. The card in his hand is something new. Something different.

Possibly even something good.
I'm posting early because reasons. And it's a bit longer than expected with a little extra Derek P.O.V. added at Ember's suggestion :D Because Derek, amirite?

Derek starts to wonder whether he's made a mistake, giving up too easily, or perhaps pushing too hard with Stiles. Either way, he doesn't get a call, at work or on his cell. It's disappointing. More than he'd expected it would be. He likes getting to help people, fae or otherwise, and this kid needs help. Even if he doesn't seem to realize it. There's little in the way of fae law or order. Things run like a frontier town, where the group tends to self-correct the worst offenses, and everyone, young or old, weak or strong, learns how to protect themselves. It's not his job to interfere with Stiles's life. But he doesn't want to see him hurt, either.

There's also a sense of unfinished business. Stiles had ultimately sent him away, but it had been amidst a confusing mess of desires and instincts. Stiles had been aroused. He'd been able to both scent it in the air and feel it with his body when he'd pinned him up against the wall. It captures too much of his attention, thinking about the lithe, sensuous creature. Enough that it has Erica casting suspicious glances his way. Noticing that gets him shaking it off, pulling his focus back to their work.

And it's important work. Work he cares about.

For instance, right now they've got a suspicious death to investigate. Nothing too complicated, just a bad fall that was suspicious because of its lack of intoxicants, heels, or disability or other physical weakness. But Erica had taken one look at the sister and laid her bet there. It's not all that surprising since she tends to be suspicious of women. Statistics would point at the live-in boyfriend, but Derek is starting to agree, listening to the lack of deception in the boyfriend's voice as he brokenly answers Erica's probing questions.

He catches Erica's eye and shakes his head minutely.

She nods and closes the folder in front of her, putting away the photos of the woman laying at the base of the stairs in a classic broken-neck sprawl.

"Okay," she says gently. "Thank you. I know this is tough but you've been very helpful."

Derek sets a hand on the guy's shoulder and guides him out of the interrogation room.

"I didn't kill her," he repeats, sniffling.

"I know," Derek says as he leads him to the squadroom doors and sends him on his way. They'll interview the sister tomorrow, and Derek's certain that they'll be speaking to the real killer - or at least find out there's more to her story than she claims. After all, the victim might really have just tripped, perhaps during an argument, but an accident nonetheless. But tonight their work is done, and Derek has other questions to put his skills to now.

It's true, being a wolf makes him a better detective. But perhaps more importantly, being a
detective makes it easier for him to be a lone wolf in the big city. It lets him hunt even in the confines of the urban environment, gives him a large surrogate 'pack' that will help him circle his target and have his back. And it gives him purpose, which is more valuable than someone with a shorter lifespan might suspect.

He's been many things in his life. A soldier. A farrier. A frontiersman. Part of him misses the old days, where horses were part of day to day life, where there were still wide open and unexplored spaces, and hiding his nature was simpler. But on the other hand, he has things like skype, which let him talk to his family with ease.

Family like his uncle.

Peter has been many things, but one thing he has always been is a meticulous record-keeper. Throughout the centuries he's been around, he's always kept his knowledge safe, even at great cost. There had been times, wars, where some things were lost, but he was always the best source of information in the family.

Misinformation too, of course. And mischief. Derek spends the walk home mulling over the question of whether or not to bring the issue up with Peter. Whether he'd be able to live down the mockery and inevitable family rumors if he so much as mentioned the word 'incubus' to his uncle.

But Lydia's information is limited, at least what she's allowed to share directly with him is. There are few fae who are universally declared neutral beings, but banshees are one of them. Partly because of their extreme longevity and partly because of their intimate relationship with death. There are ancient tales of banshees who not only heralded death, but stepped in and caused it on a large scale when they were interfered with. And beyond reacting badly to interference, a banshee on anyone's side is a severe imbalance. One thing most everyone can agree on is that such imbalances are bad for everyone, so that means neutral creatures can only offer so much depth of assistance to any individual or faction. If Derek were at all political, his working so closely to Lydia would be a problem. As it is, befriending her is right on the limits of acceptable.

He trusts that she has given him what she can for the time being. He doesn't want to push her, especially if he has another source.

When he gets home his shoes get toed off beneath them to rest in the small but carefully-wrought wooden bench and shoe box. Wood is the rule, not the exception in his apartment, despite the confines of city living. It's all of it unpainted, just natural colors coated with clear polish. The addition of a few hardy interior plants makes it home. Makes the air in the rooms fresher and less clouded by outside scents.

His socks get pulled off immediately too, and the freedom on his feet is a relief, as usual. No matter how much he spends on his shoes, they never feel right.

The lights reveal walls painted soft shades of grey that provide a gentle contrast to the warmer, more organic tones of most everything else. His computer, of course, is a spot of sleek black shine on his desk, and he goes to wake it up before he heads into the kitchen to rummage around in the refrigerator.

Like usual, there's raw meat ready to be grilled. It's a concession to his nature that he has a built-in grill-top range in his kitchen. Over the years he's found that nothing beats a quick sear for a meal that is fast and easy after long days. Throw some slices of squash on there beside it or make a quick salad and he's got a decent nutritional balance.

His computer chimes to tell him that he's signed in and he turns on the grill before heading over to
check skype. He's in luck. Peter is still online even though it's closer to dawn than midnight in the eastern-european location he's currently staying at- though it's not terribly surprising, considering who he's talking about.

He presses the call button, though he takes his tablet with him back to the kitchen so he can continue cooking.

"Ah, Derek, my favorite nephew!" Peter says. His face appears in a glitchy burst and then resolves into a clear image moments later.

"Peter," Derek says with a small smile. "You look well. How's…," he squints at the background, "Hungary?"

"Romania." Peter lifts a shoulder and waves a hand, eyes flicking Derek's way, then back to the screen, clearly multitasking, also as usual. "You look… hungry. Dinner?"

Derek quirks an eyebrow and lifts the lamb shank to show him.

Peter humms his approval. "And you're drinking…?"

Derek glances over his shoulder at the wine bottle half drunk and waiting on the counter. He shrugs. "Cab Sauv."

Peter makes a face. "Cab Franc, please. Didn't you get that bottle I sent you… when was it?"

Derek lifts an eyebrow as he chops the romaine. "Four years ago?"

Peter frowns, then shrugs. "Whatever. I'll send you another."

Derek rolls his eyes, but he smiles. "Thanks. Actually, I had a question for you."

"Oh?" Peter says, eyes still drifting to something else on the screen.

"Fae question. I've… come across someone whose kind I'm not familiar with and I was wondering if you…," he sighs, considering backing out as he tosses the lamb onto the heated grill. But Peter is his best bet, mocking or no.

By the time Derek glances back at the screen, Peter's gaze has returned, sharpened on Derek, his interest clearly piqued at the hesitation.

"Incubi," Derek says, trying to keep his voice neutral. "There's not much good info around, so if there's anything in your records, I'd-"

"Oh, I don't need my records for this one," Peter says with a self-satisfied smirk. Derek places his knife down carefully on the cutting board and grimaces when Peter leans his chin on one of his hands and purrs, "My dear nephew, have you gotten yourself an inamorato?"

"No," Derek says quickly. Too quickly, if Peter's smirk is any indication.

"Did he turn you down, pup?" Peter asks with a too-sincere pout. "Were you too-"

"No. It's not-"

"You were! Of course you were. Oh just look at you blush. Don't worry, I'll give you all the tips you need to land him. Really, it should be possible even for you. Just catch them on a slow night and watch their standards plummet. You're fantastic at growling off suitors, so that should be a
breeze."

Derek groans, planting his face in his hands. "No."

Peter laughs, then sighs. "Teasing aside, yes. I have some things I'll send you. Now I'm serious, do you want some advice on how to land him?" Peter asks as he starts typing on his keyboard, eyes tracking as he presumably assembles the files Derek needs.

"How do you know I haven't?" Derek demands, despite himself.

Peter just smirks. "Because you wouldn't be cooking by yourself right now, talking to me."

Derek snorts as he flips the meat. "Fair point."

"I know. Okay, because you're my favorite nephew, I'm sending you everything I've got. Now remember, this download link will only be up for a few hours, so get it fast. And -"

"Keep only one copy in a safe location that can be quickly destroyed. Yes, I remember," Derek says quietly.

Peter's face is solemn when he looks at him. His cautions are seemingly excessive in theory, but not at all unreasonable in practice. There'd been an aunt and cousin that Derek had never met, but whom had meant everything to Peter.

Peter's face is stiff as he masks his grief and then turns away to type into his keyboard for a minute. After a final click of the mouse, Peter turns back to the camera as the email message pops up on Derek's screen. It's probably a link to a secure torrent for data scrambled across a number of remote servers, since that's how Peter usually does things..

"Got it, thanks." Derek pauses, then looks directly at his uncle and nods. "Thank you," Derek says with genuine gratitude.

A smirk cracks Peter's face again as he buries his other emotions deep again where he usually keeps them, hidden well away from his family.

"Don't overcook your lamb. And I expect a full report on your incubus, you know. That's my fee."

Derek glares at him, but nods eventually, much to his uncle's glee.

"Notes at a minimum. Oh," Peter says, eyes lighting up with a lecherous grin as he says, "what if you video-"

"Good night, Peter," Derek says firmly, and ends the call, cutting off his uncle's laughter.

Derek can't help but snort in a mixture of embarrassment and amusement. Peter is, if nothing else, entertaining. He finishes cooking and sits down with his dinner at the island counter, pulling open the folder once it downloads.

The first file is, horrifyingly, his uncle's personal journal entries about his time spent with a particular succubus. It also seems to be the richest source of information. He skims through it once quickly. It's only a subset of his logs, which Peter keeps meticulously, but there are days and days of them, one long dance of seduction followed by a haze of unabashed fucking that lasts for days again. He goes carefully through the other files, which are excerpts from various bestiaries and logs, but they're impersonal and vague for the most part. Peter's account is the only one that addresses the intersection of werewolf and succubus, which is what he needs the most for himself.
There are things that only make sense to a werewolf, probably. Commentary about her scent, about how her aura interacts with his instincts. Things Derek needs. There's just one problem. It's Peter writing them. And as completely shameless as Peter is, Derek is not exactly interested in reading about his own uncle's sex life.

He puts it off for a few hours, starting his own file of note about Stiles and his responses to him. But the bottom line is that he needs this information. There's only one way he can think of to get around it, and that's to pretend that it isn't his uncle writing the entries. Instead he imagines another protagonist, as though it were an erotic novel of some sort. He settles in to his armchair with a glass of wine like he's just reading a book. And it actually works well enough, save the occasional jarring side note about family between entries. The inevitable comparisons he makes between the story and how it might play out between himself and Stiles keeps him reading, gets him through the entirety of the entries, but has the unfortunate side effect of leaving him painfully aroused. Normally this would not be a problem, but when he reaches down to adjust himself, he finds that he is completely unwilling to jerk off to the personal journal of his uncle, despite the subject matter.

He paces his apartment, tries to cool down by doing some work, doing some chores, but his body is far too invested in the fantasy he'd built. If he's not going to jerk off here, he needs to find somewhere or someone that can fix that problem. That decided it takes mere moments to get his shoes on and head out into the night.

At first he has the full intention of going to one of the night clubs where he knows he'll be able to find at least someone who's ready for a quick release like he is. But instead, walking along the streets, he finds himself heading in a slightly different direction than intended. He rolls his eyes and glares at himself in the dim reflection of a store window he passes by. His wolf, apparently, has its sights set on a particular target. The fact that he's spent days hunting for Stiles, combined with Peter's descriptions of the strong influence the succubus had seemed to have on his wolf, makes the choice less than surprising, though he's not sure he'll have any better luck tonight than any of the other days he's gone by.

With a resigned sigh he picks up the pace and decides that it's worth checking, at least. He makes his way to Stiles's apartment through back alleys and shadows. When he gets there, he starts to circle the building, searching for his scent, but almost immediately he catches it, fresh, very fresh. Stiles is here. It's a rush, finally getting that scent again. He doesn't think he'll ever forget it, bright and tart and fascinating. But now, now it's absolutely drenched in sex, in arousal. He pities other beings whose noses can't capture the awareness of the scent floating down through the air to him. It's wonderful, an aromatherapy of its own sort.

Derek lingers in the shadows, watching for anyone's eyes on him. But it's very late and this is a relatively quiet neighborhood. As quietly as he can manage, he hops up to the fire-escape balcony. The main door is locked and he has no real justification for forcing his way in there, disturbing the tenants. Nor can he expect anyone to pop out and leave him an in. It's only reasonable, he rationalizes, to use the fire escape as he climbs the steps up to Stiles's floor and finds his apartment. There are a few lights on and one of the windows is cracked open, explaining why his intoxicating scent had drifted down as far as the alley so clearly.

He's almost to Stiles's window when he realizes, instinct aside, how terrible an idea this is for actually developing any sort of relationship with the young incubus. Going to him in the night, horny and uninvited in the slightest is about as stupid as it gets. Being short on control and welcome is not how he wants to approach this. He really should just go, now that he's confirmed that Stiles hasn't left the apartment permanently. But his wolf is thoroughly unconvinced that leaving is even remotely close to being a good idea.
Worse still, he catches the edge of a moan through the glass. A moan that hits him at the same time as a visceral and yet ephemeral wave of arousal, one he's beginning to understand is unique to the pleasure of an incubus. He leans back against the wall, groans against fingers he presses to his lips as another wave hits.

He wonders if Stiles is alone, if he's with someone, with prey. He hopes there's no one. He shouldn't intrude but if there's... well he's not sure what he'd do if there were someone there. Stiles had claimed a brand of justice that Derek, if he were to be honest, didn't disapprove of, and though the cop side of him wants to intervene if someone's life is at stake...

Either way, he can find out. He focuses on listening in, extending his sense of hearing as far as it will go, and after a few moments, he's sure that Stiles is alone. He can hear the soft panting breaths and heartbeat from one body only. It's good, except now he can hear the slick sound of the quick motion of a hand over lubricated skin. The soft murmur of Stiles's voice as he breathes out broken bits of words and pleas to himself or to his imagined partner.

That, combined with the rich scent of him so close to the cracked-open window... there's nothing he can do but tug down the zipper of his jeans and finally, finally free his aching erection. If he looked at the situation from an outsider's point of view he might find the idea of jerking off outside an acquaintance's window pretty fucking skeevy, but as a werewolf, he knows that his life is always going to be partly about balancing being practical about the demands of his instincts and human morality.

And right now, his instincts are telling him to climb through that window and do more than just masturbate, so he settles for leaning back into the wall and curling his fingers around his cock. It's throbbing under his touch, hot in the cool night air. He doesn't need lubricant to glide the edge of his foreskin back and forth over the head of his cock, angling his knuckle so that it bumps along the ridge each stroke.

He listens to Stiles's sounds, to the rhythms of his heart and breath and hands. Derek's fingers slide into beat with the rhythms within moments, his breath following suit. The waves of sexual energy coming off of the incubus, combined with the hours of simmering desire mean it doesn't take long for him to get close, to get breathless and hear his blood pounding through his veins.

But he waits, he waits until Stiles's murmurs get sharper, till the rhythms start to shatter, before twisting his fingers in a rapid drag that sends him over the edge at the sound of Stiles's muffled "Fuck!" and he stripes the railing with trails of glistening come, biting his lips against a groan.

He leans against the wall, panting for a few while he catches his breath, then tucks himself away again. Shortly thereafter he sees the lights go out in the apartment and Stiles, presumably tucks in for the night, given the soft sounds of rustling fabric that follow.

Derek closes his eyes, shaking his head at himself before he starts to make his way carefully back down the way he'd come, back into the night. It's a dangerous game he's playing, but then again he'd known that from the moment he'd laid eyes on the younger fae.

-o0o-

For a few days, Stiles feels rather full up on energy. Perhaps it's that he isn't having to spend so much of it on running away, or being hyper-vigilant. Regardless, it means he spends a few extra
days just being a little lazy, holed up in his apartment and making sure his files are backed up and his emotions are heading back to normal.

And if he stares at the card of a certain detective sometimes, and maybe jerks off a little more than usual, well, that's neither here nor there.

The wariness doesn't return and it gives him time to settle in again. Still, eventually he does need to feed again, and at the very least, he can enjoy some dancing and watch over a few club-goers - even if it's just to glare someone off or be a temporary wingman. Make the world a little bit better. He can hold off another day or two before his hunger gets painful, though he'd much rather not push it, especially if some douche-canoe needs taking out.

The first club is a bust, though he does take a drink from a handsome woman and makes some flirtatious small talk before relieving her of her half-smoked pack of cigarettes and leaving with a wink. There are plenty of clubs on the circuit, so he doesn't have far to walk to find a place with a rougher crowd. Though it's rather chilly outside, the streets around here are pleasantly warm with the bustle of eager club-goers and people generally having a good time. He enjoys the revelry, the drunken singing, the good-natured whistles and salutations that bounce between potentially interested parties. It's humanity at its simplest, coming together, pushing back the cold with the warmth of their souls.

But he's not one of them. Not really. He's on the hunt tonight.

So instead of the warm center of the flow he looks at the dregs, the outskirts, the darker edges of the populace. Though he lets himself blend in with the good, his attention is on the bad. And there's always bad, wherever humans are. Always leeches and cheats that take more than their fair share. He doesn't even make it into the next club before his flags go up. There's a guy with a charming smile, fit and dressed in simple clothes with bold hints of color that complement his dark complexion. The young woman he has his arm around is less with the charming smile and more with the stumbling.

"Hey baby, a walk will do you good," he says softly and she nods absently. But the way he says it is a little too loud, a little too obvious.

Stiles leans against the wall as they near, hunching his face down into his hood as he pretends to be busy getting a cigarette out of his pocket. As he slips the cigarette between his lips he watches the woman's face as she passes by. When she glances at her companion, her face dips into a momentary frown in confusion and that's what does it. Stiles has a possible target for the night.

Logistically-speaking it's easier when there isn't a literal damsel in distress for him to work around. It's simpler when he's being assaulted directly - no witnesses. But there's no way he's going to pass by an opportunity to help just for his own convenience.

"You're gonna love the party," the guy murmurs, sticking his tongue in her ear and making her squirm and giggle nervously as she shoves at him, only half-playing.

It distracts her enough that she gets turned around with him, heading up the road instead of back towards the club. Stiles follows quietly, hanging back a ways. He leaves a stolen cigarette dangling between his lips, ready to be lit as a blending maneuver if someone were to pay him too much attention.

The guy is too busy keeping the girl distracted to really notice that Stiles is tailing them. He keeps telling her it's only a little further, that it'll be great. It takes a while but eventually they make it to a dingy and relatively quiet apartment building. There may have been locks on the outer door at some point, but they've clearly long since been dismantled.
Stiles hangs back a little more then, waits for the guy to glance around suspiciously. Then he slips up through the front door and watches the old elevator lights till it stops on the fourth floor. The stairs get him up there quickly enough to see the direction they take and after that it's only a matter of listening to pick out the right apartment. The walls are thin enough he can hear telemundo through one door, someone playing guitar through another. The last has music playing, and it's not loud enough for a party, but it is just the sort he's expecting.

"I thought you said there was a party," she complains, voice muffled by her intoxication and the door. Stiles tests the knob carefully. It's locked, but there's enough give that it suggests the deadbolt hasn't been thrown. No big deal. He slips free the pins that clip to his belt.

"Yeah, there's a partay in my pants," the guy says carelessly crass with a laugh that's echoed raucously by someone else in the apartment. "Tim why don't you get Maria another drink?" the second voice says. "She spilled the one I bought her halfway through."

"No, thanks I've already had too much," Maria says - if that's even her name, which somehow he doubts. "In fact, I think I'm gonna go."

There's the sharp sound of skin on skin that's definitely not the good kind and she yelps before there's a thump of a body hitting the ground or some furniture.

"Sit down, bitch, and drink the fucking drink. You seem like a crier. I don't like criers, so it'll be easier on you if you're just out."

There's an air of bored menace in the guy's voice that turns Stiles's stomach. He's clearly done it before.

"Tim. Shit, just get the water bottle. Don't waste any booze."

"Hey fuck you Darrell, come on, you know I like them when they struggle a little," Tim says. "Can't I go first this time?"

He tunes them out and focuses on picking the lock on the door. It's true, he could break it down easily, and would if push came to shove. But the less of a footprint the better for everyone, Maria included. He hears Maria start to cry out and then have her screams muffled by something. There's liquid splashing and before too long she goes quiet to the dirty jeers of the would-be rapists. The music playing in the apartment gets louder, drowning out her remaining struggles. There's some scuffling and then Stiles gets the lock, turning the doorknob carefully.

He slips inside silently. There's something off about the place, he knows it the second he walks in. Not that he has time to worry about that. He has a woman who needs help first and some assholes to delete from the genepool. His tread is light as he crosses the living-room to the open door of a lit bedroom, the too-loud dubstep covering his movements as much as it does theirs.

For a moment, his presence doesn't really register. The guys are too busy carrying Maria into a bedroom to notice they're not alone with their crime anymore. The room smells of unwashed laundry and stale jizz. He moves quietly up behind them as Maria gets slung over the mattress bounces on the bed, unconscious.

Stiles can barely contain the feral grin that spreads over his lips as he curls his fingers into a perfect fist while the men stare at their victim and laugh. It's time he turned the tables. Before they can make their move, Stiles swings into action. Darrell gets a supernaturally hard punch to the head that sends him sprawling and Tim gets Stiles's hand on his neck, giving him a solid push of compulsion through the skin on skin contact.
"Come and kiss me, baby. Don't you think it's about time you had a willing companion?" Stiles taunts over the music as Tim stares at him numbly, a veil of confusion spreading across his Cro-Magnon-esque features.

"Try me. I am just killer in the sack," he says, half demand half joke that has the man wilting towards him. He fists his hands in the guy's shoulder-length dark hair to hold him steady. Tim whimpers when Stiles's eyes flash blue, making a pathetic, terrified sound as Stiles leans in and plants his mouth over Tim's stunned gawk.

It's a little hard to get started at first, just for a moment. Tim isn't aroused, isn't hard yet when Stiles touches him, and that means he has to work a little to fire up his prey's engines. But it's a necessary trouble. Oh, he could have waited until they were ripe, swollen with arousal as they molested their target. But that would negate the whole point of his interference. So he works for it, hand groping down over the rapist's groin, rubbing at his swelling member through his clothing, just enough to catch the wave.

Soon the guy is moaning into his mouth, sagging against him. Stiles drinks hard and fast but when Darrell groans and staggers to his feet, abruptly he realizes that he's made a mistake. He's never had to deal with two targets at once, and he's overlooked the fact that once he gets going, he can't stop. Like he's physically incapable of letting go until there's nothing left to drink. The best he's ever managed is to speed or slow the process slightly, and it leaves him vulnerable.

He can hear swearing in the background, but he's focused on the cold rush flooding his head. Tim's arousal tastes oily and dark and fuels the anger that boils in Stiles's belly. It's not as vile as the pedophile he'd once killed (he'd felt sick for days after that. Proud, but sick) but it's enough to make him wish he had some sort of chaser. He doesn't even feel his usual simple desire to grind up against his prey he's so disgusting. Instead his mind fills with darker thoughts, degradations that turn his stomach even as they stimulate his arousal, images of the very things he fights against. But he doesn't have time to think about the moral quandaries of fantasizing about raping rapists.

His gut tingles in warning as there's a flash in his peripheral vision. The sense of wrongness in the apartment intensifies as he sees the blade that's swinging towards him. He's been stabbed before, but the sensation of the knife plunging into his back is overwhelmingly painful this time, enough shatter his thrill and sending him stumbling. He drops Tim like the sack of rotten potatoes that he is and spins, backhands Darrell hard, sending him flying into the closet in time with a crescendo in the dance music vibrating through the apartment.

He laughs bitterly at the sudden hard-hitting drop to the soundtrack to his assault leaking through the bedroom doorway. Darrell tries to struggle up but with Tim's life energy filling Stiles it's easy to hold the guy down with no more than a toe's strength. He pauses to pull the wicked blade out of his back. It hurts like fuck and is slower to heal than most injuries he's sustained, even with Tim's life speeding it along. He studies the blade a moment, then looks back down at his quarry, whose eyes are wide and unfocused. Concussed, likely, not that it matters for much longer.

Stiles straddles the guy and slides down to press his head back and stare coldly into the desperate fear of an approaching end of his evil. He has no pity, not even for the way each one of them seems to revert to a mewling child.

"What are you?" the man rasps deliriously. "Why didn't that kill you?"

"Doesn't really matter, does it? All that matters is that now I'm the predator. You're my prey," he says softly.

He presses cold, unaroused lips to ones that are hot and wet with panic and booze and starts pulling
out his life too. It's always harder, doing it when he's not the one being assaulted. He doesn't have the charge of being manhandled or teased that usually accompanies being attacked. Being fondled or shoved around… even if it's being done for nefarious ends, such treatment gets him going like it's just a prelude to some rough sex he's never actually had.

And oh, but he has fantasized about it. About someone being able to take him and not only survive but just blow his fucking mind. To not be some pliant prey in his hands but rather someone to fight back against, to chase and push right up to the edge and then explode over it together in a desperate race. He's spent plenty of his life now refining his fantasies, even the rough ones that come clearly in his darker moments.

He lets his eyes drift closed as the sex-tinged life energy floods him and he indulges in the fantasy a moment. And if it has fangs and flashing golden eyes this time, well…

When the bitter taste of Darrell's unwilling sacrifice slips to an end, he pushes back, lifting to his feet so easily it's almost as though he's been lifted by the wings he doesn't anatomically have, whatever the legends depict. Two lives, back to back, are enough to have him almost giddy, especially as the adrenaline begins to fade.

The place still feels off. Maria is breathing but otherwise dead to the world, so he takes the moment to take his fee from the apartment. The strange knife gets tucked into his belt but when he actually looks at the closet he starts to understand why he's getting a weird vibe.

The entire back wall is covered with weapons. Most of them have runes carved into their blades. Swords, daggers, even a pair of axes. The walls themselves have runes drawn on them and when he reaches tentatively towards one his fingers tingle uncomfortably, so he draws back and continues exploring. On the shelf above in an intricately worked wooden box he finds some herbs and strange old books. When he opens one of the leather-bound books it looks instantly familiar. Not in that he's seen it before, but that he's seen its like.

"Bestiary," he mutters. And it's legit. As he comes down off his high the feeling that he's in over his head here starts to intensify, as does the ache in his back that should have healed by now. Getting the fuck out of there starts to sound like a really good plan so the remaining books get bundled into a plain duffel he finds on the closet floor, as do one or two of the more portable weapons like the knife stashed in his belt.

He doesn't wait any longer to get on to posing the bodies so they don't make their messes in the wrong place. They get dumped down in front of the coffee table where the dosed water-bottle sits. There are plenty of illicit pills in the apartment to scatter on the table.

Tim is still breathing faintly. It surprises him, though he knows he'd been interrupted. It wasn't something that'd happened before. He'd kind-of thought that once it had started the process just kept going, whether or not he was able to drink in the excess. He wonders whether it was the pain itself or the rune-marked blade that had interrupted the flow.

Doesn't matter right now, he decides, tabling the question for another time. He stares down at the limp body of Tim for a long moment. It's different now. Now he has to kill the guy even though the immediate threat is gone and he's full to bursting with sexual energy. Now it's gone from predator-prey to straight up murder.

He waits for nausea or panic to kick in at the thought of murder, but it doesn't come. There is no pity, no value left on this rapist's life. He's nothing but a sack of meat that happens to still be breathing.
"Huh," he murmurs to himself, tipping his head. It's a little surprising, but not a lot. He supposes he's gotten too familiar with death for it to be horrifying for him now.

It's a simple thing then to tip the drugged water down the guy's throat until it's gone, using the last of his living reflexes to his advantage. It's nothing to seal his mouth over cool lips and pull in that last gulp, a bubble-burst of life that ends in a death-rattle and a shot of arousal to his flagging erection. Dark fantasies twist through his mind again but he pushes them aside as he rises again. He's got a scene to stage and an exit to make now.

He gets out fast after that, slipping up to the roof instead of going back out the front. He doesn't even pause to take the fire-escape down, instead taking a big jump to another roof that he'd never manage if he were human. Rooftops are his route for a while till he's hemmed in too tightly by taller walls. Then it's down the fire escape and through some back alleys till he finds a pay phone that isn't near a convenience store and its plethora of surveillance cameras.

The first call is to 911 where he anonymously and breathlessly calls in the sound of a woman screaming and so-forth at the address he'd vacated. He hangs up quickly, knowing it'll be enough to send a unit by to find the open door before anyone else can come by and take advantage of Maria's vulnerable state.

Maybe because he's so fucking high on energy right now he barely even hesitates before dialing the second number.

"Hale," the voice answers, low and rough and tired.

He has to bite his lip to keep from groaning as he leans into the phone booth, instinctually stretching towards the sound. "Fuck, your voice is sexy. So listen, hypothetically," he says in opening and Derek sighs so hard he can't help but laugh, too energized to hold back.

"I'm not going to like this, am I?" Derek asks, sounding pained.

"Doubtful. So yeah, hypothetically if you were, uh, doin' your thing over at some guy's place. And you happened to look in his closet and inside were a bunch of weapons with symbols and like a bestiary…"

"And by 'some guy' I'm assuming you mean someone… not like us?"

"Yeah. Your everyday average human rapist. Except for the weird runes and shit." His back aches, now that he thinks about it, where the guy had stabbed him. He twists, trying to look over his shoulder to see where the gash in his sweatshirt is. "And the stabbing."

Derek makes a sound, low and annoyed. "Hunter."

"Hunter," Stiles repeats, giving up on trying to see his back without a mirror.

Derek grunts in confirmation. "Are you alright?"

"Yeah, yeah I think so. Still hurts but… yeah."

Stiles taps a rhythm out against the edge of the bent metal frame that half-shields him from the wind. "So are we talking… Like, what, like… Buffy and her multi-species friends? Or like the indiscriminate apocalypse-happy Winchesters who'll gank anything that moves?"

"Both. Neither. Either way it's usually a bad idea to mess with them. They're big on the vengeance."
Stiles laughs. It comes out a little hysterical. "Oops."

Derek sighs but he doesn't chastise. There's a cautious intensity in his voice when he says, "Stiles, I know we didn't get off to the best start, but I do want to help you."

"Protect and serve, huh?" Stiles says, staring down a random passerby whose eyes linger a hair too long on Stiles's looted bag wedged between his calves.

"Yeah," Derek says. "Exactly. And there's a lot I can teach you," he says, voice dropping slightly in its earnestness. "A lot I can help you with."

"No… don't do the sexy voice. I can't handle the sexy voice right now," Stiles whines, trying not to grope himself in the phone booth.

"Why not?" Derek says, still with the fucking sexy voice. "You seemed to like it before."

"Yeah. Too much," Stiles points out, aroused and frustrated. "Don't you get it? You're fucking lucky you got out alive last time."

The automated voice warns him he's out of time and he's out of change.

"Stiles, it doesn't have to be that way for you. I'm serious. I can help you," Derek says, voice insistent and without pretense.

"How?" Stiles demands, panic bubbling up in his chest.

"Teach you control. How not to kill. Death isn't all--"

The line goes dead along with the apologetic termination message. But he gets the drift. Control is possible. He presses his face to the cold metal of the phone alcove and struggles to take even breaths. But he's not panicking. No, he's furious. Furious as he slams the receiver back down on the hook. Furious because everything is slipping sideways again. Furious because of Heather, because before he could justify what he'd done to the others. It wasn't like humans didn't kill for food or even just whims, so he could accept his choice of prey when it was a matter of survival. But now?

He storms away from the payphone and into an alley, dark and rank with garbage. The dark edge of twisted arousal is still writhing in the back of his mind. Awful, thrilling things that speak of his pleasure and others' suffering. Oh, maybe most of them had come from the sick minds of his evening's prey, but there are monstrous desires that are all his own. Had he ever really tried to stop himself? Or had he fooled himself into believing himself just in order to satisfy his own sick cravings for the ecstasy of death? The hero-vigilante identity he has been clinging so tightly to crumbles in his fingers.

He doesn't even try to stop himself from throwing up, from falling to his knees in the perpetually-damp broken paving. He punches the steel dumpster and doesn't care that he dents it, wishing he'd broken his fist instead for once.

But he hasn't. His laugh is bitter as he stares at the pristine knuckles. He's not even sure what it would take for him to die.
Even a few days of excessive wallowing later, Stiles groans when he wakes up. His back still hurts like a fucker when he drags himself out of bed sometime close to noon, and it's not just from sleeping in a strange bed. The shower is quick and he takes a little time to inspect the site of the wound he'd been given during the fight a few days ago. It's still there, a purple line in his skin, but he thinks it's faded a little more from when he'd inspected it last night.

Mostly he's going to be pissed if it fucks up his tattoos. The set of wings had been inked as an angst-ridden affirmation of what he was, when he'd decided he understood it. They're a reminder that he's not human. That humanity's rules aren't ever going to apply to him the way they do humans. They are also a memorial to Heather, to his worst mistake. He'd had the artist fashion them after some of the old depictions of incubi and succubae, more bat's wings than feathers.

Yeah, they also look fucking badass, but that's not the point. He wouldn't mind the scar if it were. He tries to focus on it, to heal it with as much intent as he can manage, but it doesn't seem to want to budge. Not yet anyway. He takes solace in the probability that it seems to have been making at least a little progress, so it should only be a matter of time.

Putting his shirt back on has him hissing in discomfort. The wound, annoying as it is, has actually been psychologically useful. Bitching and wallowing over the aching back has simultaneously given him space to cool down and an excuse to not think about the upsetting news Derek had given him until it was something less damaging. It's been draining, but he's spent five years healing from that wound and he knows some of the paths back from despair. And for him? Lying in bed watching reruns is a good start.

Still, laying around only gets him so far. It's time to get back to life, to remembering that there are things worth working for. Unfortunately it aches like nothing has since he'd broken his arm as a kid. It makes him wish an analgesic would work on him. If there are any such fae concoctions, he doesn't know them. He wonders for a moment if Derek knows any, but dismisses the thought. He doesn't need any more reasons to start considering calling Derek again. The sex voice was bad enough. Calling Derek had been a risk. Fae or no, the guy was a cop, and sometimes cops did funny things like arrest the guys who confessed to murder if it turned out they knew where they lived.

Stiles is tired and more than ready for another few hours of sleep, but this time in his own bed. It's been days since he dared go back and he's sick of it. There are no signs of any patrol cars lurking on his streets as he takes a wary, circuitous route along his way home. Derek had either given up or never hunted for him about this. The latter he thinks. There hadn't been anger in his voice when Stiles had told him about his latest. Just… resignation. And interest. Like he genuinely wanted to help him.

Stiles himself, when he finally really thinks about it, has been surprisingly okay with his latest kills, and though Derek's revelation had shaken him, Stiles is slowly beginning to forgive himself for not trying to learn control sooner. The first time would have been impossible, and the times
after that have been dangerous situations and times where death of a predator means safety for someone else. And now that he knows, he can try. Like… like his dad had always said, being a good person isn't about dwelling on the mistakes, it's about always trying to learn from them.

Still, it's hard keeping up with the changes happening in his life. Though he's dealing well enough, the feelings of lostness and loneliness grow as he drifts alone towards home.

Maybe he should call Derek.

He ducks into his favorite café instead of going straight home and orders something to drink. While he waits, he glances around the dining area, doing a little people-watching to satisfy instinct and curiosity both. A cute guy with dark hair and eyes and a rich tan glances at him and then smiles a little flirtatiously. Stiles smiles back but doesn't linger. He's not really here to flirt or, if he's honest with himself, even to drink coffee. This place is his regular for more than one reason; not only is their fare good, they have payphones in the back.

He's broken some cash for change in quarters when he bought his coffee and when his order is up, he takes it and makes his way into the shadows of the coffee shop where the legacy phone booths sit. They're almost more of a decorative feature than there for function, but they work. It's a hell of a lot better than standing on a street corner out in the open. Especially when he's feeling vulnerable, which he is. This time, if Melissa answers, he vows to at least say hi before hanging up.

It's relatively quiet in the coffee shop right now, so he pulls over one of the chairs to perch on and give him a good view of the route to the door. Then he slots some coins into the machine and dials a number he knows well.

"Scott Mc-" there's a thud and a laugh and then the clatter of keys and a muffled "ow."

"Scott, hey buddy. You all right there? How's it going?" Stiles asks, chuckling and feeding a couple more quarters into the machine now that he's made contact.

"Stiles! Hey. Hi! Shit, it's good to hear your voice, man," he says, sighing happily into the line. "I'm glad you caught me, I was just about to head back to the clinic."

"Thought you had Mondays off?"

"Wednesdays now. Just the usual change of hours that go with my classes at the BHCC this term. But hey, seriously, how are you?"

"Been better, been worse," he says, flicking his thumb at the edge of his coffee cup. "Still settling in here."

"Where's 'here'?" Scott asks, not bothering to be at all subtle.

"New York." He doesn't bother to try and hide it. Scott would just look up the area code from the caller ID. Besides, it's too big a place for anyone to track him down, just like most of the other cities he's spent the last five years picking his way through. Living off of other people's excess resources makes it remarkably difficult to track where he's been.

"Really? Wow. Do you like it?" Scott asks, like he genuinely cares that Stiles does. Like it's just some new place his friend has moved. And after years of Stiles drifting around the country, maybe that's all it is to him now.

"It's alright. Like I said, still settling in. Only been here a few weeks. Some pretty great club scenes around here, and there's lots of art, which is cool. Now, how are things on the home-front? Are
things still all 'it's complicated' with you and Isaac and Allie?"

Scott launches into a you have no idea, man. Stiles is more than content to just listen as Scott tells him way too much information about the peculiarities of their triad. It's familiar, listening to Scott talk about burgeoning relationships and all the conflicting feelings, just like when they'd been teenagers. There's that utter trust, that certainty that he won't be judged for his honest feelings.

But eventually Scott shifts the subject and asks, "What about you? You met anyone?"

Stiles finds himself hesitating, though he'd normally brush the question off with something about how busy he is traveling and so forth.

"Dude," Scott says, voice going smug and excited. "You totally met someone. What's she or he like?"

Stiles laughs. And what could it hurt, talking to his best friend about it. "Yeah, maybe. There's this guy. He's, uh… we've got some stuff in common. He's a cop."

Scott laughs. "Dude he totally arrested you, didn't he?"

"No," Stiles says, grinning despite his indignation. "Shut up. He just wanted to question me as a potential witness."

Scott just laughs harder. "Dude. You don't even need to bring the handcuffs."

"Oh my god," Stiles groans as he laughs, leaning against the wall of the half-booth. But he can't deny it, even if there hadn't been one notable incident in which he'd been forced to call Scott for help with the use of his toes since his hands had been… otherwise occupied. As in chained to his bedframe and accidentally out of reach of a certain pair of keys he'd left on his desk in his hurry to get naked and take advantage of an empty house and his indefatigable teenage arousal along with his latest discovery of one of his many kinks.

Scott had, at the time, adhered to the bro code to a tee, coming over immediately and without judgment. It meant he'd never told a soul and had never used it against him. Of course, that didn't mean Scott didn't tease him about it mercilessly when it was just the two of them.

When their mutual laughter fades he sighs and says, "Anyway it's new. I don't know if it's, you know, gonna go anywhere."

"I hear you. Keep me posted. And speaking of dating, my mom has a boyfriend now. And it's totally awesome but weird because he was one of my professors for my English lit core class. Like, he writes her poetry and stuff."

He feeds quarters into the machine as he listens to Scott explain how his motorcycle getting vandalized had actually done his mom good when his professor had offered him a ride home after lecture, and then been invited in for dinner, and so on and so forth.

Stiles doesn't even have to prod to get the information he wants about the others back home. Melissa's doing great, doing well at her job. Deaton's taken on a new assistant to do the work Scott used to do, now that he's officially stepped up to veterinary apprentice. Allison's taking on work with her dad, traveling sometimes for arms sales. Isaac's sold everything of his father's and is starting fresh, looking at a library sciences degree, perhaps. The Sheriff, his Dad's a-okay, on the surface. Closed a big kidnapping case and got a commendation. But that isn't the end of it.

"He misses you, Stiles, it's eating him up. He seems fine or whatever on the outside, on the job.
But I go to your house sometimes just to check on him, you know? And he's just… sitting there. Staring at old photo albums. You should talk to him again."

"It can't… he's clinging to…" Stiles cuts himself off and sighs. "He doesn't hear me. You know when I talk to him it just turns into the same fight every time."

"It doesn't have to," Scott blurts, ever the optimist. "You guys can find a way, I'll help."

And he would, too. He'd do his level best and then some. But the thought of going back there, of putting people he grew up with in his hunting ground… he can't do that. And that's always what his dad asks him to do. To come home and sort everything out.

"I'm not the same person anymore, Scott. Not by a million miles. He can't understand, the things I've done…," he squeezes his eyes shut. Being a killer is always easier in the heat of the moment. When he's hungry or high or horny the anger burns hotter at their crimes, the strength of his convictions unwavering. But times like this, talking to his pure-hearted idealist of a childhood friend, it's a lot harder to reconcile his boundary-testing rationalizing youth with the ruthless pragmatist he's become.

Being okay with himself is one thing. His dad's acceptance is a totally different issue.

Scott sighs and doesn't waste time pulling out old arguments about how his dad will forgive him and how it can't be as complicated as Stiles seems to think. He just says, "Think about it? Or, you know, send him a post-card. Something."

"Yeah, maybe." He grimaces at his empty coffee cup. "I'm out of quarters, bro. I'll have to catch you later."

"Dang. Okay. Well, take care of yourself buddy, okay? And call me soon. Like no more than a week soon, okay?"

He promises all the promises and wishes all the well-wishes and signs off. It's always hard, checking in with Scott. It feels better later, knowing that he's well and remembering his conversations fondly, but right after he hangs up he always feels far, far away from the life he'd once had.

He 'buys' another coffee because he's feeling indulgent. Flirts half-heartedly with the dumpy barista because she has a nice smile and he remembers what it had felt like once, forever ago, to have someone you thought was attractive smile warmly at you and pay you a genuine compliment. He doesn't know what that's like now. He can't ever separate who he is from what he is and it makes most of the interactions he has disingenuous by default.

On his way out an attractive and arrogant-looking young man pushes the glass door inwards, effectively blocking him in back against the table near the door. The guy's blue eyes are hard and unmoving and Stiles makes a face at the comma-shaped eyebrows as they furrow back at him, pique building in his gut and witty repartees fighting for lead-position on his tongue. He relents when he sees the red-and-white cane tap on the floor through the entrance. The young man breaks his gaze to guide the sight-impaired person through the doorway, then leaves Stiles behind without a backwards glance.

Stiles bites back an angry huff, glaring at the backs of their heads a moment, then steps back out onto the street, shaking off his annoyance. Even a jerk like that wasn't going to ruin his positive energy from talking to Scott, from hearing that everyone he loved was alright without him. He waits for his wariness to kick in, looking up the road to his apartment, wishing the feeling of home
was something he could feel again. But it isn't, and it doesn't. Besides, the next best thing is waiting for him.

A furtive glance tells him nothing out of the ordinary, but then again, Stiles looks ordinary. So does Derek. Okay, not ordinary, exactly. Gorgeous, really. But the point is his visage doesn't exactly scream 'werewolf'. The confirmation that fae other than himself aren't just the stuff of fairy-tales and history has him more willing than ever to trust his instincts, so when nothing feels off about this temporary home he heads up the street, alone again.

But he doesn't feel quite so completely alone. He's a freak, but there are other freaks. He laughs. After all, that's part of why he'd come to New York. To find somewhere where he wasn't the strangest person around. Or just to disappear, to blend into the diversity.

Either way it has him feeling a renewed sense of purpose. He's been a little too high-profile lately, he gets that. It's time to stop hunting too close to where he sleeps, to learn more about his territory. Because maybe, just maybe, he's done running. If he's smart, if he's careful, there's a chance he could settle in here. He finds his apartment untouched, just as he'd left it. He kills a few hours reading, then pokes around online looking for some hot-spots for night life.

New York has a lot to offer. Hunters included, apparently. But with Derek's warnings in mind, Stiles ventures even further the next few days into unknown territory in the city, seeking out new clubs, less obvious locations. He doesn't hunt, not really. He explores instead. Tries to have a good time like a real person.

He's not going to make any friends in some random club, but it's nice to be friendly a bit, to dance with people or shoot some pool with them or listen to their stories. It keeps him from thinking too hard about his own problems, for a while anyway.

It's getting late in the week when something new happens. He's walking down a street, well into the night, heading back from a club he'd found online but been unimpressed with, when an odd feeling pricks up the hairs on the back of his neck. It's not a bad feeling, just a sort of awareness. He glances over his shoulder, eyes skimming around the mostly-dark street for signs of something different. For the most part all he sees are shops, closed for the night, with the usual crowd of people walking past. To one side, though, there's the opening between two building that leads to a dark alley. When he squints at the shadows, Stiles starts to get the impression that what he's feeling is in that direction.

Up ahead he hears a faint burst of music, and his eyes are drawn to the man as a black-light in a doorway sets his gray coat alight. But it's only for a moment, and then he disappears inside, leaving silence in the alley again.

It's probably a small club. He wouldn't have even known it existed if he hadn't watched the guy walk in and heard the music. But more than that it's the odd feeling he gets when he moves closer. The entrance is dark, in an alleyway that suggests exits instead of entry points. There's no marking
on it, no advertising. You had to know where this place was to find it.

That speaks of loyal and perhaps fanatical clientele, not a good place to hunt. Though his curiosity is piqued, he's about to move on when another person comes out of the club, hunching their coat up more tightly around their shoulders. The person glances his way nervously and Stiles catches a glimpse of unnaturally red eyes set in nearly blue-tinged skin. The person tugs their hat down more and slips away into the shadows, but Stiles has seen enough.

This isn't just any exclusive club. It's a fae club. And curiosity has always been his biggest weakness. He waits till the other person is long gone, then makes his way down the steps to the black door. Flexing his fingers against the nervous tension that ripples through him, he breathes deep, reaches out and pulls it open.

Music reaches him immediately. It sounds like perfectly normal club music, which is a good sign, he thinks. After the black-lit doorway, there's a corridor that's narrow and painted as black as the door, though it's lit with a variety of differently-colored light bulbs. There doesn't seem to be a particular pattern to them and he finds himself wondering if other fae see different wavelengths of light.

When he turns the corner, the hallway opens up into a large room, filled with people - fae, and complete with bar and small seating areas. The club is an odd mixture of old-world décor and clubbing atmosphere. Though the lighting is dark and neon by turns and the sound contemporary, the rest of the environment has a different feel. Along with paintings in heavy frames, hyper-realistic statues line the walls in little alcoves, depicting humans and monsters from a variety of cultures. Monsters, he realizes belatedly, that are probably not works of fiction.

On the left is a DJ on a platform. To his right, a long, polished wood bar that's more old than new. The dance floor is crowded, and the patrons look like typical club patrons, except for the occasional flashes of skin colors that until now, he hadn't thought natural occurrences. He glances around, trying to move casually over to the bar. But it doesn't take long for him to notice the number of speculative looks being sent his way. An outsider in a place like this is apparently an uncommon occurrence, but so far no one had met him at any sort of checkpoint to question his entry. He sits down at the bar and the tender approaches. She's small, close to little-person small, though now that he knows about the fae, he wonders about gnomes and dwarves and the like.

Her eyebrows go up as she stands in front of Stiles, giving him a slow once-over. Then she extends her hand in greeting.

"I'm Pip."

Stiles looks at the hand a moment, but he can't see any reason not to be polite so he cautiously takes her hand. Naturally he's mistaken. When their palms meet the woman's eyes flash a supernatural gold and Stiles jerks his hand back. Pip's already snatching her hand back anyway though, shaking it out like she's been shocked.

"Well, can't say I was expecting that," she says with a note of deeply surprised amusement in her voice. "Not many incubi around these days. Fewer who'd show up here," she adds with a raised eyebrow.

Stiles's mouth falls open to demand an explanation for how this Pip knows what he is, but when his brain catches up to the latter part of the sentence he's too busy being afraid. "What? Why?"

Pip eyes him strangely, tilting her head a little as she rubs her hand absently. "Oh. Unfortunate then. Any other time I'd offer you advice, but I'm afraid tonight holds other plans for you. What are
you drinking? I'll send it over for you, on the house."

"Send it over?"

Pip kips her chin up in a gesture as her eyes focus behind him. Stiles spins on the stool to the sight of a pair of fae approaching him, wary patrons leaving an obvious pocket of space around them. One of them is a humanoid creature with partially reptilian features, the other is the man he'd seen walk into the club earlier. He still looks human, a normal man save for the now deathly pallor of his medium-toned skin and obsidian-hued eyes.

"The Duke wants to see you," he says, voice bland as he reaches for Stiles's arm. "I'm Danny. Jackson and I will take you."

Stiles squirms away but the lizard-man is quick on his other side, clamping a hand down on his biceps. The hand is light human skin-toned, though the fingertips are tipped with yellowed talons. As he jerks against the grip he sees that the skin is frayed a bit around the claws, like a punctured glove.

"Drink?" Pip says, not sounding particularly concerned about this development - at least not on his behalf.

Stiles glares over his shoulder at her. "Really dude? Make me a fucking Shirley-Temple for all I care," he snaps as they haul him off the stool and start guiding him further into the back of the club.

And yeah, fuck no. He does not want to go deeper into this place he apparently never should have come into in the first place.

"Hey get off of me," he snaps, struggling against the two creatures gripping him. The lizard man turns a yellow-eyed glare on him, slitted eyes blinking with a secondary inner layer. The talons prick Stiles's arm as he fights for his freedom but he makes no gains.

They're strong. Really strong. And if it had been just one of them, he might have been able to power away, but between them, and the fact that he hasn't fed in days, means he's caught up between them and simply lifted off the ground and carried when he refuses to walk. They drag him to the back of the club where an alcove is partitioned off with tall curtains of red silk. They slip through the gap and dump him into the couch unceremoniously. He flails as soon as he has freedom, kicking one of them hard in the jaw as he rights himself and pulls into a defensive crouch on the cushion.

The lizard-thing hisses at him, slitted yellow eyes bulging.

But a sharp snap of fingers and a softly warning, "Jackson," is enough to have the lizard-man slinking away, though not before he imparts one last glare in Stiles's direction. The guards disappear from view as the curtain falls again, but running seems like a dumb idea right now, and if Pip was going to bother with sending him a drink, he probably at least had enough time left to drink it before anything of the mortal variety occurred.

Stiles twists his head in the direction of the snapped fingers and finds himself looking at a man - not that he's human. It's clear that he isn't, though he does look vaguely familiar, just like Danny had. His eyes are a faintly reflective shade of platinum, no pupils or other details besides that blank metallic sheen. His features are otherwise human. His hair is on the long side, braided and interwoven with what looks like leather cords to fall down his back. His suit is a dark cerulean,
trim and elegant with an edge of idiosyncrasy to it. His narrow and angular face is twisted into an appealing and faintly-amused smirk, though his eyes don’t seem to be directed quite in Stiles's direction. Stiles's eyes fall on the long cane beside the man's knee and frowns as the feeling of familiarity grows.

"You're new here," the man says quietly in a voice that has enticingly deep harmonics that are almost incongruous with his wiry, angular frame. It's not a question either.

"Just thought I'd check the place out," Stiles says, trying for casual and coming up sounding young, to his ears anyway.

"New to the city as well," the man adds, reaching for a glass on the side-table containing some sort of liquor. It's a precise but cautious gesture, and he doesn't watch his own hand move, adding credence to Stiles's supposition that he is effectively blind.

"I'd like to welcome you. My name is Deucalion," he says, tipping his head in an elegant nod as he lifts his glass in a semblance of a toast.

The curtains part again and a woman steps into the enclosure, barefoot and dressed in a loose, sheer silk dress that's draped to perfection over her lithe form. She has two drinks in hand, one a dirty martini, the other, obnoxiously, a Shirley Temple.

She's absolutely stunning, thick dark hair, warm brown skin with dark and mysterious eyes that draw one in. But he feels immediately uncomfortable in her presence, like magnets pushing the wrong poles together. She sets the Shirley Temple down on the table next to Stiles like she doesn’t particularly want to hand it to him or be in actual proximity either. Then she takes the martini with her to curl up on the other couch next to Deucalion.

"This is Kali," Deucalion explains.

She lifts an olive on its stick to Deucalion's mouth and he extends a forked tongue to wrap around it and pull it into his mouth. The sensuality wraps around her every motion like it's in her very skin, but she looks tired.

"Hello," she says disdainfully, sighing tightly as she more-or-less otherwise ignores Stiles.

"Is it really so distasteful?" Deucalion asks her in an aside, looking genuinely curious to her answer.

She levels a look on Stiles, one that has his skin itching in discomfort.

"Yes," she says flatly. "But I will endure his presence."

Deucalion inclines his head and turns his sightless gaze back to Stiles.

"Hey, I'm happy to leave if it would make you more comfortable," Stiles offers.

Deucalion just twitches an amused smirk at him and ignores the offer.

"Is Kali's presence making you uncomfortable?" Deucalion asks solicitously instead.

It is, but not for any good reason, as far as he can tell. "Not particularly. Why, should it?"

"I'm a succubus," she says, like perhaps he doesn't know, like it isn't obvious. Which he supposes it shouldn't be. But somehow he knows what she is, with his very being, like recognizing a long-
"Yeah," Stiles says like he's waiting for the punchline. They offer nothing further so he adds, "Sorry, is that supposed to matter?"

"See?" she says softly to Deucalion, appearing bored. "It's tolerable and irrelevant."

"Good, good," Deucalion says. "I was rather hoping we could all be friends. Will you tell me your name?"

Stiles hesitates, but it's not like it's a secret. There's nothing his nickname could lead anyone to, not unless they already really knew what they were looking for.

"I'm Stiles. So, what, did I commit a faux-pas or something? If I did, I'm sorry. I was just curious about the place."

"No, my dear boy, not at all. You're more than welcome here. I'm just interested in you."

"Why?" Stiles demands flatly.

Deucalion chuckles and shakes his head, bemused. "Directness from an incubus."

Kali breathes a faint laugh at his comment, like it's an amusing oddity that Stiles behaves as he does. Stiles isn't cowed. His idiosyncrasy is nothing new to him.

"You're one of us. Right now I'm more interested in making you feel at home."

Stiles rolls his eyes. "I hate to break it to you but your brand of foot-in-the-door technique isn't exactly subtle. Manhandling and general creepiness will tend to tip it over that line, so sorry, dude, but I want to know your endgame before I join your little club."

"My apologies for your treatment. Your presence was unexpected and I may have been a bit hasty in sending my boys after you. I just wanted to meet you very much."

"I'm flattered, I'm sure. But that still doesn't explain why," Stiles says, stabbing his straw around in his drink rather than sipping it.

Deucalion waves a dismissive hand. "Suffice it to say that as you are an incubus, I see potential in you. That's all. And I genuinely want to welcome you to the city. Anything else I have in mind can come after you've settled yourself, made some friends. The details are something we can talk about later."

"How about now," Stiles tosses back, lifting his chin and trying for a braver face than his fluttering pulse would normally accompany.

Deucalion is silent a long moment and Stiles ignores the glare Kali casts his way. She leans close and whispers something to Deucalion that has the fae sighing. He sets his hand on her knee and murmurs to her, "Would you do any differently?"

She looks at Stiles for a long, assessing breath, then sighs, almost deflating as she concedes.

Deucalion turns back to Stiles. "You could assist me in a capacity that would be extremely valuable to me. Kali here is indispensable to me," he murmurs, taking her hand and bringing it to his lips. She curls her fingers around his hand in return and leans her head on his shoulder as he continues speaking.
"While I'm not yet ready to inform you of the full extent of the ways in which she assists me, I would hope that eventually you might do some of the same, take some of her workload."

Stiles purses his lips as he looks her over. Lovely as she is, there's a hard edge to her beauty. She really does look exhausted. Too thin, despite a frame built for curves. He tilts his head back, watching Deucalion's face. "Yeah and why would I want to do this, exactly?"

"Knowledge. Power. Standing in the community." Deucalion makes a speaking gesture with his fingers. "Many other things. You should also know that I am generous with those I value. Should you have a desire I would do my best to make it happen." A slow smile turns one corner of his mouth as he adds, "And likely succeed."

Stiles huffs a snort, stabbing another cherry with his little mixer straw. He's been more interested in survival than anything else. He doesn't want anything that someone else could get him. He can get anything he wants himself, except for the things he wants most, like his family back. And that's just an impossibility.

Deucalion steeples his fingers a moment, then his demeanor shifts abruptly to casual in such an obvious way that Stiles can practically feel it. Deucalion smiles warmly and says, "I'm wise enough to know when to cut my losses as well. Please, go and enjoy your evening. It's a wonderful group of fae that patronizes our doors. I'm sure you'll find some friends on the dance floor with little effort."

Stiles doesn't doubt it, but he has significantly less interest in approaching the dance floor now than when he'd first arrived.

"And be sure to come back and see me sometime if you'd like to learn more."

"Right," Stiles says, trying to keep his voice neutral as he pushes to his feet. "Well, thanks for the creepy welcoming committee."

And though Kali glowers at him, Deucalion's mouth twitches in amusement and Stiles can't quite find it in himself to categorically dislike the man just yet. Anyone with a sense of humor can't be entirely bad.

The lizard man Jackson and his pasty partner are standing just past the alcove and they watch him as he moves away from the curtains. Jackson glares at him - or so he assumes. He's not actually sure he's reading those scaly facial expressions correctly.

The other man's smirk turns saucy as he looks him over, stripping him mentally out of his clubbing clothes. Stiles is aware that he's probably spewing pheromones or whatever, given the ominous situation and his natural physiological response to threatening situations. And the guy's gorgeous, except for the whole pale-as-death thing, and he'd probably take him up on his implied interest another time. But right now he wants nothing more than to get the fuck out of there and away to his own territory - or at least neutral ground, so he barely acknowledges them as he passes by and quickly skirts the dance floor, heading for the door. He can feel plenty of eyes on him and he doesn't like it, doesn't like being the center of attention in a world where he doesn't know the game.

Stepping out into the cool night air is a relief. Getting a few streets away and merging into the city's pedestrian traffic is an even bigger one. He starts towards home automatically, but after a moment he starts wondering about just how valuable he might be to this Deucalion guy, and whether that value would entail some extra eyes on him. The unplaced recognition he'd felt on seeing them makes him wary as fuck.
So instead he turns away and heads for a new hotel, a nice one. He pays for a basic suite and takes a relatively circuitous route to his room to make sure he can spot any tails before actually approaching the place he's planning on resting his head. Security is probably good; the place really is nice. He's being wasteful but at the moment he doesn't care, especially not when he enters the room and it welcomes him with pristine neutral territory.

He's almost gotten used to being the hunter, and feeling like the one being hunted again is not exactly doing wonders for his calm or confidence. Especially not considering how much Derek had shaken him last time they'd spoken. Still, it had been his news, and not his person that had upset Stiles. And Derek might be hunting him too, but it feels different. Like they are peers and he's being sought on the same level. Not like he's some asset to be courted and used.

He hadn't kept the card. He'd thrown it out after memorizing the numbers, like he does with nearly everything he doesn't need. But he turns the pen in his fingers like he might the card if he'd kept it, fiddling his way through his decision to call.

He sighs, then punches the buttons with the pen to dial. He's in far, far over his head, and he has no idea who he can possibly trust out of those he'd met tonight. But one thing he's sure of after meeting the group of fae at the club, he can trust Derek to a certain extent. Whatever else he is, Derek's a good person. Stiles knows it, like he had tasted it in Derek's skin when he'd mojo-pushed him to leave. He really does believe in protecting and serving.

It's late. Later than he'd thought to check, and when Derek answers his voice is rough with sleep. If he weren't so stressed, he'd totally be nursing a semi just from the low rolling sound of his greeting.

"Derek, hi, it's Stiles."

"Stiles?" Derek says, shifting in what sounds like his sheets. "Stiles, I'm glad you called. I was worried about you."

"Really? You've been thinking about me?" Stiles blurts. Then he clears his throat. "Yeah, sure, I'm okay. Why?"

Derek huffs a droll laugh. "Well, you did say you got stabbed last time we talked. How's it healing?"

Oh. Right. Stiles rolls his shoulder to test the ache again. It's definitely better than the last time he'd checked.

"Healing. Like, extra slow, but steady. Should I be worried?"

Derek makes a hum of indecision. "Just keep an eye on it. Tell me if it gets worse. I might be able to help."

No strings attached. Just like that. Stiles tangles his fingers in the cord, smiling faintly to himself. "Thanks. I mean that. Uh, hey, listen, I wanted to ask you something. Do you know a fae named Deucalion?"

"What?" Derek snaps, voice going sharp and rather alarmed.

Stiles feels his heart sink at the sound. So his instincts were right. Deuc wasn't so much on the side of protect and serve.

"Just, I met him tonight and he was all wanting to be pals and you know, you're the only other fae I-"
"He's dangerous, Stiles. Ruthless. He's…" Derek sighs, pausing as he chooses his words. "He's not… bad but he walks a very fine line of too-far. I'm not going to try and tell you who to befriend. Just… don't let him do you any favors."

"Wasn't planning on it. But…"

"But what?" Derek asks, voice softening.

Stiles sighs, laying back on the bed again. "Do you go to that club?"

"Sometimes, yeah," Derek says, voice still low and warm. "You like dancing?"

And the thought of Derek dancing in a club, maybe even grinding up against him. Stiles clears his throat as his dick twitches with interest. He curls his fingers in the cord to resist reaching for his lap.

"Yeah. I do. It's good energy, and good hunting grounds at the same time. I spend most of my time at the clubs, honestly. But this place? It was… I don't know. A few weeks ago I didn't even know if other fae existed, and now I could just, you know, go dancing with them or whatever. I'm not alone here anymore."

"No. You don't have to be alone," Derek agrees softly in a voice that goes straight to Stiles's dick. "But you don't need Deucalion for that either. His club's fine, at least if he doesn't have his eye on you. But there are a lot of us in New York and there are other fae places you could hang out, make friends at if you want."

Stiles breathes a soft sigh of relief. He isn't beholden to Deucalion's club for a gateway to other fae.

"I could take you to them," Derek offers, voice warm with the layers of desire and genuine interest.

Stiles bites his lip against a groan, squirming on the bed and smushing his face into the down pillow. He twists his mouth back to the receiver and says, "I don't think that would be a good idea."

"Why not?" Derek says, voice rough.

"Because," Stiles shoots back, rolling up to a sitting position again. "Because I want you, Derek, and I have a hard time controlling myself in general, let alone around you, someone I want. And you know, I also really don't want to kill you, crazy as that sounds," he says, voice tight with sarcasm. He heaves a sigh and says more seriously, "I kill rapists, not good cops."

"I've been trying to tell you, Stiles. You can learn control. And you don't have to worry about killing me, you really don't," he says firmly.

Stiles snorts derisively. Maybe fae who are a century and three-quarters old don't remember the beginning. Don't remember what it was like to have no control whatsoever. Maybe he can learn control, but he has a feeling it's going to take a long time. He'd never been good at impulse control even when he hadn't had supernatural abilities to contend with.

"Yeah, sure," Stiles says, though his tone isn't exactly positive. "Okay, well, thanks for the info. I'll be careful." Stiles hesitates a moment, not wanting to hang up and at the same time knowing that any longer talking to Derek would lead to awkward one-sided phone sex, and he's already enough of a creep, thank you very much.

"Sleep well," he manages despite his dry throat.
"Wai-"

He hangs up and falls back onto the bed with a groan, hand slipping down into his lap as he rolls his hips against the friction of his jeans. Yeah. Control is not his strong suit. He just hopes he can resist taking Derek up on his offer long enough to give this not-killing thing a try.
Derek keeps a quiet eye out for reports matching Stiles's signature. He's careful not to search too frequently or too specifically, skimming dozens of reports instead and avoiding leaving a trail. None of them land on homicide's desk - yet. Still, he finds it soon enough, unsurprised at the young woman listed as an assault victim who had apparently been spared a worse fate than being found mildly overdosed with GHB. The officers' reports seem to indicate little suspicion of foul play given the paraphernalia and survivor's statements. Still, two more kills brings the total to twenty-three, and that's a problem, according to some stern texts Lydia sends him. If some eager young vice officer puts them together, gets a feeling there's more to it than mystery designer drugs…

Something needs to be done, but Stiles hasn't been back to his old apartment for days, at least not at the times he'd gone by. Derek's been checking, trying to find him, to continue their abruptly-ended conversation, but he's had no luck. Derek doesn't catch a fresh trace of the incubus there or anywhere else he goes, though he searches for most of his off-hours. Short of a stroke of luck, all he has left to try is to pick Lydia's brains over it, to learn more about this rare breed of fae. He knows there's no more time to waste when he gets a text message from Lydia with a request for a late-night drink. A face-to-face meeting outside of police business did not bode well.

Erica may be human but she works hard and late. And she's perceptive. She won't miss a visit down to the morgue, so Lydia gets a text on a bathroom break with a confirmation. Though it relates to police business, it's not actually police business, not really. It's fae business at the core of it, and he's trying to keep Erica free of that burden as long as possible.

So instead of going down to the morgue he sits in a ritzy bar most cops wouldn't be caught dead in because one doesn't defy the will of Lydia Martin. At least it means the drinks are good. The coffee is excellent, though tonight he switches to Irish after just one cup. He doesn't drink much, but tonight seems like a good night for it.

Lydia arrives in her usual style, both simultaneously show-stopping and subtle. It's hard not to notice someone so confident and beautiful, but she also exudes a suggestion that one's gaze dare not linger too long. He watches her anyway, but she doesn't look pleased when she turns those bottle-green eyes on him. It's a powerful sensation and he resists the urge to slouch further into his seat as she clicks her way over, stilettoes echoing slightly against the hard floors. Coming up opposite him, she slips into the booth in a graceful motion that is a sharp contrast to the nervous fumbling of the server who appears moments later, soliciting her drink order.

She makes her choice and orders some food as well, though Derek is uncertain whether that signals that they'll be having a longer conversation, or she's simply hungry. She stares at him silently, both of them waiting. Thankfully the server hurries at getting her cocktail ready, leaving them in peace after a stern glower from Derek.

Lydia sips her drink, then gazes at him a long moment. "Let's get right to the point. There are too many incubus kills happening right now to be reasonable. Worse to come," she adds, eyes going a little unfocused and swirling faintly enough he'd think it a trick of the light if he didn't know better. "More such deaths," she says firmly, a clairvoyant decree he knows better than to doubt.

He supposes some might find such a pronouncement shocking, but death is an inexorable part of life. Especially theirs.

It's a big city," he points out. "And not everyone living in it deserves to be."
"My point. Perhaps your little incubus needs to be put down," she says with a tilt of her head, eyes flashing a not-quite supernatural shade of green in the dim light.

A protective anger flares in his chest, out of proportion to how much he knows about this kid, how much he's actually involved.

Derek bites back a sharp response, forcing himself to calm down enough to sip some of his drink. He'd be a fool to try and pretend that his wolf hasn't been particularly interested in Stiles, searching for his scent, panting for him. But it's more than that. Not just an animal attraction. And he doesn't want to see him hurt.

"That seems extreme. He's just a kid," he says, managing to keep his response flat.

Her eyebrows arch anyway. "Two dozen dead in the last two months? That's extreme. An incubus choosing lethal feedings that much is being irresponsible. It's going to become difficult for me to mask soon. If he doesn't ease up immediately, the responsible choice, the only choice to keep us safe is to remove the problem."

Derek shakes his head, stabbing at an ice cube in frustration. "I don't disagree that something needs to happen. I just… I've talked with him. He has no idea what he's doing. He's literally just a kid who's been figuring it all out on his own."

Her eyes narrow as her lips purse sternly as though she's about to say something about excuses and assholes, only more elegantly, he's sure. He lifts a hand to forestall her because she is missing an important piece of information.

"Lydia, he'd never even met another fae before me. And I know for certain he's taken out three, but the other twenty? What I'm trying to say is I don't think it's him. Not all of it anyway."

Lydia's eyebrow goes up skeptically. "Derek, incubus and succubus kills are very distinctive. Are you suggesting there's a second unscrupulous sex-eater roaming the precinct?" She tilts her head, frowning slightly. "Perhaps you are unaware of how rare they are these days? It's highly improbable that two such fae should appear at the same time out of the blue, even more-so that neither of them should be behaving responsibly."

"Maybe so," he says, shaking his head. "But despite that he has… reasons. Rules. He only picks rapists," he explains. "Even tried to protect me when he could have easily…" He shrugs, letting the motion encompass a number of potentialities.

That earns a contemplative frown as Lydia turns over the new information. "Rules?" she muses. Her eyes dart back and forth like she's testing new probabilities in her mind, revising her calculations. "If that's true, if," she emphasizes with a manicured finger. "Then I would be inclined to give more weight to your theory that something else is happening." Her head tilts as she explains. "One of the recent deaths was a young woman, and while it's true that women can be rapists, she seems an unlikely candidate based on her array of statistics."

Derek takes in that information with relief. Despite Lydia's reservations, he's certain that Stiles hadn't been the one to kill the girl. "There are two of them. We should look for discrepancies in the cases. And nobody is killing him, not yet."

She frowns over his assertion, then sighs as she chews it over, gesturing a concession with a flick of fingers.

"Either way, much more of this and questions are going to get asked that aren't going to be as easy
to push aside. Your little friend is in hot water regardless."

He sips his drink again, savoring the rich, hot burn of it on his tongue. "I know. What would you say if I told you Deucalion's made a bid for his attention?

Her eyes go flat and unreadable. She takes a slow, contemplation-filled breath, then looks away. "I'd say that sounds like fae politics, and that's out of my limits of neutral territory. And that some, those aligned with your faction, might say that you should definitely find him. Soon."

He lifts an eyebrow. "I don't know much about Deucalion. I've heard the name but that's about it."

She eyes him, carefully not speaking.

Sighing his acknowledgement, he lifts his glass again for a sip. "Well, point is, he deserves a chance to find his way and the fae community owes him some support while he does. I'm still trying to get in touch with him, help him understand the norms, but I hesitate to actively hunt for him. He's skittish-"

"In his nature," she murmurs.

"Exactly. So I'm trying not to chase him off. He has my number. He's called me once already so hopefully it's just a matter of time. In the meantime…"

"Yes, I'm sure we both have a number of people to test the lay of the land with, possibly help with the cleanup before things become official cases," she says, tilting her head as she slowly drags the glass spike skewering her maraschino cherry around in a circle, swirling the red liquor at the bottom of her drink. "Messy," she murmurs.

"Novice," he contends.

There's a pause as she sips, eyes in the middle distance as her mind works over the problem. He knows better than to assume he can keep up with her. Not only is she among the few fae who are constrained to work the middle of it all, free from factions or their rules and duties, she's also got hundreds of years on him and comprehends a line of entangled energies that goes deeper than he can fathom.

"Just how young is he?" she asks, eyes narrowing on him.

"Twenty one," Derek says with a snort. Derek's not even very old by werewolf standards, but it makes him feel ancient in comparison.

Lydia lifts an eyebrow as she pops the cherry into her mouth and sucks it off the stick, coral pink lipstick a pretty contrast to the candy red fruit. Her gaze is steady and interrogatory as she chews.

Derek sighs as he explains. "Fae mother left him an orphan to be raised by humans. Humans naïve to the fae. Sounds like he ran when he found out what he was. Been on his own ever since."

She frowns. "He has had no mentoring then? Well," she says with a delicate sigh, some of the hardness fading from her gaze. Even she has some sympathy for such a poor hand.

Derek's wolf relaxes a bit now that it seems Stiles's head is firmly off the immediate chopping block. He washes the residual tension down with another sip of liquor.

"All alone," Lydia makes a contemplative hum that has his eyes jerking back to her face warily. Her eyes turn amused and feline as she turns the glass skewer to gesture at him. Red hair spills over
her shoulder as she tilts her head, face pulling into a pout of affected surprise as though a thought had just occurred to her, though he knows full well she'd reached it long ago. "You should fix that, since you're so keen on keeping him alive."

He grimaces at her. He's all for mentoring another wolf in need of a pack, but an incubus? And a veritable child at that… he wouldn't know where to start. At least that's what he tells himself.

She forges onwards, ignoring his wariness. "You've been known to mentor orphans, haven't you?"

"Wolves," he argues, though he knows he's already lost this battle.

She flicks her fingers dismissively. "Fae."

She's not wrong, either.

"And besides, it's your life's work, serving and protecting your communities. Plus the sex is mind-blowing," she adds, gazing off into space with a faint smile on her lips.

"You think I should bed him? I've been trying to find a way to avoid pursuing that," he replies, frowning. Trying, but mostly failing.

Her eyes flick over to his, eyebrows going up in genuine surprise. "Whatever for? In fact, bedding the lad might very well be the best thing for everyone. Help take the edge off."

It's not that he doesn't want Stiles. He does, badly. But things are rarely that simple. "He's a kid," Derek argues weakly, and Lydia's eyes roll at the highly unconvincing tone of his voice.

"He's legal though, isn't he officer?" she says with faux sweetness, popping the last cherry into her mouth as she bats her eyelashes at him.

The uncharacteristic move confuses him for a moment. Then the memory of Stiles saying the same thing comes to mind and he groans because he really hates her clairvoyance right about then.

"Don't worry so much. It's practically inevitable anyway," she murmurs in her normal voice, winking at him.

He glares at her as he leans back in the seat, because she's not playing fair. But then, she never does, so why should that be surprising?

He stays through her meal, nursing another drink and talking about mundane things, as colleagues do. But when they part, she reiterates her warnings that Derek needs to find Stiles soon.

Irritation has him prowling the street instead of heading home. Home is his den, his sanctuary, not a place to go when he's wound up. Tonight in particular he's got a lot on his mind, which is nothing new, really. He's used to balancing a demanding human career as well as working to benefit the lawful fae. Normally it would be easy to turn it off, to go back to his own life at the end of the day. But there's a level of personal investment this time, unexpectedly so. And try as he might, he can't keep the neophyte incubus off his mind.

So he prowls. He walks the back alleys with his head down and his hands shoved in his leather jacket, letting himself turn and twist the problem of the sex-eater in the city. It frustrates him to no end that Stiles keeps running from him, and not just for practical reasons. The way the younger fae consistently dodges him has his wolf panting for the chase, eager to send him on another hunt, a real hunt, which would last until Stiles has nowhere to go, no escape from Derek or his passions.
And to think he'd once accused Stiles of being the fae to have issues respecting consent.

It's fucking hypocritical, but the thought of that lithe body under him grows even more exciting when it is imagined as being in *spite* of an attempt to run.

Not that having Stiles come to him wouldn't be equally as pleasurable. Just a different sort of excitement. Possibly. There's a spark of danger there too, that power sparking in Stiles's whiskey-colored eyes. Well. At least his hypocritical excitement goes both directions. Knowing that Stiles could and *had* overpowered him, could possibly have had whatever he wanted of Derek…

He closes his eyes and takes a steadying breath, allowing himself to begin to accept the idea of actually fucking the kid. What it would be like to mount him. Or how sensually that lithe torso would roll as the incubus fucked Derek. How much each of them could cut loose, knowing the strength of the other. Though Stiles had never bedded another fae, sex was literally in his DNA. No matter how inexperienced, he'd surely take to sex with another fae beautifully, the consummate natural. If Stiles could grow to trust him… to invite him in instead of running…

It almost proves to be his downfall, being distracted like that. It's only at the last minute that he picks up the sickly scent of human hunters, all their warding potions and bloodstained clothes that reek with the scent of dead fae to someone with a nose as sensitive as a wolf's. It's not an ability most fae have, so it's not something the hunters bother to conceal.

He turns to go, but the scent of hunters hits him from his other side too, blocking his exit from the mouth of the alley. He doesn't *think* they're hunting him. They're not being quiet enough. But even so, his first instinct it to fight. To kill. After all, this is his home turf. They don't belong here, not as far as his instincts are concerned.

Except that they do. It's a public city and everyone has the freedom to coexist. Regardless of how much it annoys his wolf.

It's also part of the reason why so few wolves live in the confines of a city. Beyond the wretched smells, the lack of trees and animals, there are the fundamental differences in social norms. He'd long since learned that those were the hardest to handle for his kind. But Derek has his reasons for defying his nature, and it also makes him an unexpected entity. Gives him advantages like hunters who don't think to mask their scent profiles.

But there are a lot of them, more than there should be. When it becomes clear that they are, in fact, about to happen upon his path, he takes a too-high leap up to a fire-escape and climbs his way to the roof instead of facing them down. He crouches on the square rooftop for a while, watching the slow patrols of hunters as they drift in overlapping routes. There are frequently hunters here and there in the city, working solo or in pairs, and as much as they're a problem, they also do some good for the city. Some of them help stop civilian crime in addition to searching for their favorite brand of fae.

But when they hunt in packs like this… that's a very bad sign. It means organization, sharing of information, bonding over a purpose of some sort. For a while he takes the risk of following them. It's possible someone might look up and catch sight of a pair of golden eyes flashing in the moonlight, so he does it carefully, staying at least half a building behind them. But he listens, and what he hears is vague at best but it does give him cause for concern.

There's *something* happening in the supernatural world, and whatever it is might include Stiles in some way, but despite Lydia's misgivings, Derek is sure that the blame does not rest solely on those surprisingly broad shoulders.
When he gets tired of hearing the same bitching about the cold and the hunters’ families, he stops his pursuit and resumes his course home. He's no less worried, but he's fast approaching the point where sleep will be able to override his stresses if he lets it. So he heads for his apartment with only a little extra wariness and tail-spotting checks.

He's ready for a shower, maybe even a long bath tonight to help ease some of his tension. Either way, he shrugs out of his leather jacket, hanging it neatly on the hook near the door between his other two such coats. He leaves the lights off, padding along across the carpet towards his bedroom. He keeps his place tidy, free of any excesses, so it's not hard to navigate even in near pitch-blackness.

The contents of his pockets get emptied onto his bedside table, and his socks get tossed into the hamper. He drags his toes through the thick carpet, sighing in soft relief at the freedom he appreciates the most about being home. His shirt gets untucked from his slacks as he heads for the bathroom, more than ready for a long, soothing shower. But before he can turn on the water, he hears the vibration of his cell phone against the table.

With a sigh, he turns and walks back out, picking up the offending bit of technology. The number is unknown, which he'd usually let go to voicemail, but in this case, he's hoping for an unknown number and he answers it quickly.

"Detective Hale speaking," he says.

Based on the pleased hum he gets in return, it's none other than the incubus in question.

"Hi sexy-voice," Stiles says, voice warm and teasing.

Not an emergency, then. Derek relaxes a little. "Hi back," he replies.

"What are you up to?" Stiles asks.

Derek tries to hear something telltale in the background but it's quiet, just the sound of Stiles's voice.

"Nothing. Just got home."

"You work late," Stiles murmurs. "You should relax."

"That's the plan," Derek says, sitting down on his bed and leaning back against the headboard with a soft sigh.

Stiles makes an interested hum, which Derek attempts to ignore.

"I was hoping you would call. How are you? Have you had any more trouble with... anyone?" Derek asks, trying on his mentoring cap. He hasn't worn it in a while.

"No," Stiles laughs. "No, I've been laying low. You're the only one giving me any trouble right now," he says, voice laden with the teasing edge of implication.

Derek takes a steadying breath, trying not to let himself get entirely derailed. "I've been keeping an eye on your kills, actually. Working with the coroner to make sure they get ruled overdoses best we can. I was hoping to talk to you about that, talk with you about your cases."

"Derek, do you really think I called you this time of night," he breathes, voice going lower as he says, "to talk about cases?"
Lust sparks in his belly, hot and aching. He tips his head back against the headboard as he softly replies, "No."

"No," Stiles agrees.

"Why did you call then?" he asks, even though his cock is convinced it already knows the answer, given the uncomfortable tightness of his pants.

"Derek," Stiles admonishes, laughing faintly. "Derek I called you because I'm horny and I'm lonely. And you're the only one who... you understand. What I am."

"Yeah," he says softly. Stiles is, as Lydia had reminded him, one of theirs. Someone with particular needs and a too-heavy dose of estrangement from the human norms they have to live within.

Stiles breathes a tense sigh and says, "Please tell me that you're home alone and horny too before I die of humiliation."

"I am. Alone," he agrees. Glances down at his lap. "And horny."

A soft, relieved sigh answers his admission. "Well, maybe we should help each other out with that."

There's a question in his voice, and Derek stalls with an uninterpretable hum as he makes up his mind. Lydia's points are all more than valid. He might be young in comparison, but Stiles is definitely an adult, more than able to make his own decisions. And he's alone and unguided. Using the sexual tension between them to strengthen their relationship might be the best thing for everyone.

Besides. Derek wants, like he hasn't wanted in a long time.

"I think about you, you know. I haven't been able to stop thinking about you," he admits, because it's only the truth.

Stiles makes a low, pleased hum. "Yeah?"

"Yeah. The way-" He huffs an amused breath, shaking his head.

"What?" Stiles prompts, voice light with an edge of anticipation.

That fae connection, that understanding, goes both ways. He gets to talk about what he really feels, not some sanitized human version of his desires. He's spent so long away from other wolves or other fae even, when it comes to being intimate. The idea of being himself... He stretches out on the bed, laying back and closing his eyes as he lets the memories wash over him.

"Your scent. For a werewolf, the way you smell to me it's..." He sighs, breathing in the memory, searching for the words to explain.

"Yeah?" Stiles says again, encouraging.

"Intoxicating. I don't know how to describe it, how bright and hot and tart it is. I just know that when I can smell you, I want you. And when you turn it on? Your power? I want to touch you more than anything, to press my face against your skin and just breathe."

"Mmm," Stiles says, low and sensual and encouraging all at once. "I'd like that. You smell pretty fucking good yourself, you know. Hey, what are you wearing? Sexy leather jacket?"
"Took it off. I'm wearing work clothes. Slacks and a shirt. You?"

Stiles snickers. "Kinda… less than that."

"How much less?" Derek asks, throat tight.

"Like. Technically I'm under a towel. You should, uh, you should take off your shirt."

"Is that so?" Derek murmurs, though he leans his phone against his head and sets his hands to the remaining buttons on his shirt. "All right."

"Button-up?" Stiles asks.

"Yeah. Dark blue, long sleeves. And… on the floor," he adds as he tosses the garment aside.

"Excellent place for it," Stiles chimes in. "You should probably send your pants to join it though. Wouldn't want it to get lonely."

Derek laughs. "You want me naked?"


"Don't touch yourself," Derek says as he tugs free his belt. "Not until I catch up to you."

Stiles makes a sound of frustration, but Derek hears him comply by the thump of his hand on the pillow. That sends a little spark of arousal through him, that connection, that willingness to get on the same pace.

"Hurry up," Stiles whines.

"I want to put my mouth on you," Derek says as he drags his zipper down and then lifts his hips to shove his pants and briefs down his thighs. Stiles groans at the pronouncement.

Derek continues, saying, "I want to find out if you taste as good as you smell, to lick every part of you until I know you."


"So yes, I'm hard too," he says as he kicks his pants away, cock slapping against his belly as he does so, forcing him to suck in a tight breath. "Tell me about your cock, wrap your fingers around it for me."

Stiles moans, but says breathlessly, "I'm uncut. Uh, longer than average I guess. My dick curves upward a bit when I'm hard like this," he sucks in a breath through his teeth. "God I'm hard. You have no idea."

"Tell me," Derek says, stroking his hand slowly along his length.

"This is so… I've never… there's never been anyone I could… are you touching yourself? Are you with me?" His voice goes slightly nervous, slightly desperate.

"Yes," Derek confirms, letting himself have a little moan in his breath as he moves his hand. "I'm with you, I've got my hand around my cock for you."

Stiles makes a sound of pleasure. "God, I wanted you so badly, right from the first second we met."
When you pinned me against the wall? I was hard, you know. Seconds away from whipping it out and jerking it in the alley, and then there you were. You're lucky I didn't jump your bones right there. God, I wish I could see you. Are you cut?"

"No," Derek says, sliding back his foreskin to reveal the glistening tip of his cock. "Most fae aren't."

Stiles makes a soft sound of interest that slips into a groan. "I bet you have a beautiful fucking cock, too."

"Next time you should come see it for yourself," Derek says, realizing that he means it. That he'd be willing and ready, now, to go to that level with the incubus.

Stiles makes a frustrated sound and says, "Fucking tease."

Derek hums in dissent. Whatever reticence he's felt has been put to bed. "I'm not teasing you. Believe me, I was as hard as you were, both of the last two times we met."

It's not easy to get past decades of caution that have him hesitating to share the full extent of his desires, but Stiles deserves his honesty, his openness. He slides his fingers down along his cock as he murmurs, "The way it feels to be around you is so good, so primal. It makes me want to mount you, like a wolf in heat. Like an animal."

"I want that," Stiles breathes. "I want to be…"

"Tell me," Derek encourages, a little breathless himself now.

Stile moans and then forces the more difficult words out. "I want someone who can overpower me. I want to be held down. Mounted. Just fucking taken."

Derek groans, fist tightening around the head of his cock as he twists. His wolf fucking howls at that image.

"What else?" he asks, breathless, heart pounding in his ears. "What else do you want?"

Stiles makes a soft, broken sound. "Everything. I - I want you to fuck my face. Just hold me down and make me swallow you. Keep me gagged with your cock, with your fingers, with anything. I - I want you but I don't want to hurt you. I don't want to hurt anyone."

And then he gets it. There's deep desire in the words, but also pain. He might want those things genuinely, the same way Derek does, but not necessarily solely for all the right reasons. For pain he doesn't deserve or need. Despite the indignant protest of his wolf and the throbbing heat of his body, Derek stalls his hand and sits up a little on the bed, holding the phone tight against his ear so that his voice is firm and clear when he says, "You can't hurt me, Stiles. I'm stronger than the humans you've been with. You can have anything you want with me."

"Don't-" Stiles makes a frustrated sound. "You say that but I still was able to… just… fuck. I can't, Derek, just." He groans, the sound of his hand slicking over his flesh faintly audible in the background.

"It's okay," Derek says, hoping to soothe the upset in Stiles's voice. Bad timing, and Derek's wolf is too invested now to let him push the issue. "I'd do whatever you wanted," he relents, resuming his own motions. "You name it."

Stiles moans his relief. "Hold me down?" he pleads.
"And fuck your face," Derek agrees, picking up the pace of the hand sliding over his cock as Stiles moans. "Yeah, I could do that, pin your arms down with my knees. Hold your head where I wanted it and watch your beautiful mouth take my cock over and over again."

Stiles moans out a "Yes."

Derek closes his eyes, imagining that, the incubus here in his bed. "I'd keep you right where I wanted you, till I was satisfied. You want that? You want to taste me, to make me come down your throat?"

"God," Stiles murmurs, "Please…"

"I won't be able to think about anything else, you know, the next time I see your lips."

"Fuck," Stiles breathes.

"And then when I was done I'd take my turn, wrap my mouth around you. You said you're long. Do you think I could take all of you?"

Stiles groans over a broken curse. Half a please makes it out, just like Derek had heard when he'd been lurking outside his apartment. Derek's hand is moving fast and hard over his length as he lets his wolf loose on the fantasy.

"But you wouldn't fuck my face. No. I would pin you down, draw it out," Derek says, holding his phone to his ear with his shoulder to free his hand to move south. "How long could you last before you were begging?" he asks, tugging at his balls and he growls, letting his wolf's urge to dominate show through. "Because I wouldn't make it easy. I'd tease you and suck you till you beg me to let you come. Fuck, I bet your come tastes as good as you smell."

Stiles actually whimpers, voice muffled by a pillow perhaps.

"And the sounds you'd make, the sounds you're making," Derek manages between tight breaths. "Are you going to come for me? I want to hear you come, I want to get off to the sound of you-"

"Oh fuck, fuck I'm-"

Stiles's peak moan is pure perfection, breathless and raw as he gasps through it.

Derek wishes he were there. Wishes he could lap up the spilled come. Wishes he could lick Stiles open until he was begging for Derek to plunge himself into that body for another round. He's not even sure he doesn't say those things aloud, panting as his fist pumps fast over the head of his cock.

"Come on," Stiles murmurs, breathless and sensual in his ear. "Come for me."

And that does it.

"Ah-" he groans, core tightening sharply as the orgasm hits him. He lets himself groan, lets himself voice his pleasure for Stiles's benefit as he rides the peak. His moan is breathless as he takes a few slower strokes, milking the tail end of the orgasm and leaving quite the mess on his hand and the dark curls that nestle around the base of his cock.

"Wow," Stiles mumbles, still breathing a little hard.

"Yeah," Derek agrees. He hasn't had an orgasm like that in a while, really. And especially not one that he's shared with someone else. Though the only scent filling the room is his own, it's enough
to have his instincts softening to a warm, low hum of contentment as he stretches on the bed, running his fingers through the soft hair on his belly as he listens to Stiles breathe.

"Thanks," Stiles says softly after a moment of shared silence. "I mean that. I, uh…" He clears his throat, then says, "Well, anyway. Good night, Derek."

It takes a moment for his sex-addled brain to catch up and by the time he says, "Stiles, wait-" the connection is dead.

He laughs, frustrated as he drops his head back on the bed at yet another instance of the incubus escaping him. Skittish indeed. His wolf is plenty petulant as silence intrudes once more and the reality of his solitude comes to the fore. It's not his ideal outcome, but it's progress, and the best option for right now. Oh, he could technically use department resources to trace the call, but everything he's learned about incubi tells him that putting Stiles on the defensive, making him feel hunted, is a bad idea. And things had gone well. Stiles had pursued him, and though he's a bit displeased at the emptiness of his bed, physically he feels well-satisfied and relaxed now. All that's left is to have faith that Stiles had found their interaction as rewarding as he had, and hope that he'll be back for more.

Next time he'll get Stiles to listen.

He doubts Stiles will call back tonight, but he doesn't leave his phone on the bed as he takes his sticky self to the shower he'd been headed towards half an hour ago. He turns the ringer on and puts the phone on the counter near his shower instead, where he'll hear it if he does call. A smile works its way across his face at the little bubbles of anticipation and wistfulness that simmer in his chest. One thing is clear; he's not going to be able to play responsible, detached mentor here. No, this time he's invested, personally. Like a pup with a crush.

It feels like a good thing.
Chapter 7

Stiles knows he has a stupid grin on his face as he walks down the steps of his apartment building. He ducks his head and waves politely to Mrs. Sato and her corgi as he passes her door. Her eyes widen and her pupils dilate, keys stilling in her hands as he passes, and her answering smile turns a little sultry and appreciative. He bites his lip in embarrassment and hurries past, trying to rein in his aura or whatever. No need to roofie the nice lady on the first floor or anyone he happens to walk by on the street just because he's happy.

He'd actually done it. Had a consensual sexual experience that didn't end in death. And yeah, okay, maybe his orgasm felt more mild when he wasn't sucking the life out of someone, but that doesn't matter. The point is, there's hope, of a sort, regarding his sex life.

It's sunny, warm with the afternoon heat and clear skies. After an energized night of masturbating in the hotel, he'd wandered home in the dawn hours and then spent the rest of the morning lazily jerking off in bed, savoring the roughness of Derek's voice in his memory. The sound Derek had made when he'd come… If he weren't totally and thoroughly spent, he'd be getting hard now just thinking about it again.

Happy, he decides to treat himself to an excessive coffee and probably a danish too, so he heads for the coffee shop on the corner with a grin.

But his happiness is destined to be short lived. Jackson and Danny, looking completely human, are waiting for him, at his coffee shop. And though they have coffee at their table, the way they are both watching him when he enters tells him that they aren't there by accident.

Excellent phone-sex aside, he's starting to think he really does need to ditch town. And soon.

"Creepers much?" he asks, giving up on pretense and walking directly over to their table.

Danny just quirks an amused eyebrow, but Jackson glares at him in disgust.

"Get a coffee and sit with us," Jackson orders.

Danny rolls his eyes and smiles, glancing up at Stiles. "Please. We'd like to talk to you."

Jackson huffs, but after a moment he rolls his eyes skyward and bites out a, "Please."

Stiles tilts his head. "Ouch, that looks like it hurt," he says, earning himself a glare. But it had been a genuine request. He shrugs then. "Okay. Yeah, I guess I can spare a few minutes. You can tell me who does your makeup and we can talk about boys," he says with a mocking squeeze of his shoulders and a simper - though he legit wants to talk about their makeup because they look completely human in the light of day.

He keeps one wary eye on them as he orders his coffee. Danny just watches him back, calm and carefully non-threatening. Jackson sits sullenly, arms crossed and legs kicked wide and body angled so that his lean torso is still showcased even as he pouts.

He'd maybe started to warm to the idea of the fae club - or at least one of the places Derek had mentioned, but now… with these two showing up on his home turf. And there's an eerie feeling of déjà vu. After a little bit the sense of déjà vu clarifies on the curve of those perfect comma-shaped brows. He's seen Jackson here before. And Danny too, earlier. The cute guy who had smiled at him. It has his blood running cold. While it could be a coincidence… it makes him feel hunted
again, which pisses him off. He'd just started to settle in here.

The barista hands him his coffee with a flirtatious smirk. He winks at her, then musters his courage and heads over to the interlopers, ready to gather information.

"So talk," Stiles says, plopping down on the chair.

He pops the top off his coffee cup and swirls a finger in the whipped cream. He feels a little dirty when he licks it off his finger, not even trying to rein in his aura, but it feels good to assert the warning of his power. And to see Jackson's jaw tighten in discomfort as he shifts slightly in his seat.

"You haven't been back by the club. We were hoping we'd see you there," Danny says, offering a very charming smile that even turns a little heavy-lidded, though Stiles isn't certain whether that's just a natural reaction to his aura or a more legitimate flirtatious device. "You should come out tonight to the club. We're here to officially invite you."

"And why would I want to do that?" Stiles asks and slides his head back and snorts. "You guys didn't exactly make my first visit a good time."

Danny at least has the decency to grimace. "Yeah. Sorry about that. It's just, the Duke has been looking for someone like you for a long time. We maybe got a little over-eager."

Stiles doesn't buy it for a second.

Danny leans forward with a smile, "But we can promise you that tonight you'll have a great time. We've got lots of friends who are down to party, and the drinks, everything, is all on us. Right Jackson?" he adds, giving his partner a kick under the table.

Jackson smashes something that resembles a smile onto his face and says, "Right. We know how to party."

Stiles makes a face. That he doesn't doubt, but that's also hardly the point. "You still haven't explained why," Stiles contends, sipping at his coffee.

"I'm not trying to mislead you or anything. The Duke is interested in you, because of what you are, and because you're..." He purses his lips, eyes tracking quickly over their public location. "You're one of us. We stick together, makes life more fun, and easier too. Deucalion makes sure of that. He'll take good care of you."

"Yeah, but why?" Stiles asks, thumping the edge of his coffee cup against the table in annoyance. The evasion, the sloppy persuasion pisses him off. And maybe it'd work on someone else, but playing with persuasion is how he's lived the last five years of his life. Longer, if he's honest.

Danny sighs. "We don't know, exactly. His reasons are his own."

"So you're what, his fan-club? Bringing him a little gift to get a pat on the head?" he needles.

Jackson cocks an eyebrow at him. "We work for him. We're a lot higher up in his organization than groupies."

"Great," Stiles says, voice sarcastically ebullient.

Jackson goes stiff and Danny shoots Jackson a warning glance, but nods when Stiles lifts an eyebrow at him. "Yeah, we work for him. He's a good boss and he definitely makes it worth our
while. And he just wants us to all be friends," Danny tries.

Jackson rolls his eyes, which makes Stiles snort in agreement. He leans on his elbow, squinting at the fae in question. "Hey, what are you anyway, lizard boy?"

Jackson's nostrils flare in annoyance and he glares at some woman sitting next table over who has been not-so-subtly checking them out for the last several minutes. She jerks her gaze back to her coffee as Danny leans forward and puts a hand up by his mouth, blocking it from view.

"'Lizard-boy' is pretty much right, but yeah, a Kanima. And I'm a Vetala," Danny says under his breath.

Stiles makes a querulous face.

Danny rolls his eyes and says, "A kind of vampire."

"Right," Stiles says and swallows back his questions. The fact that there are different kinds of vampire might be common knowledge but he doesn't need to expose his gaucherie here. And yeah, maybe he could act on their supposed offer of friendship and gather more information he desperately needs, but he trusts the discomfort in his gut more than the smile on Danny's face.

"Come out with us tonight. We'll make it worth your while, seriously."

Stiles thumbs the edge of his coffee cup, mulling it over for a moment, but there's nothing like an upside as far as he can see, not right now in his life. He sighs and pats his thighs as he pushes back from the table. "Well that's great boys, it's been a lovely chat, but I've got people to do, things to see," he says, winking mockingly with the (actually rather amusingly ironic) malapropism as he rises from his chair.

"Will you at least consider it?" Danny asks, an edge of frustration creeping into his voice.


He tosses his empty cup in the trash and pulls open the door, heading out into the daylight and turning away from home, just to be safe. He walks quickly, putting more serious thought behind finding another apartment or three as a backup. But he barely makes it a block before he hears his name being called.

"Stiles, wait!" Danny says again.

He groans and turns around. "Dude, a hard sell is only going to backfire."

But Danny just keeps walking towards him.

There's a screech of tires on the street and Stiles turns as the door slams open. He spins on his heel to run up the road when two guys leap out of the bay. But when he turns, Jackson is already there, looking back at him with that stupid, smug face. He shoves Stiles back into the arms of the men. They grab him in a flurry of motion that's too fast for him to react to, and before he knows it he's being bundled into a blanket and pushed into a van, unable to exert his influence through the buffer.

He struggles, sure, but there's a hell of a lot of muscle - fae muscle piling on top of him as the van pulls away.

"Get off him," Danny says, and after a moment the weight on him eases and he's shifted back to an
upright position. He twists his head free of the blanket and glares at the pair of faces staring back at him. A pair of twins, or some kind of fae makeup that looks identical on them.

"What the actual fuck?" Stiles demands, squirming against the tightly-wrapped blanket-thing.

Danny sighs. "Look, we offered you the easy way. But you have to talk to Deucalion, and you're hard to track. We couldn't risk losing you again."

"Oh my god," Stiles groans, kicking hard at the seat in front of him. "Why can't you just fucking leave me alone?"

"Bec-"

"Fucking rhetorical question you fucking pawn," Stiles snaps, kicking the seat again in frustration. "Just don't even talk to me."

Stiles stews in silence the rest of the ride to the club, glaring at anyone who looks at him. But Jackson and Danny both seem more interested in donning sweatshirts and gloves, leaving none of their skin exposed to Stiles's reach. When they pull into the alley, Stiles doesn't even bother to fight as the twins unwrap him and bundle him out of the van into Jackson and Danny's waiting hands. He knows when he's outnumbered and he may need to save his strength.

He lets them lead him into the club. The neon lights are off, plain white lights leaving the place bright instead of shadowed. There's a while yet till it gets even close to being club hours. Instead of the main dance floor, they take him down another hallway beside the bar that leads to the bathrooms, then beyond. There's an "employees only" door that they take him through which continues past storerooms and a few smaller rooms marked private. This hallway is lined with statues, horrifying in their surreal realism. Unlike the pleasant ones out in the club, these are grotesque. Some of them look terrified, though sexual poses are the most prevalent. They stop at the end of the hallway and Jackson moves forward to type a code into a keypad.

"Creepy décor you guys have going on here," Stiles mutters.

"Deucalion is a gorgon," Danny says in a conversational tone, waiting patiently as Jackson swears and does the code again more slowly.

If that's not a non-sequitor that means… all these statues are-

"But he's blind," Stiles blurts, then winces, because maybe gorgons don't actually work the way the mythologies suggest. He wishes desperately that he weren't so young and inexperienced right now.

"Yes. A long time ago someone blinded him with a reflection of his power. But they didn't succeed in killing him," he says with a note of awe or pride in his voice.

Jackson gets the door open, and they step into what look much more like a home than a business. Jackson and Danny guide him through a sitting room and into an expansive den, lined with the occasional musical instrument or crafting station for various hobbies. Bookcases fill the rest of the wall space. Definitely a place of leisure and entertainment. On the far side of the room is a curtained enclave.

The curtains are all down, but he can see outlines through the sheer fabric draped around the enclave. He is certain that Kali is there at the very least, and working some serious mojo. Even though he can't see her with his eyes, he can feel the sex energy ripping and twisting through the air. He glances at the men holding him but they seem, for the most part, unaffected. Stiles, on the other hand, is desperately fighting to avoid popping a boner.
It's turning out to be a losing proposition. Moans from inside the enclave go straight to his dick, much to his dismay. His jeans are too tight, making his steadily-growing erection very uncomfortable. If he had his hands free, he'd just adjust himself, but Danny and Jackson are both holding on tight.

"Fuck," he mutters, shifting his weight to try and make his jeans more comfortable.

"Seriously, that gets you hot?" Jackson asks, sneering at him.

Stiles rolls his eyes, too pissed and too used to what he is to be embarrassed. "What part about incubus do you not understand? I am literally always horny, and I'm sure even someone as coldblooded as you can feel the heat Kali is giving off here. Jesus."

He shifts his hips again more obviously since the cat is clearly out of the bag. "Besides, you're the ones that brought us down here to play voyeur. Look to thy own house, douchebag."

Jackson tenses, like he's going to do something about it, but before he can, the curtain flips back and a feline fae comes out with a limp man slung over its shoulder. It's followed by another similar-looking fae with another body. Stiles's stomach twists as he watches them take the victims away down the hall.

The curtain is still stuck open, and he can see Deucalion, nude and reclining on the couch, looking tired and leaning his head back against the wall. Kali, on the other hand, is only partially visible. A woman starts moaning, full-on porn-star moaning. The corner of Deucalion's mouth turns up as her cries grow more desperate. Then, abruptly, they're muffled as Kali shifts further out of sight. But Stiles can feel the flood of sex energy in the air that's strong enough to have him biting back a moan of his own.

When he opens his eyes again, it's to the sight of a woman's body falling down on the floor near the doorway, her face in an impossible grin of pleasure.

The pull on his instincts is getting stronger, and part of him is desperate to know what's happening in there. Besides, Jackson and Danny are surely just going to drag him in there soon anyway. After just a brief deliberation, he gives up waiting in favor of walking with a little dignity this time. His captors scramble after him, catching hold of his arms and hissing at him to wait.

He tells them to fuck off, and when Danny reiterates his command to wait, Deucalion crooks a finger at them, and Danny and Jackson let him go.

He marches the rest of the way into the tent, and then glares back at Jackson and Danny before pointedly dragging the curtain shut again. Taking back that little bit of control feels nice, but then there's nothing for him to do but turn back to the scene inside the drapes. His skin is itching, like static electricity is in the air, pricking at the hairs on his arms. Before he'd felt oddly repelled by Kali's presence, but now it feels like he's almost vibrating on the same wavelength with her, with the waves of sex coming off of her.

Kali looks like a goddess, hair loose and wild, body shining with a thin layer of sweat, breasts heaving as she breathes deeply. Deucalion strokes himself slowly, and though his eyes are closed and his sunglasses in place, Stiles is pretty sure he should be looking anywhere but his eyes, because blind gorgon or no, across from Deucalion is what appears to be a newly-minted murder-statue.

Besides, Stiles can't stop looking at Kali.
She's riding the lap of a bound man, a human presumably. His eyes are wide with terror and arousal as she rubs at her clit and grinds on him. Stiles finds himself breathing heavily, in tune with her as she rides, with the deep breaths rushing through her parted lips. She lowers her head to the man's mouth and starts to pull his life, a low moan escaping her lips. It's fast and hard, spilling from him in a rush. The man under her convulses in the throes of his rapturous death and she shudders on top of him.

Then she's shoving to wobbly feet, moving in a way Stiles knows too well, floating on the high, like she's about to spread her mythical wings and fly. She instead strides over to Deucalion, straddling his lap easily. He's more than ready for her, and it takes just a shift of hips for her to slide down around him.

"Watch," Deucalion orders in a firm voice.

As if Stiles could do anything else.

Kali holds Deucalion's jaw, lets it hang open as she rolls her hips more slowly. Stiles is perplexed, but then the air shifts and he feels the energies change. Change direction. The blue vapor is sliding out of her and into Deucalion, slowly at first, then faster as she rides him with steadily accelerating motions. The sound of their coupling is slick and growing louder as she moves.

She starts to tense, nearing her climax, and Stiles feels like he might pass out when she comes. He's definitely about to come in his pants, completely untouched. Deucalion moans under her, hips rocking in time with her. Stiles is panting with her as she rubs herself furiously, unable to even so much as blink as she lets out a low, keening sound and goes rigid.

Stiles swears as his body betrays him, orgasm coming in a sudden rush as she comes. He's definitely about to come in his pants, completely untouched. Deucalion moans under her, hips rocking in time with her. Stiles is panting with her as she rubs herself furiously, unable to even so much as blink as she lets out a low, keening sound and goes rigid.

When she slumps to the side, Deucalion reaches out to catch her with lightning reflexes that defy the apparent limits of his blindness.

"Ah, you are too generous with me darling," he murmurs as he lays her gently down on the couch.

"You're too thin," she mutters.

"As are you," he replies archly.

Stiles is just glad that his jeans are black.

Deucalion strokes his fingers through Kali's long black hair as he says, "Stiles, I hope you'll pardon us a moment to rest before we talk. I wasn't expecting you till tonight."

Stiles grimaces and grudgingly says, "Yeah, sure."

"Someone will be by in a moment, so if you're hungry or thirsty, just say the word," Deucalion says as he presses a button on the table beside his couch.

Stiles stares at the statue a moment, at the perfect detail of the woman's face. Her head is angled, face peaceful, like she'd been unconscious when turned to stone. Her wrists are bound to her chest by rope, but the ropes remain unpetrified. When they cut her away from the hand-truck she's tied to, it will leave her statue looking like some sort of pining woman with her hands over her heart.

As promised, a fae ducks into the enclave a moment later, one of the ones from before who'd taken
a body away. If he had to guess, he'd say she, though it's hard to tell with her feline features - fur included. She sets a bottled water beside each of them without asking, then looks at Stiles inquisitively.

He shakes his head and she bows slightly before turning to the petrified woman. The hand-truck gets maneuvered into her paws and then she carefully wheels the statue away, closing the curtain again behind her.

The humans are still lying on the floor.

Kali eventually opens her eyes again, looks over at him for a bit before she slowly sits up. Stiles freezes when she stands, still staring at him, but then she turns and steps away. She reaches for a silk robe and slides it on, handing a second one to Deucalion.

Deucalion frowns as he takes it.

"He looks uncomfortable," Kali explains, glancing at Stiles.

Deucalion's sightless gaze swings Stiles's way as he dutifully slips on the robe, reducing the nakedness factor in the room significantly.

"Forgive me, my experience with Kali led me to assume that all of your kind preferred nudity."

"It's not that," Stiles says, embarrassed when his voice comes out cracked, because he's actually legitimately fine with the skin. "It's… everything else. What the hell did you guys just do?"

Deucalion is quiet for a moment. Then he smiles faintly and says, "Dinner, mostly."

Kali pushes some of her hair back from her shoulders as she takes a bottle of water from the side table. "I've been working for Deucalion for centuries now. I use my abilities to provide him the nourishment he needs."

"Why?" Stiles asks, crossing his arms over his chest and jerking his gaze away from the statue. She shrugs a shoulder disinterestedly. "Because he can no longer hunt for himself."

"Yeah? Why's that?" Stiles asks, though he supposedly already knows the answer.

Deucalion gazes at him unnervingly. "Because I am a gorgon, and I've been blinded."

"It means he can't feed on the energy he normally would using his eyes. It should have doomed him to starve to death," Kali says softly, stroking his shoulder.

Deucalion smiles warmly over at the succubus. "And it would have, but Kali harvests excess life force and passes it on to me, at times using the energy to temporarily heal my blindness, to help me get everything I need," he says, gesturing in the direction of the freshly-petrified woman.

"Excess life force," Stiles says with a snort, glancing over at the two naked bodies left on the floor like so much garbage. "You mean you kill people."

"So?" Deucalion replies, the faint edge of a sardonic smile touching his mouth as his gaze returns to Stiles. "They're just humans. Besides, you've killed a time or two yourself, to put it lightly."

Stiles glares at the floor, unable to deny it.

"A fae like you who feeds on human life energy must naturally understand that there is a hierarchy.
A natural order. We are the highest in the food chain. After all, humans are perfectly happy to subjugate those lower than them. How is this any different?"

Stiles gnaws on his lip a moment, trying to consider the words without a knee-jerk reaction.

"Maybe I think sentience ought to be the line."

Deucalion tilts his head in thought, running a hand over his somewhat-mussed hair. "And yet humans eat pigs and dogs and whales, just to name a few. There is a great deal of hypocrisy there."

Stiles concedes the point with a grimace. It's all stuff he's thought of in his own struggles with his conscience. He'd never eaten just to survive when he'd only fed as a human. He still doesn't.

"But do you have to kill them?" he asks, looking at Kali, who gazes steadily back at him. It's a loaded question, he knows. He wants the answer to be no, because of what it might mean for himself, but he also almost hopes that it's yes, just to make this whole thing feel less crazy.

"No," Deucalion says. "Though there are… extenuating circumstances at this time."

Extenuating circumstances that have Deucalion's sightless gaze shifting reflexively towards Kali, and her squeezing his hand briefly.

Stiles sighs. "All I'm saying is, still sounds pretty evil-badguy to me."

Deucalion gazes at him for a long moment, and though his gaze is sightless, Stiles looks away.

"So-called villainy is rarely so simple as that. Forgive me for indulging in this line of discussion, but I'm curious, why are you still using the convoluted human rule-book for good and bad?"

"Maybe I'm not," he says, though it's probably a lie. That's going to take time to get used to, he thinks, and he doesn't exactly feel like mentioning his youth. "But yeah, I'm still kinda expecting the next thing you're going to tell me is you have plans to rule the world."

Deucalion laughs, melodic and low, and again Stiles feels the warm pull of it rather than any negative response.

"No, definitely not. Though, you're not entirely wrong about how I view the matter. I'm of the opinion that seven billion people is far in excess of what is good for this planet. It's like letting the populations of white-tailed deer get too large in this country; bad for everyone, including the deer. So I've also never understood why we aren't the governing force, culling the herd, though that is a point of great contention between some of the major fae factions."

"Ok Magneto," he tosses back with a snort.

Deucalion turns his head and fixes his gaze on Stiles unerringly, despite the obvious petrified state of his eyes. It's fucking creepy is what it is. A slow smile spreads on his narrow face and his voice drops low when he speaks.

"A worthy analogy, perhaps. But surely you have found his arguments compelling at times," he says.

Stiles hadn't as a kid, thinking himself human. He doesn't want to think too hard about it now that he knows he's not. Not right now, anyway.

"Well, whatever. I'm not really interested in your politics," Stiles says.
"Of course not," Deucalion murmurs. "And beyond idle discussions for our mutual amusement, I wouldn't want you to waste your time on such matters anyway."

"And what 'matters' would you have me spend my time on then?" Stiles asks, crossing his arms defensively.

Kali frowns at him, though this time it's not in annoyance. It's a look of contemplation more than anything else as she studies his wary posture.

Deucalion smiles warmly at him and leans forward. "Yes, you are direct, I must remember that."

Stiles makes a faint noise of agreement as Deucalion gathers his words.

"To put it plainly, I hope for the following; that you get to know us, let us have a chance to become your friends, your lovers. Let us strive to please you to the best of our abilities. Learn from Kali, learn how to take life and to share it as skillfully as she. And then, when you're ready, serve me as Kali does. Help me survive by sharing harvested energy. And yes, with your assistance, it could all be done without killing, if that remains important to you."

That… actually sounds like it might be something he wants. If there's anything he wants right now it's knowledge about the fae, about Derek's talk of control and how it could be accomplished. But he also hears Derek's warning in his mind. He doesn't want to get in over his head before he's had a chance to find his feet, and being around Deucalion gives him the feeling that keeping his head above water might be difficult indeed. And then there's another factor. He frowns at Kali, who still looks exhausted. "That seems like a lot of work."

Deucalion nods solemnly. "I'm not about to pretend that your help isn't valuable to me, literally vitally so, in fact. Your talent is unique to your kind. Your kind are also increasingly rare, which makes you doubly precious to me. That means I will do almost anything to offer you something you want in return."

Stiles lifts his eyebrows, crossing his foot over his knee and letting it jiggle a little to release some of his nervous energy. "Yeah, well you were pretty vague about the benefits last time we talked."

Deucalion smiles at him. "Yes, because you will surely wish to choose your own benefits. Like Kali, I doubt you have little use for money."

"Easy to come by with my skills," Stiles agrees. He lets the silence stretch, lets Deucalion make the next move.

Deucalion hesitates, mulling over his options. "I do have much I can offer. I am a powerful fae. I can offer you some of that power. For instance, I might assign people to work for you, to cater to your desires without needing to expend your own efforts on persuasion."

Stiles picks at the rolled seam of his jeans on the side of his thigh. Being a commodity this valued would be excellent if he wanted to be on the market. If he had things he wanted, he could set a high price for his services. The only problem is, he has no interest in being a commodity at all, and that's when value becomes dangerous. Apparently he's a rarity, a precious jewel. The sort of thing thieves and treasure hunters make sport out of capturing back and forth. And given the way he was brought here, he doubts these particular people would have trouble with taking what they want.

His best bet is probably to get as much information as he can, then play along and get some more time, some freedom to "think things over". Of course, by "think things over", he pretty-much means leave town and go heavy on the hiding, but that's not what he's going to tell Deucalion.
"Okay, well, that doesn't particularly appeal to me either, but I think there's something else I need to understand first. My real question here is why?" Stiles asks, frowning. "I mean, okay, you want my help, but you said you've been doing this for centuries, but suddenly you're tracking my every move and kidnapping me for meetings, so what is it that's changed?"

"Kidnapping?" Deucalion says, voice lilting in what sounds like genuine surprise.

"Well I'm not sure what else you'd call being forced into a van by four fae and then dragged in here against my will," Stiles says, voice coming out a little more sharply than he's realized is probably wise.

Deucalion's face goes stony and Kali closes her eyes as she hisses, "I'm going to kill them."

Deucalion sighs. His voice is low and tight as he says, "I'm sorry, that shouldn't have happened. They must have misinterpreted what I meant when I said it was urgent that they find you and ask you to come meet me."

"So you'd let me leave right now if I wanted to?" Stiles demands, fingers curling tight against the denim of his jeans.

Kali looks upset when she looks at him, genuinely worried and unhappy at the prospect. But she purses her lips and doesn't say anything.

Deucalion's face draws down as he sighs, then says, "Yes, of course, though I do hope you'll stay at least a little longer, let us finish talking."

He almost believes it. Almost. But the important thing is that either way, his next few moves are the same. He relaxes a little, sinking back into the seat and switching his legs. "Yeah, okay. I'll hear you out."

"Thank you," Deucalion says, smiling at him. "Now, to answer your earlier question, there is a matter that constrains our timetable."

"Your extenuating circumstance?" Stiles supposes.

"Indeed," Deucalion says with a pleased smile, like he appreciates Stiles's shrewdness. "What I am about to tell you is a very precious secret, something that would be very dangerous to us if certain others were to know. No one outside this room knows this."

Stiles blows out a slow breath between his lips, rubbing his palms against the denim of his jeans. "And I suppose you want me to swear to secrecy."

"That is my hope, that you will not put us in harm's way."

Stiles grimaces, and shrugs. "I'm not going to swear an undying oath or anything, but I promise to be quiet as I can about things that aren't my business."

Deucalion nods slowly. "Then that shall have to be sufficient." He turns to extend a hand Kali's way and she takes it gently, guiding it to settle low on her abdomen. "The rarest of wonders has occurred."

"I am with child," Kali says solemnly, gazing down at her own body like she still can't quite believe it herself.

Stiles isn't sure what to do with that. It feels like it's something so significant, given the secrecy and
the looks on their faces, but he doesn't know why. He knows fae like Kali and himself are rare, but…

"Congrats," he says awkwardly.

A bitter-sweet smile spreads on Deucalion's face as he says, "This is why we need your help. Eating for two was already hard work. Eating for three… it's proving more of a challenge than expected. It's why we've been so heavy-handed with our feedings, and it's only going to get more difficult from here on out. That's the reason we're moving so urgently."

Kali's face is guarded, but there is a clear level of worry in her eyes as she stares at her hands.

"I don't know how much longer I can manage this on my own, and you're the only incubus we've come across in years." She lifts her gaze to Stiles's and it is entreating. "If not for our sakes, then I ask for your help for the sake of our kind. There are so few births among us," she says, gazing down at her belly.

"You see now why I'm ready to offer you whatever I can to solicit your assistance. Why I hope you will come to want us as we surely want you."

And it feels genuine. It feels like maybe there's more to it, that he doesn't know everything, but otherwise, yeah, it feels honest. Stiles sighs.

"Okay. Listen, maybe I'm interested. But I don't want to make any bargains without having time to mull it over. I mean, this is a big deal and I want to really think over the terms I wants to ask for in return so as not to get fucked-" he stops, scrubs a hand through his hair with a snort. "Except, uh, literally."

A genuine smile splits Kali's features for the first time and Deucalion laughs, his smile turning sly as he murmurs, "I should hope not."

The timbre of his voice sends a ripple of awareness over Stiles's skin. It really is attractive, as is the rest of him. Stiles glances at them, indulges in a momentary fantasy of being caught up between them, protected by their experience, by the training and knowledge they can offer him.

"Well," Deucalion says, his voice becoming more brisk. "That seems quite reasonable to me. How long do you need to think? Would two days be reasonable?"

Stiles scratches at his chin, then shrugs and says, "Yeah, okay. I think I can do that."

"Then I will leave you to it. Do you need someone to show you out?"

Stiles grimaces, "No, I've got it."

"The door code is 1-2-6-3, should you need it to get out or if you wish to return before our appointed time," Deucalion says, smiling. "You are welcome here any time."

Kali smiles at him too as he stands and he nods to her before saying goodbye and ducking out of the curtained area. His emotions are a bit of a mess, a sensation of whiplash after going from such wariness to such warmth.

Once outside the room, however, the pleasantness fades more quickly. The events of the day have all of his flight responses primed and he's checking over his shoulder every three seconds as he marches for the door. He's hungry and underpowered and overwhelmed and each step comes more quickly than the last as he makes for the outside world.
By the time he's on the road, his breathing is verging on hyperventilation. He doesn't want to stop, so he sets a steady walking pace and tries to focus on his breathing instead. Breathe in for five steps, breathe out for seven. Repeat.

Sympathy is one thing, but putting himself into that kind of servitude is another thing altogether. Sure, his first thought is that he ought to help, to do what he can, but he's also scared. Running the hell away and starting fresh is starting to sound like a really good idea.

He doesn't owe them anything. It's not wrong to take care of himself. He needs to make his decision for the right reasons, not an impulse.

He tells himself these things on repeat as he hurries towards his apartment. But the sight of Kali's worried face keeps intruding in his thoughts, as does the seemingly genuine offers of friendship.

By the time he gets home he's sweating and on the verge of what feels like some sort of breakdown. He's certainly about to break down into tears when he shuts and locks his door. His breaths are painfully tight in his chest as he searches for an even more secure-feeling space. The bathroom provides an additional locked barrier when he shuts himself inside it. The sink faucet getting turned on adds enough white noise to make the silence that much more apparent as he leans against the sink, trying to steady himself.

He's not the child he was when he left home five years ago, that much is certain, but when he stares at himself in the mirror, he still sees so much youth, despite the tension in his face. He's haunted by more than most people his age, though he's sure this is only the beginning. New York was supposed to be somewhere he could lose himself and instead it feels like he can't hide.

The cold water on his face isn't all that refreshing. Stiles dries his skin with an inherited hand towel, squeezing his eyes shut and rubbing the towel against his eyes until he sees white stars.

He blinks his vision back into focus as he hunches over the sink. He lets the water run for a while, watching it curve around the sink's bowl and funnel down the drain.

Life happens. Change is the norm. Water under the bridge.

His duffel gets laid out on the bed and his belongings shoved into it haphazardly. The important things are already in his backpack at the train station. Now it's just the extras. The clothes. The few knickknacks he's picked up. All said and done it's not much.

It never is. And that's the way it's supposed to be now. Ready to disappear at a moment's notice.

And he is, except for one thing.

Derek.

New York has just proven to be more than he's ready to handle, really. There's no shame in that, not knowing what he knows now; that he's not alone but way more alone in some ways, and way too young to be dealing with all this fae crap. He'd just find somewhere less complicated to cut his teeth on. If he decides to help Deucalion and Kali, it will be on his terms, somewhere he feels safer. That will be one of his demands. They'll come to him, not the other way around.

As for New York? He can always come back later. After all, if fae are as long-lived as everyone seemed to claim, it would hardly be a drop in the bucket for him to disappear for a few years. And if Derek is still here when he comes back, then… then he'll see.

He hesitates at the door, duffle bag in hand. He feels tired, he realizes, and hungry in more ways.
than one. Not a good way to start out if he's leaving. Not a good headspace to make decisions from. The locker at the train station will still be waiting if he doesn't go there now and lead anyone to it, and the things in his hand are expendable if he can't come back to his apartment before he hops an Amtrak.

For all that Deucalion's offers of friendship seem genuine, there's a hard edge to his pragmatism. He's sure that Deucalion is having him watched, but that might turn out to be for his benefit. If he goes out tonight, looking like he's clubbing and not running, he might have a better chance of sneaking out through the building's maintenance tunnel later on. So he has a plan. He'll nap the rest of the day, then go out when it's dark and go to the clubs one more time. He'll find one last evil human, one last New York City rapist, then feed for the journey and go. The real decisions will come tomorrow, or the next day.

He'll leave a message for Derek once he's safely away.
The door to the department bangs open and Derek is instantly on alert when the scent hits the room. The scent of death and poison and leather combined with the charred carbon on improperly-cleaned guns are a unique bouquet that only hangs around hunters. He rises smoothly from his desk and moves nonchalantly away and out of sight towards the file cabinets in the back. There's nothing of any use in any of them, but it provides him more cover.

Besides, the musty smell of old papers and dust and rusting metal is far preferable to the stench of the hunters. There are a lot of them. He counts heartbeats and they're too many to distinguish. He doubts they're after him, since he's given no one reason to hunt him, but he has no interest in being near them either. Erica doesn't even bat an eyelash at his move, and he's thankful once more for the fact that he has a partner who trusts him so implicitly.

"Who's in charge here?" a rough older man's voice demands to the squad room at large.

Erica stands away from her desk with a posture set in a precise blend of confidence and politeness. She's the most senior detective in the room at the moment, and though their captain is around, none of them are going to allow unfettered access to the captain's office.

"I'm Detective Reyes. What can I help you with?"

"You can get me the person who's in charge," the man says back dismissively.

Derek's not sure if it's misogyny or the arrogance of the powerful, but his hackles rise at the disrespect being shown his partner. Hard. He grips the edge of the filing cabinet tight to hold back his anger, taking sharp breaths to vent his adrenaline. It's not that he can't come to her defense if needed, but he also more than trusts she can take care of herself. So he waits. Watches her carefully.

She crosses her arms, totally under control. "I'm the senior detective available," she says coolly. "That's as good as you boys are going to get."

He can only see the man at the front clearly as he steps closer to Erica, his hair white with age and his face bitter with arrogance. "My grandson, Darrell Argent. He was murdered."

Derek swears silently. He'd known Stiles had taken a hunter, and from the police report it was well justified by his brand of morality. But he'd hoped, in vain, that the kill hadn't been anyone of note. A black sheep, perhaps. The Argent grandson of a hunter leader on the other hand... Vengeance to a disproportionate degree is a hallmark of the Argent clan.

He knows that well first hand.

Erica inclines her head stiffly. "I'm aware of his passing."
Derek stiffens. That's not good. She had no real reason to be looking at that file, unless she was following these strange 'drug overdoses' as well.

"My condolences," she says calmly. "However, sir, that case has officially been ruled an accidental death."

The man laughs bitterly. "It was a murder. And I need access to his case and information from the scene."

Erica purses her lips, taking a calming breath. "Still not our department at the moment. If that's an avenue you want to pursue, you can file an official request-"

"I don't want to file a request, sweetheart. I don't even care if you rule it a homicide like it should be, after all, it's not like you idiots know who to hunt. What I want is to see the medical examiner's report."

Erica's fists settle on her hips, shoulders going back as she sets her jaw and slips into a nonverbal posture of power. "As is your legal right. So again, I suggest you go to the morgue administration office during regular business hours and file a request."

The men stare at her, but she holds firm. It doesn't take long for other officers to cautiously rise from their desks or pause in their comings and goings to keep an eye on these interlopers. Like pack, circling an enemy. It isn't much longer after that that the hunters seem to get the picture. The man tips his head back with a look of disgust, then shakes his head and turns.

They file out like the motley crew that they are, and Derek slowly drifts along closer to his partner in their wake, once he's sure they're gone.

She glances at him with a grimace as she blows her hair out of her eyes and lets her hands fall down off their defiant position they'd taken up on her hips.

"The fuck is going on out there?"

Derek shakes his head, avoiding lying to her.

"I'm going to call Lydia," Derek says instead, turning and heading back towards their desks. "Give her a head's up what might be coming her way."

"Good idea," she agrees, eyes still on the doors as she follows him back. "Hey, you think we should look into the case? Guy seemed pretty adamant it was a homicide."

He shrugs dismissively.

"Oh come on, don't give me that. I know you're interested in it too - saw this Argent kid's file on your computer," she says, leaning on her desk.

That explains it. He stacks the papers on his desk and puts them in one of the drawers.

"A little," he admits, attempting nonchalance. "You know these things usually just blow over, once they realize their drug is killing more clients than it should. Not a good source of income if your base ends up in the morgue," he says as he shuts his desk drawer and locks it. "Might as well wait and see what Lydia says. She'll know if it's a waste of time."

Erica's eyes sharpen on him with predatory interest as he goes through the automatic pocket and belt checks. Like a cat who's heard the tin-opener. She sits and leans on her elbow on the desk,
well-distracted for the moment.

"Going to Bella's?" she says with studied innocence.

He levels a look at her and then snorts. "Yeah. And yes, I'll bring you something."

"Danish."

He rolls his eyes and glances pointedly at his watch. They're always out of pastries by this time of day.

"What? A girl can dream."

He shakes his head and makes his way out of the office. Going to the coffee shop down the street serves multiple purposes, letting him have enough privacy from Erica's clever ears as well as keep an eye out for any lingering hunters. It helps him compartmentalize - and means he can get the good coffee instead of drinking the swill at the station that always seems to have a hint of old mold to his sensitive nose, no matter how well it got cleaned.

It's a nice day out, but he's not there to enjoy the scenery. He's more focused on watching the people he passes on the street, keeping an eye out for anyone out of place on what is definitely his home territory. Having hunters in his area has his skin crawling.

He calls her when he's out of earshot of any of the officers milling around near the station.

"Good timing," Lydia says as she answers the phone. "We've got another 'drug overdose' in."

Derek sighs. Not good. He'd been hoping that after their last conversation, Stiles would call, give him a chance to help instead of hunting alone again.

"I was calling to give you a head's up. Hunters came to the squad-room. One of the recent 'drug overdoses' was one of theirs."

He hadn't mentioned that fact to her earlier, though he's known since it happened. As much as he appreciates and likes Lydia, he knows they can never come at things from the same perspective, with the same goals.

"They're catching wind that something's going on. They're going to want to see the autopsy report for Darrell Argent. He's apparently the grandson of a leader."

"Grandson?" Lydia swears quietly and creatively under her breath, switching languages to something old enough that even Derek doesn't recognize it. She heaves a sigh, and he can hear her heels clicking in the background as she paces.

"Well," she says. "That explains it… Certain things have become clear. The time for play is over. Derek, I fear we are out of time to deal with the boy kindly."

He purses his lips, dissatisfied with but unsurprised by the ruthless turn of her thoughts. "It's not him," he says firmly, setting his jaw against the impending argument.

She sighs. "I know."

He ducks into the mouth of an alley for a little more privacy from passersby. "Then why-"

"A chain of events has been started. I'm sorry Derek, but someone must intervene against him or else we'll be facing a Grand Hunt."
A Grand Hunt? That… that would be catastrophic. But the arrogance and lack of subtlety in Argent's voice spoke to the truth of Lydia's prediction. Pressures in the city have been building for a while, long before Stiles's arrival. He knows that, but it doesn't make it any less unfair. Derek swallows back a growl that Lydia doesn't deserve.

"You'd have him be the sacrificial lamb?" he bites out.

"One life for many?" she says softly.

"It's never that simple," he says, staring at the people walking past the mouth of the alley, oblivious and rightfully so. The sky is too blue, the air too gently warm for what their conversation holds, and the cool brick against his arm, the shadows provided by the buildings, those are much more appropriate for what they're contemplating.

She is silent for a long moment.

"No," she admits, voice sad.

He picks at the brick wall beside him, at the tiny patch of moss growing between the cracks. Their conversation already coming well close to the line of what she should be doing. But Argents don't play by the rules they claim and he's not willing to roll over for them just yet. He leans against the brick, hoping that she can give him just a little more. "Lydia, is there anything else? He doesn't deserve any of this"

"Let me…" There's a soft sound from her, low and breathy. He feels a spike of awe as well as sorrow as he realizes that she's deliberately opening her foresight. He knows that it's difficult and also stretching the rules to the point of breaking. She's doing something that few fae will ever come close to understanding, exerting herself beyond what comes freely to her, pushing in part on his behalf.

It might even cost her the life she's built here. She might be forced to move on, to separate herself from the tides of the factions in this great city. No matter what, after this he knows she's going to have to distance herself from him. She's sacrificing their friendship, her home, for him. For Stiles.

Her next words are chosen with care. "He can be saved. But… it won't balance. Not for years or even decades, depending on the sacrifice. It all hinges on a choice."

"A choice," he repeats.

She hesitates for a long moment, then says, "Your choice. I can't…"

"I understand," he says quickly. "Thank you."

Her sigh is sad, wistful as she says, "Things are going to change."

"The one constant," he says, pushing away from the wall and resuming his course towards the coffee shop.

"Yes. Yes it is." She laughs, the heavy mood easing finally. "Well, I've got to get back to it, and so do you."

"Yeah," he says, slipping into the flow of traffic. He doesn't feel better, but at least he knows one thing. Tonight he's going hunting. His wolf urges him to draw in deep breaths of the city air, to start gathering scents, to get ready to chase.
"Find him, Derek," she murmurs.

"Yeah," he repeats.

"You're being weird."

He glances up at Erica with a raised brow as she leans in and steals part of his lucky danish. It's true. He knows it. But it's nothing new. He's not human, so for someone working with him this closely day in and day out, She's going to eventually be faced with all of his little idiosyncrasies. So far in their partnership, she's rolled with them, enough that he relaxes into himself in her presence. But tonight… with a particular incubus getting under his skin and the full moon close rising in a few days, which just makes him even more itchy. It's no surprise that she's picked up on something.

"So?" he replies, taking a large bite of the remaining pastry before she can get her fingers on it. He's definitely ready to be done with this paperwork and get out of the too-narrow confines of inside. Day has worn ever closer into night and he's spent most of it turning possibilities over in his mind. Where he'll hunt. What this choice of his might be.

"Just an observation," she says, squinting at him.

"I'll be sure to let the captain know you deserve a commendation," he bites back with a sardonic look.

She flips him the bird and scowls at the empty napkin on her desk that doesn't contain anything but the glossy remnants of her own danish. But if he'd brought her two, she'd have cursed him for making her diet even worse. She crumbles up her napkin and shoots it for the trash bin, giving herself a congratulatory fist-pump when she nails it like she does every day. He offers her a half smile, but she sighs and sits back, tapping her pen against her keyboard and frowns at him.

"So. Those weirdos bothering you too?" she asks.

He cocks his eyebrow but accepts her choice of explanation for whatever oddity she's been perceiving in his behavior. It's a better cover story than just being weird.

"Some."

"The old dude was a jerk, but it was the blonde chick with the crazy eyes that got to me," Erica says.

Derek forces himself to click meaninglessly on his computer screen to cover the chilling alert that her words send rushing through him.

"I didn't see her."

"Yeah, late thirties-"

Early forties now actually, by his count.

"Long blonde hair and makeup and designer leather jacket and stuff. But crazy eyes and I'm pretty sure she was packing heat, even here."
It's worse than he thought if Kate is here. Her presence makes Lydia's foretelling of chaos more plausible. Anywhere Kate is, fae-hunter tensions mount quickly.

"Yeah, definitely a weird bunch," Derek agrees.

She sighs, leaning her chin on her hand as she stares at her computer screen instead.

"Too bad you couldn't find that kid," she murmurs.

"What kid?" he asks, even though he knows exactly who she means.

"You know, the one from Cahill's scene," she says, sipping her coffee. "I know you don't think it's anything weird but I think these deaths are starting to get creepy and so far he's the only apparent witness."

"True," he says, because it is, if one counts perpetrators as witnesses. "Still can't believe I didn't catch him," he grumbles, which is also true, more or less.

She snorts. "Had to happen some time. We can't be the perfect dream team all the time or the mortals start getting suspicious," she says with a mocking pout, fixing her hair with a facetiously glamorous flick of fingers.

He laughs at the irony, shakes his head, tempted to lob a pen at her.

"Still, maybe we should be looking for him, just in case," she says, mouth twisting in that way that it does whenever she's got a gut feeling leading her somewhere.

He frowns at his desk, at the file that's been sitting open for hours, unseen as he stared through it and worried about Stiles and Grand Hunts and everything in between. He glances at her, then tilts his head, deciding to let her in on part of it, hopefully to keep her from getting involved herself.

"Yeah. Maybe I'll go out again tonight, see if I can't find him." His wolf certainly likes that idea. It wants to roam the streets and hunt and enjoy the moonlight like a happy puppy.

Erica sighs, looking over at him with a scowl. "You do have to go home and have a life some time, Hale."

"Who says I have to go home to have a good time?" he replies archly.

"Nobody," she replies, eyes narrowing on him. "If you're planning to hit the clubs instead of the alleys."

He turns a smug grin on her, trying to keep it from turning too feral as he says, "Don't worry. I plan on enjoying myself."

The moon is going to be full in two days and it's already enough to have him sighing pleasantly as he steps out into the cool night air and lets the light slip over his face. Normally he'd hit one of the smaller clubs that catered to fae on a night like this, try to find another wolf or lunar creature just as energized as himself for a good time. But tonight he has a particular goal in mind.

Stiles.
His first stop is going to be Stiles's apartment. He takes a cab the majority of the distance, though he stops a block or so away to give himself the freedom to make his approach. It feels good to move out in the cool air, and it soothes his edgier instincts to get the chance to circle the building and check for threats before closing in on his target.

Stiles's scent is there, and though it's a bit faded, it's fresh. That would be encouraging, except for the scent is stressed and he picks up other fae trails. Someone reptilian, and someone who reeks of old blood have been here, more than once.

There are no lights on in Stiles's apartment and Derek focuses his hearing on the apartment, but hears nothing. It leaves him with a renewed sense of urgency, as well as the knowledge that Stiles is elsewhere. The front of the apartment building has a strong edge of Stiles's scent and Derek focuses on it, following it backwards into the night.

It's thready in places, disrupted by those that had come after it, but with his determination, he makes it a good ways before he loses it altogether. When it does disappear, he finds himself in proximity to a number of clubs. It makes sense. Stiles had told him they were his favorite hunting ground and place of enjoyment. He thinks about the venues that are nearby, thinking about which ones might appeal to Stiles.

There are a few possibilities, but only one place that is clearly on the list. The Duke's. It's not his first choice, personally, but it's the only place he knows Stiles might go. He only has a few more blocks to go till he finds the dark alley that contains the public entrance to the club. The alley contains a few masking wards, hidden well and recognizable only to those familiar with them. They help keep humans from straying too close to the club on accident. Mostly harmless. But they do vibrate on a frequency that Derek can hear, unlike most people. It's faintly annoying to listen to as he trots down the alley and tugs open the door to the club.

The pounding music drowns out the buzzing quickly enough and he makes his way down the narrow hall and out onto the dance floor.

He can immediately see that Deucalion is holding court, the curtains drawn so that sycophants and the like can come beg a moment of his time. Derek has no intention of doing so. Not since Stiles is nowhere on the dais. Instead he turns towards the bar, slipping through the crowd as unobtrusively as he can. He spots a familiar face or two, exchanges a nod here and there, but for the most part, goes unnoticed.

Pip, however, has a mind for details. She has a pint of bitter in hand by the time he reaches her domain.

"What brings you around?" she asks, letting her accent roll out more than usual now that she's faces with a kinsman.

"Slainte," he murmurs, lifting his glass to hers and clicking them before he starts to sip.

"Looking for someone," he says, his own words lilting a little.

"A specific someone, lad? Or are you going to make the lads and lasses particularly happy tonight and give one of them a go?" she teases.

"It's the right kind of night for the latter, isn't it?" he says, glancing back to follow her gaze and take in the flirtatious looks directed his way.

"But it's the former," she says with a sigh. "Well then, you know the rules."
He does. He pulls his notebook from his jacket pocket and writes down a few pertinent questions and pieces of information - not just information about Stiles, but also about himself, and some of it meaningless. Secrets and dross, real value and real garbage, just what the leprechaun needs to play with the forces of luck.

Pip wanders down the bar, tending to a few more patrons while he writes his truths. He tears them into strips, folds them up and scrambles them. He doesn't come by often, but in a century and three quarters, he's played the game with her plenty of times.

Pip sets a die on the bar, old, made of bone and carved with old Gaelic. A small bone coin gets set beside it with a four-leaf clover etched into its surface. Then she reaches over and divides the pile of secrets into two. "Evens," she says, pointing to one. "Odds," she says with the other, then points at him.

"And I'm evens," he says with a wry smile. "Because you're always odds."

Pip laughs and scoops up the die, rolling it around between her caged fingers. "Or am I odds because I know that you are evens?" She gives it a spin on the bar as Derek sips his beer and contemplates the point, watching the little die come to rest on a two.

She takes a strip from the even pile and folds it open. "Well now, isn't that a surprise?" she says, eyebrows going up at the sight of Stiles's name written on the paper. She runs the strip through her small fingers slowly once, twice, then taps it against her bar. "I thought you didn't get involved in politics."

Derek frowns. "I don't."

"He's an incubus," she says, grimacing. Her eyes flick over to where Deucalion is holding court and Derek wonders just how much he doesn't know about what Stiles's kind could mean here.

"And he's been here," she continues, looking back at him with kelly-green eyes. "Politics are involved, whether you like it or not."

"That's not why I need to find him," Derek says, picking up the die. It hums with the shifting energies their game is creating under the leprechaun's influence.

"No. But I doubt that's going to matter," she says, swirling her fingers through the air as she traces lines of energy he can't see.

His first piece of information has proven useful, and he'd rather not waste time on much more winnowing. "Do you have any more information for me about him?" he asks, leaving the game on pause, trading on the coin of their friendship in his haste. He'll come back and finish her game later if that's all she's got for him right now.

"No," Pip says, tapping the luck coin. "Which is why you should keep playing. Information isn't the only thing I can do for you."

He hesitates, lifting an eyebrow. "You'd give me luck? Why?"

She shrugs, like it isn't something people have promised first-borns for. "I like you. And it seems like the kid needs a break."

He sighs, tilting his head as he nudges the die around in his palm. "Can't argue with that."

She pours herself a glass of Irish. "Don't worry. It's just a little. Just for a few hours."
That's different. Just a little luck he can pay the price for without question. He rolls the die across the bar between them. The number comes up a four, and he takes a piece from his even pile. Instead of opening it, he stuffs it in his pocket without reading it. A lost question. A trick of fate. The hairs on the back of his neck prickle at the energy Pip is weaving from it.

She takes her turn, rolling a three, then pulls a slip from the odds pile, smoothing it out against the bar. She laughs at the mundane question. "What did you have for breakfast?"

He snorts as he takes the die and gives it a spin. "Danish and coffee. My partner's rubbed off on me."

"Partner? So you're playing after a little ménage à trois with the lad?" she teases with a wink. "Or are you the jilted lover? Not worth it, love, none I've ever met could resist the pull of an incubus."

"My work partner," he clarifies with a scowl as he takes his paper from her pile. "Favorite color?" he asks when he unfolds the next scrap.

She laughs again, flicking her coppery braid back over her shoulder with a hand bedecked in gold rings. "Lad, now that's a silly question, 'innit?" she teases, letting her old accent lilt more strongly as she pours them both more drink.

They play quickly then, twisting through the piles, taking turns keeping and sharing secrets. The air around them is charged by the time they finish the piles, the little bits of luck have been pulled apart and laid bare in the universe. When they're done, she closes her eyes and chants a soft rhyme under her breath, the old-world sounds familiar to Derek in their shared heritage.

The tension builds in the air until her eyes flash open, gone gold and shimmering as she says the last word. Then she snaps her fingers and taps the coin firmly, sending all the charged energy down into the bit of bone. It's almost an audible sense of suction to Derek, though the others around them don't seem to notice.

"Thank you," he says solemnly, pocketing the coin when she extends it to him.

She shrugs. "Come 'round more often. There're things at stake you know little of, and you might find some of your answers around here. After you find that boy, of course."

She flicks her bar towel at him in dismissal as she turns and heads down the bar to serve waiting patrons who are wise enough to be patient when the barkeep is conducting her business. He turns away from the bar and finds himself disconcerted as the rest of the world reintroduces itself to his consciousness with a throbbing bass line. He shakes himself, and rolls his shoulders.

Leprechauns

When he lifts his head, he finds himself gazing at Deucalion in his pavilion, whose sightless eyes are directed his way. It pricks at the hairs on the back of his neck, knowing there are so many things he doesn't know about what's going on here. He doesn't regret his choices to stay apolitical, but at the moment it is an inconvenience.

There's no sign of Stiles here, even if Pip hadn't assured him that she hadn't seen him, so he slips through the crowd, back to the entrance. When he gets to the street, he curls his fingers around the chip of bone in his pocket and relaxes into the ebb and flow of the tides of chance. He closes his eyes and turns slowly until he feels a faint pull. Walking sends him down the alley and back to the street. Turning in the direction of some of the clubs he's aware of has the pull strengthening. He has a feeling that for the rest of the night he'll be browsing purely human venues. Places Stiles
might use as his hunting ground.

It's not the first time he's used a leprechaun's luck. The key is to relax, to try not to anticipate anything. He meanders, wandering down the sidewalks without a clear direction. He navigates by feel, going until he comes past a junction and gets a feeling that's quieter and colder. Going back a few steps and choosing the other direction pulls the feeling back into harmony. There's almost a music to it, something old and not unfamiliar.

It's good, it's easy, until he turns down one road and the music crashes into a discordant rush that has him snapping his eyes open and slipping back against the wall, back around the corner he'd just turned. The sensation of danger does lessen, but it doesn't disappear as he steps away.

He steps down into one of the small stairwells leading to a basement entrance, not foolish enough to confront an unknown danger for no reason. He's learned a great deal in his years as a lone wolf, and one thing he knows is that foolish boldness isn't brave, it's just stupid.

He waits, and his caution is rewarded when the scent of a hunter's stink reaches his nose. His wolf growls, hunkers down and hides in the shadow. He watches carefully from the shadows as a small patrol marches past. To most anyone they would simply look like people out walking, perhaps a little goth, but nothing particularly special about them. To him, even without his nose he'd know who they were. Especially given the loose blonde hair of the woman leading the small pack with flashing eyes and a searching gaze.

Kate.

On a night like this, with that maniacal light in her eyes, she'd shoot first and ask questions later. Given the flash of a knife-blade next to a pistol on her hip, she's come armed for anything. He doesn't doubt that she has the proper weaponry to wound him. As well as the desire. In fact, he wouldn't put it past her to shoot him no matter the time of day or location. She knows him for what he is, knows Cora too. Cora she would definitely kill over what had happened in Argentina twenty years ago. Either way he's damn glad for the luck Pip had loaned him, for the warning that had likely saved his life.

More now than ever, though, he just hopes he's got enough luck left to find Stiles. Stiles might look harmless, but underestimating Kate or any Argent was just asking for trouble. When they're gone, when he finally relaxes enough to feel the softer melodies calling him through the night, he finally makes his way up the steps and continues on his path. Fortunately it's well in the opposite direction from where the hunters are heading, but the encounter makes him ever more certain that he needs to find Stiles.

The music begins to build, to sway through his mind more vividly, and he starts to wonder just how much luck Pip had pumped into the little chip in his pocket. If there's more to her involvement and opinions than she'd let on. He wouldn't be surprised. He's known her too long to think she's ever truly a bystander, for all she claims to be an observer at most. He's never known a leprechaun who could actually resist meddling in one way or another.

But for now, that's not important. What's important is following the music he hopes will lead him to Stiles.

Soon the sound of real music takes over, heavy and leaking in bursts through a door that's held open on intervals to let in club-goers. He knows where he's going now. This club is hot, one he knows by reputation alone from police reports that spring up in connection to it on a regular basis. The young, the reckless, and the predatory come here every night, but on a night like this they come in droves. The moon is turgid in the sky, overflowing its bounds. The air holds an edge to it,
an impatience that humans and fae alike feel implicit in their breaths.

It's enough to have him flashing his badge to get in, to circumvent the line he should rightfully be waiting in. Then again, technically he is tracking a suspect, despite the fact that he's not going to be arresting him, despite what human law would demand. He follows on the edge of a crowd of young women, bubbling with excitement and anticipation of a sexy night as they go down the hall and out into the club proper, heading right for the bar.

Derek drifts towards the dance floor instead.

The energy here feels right, a slow and sensual sub-beat underneath the highs of the dance music vibrating through the air. The wolf in him rumbles, tasting the tug and pull of hunting and mating instincts the writhing crowd of humans inspires despite its duality. He feels like a dark stone looking up through the ripples of a shallow pond, an interloper cutting through the lightness of the fireflies dancing around him, reflecting through the water and yet leaving him untouched. Because something pulls him still deeper, further out onto the dance floor. A familiar tension that tightens his throat.

It makes sense suddenly when a group of people shifts, the sea of bodies parting briefly enough for him to see him. Stiles is dancing, moving to the beat of the music with sinuous rolls of his body that are punctuated by the hard edge of strength that lives under his skin. His eyes are closed and his head tipped back, lips parted slightly as he moves with the rhythm of the crowd, floating on the energy that flows around him.

Derek doesn't know enough about incubi to know whether they can feel the sexual energy this way, but he suspects they do given the sheer ecstasy on Stiles's face as he moves. He's not quite alone; the people around him are aware of him, gazing at him in admiration and moving in harmony with him. But no one is really dancing with him.

His clothes leave little to the imagination, jeans tight and low-slung, tank-top a loose and sparse y-back that is the color of blood. But even more than the cut and the color, it's what it reveals that is the real show-stopper. Derek stalks along the edge of the dance floor to get a better look at Stiles's back, the tattoo that spans the entirety of it from shoulders down to where it disappears under his jeans.

Wings.

They're not the typical feathery angel wings. Instead it's a design that is much more appropriate for an incubus. They're like a dragon's wings, taut and hard and sensual. Like leather with sharp claws at the tips. The ink has a classic edge to it, simple greyscale shading, but they're that much more realistic for it. They flex and move with Stiles's body like they're a living, breathing part of him. His wolf rumbles in pleasure at having found his quarry, pleased and ready to stalk now that he's hunted him down.

Another club-goer cuts off his line of sight, slipping in against Stiles's back and dancing against him. But the guy's rhythm is shit and Stiles pushes away from him after a moment, casting the guy a wink and saying something over the music as he turns to move elsewhere.

The guy doesn't take a hint. He grabs Stiles's arm and tries to hold him there. It has Derek's protective instincts flaring hot, but Stiles has it well in hand. His eyes are cold over his hard smile as he turns back to face the guy. He presses bare fingers to the guy's wrist deliberately and leans close to whisper something.

The man goes slack, dazed as Stiles's aura works its magic. With a little nudge from the incubus,
the man drifts away and Stiles turns and slips into the crowd, heading Derek's direction this time. The chip of bone in his pocket might be sending the incubus his way, with a little manipulation of luck, of the random choice of direction. Stiles doesn't seem aware of him as he slips through the crowd, hunting for someone better to dance with.

Derek is faced with the choice of whether to stay where he is or slip away and suddenly realizes how very much he doesn't want to wait anymore.

He wants to be the one Stiles chooses next.

Whether it's chance or the deeper awareness of others of their ilk, Stiles moves his way, slipping into the space forming around Derek amid the flow of dancers. Derek stays where he is, a rock amid the waves, not moving at the same pace as the rest of them. It's that that finally draws Stiles's gaze to a focus. He'd been moving on instinct, dancing with the current, not going anywhere intentionally. The sight of Derek draws him short.

The night, the energy of the place has Derek staying silent, paused in the moment lest he shatter it. But there's a magnetism between them, an underlying rhythm that says they move to a unique pattern. It's enough that Stiles doesn't run - though Derek can tell he thinks about it. His eyes are amber, and so much more complex than the gold of the wolves he's known. There are layers there in him that he doesn't understand, for all that he has more than a century on the younger fae.

Stiles doesn't say anything either. He just moves closer, shifting through the tension without cutting it, pulling them together like a seam. And then Stiles is just there, sloting his back up against Derek's chest, curling a hand back to Derek's neck, body stretching and undulating with the beat. The rest of the world fades to irrelevance as Derek moves with him, running on instinct as he curls a hand around Stiles's hip, cinching closed the gap between their hips till Stiles is riding against his lap with every pulse of the music.

His wolf growls.

This close his scent is distinct from the masses, tinged with an edge of intensity, of hunger. It reverberates with something primal, something feral in Derek's chest and he lowers his head to drag his nose along the soft skin behind Stiles's ear. Sweat is dampening the edge of Stiles's hairline and Derek can't resist flicking his tongue over his lips to catch the taste of him.

Stiles's hands curve tight against Derek's thighs as he rolls back against him, leaning his head away and giving Derek more access to his neck. It's an offering he can't possibly resist. He tastes his skin, inch after slow inch as they sway and grind together, moving his lips down Stiles's neck to the dip of his shoulder where the tip of the claw-spiked wing extends.

Derek knows he should be talking to him, helping him learn how to fit in with the fae community at large enough to not get himself killed. Instead he trails his fingers down the undulating span of Stiles's wings, reveling in the shiver that ripples through his heated skin as he touches him.

Pip's right when she says that resisting an incubus is one of life's more foolish endeavors. He gives in instead, leans close and slides his hands around Stiles's ribs, leaning their bodies tight together as he sucks a mark into Stiles's neck. It fades like the echo of the music as the dj shifts gears into another song, but the way Stiles's fingers had tightened on his thighs when he'd done it tells him it was worth it.

He should talk to him. He should pull him aside where he can at least tell him the most pressing information.
He will. Of course he will.

Just... after the next song.
If Derek thinks that their being in public is going to be enough to keep Stiles from bleeding him dry, then he has another think coming.

The impending threats of Deucalion's machinations have his fight-or-flight instincts primed and ready, and Stiles is just a hair's-breadth away from lashing out. And he's so hungry, in so, so many ways. His mouth is tingling with desire, with the need to turn his lips to press over Derek's. He's already shifted so that they're dancing chest-to-chest, unable to keep himself from curling an arm around Derek's shoulders to bury his fingers in his impossibly sexy hair. And Derek's not making it easier, not at all.

So far he's just teasing, only pressing his mouth to Stiles's neck and never his face. The only part of Derek that touches Stiles's mouth are his fingers, which run up Stiles's throat every now and then and brush against his lips. Like a promise to keep them closed. But in some ways that just makes it worse. His mouth is probably his biggest erogenous zone, given his nature, so every touch has him shuddering with the effort to keep his lips closed. Plus there's the counter-intuitive arousal he's built around fantasies involving the denial of that very zone. He doesn't doubt Derek remembers Stiles begging him to gag him with them during their phone sex fantasy. In his darkest, loneliest nights, Stiles has sometimes wondered if someone could do it by force, if only they put a kind of muzzle on him. Tied him down, maybe. But no, in the heat of it he'd surely lose control, persuade his partner to remove his mask.

Derek tells him he's stronger than the humans, that Stiles won't hurt him, but Stiles has been able to persuade Derek to do his bidding on more than one occasion with only a bit more effort than it takes to control the humans he so easily and compulsively drains dry. So stronger he may be, but without the added restraint of keeping himself in control, he fears that Derek could in fact succumb to his killer kiss. And why would he risk testing it when Stiles is so new to the idea of control? If Stiles loses control, what defense does Derek have against him?

And he's so hungry.

As it is, it's getting harder and harder not to encourage Derek's lips to 'accidentally' make their way up to his, to seal his fate. He tries to focus on their hips instead, the way their thighs slot together so perfectly. Or the heat, or the lights, or anything. The music drops into an explosion of bass and reaching discordant reflections of the melodic themes. It's like a musical orgasm, shared in part by all the dancers and Stiles throws his head back in a desperate attempt to let the swell of human energy that greets the sounds satisfy the hardest edge of his hunger.

But when Derek tightens his grip on Stiles's waist and drags the beat out, Derek's hips rolling against his, driving the hard lines of their erections against each other in a slow, taut slide, it's like there's a wire that connects his cock to his mouth. It's too much because the next thing he knows, his fingers are tight in Derek's hair and he's pulling, dragging Derek's head back with too much force, baring his mouth to Stiles's seeking.
Derek's hands go limp on Stiles's waist and his eyebrows go up in challenge. He bares his teeth, primal, defiant, even as his body surrenders. Like he wants it, like he's daring Stiles to do it.

Just like they all do. They all desire him in the end, even knowing it will be their death.

"No!" he gasps, shoving back from Derek, stumbling against another body.

"Stiles," Derek says, moving towards him, looking completely unconcerned and not a little aroused. Another 'willing' participant in Stiles's deadly charade of seduction.

An undeserving victim. Stiles backs away, trying to gather his strength against the desire to devour.

"Stiles," Derek repeats, voice soothing, hands lifted like he's gentling a spooked horse.

"No," he whispers, shaking his head. He catches Derek's wrists as the werewolf reaches for him.

"No. I'm leaving New York. I'll call you when I'm gone."

"Don't go," Derek says. Pleads.

"Don't follow me," Stiles orders, pushing away from him. Derek's fast, but he's faster.

He runs.

Navigating the dance floor is second-nature to him, slipping between people and leaving chaos in his wake, following the currents till he finds a door, bursting out into the cool night air and accelerating away. All he can hear is the sound of his sneakers hitting the pavement, the air rushing through him. He runs from all of it, from the people, from the music and from the light, ducking away into alleys and shadows.

Then again, when doesn't he? It's all he's done for five years. He'd been a fool to even begin to hope anything different would happen. To think that he could handle anything else. He'll just get the fuck out of this city that's too big, too intense for him to stay sane in. Derek is too intense for him to handle. He wants him, wants him so badly part of him was ready to do it, to take his life just so he could take him to his bed. But he can't. He may not be human but he wasn't raised to be a monster. He can't just turn into one and forget the values he once knew.

It's a blind dash through the streets that he doesn't pay attention to. His heart is racing and he just wants to go. And it works, for a while. He just escapes it all in the night.

Until very suddenly the night comes back with a vengeance.

There's a flash of grey in front of him and then pain like he's slammed into a brick wall. Harder, because it was moving back at him. Whatever it is he feels a rib crack as his forward momentum is halted and reversed. He hits the ground hard, skinning his elbow and palm. He groans twisting his neck to see what's in front of him, but the alley is empty as far as he can see. He'd chosen the path for its darkness, not thinking how it might be used against him. He can barely see his hand in front of his face.

"Did you really think you could escape by running? How stupid are you?" a voice hisses.

And yeah, literally hisses. The ss are drawn out too much, rattling in the empty alley. He twists toward the sound but all he catches is the faint flash of green-tinged grey snapping over his head.

"Then again, all you can really do is think with your dick, isn't it?" the creature taunts. The voice is familiar, he realizes now, if he cleans away the hissing. Gold-green eyes flash at him from the dark
and he abruptly understands who he's talking to. He's seeing Jackson in his proper form this time.

The voice comes from another direction and Stiles opts to push to his feet instead of keep spinning trying to follow the Kanima's movements.

"What's it to you, jackass?" he spits back, pressing a bleeding hand against aching ribs. Though he supposes making a break for it in the open had been a stupid move given that he'd been sure Deucalion's goons were watching him. At least he'd been right about that.

"You've made the Duke unhappy. When the Duke is unhappy, my life gets more difficult."

"Yeah, no. I'm pretty sure you're the one that fucked that up by kidnapping me," Stiles snaps, inching backwards towards the mouth of the alley.

With an angry hiss he brushes past Stiles, knocking him off balance by scratching his claws down over Stiles's shoulder. The cuts tingle and he swipes away the clear slime that's clinging to his skin in the Kanima's wake.

"You reek of wolf," Jackson complains.

For a moment Stiles is confused by the accusation, but then he gets it. Derek is the wolf.

"Sorry?" he offers, half sarcastic, half perplexed by the non-sequiter.

The tail slams into him again, this time from above, knocking him to his knees. But he's starting to recognize the sounds of Jackson's movements, of the swish of his tail. Jackson's above him, climbing along the walls instead of the ground. Stiles scrambles back to his feet away from the sounds.

Stiles holds his hands up warily, trying to make sense of the situation. He can afford to eat a little humble pie if it'll get him out of this fucking alley. "Look, I might think you're a douche-nozzle, but I never meant you any harm or insult or whatever."

There's a hiss that skitters towards him. Eyes flash in the shadow. "No harm? You're dangerous. You're too obvious. Your kills are sloppy, too close to our territory. You're putting the Duke at risk."

This time when the tail sings towards him he reaches up to intercept it. It slams hard into his hands but he gets enough of a grip to yank. Jackson goes with the motion, sending Stiles stumbling as the lizard-man leaps off his perch and down into the alleyway.

"Jesus, fuck. It wasn't like it was intentional. Why are you attacking me? It won't happen again."

The hiss he gets in response is outraged. The claws dig at the asphalt, tearing up loose crumbles of it in a mess. "Why? Counting on your hunters to catch me tonight?"

"What?" Stiles demands, more confused than ever.

"Either you're a moron and you've somehow kicked a hunters' nest inadvertently, or you've done it intentionally to cover your tracks while you ran. Either way, I ought to kill you for the trouble it's causing me and mine. Not all of us have the luxury of always wearing a pretty face but your sort always conveniently forgets that fact. But that's not what my problem is."

"Clearly," Stiles mutters.
He gets another angry hiss in return as Jackson stalks closer, head ticking sideways in a reptilian gesture. "The problem is that Deucalion wants you."

"So?" Stiles snaps. "I didn't ask him for anything and I don't owe him anything either."

The creature leaps forward and lands right in front of him in a crouch, thick tail arching slowly through the air as yellow slitted eyes glare at him. "I get Deucalion what he wants. Even sluts like you."

Stiles laughs darkly, gauging the distance between himself and the only nearby object that might plausibly make a weapon; a discarded beer bottle near the dumpster. He shakes his head as he says, "The irony would really amuse you if you had, you know, a sense of humor. And I told Deucalion I'm thinking about it, okay?"

"Thinking about it?" Jackson hisses derisively as he slashes claws through the air, heavy with threat. "I'll make it easy for you. You're going to do what he wants."

"So what, you're going to try and take me to him again?"

The laugh is chilling. "I could. But instead I'm going to hurt you. I'm going to beat you until you beg me to take you to Deucalion for his protection."

Stiles sets his jaw at the threat. He's not juiced up, but he's not weak either. He still has more strength than a normal human and he's not going to go down without a fight. When he sees the muscles in Jackson's abdomen tense as a precursor to motion, he hurls himself in a sideways dive-roll. It's awkward and it hurts like hell on the now-painful ribcage he's wearing, but the massive muscular tail doesn't hit him, nor do the claws.

"Deucalion isn't going to like this," Stiles tries, pushing awkwardly to his feet. He's already starting to feel sluggish and stiff. More than he should be.

Jackson hisses at him. "You think you know him? You don't."

Stiles doesn't argue, because he's not wrong. He manages to grab up the beer bottle with a minimum of fumbling and crack it against the dumpster to turn it into something dangerous. Being a knife fighter isn't exactly one of his skills, but he knows a few tips and tricks and he's also pretty sure he's not going to rule anything out when he's up against something he doesn't have a clue about how to fight. Claws and tails weren't in any training manual he'd borrowed from his dad. Not on such a sentient being.

He spins and lunges toward Jackson's momentarily exposed abdomen, but the window gets closed immediately with a fast arm. The claws catch Stiles's forearm with a glancing blow, not enough to make him lose his grip on the bottle, but that's okay because the weapon has distracted Jackson's attention long enough that Stiles gets in a bare-knuckle punch to his throat.

But Jackson just laughs.

Not because it wasn't a good hit but because the throat isn't apparently a weak spot for a Kanima. And definitely not enough to slow him down because he follows Stiles's motion back without hesitation, claws returning the favor with a slap across the face.

And that could have been it.

That could have been the end if he'd been trying to kill Stiles. All it would have taken would have been to slash a couple inches lower and tear open his carotid. Incubus or no, his level of hunger
means he is in no shape to heal that kind of injury on the fly, especially given he has no idea how long a fae-caused injury might linger. But for whatever reason he's fortunate enough that he only ends up dizzy and with a bleeding face.

Jackson's hissing laughter reminds him of one important fact, however. That he's not human, and he needs to start fighting like an incubus. He drops the bottle and throws himself bodily at Jackson, scrabbling for a grip on him, getting inside the striking range of his claws.

Jackson shoves at him, hissing indignantly, but after a couple tries, Stiles manages to get his hand on the reptilian skin for long enough that he feels the tingling warmth the always tells him he's made enough of a connection for it to matter. He does everything he can to power up the connection, to open the channel to bind Jackson to his will.

"Stop. Leave me alone," Stiles commands.

The lizard stumbles back a few paces and Stiles bolts, not wasting even a second of his advantage. There are people on the street and he's desperately hoping that even Jackson isn't prepared to set off a panic among those who aren't too intoxicated to realize there's something big going on.

But he's not fast enough, not by a long shot. He only makes it a dozen paces away before he's slammed down into the asphalt. Jackson's full weight is on his cracked ribs, and he cries out. The sound turns into a scream as Jackson digs in, hind-claws cutting into the flesh of his back. He thinks he hears one of his ribs snap.

He fights for leverage but he's got nothing, and his wrist has him yelping when he tries to push with it. Jackson's fore-claws curve over the back of Stiles's skull and give Jackson the leverage to slam Stiles's face into the ground once, twice, three times. Everything goes pretty fuzzy for a few moments and he goes limp against the cold asphalt, trying to focus himself enough to influence Jackson again. Or maybe just not black out and keep breathing.

He gets dragged over onto his back and a hand gets wrapped around his neck. Jackson leans close and hisses in his face, forked tongue tasting the air or taunting him, he's not sure. But he is sure of one thing. Something important. It takes a moment for it to filter through his brain but when it does, he acts decisively.

He swallows back his disgust and fear and plants his mouth over Jackson's, enveloping the taunting tip of that tongue and letting his own instincts loose. Energy starts flooding his body, wonderful, primed energy that any other time would disgust Stiles to know that Jackson got off on this violence. His vision starts to clear, but abruptly his grip is broken when Jackson's head rears back on a horrible clicking hiss of a roar. The Kanima twists, lashing out at something behind him in the shadows.

Stiles is strong enough to stumble to his feet. His ribs ache like hell, screaming with each breath in, and he's pretty sure his left wrist is broken. Jackson's weaving away from him a pace, a thick blob of blue-green fluid that must be blood sliding down his back beneath a wicked gash. He sees a flash of silver in the alley and his eyes finally catch on what - who - has Jackson distracted. It's a woman, clad in black leathers and with her blonde hair tied back from her face. She's crouched in a defensive knife-fighting stance, jagged blade in hand as Jackson stalks towards her. His tail whips around and Stiles stumbles out of the way, groaning as he bangs into the dumpster again.

She shouts a warrior's cry and lunges again, slashing at Jackson. He bellows as the blade cuts his arm, more blue-green blood gushing from the wound. He spins, slamming his tail into her and sending her stumbling, but Jackson doesn't pursue. He leaps up the wall instead, climbing quickly over the various protrusions till he disappears over the line of the roof.
Stiles gapes after him, struggling to draw himself upright and away from the dumpster. Abruptly he remembers that he is not alone in the alley and jerks his gaze down to look at the woman. The move has his head spinning, but he can tell that she's moving towards him.

"Hey, are you alright?" she asks, face curving into a sympathetic expression.

But he doesn't trust it. "What was that thing?" he asks, trying to muster some confusion or shock, hoping she hadn't heard them talking. She's a hunter, at a guess, and he's not exactly in fighting form.

She shrugs, still gliding closer. "Monster."

Yeah. He really doesn't trust the faint smile on her face for a second. Or the excessive leather or the fact that her hair doesn't even look out of place. Creepy.

"Uh. Right," he says, pushing away from the dumpster, more than ready to be on his way again, no matter how much his head is spinning. "Well thanks for scaring it off but I'll be fine-"

"No you won't," she says flatly, and before he can so much as take a breath, she's snapping forward and there's a piercing pain in his belly. A pain he's felt before.

"Die, freak," she hisses with a mocking grin on her face. "Don't know what you are, but you're not human, and that's enough for me."

Her eyes are feral as she leans into the knife, grinning as blood gushes down over her hand. Even more potently than with Jackson, there's a dark arousal coming off of her in waves, an energy that, while pungent like a dark wine, is something he can feed off of without even really trying. Stiles isn't out for the count yet. Almost on instinct, his hand slaps out against her bare throat.

"Stop," he orders, putting every ounce of his power of persuasion behind it, though it leaves him gasping for breath.

Her eyes glaze over as her hand falls away from the knife blade. He twists his hand down the front of her shirt, skin to skin as he gropes her breast, sending another pulse of life-saving sexual energy through the air to him. He gulps in charged air, trying to catch his breath but the blade in his side is making that impossible. It needs to come out, fast.

The contact his good hand has with her body is the only thing keeping him alive, so it has to stay. Biting his lip he braces himself and lays the edge of his broken wrist against the hilt of the blade. There's enough width to the guard for him to get enough leverage to pull the knife back out of his body. He screams with it. Grunts and hisses and it's slow going, it hurts like fuck, and he has to pause sometimes to strain forward and tease more sexual energy from the woman's body, but he does it. The instant it's gone he can already feel the lack of rotten disruption in his flesh, feel the energies meeting back up inside him.

And yet he needs more. He's so weak as the blade clatters to the ground, so afraid and yet aroused because there's prey, right there in his hands. She leans against his hand, rubbing her breast against him as his compulsion to stop starts to weaken.

Part of him rails against using his ability against someone who isn't a rapist, a piece of habit panicking at the crumbling structure of his morality. But he chokes on a laugh as blood continues to dribble down his side. She'd tried to kill him, for no other reason than he was different from her. And as far as he's been able to work out, kill or be killed is the purest moral of survival.

He thumbs her nipple as he presses his mouth over hers, drinks in her gasping moan as her hips
press hard against his. Then he drinks in *everything*, as quickly as he can manage. He pours it down into his belly, into the blight-tinged wound made by the special blade. That one is the worst, the most dangerous, and the thing that his every instinct tells him to heal.

She shakes under his grip, crying out with a moan as her eyes roll back into her head. The end is close, he can feel it. She's going to die in his hands.

**Could** he stop?

The others said it was possible. But he already knows it's not going to happen tonight. Maybe if he weren't injured, he could at least try. But now? Her life energy is nowhere near enough to handle his injuries, and his instincts are winning out. They own him almost as powerfully as ever before, and for the second time in his life a blonde woman dies under the touch of his lips.

When she sags against him he stumbles, still far too weak to do anything but let her slide to the ground in a lifeless heap. Her face wears a grin as maniacal as the one she'd worn when she'd stabbed him, though her eyes are now without any spark.

He breathes and it aches. He still has a broken rib, he can feel it grinding unequally as he sucks in necessary air. Hunger still gnaws at him and he wobbles as he stands away from the wall. Her life has only served to combat the damage she'd done to him and part of what Jackson had done. The rest of his injuries, his hunger, those remain untouched.

Fuck New York. But he can't exactly catch a taxi, let alone a train out of the city looking like this. Any hotel would be just as likely to call the cops or an ambulance as give him a room and he doesn't have the energy to persuade anyone otherwise. His apartment, he decides, with its shower and fresh clothes and bed is his best bet. Decision made, he starts to walk. He's not even too far distant now.

But getting home proves plenty difficult. He has to move quickly enough not to get caught again by Jackson or a hunter or even a regular human cop, but slowly enough that he doesn't end up passing out on the street from blood loss. His shirt is matted and sticky with blood that won't stop trickling down from the slashes in his face and back. His knee is killing him, but it's not nearly as bad as the pain that each breath brings against cracked ribs.

He stumbles through the increasingly familiar back alleys and shadows, doing his best to avoid the light. He's not sure how he makes it, but he does. He gets home. He's even still got his keys in his pocket and one good wrist to open the building door with.

The elevator ride up to his floor is actually the most difficult part because he stops moving, sags against the wall for a minute to rest and almost crumbles from the sudden cessation of momentum. He's certain he has a concussion given how badly he wobbles when he stumbles out of the elevator towards his apartment. But he doesn't fall. Hell, maybe he's not even really that badly injured, despite these being the worst injuries he's ever had. Maybe it would take a lot more to actually threaten his life. Either way when his apartment door gets opened he lets out a sob of relief at the sight of it, at the apparent safety of his quiet, empty home. He shuts the door behind him and goes straight for the bathroom.

He's a sight to behold, drenched in red and bearing dirt over his torn clothes. He laughs, almost giddy as he pulls his shirt up, using the inside edge to wipe gravel away from the wounds on his face. They're healing; slowly but visibly, and he doesn't want bits of asphalt in his skin when it heals over. Getting clean is the most important step now.

It hurts like fuck when he pulls his shirt over his head, but it feels nice to get the torn fabric out of
the gouges on his back. He can feel them start to heal without the cloth impediment. His shirt goes in the tub. Then, slowly and painfully since he only has one good hand, the rest of his clothes follow. The heap is so soaked in blood it results in a red stain that dribbles slowly towards the drain.

Once bare, the rest of him gets a brief but achingly slow once-over with a towel to clean away the worst of the blood and whatever other debris is impeding his healing. Eventually, though, the towel gets dropped into the tub because he's shaking too badly. Lightheadedness isn't good, but he isn't sure if it's from head trauma or a sign that he's going into shock.

He's so cold and he wants to shower or take a bath but he's not sure he wouldn't pass out and drown if he did. He knows the warm water could cause his blood pressure to drop, so he settles for pulling on his bathrobe instead and leaning against the counter as he uses the mirror to get the last few bits of gravel out of the cuts on his face. Then he can go lay down, even if he does leave dirt and blood all over the sheets.

Anticipation of that has a rush of relief flooding his system and he grips the edge of the sink, hangs his head a moment to catch his breath. He's not even surprised when tears spill unbidden down his cheeks, stinging a bit in the healing wounds. He'd survived. Fuck, he'd fucking survived. He laughs, and it's almost a giddy sound, which, again, not that surprising given the head wound. So when he lifts his head and sees Derek, for a moment he wonders if he isn't hallucinating the werewolf's reflection in the mirror. But the flare of Derek's nostrils, the furrowing of his brow and the angry stride with which he approaches tell him that he is not merely seeing things. If it were a fantasy, Derek would surely be far more naked and far less annoyed.

Probably. Those furrowed brows are pretty fucking sexy.

Stiles turns, wobbles, clutching the edge of the tub as he focuses his eyes on the not!hallucination Derek and says, "How the?"

Derek rolls his eyes and points. Stiles is confused, but then he looks down at the dribbled blood trailing from his front door and snorts. An easy trail for a werewolf to follow he supposes. "Oh."

"Stiles," Derek says, stopping short as he sees the mess of blood and torn clothing in the tub. His jaw tightens but his eyes are searching and worried as he looks back to Stiles, eyes flicking down to where the bathrobe that covers the worst of his wounds is gapping open and baring his chest and throat.

Though the look is one of concern, Stiles's instincts latch onto another interpretation. He can feel his body reacting, feel the way the air becomes charged in the small bathroom, see the way Derek's nostrils flare and his eyes sharpen.

Derek looks unbelievably good. Dangerous for both of them. There's a flash of fantasy in his mind eye, that perhaps Derek could do it, could take him, weakened as he is. He could press him down into the bed and mount him. Turn his mouth safely into the pillows and keep him there. Part of him wants to ask whether werewolves like doggy style or if they find it too ironic?

He swallows back a giddy laugh as the snapping edge of hysteria drags at him. It's pointless, a catch-22 since he doubts he'd be able to stay conscious enough to enjoy it without feeding. He's lost so much blood. So much energy. And Derek's like a live wire, like nectar, glowing with life energy, with sexual vigor. The rest of the world fades to insignificance.

"Derek," he murmurs, standing away from the tub and swaying closer in some parody of his usual sensual slink.
It should be a warning to someone who knew the stakes. Who knew what Stiles could do.

But the man just watches him with attentive eyes that show no hint of wariness.

"Derek you..."

But he forgets what he was trying to say, body far more interested in pressing closer. Derek is shrugging out of his coat, then reaching for the hem of his shirt. Stiles can't do anything but stare as the spans of skin are revealed to him. Then Derek's hand is reaching up to curl hard around the side and back of Stiles's skull, pulling him close and holding him tight.

"You won't hurt me," Derek says quietly, with utter and impossible confidence.

Stiles thinks fleetingly of the pathetic fledgling control he's managed but knows that the injuries will weaken whatever self-control he might have wrought otherwise. It's a mess of hope and fear and shame in the back of his head, but desire and pain win out easily and he loses hold on thought altogether as he surges forward to close the distance between their mouths.

For a moment, one hot, sweet, glorious moment, it's just a kiss. Just the rarified sensation of dry, hot lips coming together, brushing and pressing and parting for and with each other. For a moment he just kisses him with everything he can muster.

Then the next moment his head goes light and bright with the rush of energy and need flooding through him. Derek's energy... it's... he's never felt anything so pure, so vibrant, so powerful.

It's not just life, not just his sustenance. It's real, it's someone he wants. For the first time since Heather, he wants the person, not just their sexual energy. The thought of Heather's death is enough of a shock that he manages a thought towards pulling back. A thought, but nothing more. His body isn't his to control, lost to the throes of instinct and survival and need.

The world around them is a blur of amber and ice-blue light, beautiful and warm and good. He feels the pop of his rib setting as he breathes in, though it's something distant, something happening to someone else. He's far too deep in the light to care about anything but drinking more.

But Derek is strong. So much stronger than anyone else who's ever faced his deadly kiss. Derek breaks the spell with ease, holding Stiles's head back as he lifts his own. He's breathing hard but his eyes are bright and focused when he meets Stiles's gaze, and the corner of his mouth turns up for just the briefest moment before he's pressing his mouth over Stiles's again.

That strength, that ability to resist has Stiles shocked, and he doesn't protest when Derek presses his tongue into his mouth, pulling him close and dragging them towards the bedroom area. Stiles can't help but pull more energy from him, but Derek doesn't seem to mind. He seems to have energy to spare, as promised. Stronger than a human, so much stronger, because he'd be dead by now if he'd been human, Stiles has already taken so much, body desperate to heal and himself desperate to taste Derek.

Surely Derek has limits at some point, but right at this very moment Stiles is probably far too weak to even come close to truly harming him before Derek could break free of his kiss. He's dizzy, breathless with the kisses as his mind runs over these premises again and again, trying to be sure, to be certain. Derek's strong enough, he's really strong enough to survive Stiles.

Stiles won't hurt him. He can't hurt him.

When it finally hits home it has him making a sound of relief, of joy, and shrugging out of the bathrobe as he and Derek fumble their way towards the bed. Derek groans as the fabric hits the
floor, hands skimming down the expanse of Stiles's back to curve under his ass and squeeze. Stiles curses under his breath as he grips Derek's waist, guiding him more forcefully backwards into the bedroom. He's in. No hesitation.

When they arrive at the bed, Derek lifts Stiles easily, laying him out along the soft bed-spread and gazing down at him with blatant desire. Stiles sucks in a breath at the sight, and then abruptly realizes that his breath doesn't hurt, not this time. His ribs are mended, at least for the most part. His other injuries still hurt, but the pain is much more secondary now.

He presses a hand to his ribs and takes another breath. "Wha..." he tries as Derek climbs over him. "How..."

Derek doesn't answer, too busy grinding a thigh up between Stiles's, rocking against him with his denim-clad hard-on and Stiles moans, letting his head fall back as he gives in to the incoming ministrations. Derek sucks at the skin of his neck, then nips at the soft spot behind his jaw, then moves up to kiss his mouth again. It's just a kiss this time, Stiles doesn't feel an irresistible urge to feed, so he doesn't, letting himself get lost in the dizzying feeling of Derek's warm, wet mouth against him.

Or maybe it's the concussion making him dizzy. Either. Both.

"Tell me what you want," Derek murmurs against his lips, running a broad hand along Stiles's temple and back into his hair. "Whatever you need."

His eyes flutter closed at the onslaught of images, of years of pent-up fantasies and needs, and their conversations. He licks parched lips and tightens his grip on Derek's waist. What he needs, though, is to not hurt Derek. He needs Derek to stay in control.

"I want you to... t-take me," Stiles manages, sounding breathless and uncertain. Derek goes still above him and Stiles curses his ineptitude and inexperience. He opens his eyes and locks them onto Derek's, drags his hands up Derek's chest to curve around either side of his jaw as he holds his gaze.

"Fuck me. Hard," he says with more confidence, and watches the fire spark in Derek's eyes.

This time when Derek kisses him, he can't help but take a little more of that amazing energy into himself. And Derek just keeps giving, rocking against him as their tongues drag and twist together. This time when Derek lifts his head, he's breathing hard, but his grin is feral and he just starts kissing his way down Stiles's body.

Assured of the coming pleasures and after having taken the worst of the edge off his hunger, he's able to take a breath and watch as Derek nuzzles his way down Stiles's body. Derek's beard scrapes against his skin in a delicious rasp that has Stiles arching against him. Stiles curls his fingers into Derek's hair when Derek's mouth drops below Stiles's belly-button and he starts nipping at the hair trailing south on Stiles's abdomen. But Stiles holds him there, torn between letting him go further and hauling him back up to kiss the breath out of him again.

"I want to taste you," Derek murmurs against his skin and then glances up at him, arching an eyebrow that dares him to disagree. Slowly, Stiles lets his hands slip away, leaving Derek free to do as he pleases.

Stiles bites his lip and watches as Derek's lips part and then brush against the flushed tip of the head of his penis peeking out from his foreskin. He makes a strangled sound when Derek's tongue extends to lick at the glistening precome. Those long black lashes flutter shut to rest on his
cheekbones as he takes Stiles's taste into his mouth, making a hum of pleasure that has Stiles cursing in awe.

Being sexually stimulated like this, it's not the same as drinking in new energy but there's a certain rush of that special sexual energy happening inside him as Derek touches him, wraps his lips around him. He isn't healing any faster but everything, every cut and strain and break feels more alive, more healthy as he shudders under Derek's slow ministrations.

His fingers grip reflexively at the sheets when Derek presses down, tongue working as he swallows Stiles down. Stiles is about to explode and they've only just begun. He manages to get control of one of his hands long enough to direct it to Derek's thick dark hair. Derek makes a pleased hum in response and Stiles just shudders, arching against him.

But he's not ready to come yet, not ready to let the symphony of energies and vibrations come to their crescendo. He tightens his abs, trying to pull back even though he has nowhere to go.

"Come on, come on," Stiles pleads, tugging on Derek's hair. Derek lifts his mouth with a pop and a scowl. There's a faint yellow glimmer to his eyes when they meet Stiles's and Stiles makes a needy sound.

"Come on, get those fucking pants off and fuck me, please," he says.

Derek growls, but he stands away. As ordered, Derek tugs his jeans open and pushes his clothes down his legs, baring himself to Stiles's view. He steps out of them, then sets about kicking free of his socks as he bends to retrieve his jeans and digs around in a pocket.

Stiles is too transfixed by the sight of Derek's cock to pay much attention to what he's doing. And he'd been right. The thing is fucking beautiful. Heavy and hard and surrounded by a thick but soft-looking layer of dark hair. Even his balls are pretty, large and round and hanging just unevenly-enough to be adorable.

That might be the concussion talking again.

Then again, maybe not. They swing as Derek climbs back onto the bed, kneeling between Stiles's thighs, and to Stiles they are beautiful indeed. Sex is beautiful, it's the most beautiful thing in the universe. The joining of bodies, the excitation and sharing of pleasure, the heat… not to mention all that gorgeous skin. Stiles stares, entranced. Stretches his arms towards Derek so that his fingertips brush Derek's thighs, sliding softly through the dark hair on his quads. Derek says his name softly. Only then does he look at what Derek's holding.

A packet of lube.

"Oh fuck yes," Stiles breathes, spreading his legs wider.

A smirk spreads across Derek's face as he slides closer, letting his erection slide lightly against Stiles's. He tears open the packet and pours it over his fingers, then lowers his hand between Stiles's spread legs. His lube-coated fingers are cool and Stiles flinches just the slightest bit when they touch his hole. But it warms quickly as Derek rubs a smooth circle around his entrance, pressing gently at the tight pucker. Stiles makes an impatient sound, canting his hips down towards Derek's fingers.

Every time things start to slow down between them, the world gets fuzzier, the aches grow more present and his dizziness returns. He doesn't want to wait or to take it slow. He can't. He digs his fingers into Derek's shoulder, urging him on. Derek grinds against him, cock heavy against Stiles's
aching and sticky erection. The move pins his fingers between them but also gives him more leverage to push one thick fingertip inside Stiles. Derek leans up over Stiles's body as he continues to push the finger deeper, lowers his head to capture Stiles's mouth as he slides it all the way in.

It's nowhere near enough.

Stiles kisses back, hand hard around the back of Derek's neck, opening his mouth wide as he presses his tongue deep. It's more than anything he's ever had, better than anything he's ever imagined. But he needs more. Stiles rides down on Derek's hand as he pulls the energy from Derek and from the air around them, charged by their shared sexual energies. He pulls and pulls until Derek gets a hand on Stiles's chest and pushes, breaking the kiss, breathing hard. Stiles can see the sweat on Derek's brow as he leans back a bit and looks down to concentrate on slipping a second finger into Stiles's body. He looks more ruffled than before. But when he glances up at Stiles, his gaze is sharp, not glassy, and his lips are curved in pleasure as he rocks his fingers into Stiles's body.

Derek tips his gaze back to Stiles's hole, slides his other hand under Stiles's knee and pushes it higher, spreading Stiles even more for his view as he slowly glides his cock alongside Stiles's. And it's exciting, being put on display like that, watching Derek's face as he plans his next move. But after a moment, Stiles realizes that Derek intends to fuck him like this, on his back, face to face. In theory, it sounds amazing, but he balks at the easy access he's going to have to Derek's mouth. Not taking energy from him now is one thing, but once Derek was inside him? Once he was lost in the chase to the peak?

He has no idea what will happen when he comes.

Stiles tenses, pushing at Derek's chest hard enough to have him easing back, brows lowering in confusion though he immediately does as Stiles bids. Stiles doesn't stop to explain. Instead he just twists away from Derek, climbing higher on the bed and rolling to his hands and knees. His wrist still aches a little as he leans on it but that doesn't matter when he bends to his elbows and spreads his knees, too dizzy to even hesitate for a moment at putting himself in this blatant a position.

"Like this. Fuck me like this," he says, twisting to look back at Derek.

There's a persistent golden light in Derek's eyes, and he's still a little breathless, but that doesn't diminish the desperate need on his face as he stares at Stiles's presented body, or the tension with which he holds himself just a couple feet away.

"You want me to mount you?" he asks, tearing his gaze away from Stiles's ass and meeting his eyes. They are a wolf's eyes, golden and sharp, and his words are pronounced with care because there are fangs now visible in his mouth.

"God yes," Stiles says, unbelievably aroused at the fae edge coming through Derek's control. "Just like we said. Just fucking-"

Derek's already there, hands gripping his hips roughly as he jerks Stiles into the position he wants him in. Stiles twists his head, trying to see. Derek's cock is already nudging up between Stiles's cheeks and with a short thrust, everything changes.

It hurts, the way the thick head of Derek's cock spreads him wider than Derek's fingers had, and keeps spreading. Stiles pants against the bed as Derek pushes into him, holding his hips steady with bruising grip even when his body tries to twitch away. The pain is an ache as the head of Derek's cock slips past the too-tight ring of muscle that Stiles can't seem to relax, but at the same time, it's an amazing feeling. He feels so full, so fucking full. His body clenches down around the
intrusion and Derek growls, shoving forward against the resistance until his hips slap against Stiles's ass, balls following a split-second later.

Stiles squeezes his eyes against the prick of tears at the discomfort and the joy of being so deeply penetrated. Fully seated, Derek adjusts their balance a little, spreading his knees a little wider over Stiles's calves and tilting Stiles's hips even more wantonly so that when he grinds forward, Stiles feels it impossibly deeper.

"You like that?" Derek demands, words still catching on his fangs as he bends over Stiles's back to drag his teeth over the nape of Stiles's neck. "You like me mounting you like this?"

Stiles nods his head jerkily, fingers fisting in the sheets as Derek rolls his hips, grinding his cock inside him roughly.

Derek's hands scrape up Stiles's ribs, up under his arms and down them till his hands close around Stiles's wrists. "Just like we said," he growls, leaning his weight into his hands, pinning Stiles's wrists to the bed.

Stiles whimpers at the sharp pain in his damaged wrist but he doesn't fucking care because Derek is still rolling his hips, taking longer and longer strokes into him. There's not much room to maneuver, laid out over him like this, given how close they are in height, but it just adds to the pressure, the closeness of Derek's body. It hurts. It hurts but endorphins are running wild through Stiles's body and every ache, every sting is just more sensation. He can feel the brush of pubic hair against his ass, of Derek's belly sliding along his back. He can hear the sound of flesh on flesh and smell sweat and blood and sex.

And then all of a sudden, it all comes together. The world snaps into focus, blue and ethereal and boiled down to what's happening right here between them. It's no longer limbs and angles and touches and sensations.

He's being fucked.

His breaths are mewling gasps, overwhelmed with sensation and half-muffled by the sheets his face is pressed against. Derek strikes a hard, fast rhythm and keeps it, with the occasional punctuation of a slow, unexpected thrust that has Stiles clenching in anticipation and crying out when the thrust comes late. It's everything, it's overwhelming, his every cell is singing with the energy of it.

Derek's teeth nip sharply at the curve of his neck, his shoulder, but the motions are distracted, desperate little additions to the vigorous pounding of his hips.

"More," Stiles begs on a low moan as he twists in Derek's grip, reveling in the bruising pressure of the grips on his wrists, in the way even his toes dig in against Derek's skin where their legs are pressed together.

The sound Derek makes in response is an actual growl, deep and vibrating in his chest as he grinds tight, limbs binding in their hold on Stiles. With one hand snapping up to fist in Stiles's hair and jerking his head to the side, Derek sinks his teeth into the curve of Stiles's neck. The counterpoint of the thrust in his hips just drives the teeth deeper, and Stiles doesn't even have a name for the sound he makes. Pain is too simple a concept to describe it, so is pleasure. It's everything, things he doesn't even know yet, all rolled into one sensation.

He can feel Derek's bite on a whole different level, like a jagged piece of his own sundering kiss, flooding his body with wild sexual arousal. It comes in untempered, desperate waves that have him
spasming under Derek, body seizing and twisting against his grip, each rushing sensation crashing into the next in a violent spiral and when it all comes crashing down and hits him at once -

He howls.

Or maybe Derek howls. Maybe he's just hearing the universe howling. He's not sure. He's not even sure he's breathing. Wouldn't be sure his heart was still beating if it weren't for the rushing thunder of his pulse in his ears. Everything is vibrating in perfect discord.

He can feel the familiar sensation of his cock tightening and pulsing through the last spurts of his orgasm at the same time that he can feel the unfamiliarity of having that same sensation being mirrored inside his body as Derek comes. His body clenches around Derek, tight around every pulse, every shudder. Derek's body is caged tight around his, trembling with his own pleasures.

An aching and satisfied warmth spreads through Stiles's body in the aftermath of the orgasm like never before and he goes boneless. Derek's teeth retract from his neck and when Derek moves to pull the rest of the way away Stiles makes a sound of protest, reaching back with his one free hand to try and hold them together, just a little longer. Derek obliges him, leaning his weight into Stiles firmly again, though he eases the grip on his hair and wrist, instead running those hands soothingly down Stiles's sides before curling around his waist and shifting them both onto their sides.

Stiles slides his hand over the one Derek has on his belly and slides his fingers in between Derek's. The embers of satiation linger in his abdomen, impossibly perfect, something he's never felt before. For the first time in his adult life, Stiles falls asleep satisfied.
Stiles wakes in stages. He blinks his eyes open once and gets an impression of light and warmth. He closes his eyes again and sleeps in the cozy sensation. The next time he surfaces he comes up enough that he recognizes he's a little bit sore. But he doesn't hurt that much. Faint hints of painful memories get softened away with cloudy sleep as he burrows closer to the warmth pressed against him.

Finally, much later, with the sun high enough to not be beaming directly through his window anymore, he blinks away sleep entirely. There's that warm, heavy feeling sitting in his bones that tells him he's slept long, but not because he's been lazy, because he definitely needed the rest.

Oh yeah. He'd needed his rest.

After all, they'd been hella vigorous in their fucking last night. Because yeah, Derek Hale is definitely in his bed, warm and breathing steadily, relaxed and tracing a senseless pattern into Stiles's hip with broad fingers. He's on his back, eyes closed and one arm tucked behind his head like he's maybe been awake a while but stayed anyway.


Stiles has an arm slung across Derek's chest and his head is on the meat of Derek's shoulder. His hand is settled over Derek's heart, he realizes, there to catch the steady vibrations that prove his bed-partner is alive and well. Though of course, that's not the only reason to have his hands on Derek's chest. He drags his fingers through the dark hair on Derek's chest reverently, and when he looks up, Derek is gazing over at him with soft, heavy eyes and an equally soft smile.

When Stiles shifts a little closer he grows more aware of a novel sensation from his backside. He can't resist reaching back to press fingers down between his buttocks to touch the edge of his hole. He's still slick there with leftover lube and come alike and his cock twitches with bright interest. The ache runs deep as he slips a finger inside himself, his body having been far too busy dealing with healing important injuries to spare him a little post-coital soreness. He's so fucking glad he can feel it, even as he winces.

"Are you alright?" Derek asks, brows drawing down in concern.

"Yeah," Stiles laughs, a joyful sound. "Sore. Isn't that great? I can't believe I finally did it."

Derek shifts beside him, turning onto his side so he can slide their legs together slowly. "Did what?" Derek asks, brows lowering and lips curving into a pleased smile.

"Had sex," Stiles replies, wriggling closer against Derek's body suggestively. And yeah, he could definitely stand to do that again. He reaches out…

But Derek has gone stiff beside him, and when he looks up at his face there's consternation there. "You mean…"

Stiles squints at him. "Last night was it. First time. I told you I never…"

He bites his lip. Part of him is glad that his novice status hadn't been painfully obvious, but on the other hand, he doesn't like the look on Derek's face. He watches Derek's eyes search back over memories of conversations, sees the missed implication catch and Derek's face tighten, upset.
"I didn't... I'm sorry, I was too rough last night. I should have..."

Stiles presses fingers to his lips, slides over him, pressing him back in the bed and straddling his lap, letting their warm, half-hard dicks bump against each other and hell yes that is an awesome sensation. "Pretty sure you did exactly what I asked you to," Stiles says.

Derek frowns at him for a long moment, eyes skimming over Stiles's body and face, searching for signs of pain. Eventually, finding none, he relaxes. "Fair enough.

"Wanna keep doing what I ask you to?" Stiles asks as he rolls his hips suggestively.

Derek's eyelids go heavy and the corner of his mouth turns up, baring the faint edge of his teeth. "Very much so."

Stiles leans down and kisses him, soft and quick. The instinct to deepen it and pull is fierce, but he reins it in and lifts his head again for a few seconds and just gazes down at him, studying his eyes in the morning light. And they're fucking beautiful, mostly green but showing hints of blue and amber at the edges. He's not entirely satiated, since his body has had to expend so much energy healing, but he's not too hungry to resist the temptation of Derek's feast laid out for him in order to take in that sight.

At least until Derek lifts his head and kisses Stiles back.

Then he can't help but open up and drink in some of Derek's energies as he rolls his body slowly against him, reveling in the soft, bare, warmth of so much skin-to-skin contact. He lays his body against him, runs his fingers down his sides and then back up again. His mouth is hot, wet and ready, and the sound Derek makes as their lips slant over each other is too.

It doesn't take long before his body is more than ready to go, his erection brushing against Derek's as he puts his whole body into kissing him. And he drinks, but not like before. He tries something different, because he can. Stiles licks against the flow of sexual energy, playing with the pull, with resistance, letting it come in little sips that have him shuddering with anticipation. Derek too, if the moans and trembling motions of his hands are any indication.

Stiles straddles his lap even higher, grinding his hips back against the tip of Derek's dick, catching it in leftover slickness. Derek's eyeballs draw together and his hands tighten on Stiles's hips.

"Are you-"

"Fine," Stiles interrupts, leaning closer as he rolls his hips again. "And so, so ready to have you inside me again."

That earns a faint flash of teeth and a low sound from Derek and Stiles wriggles himself down against him, working his way down against Derek's cock, trying to guide the tip of him up and into his body without even lifting a finger. It isn't smooth, and it stings a little when Derek's cock catches a bit at his rim at an odd angle, but he manages it. After that, sliding himself down onto Derek's erection little by little with his little hip motions is so excruciatingly pleasurable it has them both gasping their way through stuttered breaths by the time he's hilted.

It feels like the most natural thing in the world for Stiles to spread his knees just a little and sit upright in Derek's lap, reaching his arms over his head in a cat's stretch before folding his hands behind his head. He gazes down at the beautiful man laid out beneath him, taking in the way the light kisses his skin, shadows on the curves of muscle. He loves the way his pinkening erection nestles in the cleft of Derek's abdominal muscles. Their skin tones are a beautiful pairing together,
his pale where Derek's has a hint of warmth and shadow to it.

Though his ribs no longer ache with his breaths, there's still a twinge in his belly now and then where the hunter had stabbed him. He runs a hand over his abdomen, checking the wound now that he can see it. Derek's fingers reach up to trace the line too, his brows furrowed. But Stiles brushes their hands away and leans back a little, taking some of his weight on his arms, braced against Derek's thighs. He makes a soft sound of pleasure as the shift pushes Derek even deeper into him. He feels so full, so stretched and warm and perfect, just sitting there with Derek buried deep inside him. He takes a deep, savoring breath.

Then he moves.

He rolls his hips, a simple glide forward and back at first. Last night had been full of desperation and the overwhelming need that made every sensation blur together into an inseparable mess. Now he can take his time, savor the slow, slick sensation of Derek's cock gliding along his insides, and it's like nothing, nothing he's ever felt. But at the same time, it's achingly right, like coming home. Once he finds his basic rhythm, it isn't long before he punctuates it with lifts and grinds, twists and slides in a dance he can feel in his very bones.

He may never have fucked like this before but he knows these moves, he's teased at them out on the dance floors for years. The way Derek's hands skim up his thighs and brush over his chest isn't even all that different from having a partner on the dance floor, despite the different angle. But this vantage, getting to watch Derek's darkened eyes follow his every movement, see the muscles tense under him and feel the heat of him against him, inside him. This is perfection.

He hums along with a few notes of the melody that vibrates inside his head. This is the way he was meant to dance. He was always meant to be like this, alive and connected intimately. It's not as ferocious as the blur of last night's mating but in its own way, this is just as intense. He just stares into Derek's eyes as he rides him, watches each flicker of pleasure pass through them.

His instincts demand that he take Derek's mouth, that he drink down his energy. But Stiles resists, best he can. His mouth hangs open as he pants, drawing in what energy is on the air alone, and it's a teasing, tantalizing taste that sparks on his tongue. There's an intensity in the way Derek's eyes fix on his open mouth, a heat that has Stiles flicking his tongue against his lip reflexively.

Derek lifts fingers to Stiles's mouth, pressing them over his lips and then slowly dragging them down so that the tips of them sit on Stiles's lower lip. Stiles drags his tongue against Derek's fingers till they're nice and slick.

"Just like we said," Derek murmurs.

Stiles moans at the choice, at the fact that Derek is indulging one of Stiles's fantasies, gagging him with his fingers, keeping Stiles from hurting him. Oh, he understands now that it's within his grasp to try and even manage not to hurt Derek, that he doesn't need the gag to do it, but it still arouses him to feel it after having imagined it so many times. And to know that Derek had listened… He sucks them down, swallowing them as far as he can, though Derek leaves his fingers soft and easy, just present for a while. They stay like that, Stiles breathing tightly through his nose and working his tongue against Derek's fingers till they're nice and slick.

And then Derek changes the game, pulling his hand free from Stiles's mouth and curling those slickened fingers around Stiles's cock where it's been swaying over Derek's belly and leaving behind smears of precome. Oh. Oh yes, feeling Derek inside him and touching him at the same time it's… Stiles thrusts against the loose fist he makes, but the angle is insufficient and he grunts
in frustration. It has him sitting up again so that he can rise higher up on his knees. It means Derek's not hitting him quite as deeply anymore but he doesn't care because he has more pressure this way. He rides Derek's lap with shorter, more vertical motions now, biting his lip against the sensation of another person's hand wrapped around his dick, gliding his foreskin against the glans with each thrust.

He curls his fingers hard into Derek's shoulders for more leverage, adding force to his thrusts, then speed. The sound of skin against skin grows loud in the room, a perfect percussive beat to their dance. It's so different from last night, being the one in control, the one moving and twisting to penetrate himself on his partner. But it's just as amazing in its own way.

Stiles curls down more and more as his pleasure builds, breathing harder as he exerts himself. Derek is right there with him, and if the look of fierce concentration in Derek's eyes is anything to go by, he's struggling not to come before Stiles is done riding him to his own climax. That thought sends a bolt of arousal straight through Stiles, that Derek would deny himself just to please Stiles. That he wants to see Stiles come first. Stiles wants so badly to take his mouth, to let his nature run free, but… He's not going to, he decides. He's not going to let his instincts win this time. He refuses.

Derek's grip tightens, moves in sharp counterpoint to Stiles's hips. He buckles reflexively, curling down over Derek's body as he rides him in desperate little strokes. But he holds his mouth back. He wants to do this without it. He wants to come against the grip of Derek's hand, the feel of Derek inside him, nothing else. He needs to do this.

"Yes," he gasps out, pressing his forehead to Derek's, holding his lips just centimeters from Derek's now. But he holds back. "Yes."

"Yes," Derek repeats, grinding up against him.

Stiles jerks, body stiffening as he loses hold on his coordination, crying out into Derek's mouth as he comes, spilling himself into Derek's fingers. Joy explodes through him. He'd done it. He'd held back. He'd had an orgasm without taking Derek's mouth. He'd kept his control, even in the face of such incalculable temptations. He laughs, happy, and Derek hums with him.

As the orgasm tapers off, Derek's hands slip away from his cock and curl into his body, splayed over his skin. Stiles picks the pace of his hips back up and finally lets his head drop to capture Derek's mouth with his own, tangling their energies in a sparking mess as he drinks in Derek's arousal to chase down the settling heat of his pleasures.

He's able to notice nuance in it, now that he's had his orgasm and is well satisfied of his primary hungers. Like he can play with the sexual energy, taste it, but he doesn't have to consume more than a little of it if he doesn't want to. He has so much to learn, so much to try. He tugs at it, digs himself into Derek's pleasure but doesn't drink it. Derek's fingers tighten sharply on him when he does, a low moan vibrating in his throat. Stiles takes that as a good sign, digs deeper. It tingles through his body, leaving him shuddering as the sensations clash. Derek's fucking up into him desperately at this point and Stiles pulls, drawing it all up as high as it will go.

Derek goes stiff beneath him, groaning against his lips as he reaches his climax. Stiles moans with it, reveling in the glorious sensation of Derek's spiraling energy as well as the physical pleasure of feeling each pulse of Derek's come landing deep inside his body. But Stiles knows instinctually that there's more. He doesn't let up. He pulls the orgasm higher and higher, to places Derek's probably never gone. Derek arches on the bed, a strangled cry echoing in his throat as his cock twitches valiantly several more times within Stiles.
Only then does Stiles break their kiss, snapping his head back and leaving Derek to fall back to the bed, panting, wrecked beneath him.

But very much alive.

Derek gazes at him with blissed-out, stunned eyes, mouth hanging open as he scrambles to catch his breath. Stiles chews on his lower lip, biting back a grin as he studies Derek's face, tries to memorize every detail of his flushed features in the aftermath of pleasure.

Eventually though he lifts off of Derek's lap before either of them can get too sensitive, then reaches for the tissues by his bed to clean up the bulk of their spilled fluids. Derek just lays there, letting Stiles clean him, still breathing hard. It makes Stiles grin, more than a little pleased with himself. He so desperately wants there to be upsides to the whole sex-with-Stiles thing.

When Stiles' slides back into the sheets beside him, he curls close, earning an approving hum from Derek. He settles into the warmth, into the deep relaxation that has followed in the wake of their exertions. Stiles leaves his head resting on Derek's chest, listening to his heart beating. Derek's hand settles against his hip, almost limp for a while as he rests.

But neither of them sleep. They're spent, but not tired again, not really. They'd slept a long time in the night already. Derek's fingers start to move eventually, tracing the lines of his ribs. His touch lingers on the purple line of scarred tissue left by the hunter's blade. His brows are drawn down in concern as he looks at the wound.

"I'm sorry I wasn't there when you needed help," Derek says eventually, breaking the silence.

Stiles snorts, eyebrows going up as he lifts his eyes to Derek's. "I literally ran away from you. It would have been pretty ridiculous to expect you to follow me to magically appear and save the day."

"I did," Derek says, frowning down at him. "I did follow you. Of course I did," he says, and Stiles sucks his lip into his mouth, trying not to grin when Derek rolls his eyes. "But you are annoyingly fast, and before I could catch up I ran into some hunters on patrol."

Stiles lifts his head to look down at Derek, scanning him for injuries now that his mind isn't clouded with the haze of his own injuries or sex. Derek sighs but obligingly turns his arm over to show Stiles. There's a line on Derek's upper arm that's still dark pink from the knitting tissues and Stiles touches it cautiously. It's on its way to being healed but Stiles frowns.

"Are you okay?" Stiles asks, worried.

Derek waves a dismissive hand at him. "Fine. Barely nicked me before I got free, and then I spent a while leading them on a wild goose chase. I was certainly better off than you were. What happened to you?"

Stiles grimaces and lays his head back down on Derek's shoulder. "There's this asshole of a Kanima who has it in for me. I guess he tracked me down or I crossed his territory or whatever and he took the opportunity to give me a beating. I think I'm just glad he didn't actually want to kill me. I got my ass kicked."

Derek winces. "Kanima are heavy-hitters. Wolves are relatively tough but even I wouldn't take one on by myself if I could help it."

"Huh." Stiles files that information away in his rapidly-growing store of fae knowledge. "Well, that would make sense. Pretty sure Deucalion doesn't keep him around for his personality," Stiles says
"He works for Deucalion?" Derek says, frowning sharply.

"I guess? But I apparently make his life difficult, like I'm the fly in his hair product or something. He wanted to work me over until I was ready to beg to be taken to Deucalion to uh..." he hesitates, given Kali's secret. "To take him up on his offer. Deucalion - I fucking refuse to call him "The Duke", I mean, do they even know how ridiculous they sound?"

Derek snorts a laugh as Stiles gesticulates over the melodramatic moniker.

"Anyway, he really wants me to work for him. To the point where he's making offers of whatever I could want in compensation, which, again, creepy. Does he not get that it's creepy? I'm not exactly impressed by his negotiation skills at this point. Maybe some people think that kind of offer is exciting, to me it just sounds desperate."

"Desperation is dangerous," Derek murmurs.

"Yeah. I know that better than, like, anyone," Stiles mutters darkly.

Derek runs a sympathetic hand over his shoulder, leaving warmth in his wake.

"What does he want you to do that he's so desperate for?" Derek asks, brows lowering, looking concerned as well as pensive, like he's thinking over things that he isn't sharing with Stiles.

Part of him wants to spill all of it, to just tell Derek everything and let him sort it all out. But at the same time, he's not really sure Derek, that anyone, can understand his perspective who's not an incubus like him. Stiles sighs heavily. "It doesn't really matter. I'm pretty sure I'm saying no, especially after last night - at least until I can do things on my terms."

Derek looks relieved, and some of the tension slides out of his body at Stiles's pronouncement, though Stiles can still see him worrying over it.

Besides. Right now, Stiles is much more interested in the present. "Anyway, I don't want to talk about that. Let's talk about something else."

Derek blinks away his pensive expression and smiles. "Like what? Like how I've actually got you here sitting still long enough to have a conversation?" Derek teases, tightening the arm he has around Stiles's waist.

"Something like that," Stiles says with a laugh.

"You could get a phone," Derek suggests, leaning closer and brushing a kiss against the side of Stiles's mouth. "That way I could call you instead of having to hunt through random clubs trying to find you."

"I dunno," Stiles says, leaning into Derek's grip and smirking at him. "Seems like it turned out okay. I liked the way you found me. I loved dancing with you."

Derek hums in agreement, but nuzzles against his jaw.

"Call me, we'll do it again," Derek counters.

"Mm," Stiles replies. "You do have a point."

Derek makes a pleased rumble against his cheekbone. Then he laughs faintly, laying back against
the pillows. "Speaking of dancing, I just remembered. I was wondering, last night. What did you tell him?" Derek asks into the warm quiet of the apartment.

Stiles twists to look up at him. "Who?"

Derek's eyes are soft with relaxation as he looks over at him. "That asshole in the club with no rhythm, the one who grabbed you because he didn't want to stop dancing with you."

Stiles laughs, splaying his fingers out to fan over Derek's ribs. Oh. That asshole. Not an entirely uncommon occurrence, though he sees it happen way more often to women, getting felt up by dudes who think they have a right to someone's time, someone's body, just because they're on a dance floor.

They're a momentary souring of his enjoyment on the dance floor, but he finds it amusing as hell to give them a dose of their own medicine. He hadn't realized Derek had seen that. "He tried to tell me it wasn't fair to get him hard and then move on. Shithead. I told him to find a horny girl and spend as much time as she wanted eating her out. And he was not allowed to get his dick wet in the slightest. I call it my blue-plate special. Get it? He eats out, but still gets the blue balls."

Derek laughs, tipping his head closer to breathe against his hairline. "I like it."

"I've been told I have a flare for poetic justice," Stiles says with an airy smirk, and Derek laughs again, softly.

For a bit they just lay there, relaxing in each other's arms and the sense of closeness that has been built with each piece of personal conversation, each private moment shared. It feels good. So fucking good to be himself, completely himself with Derek. It feels real and it makes him want to share more, and better yet, to know more about Derek.

"Do you have family?" Stiles asks after a while.

"I have family spread out around the world. But in New York? No. Nobody close. I'm not even part of a pack here."

The way Derek says the last bit is layered, like there's a lot more to it than the simple words can encompass. And yeah, if he thinks about it, lone wolves don't exactly survive long in the wild. Not that Derek's a wolf. A werewolf could be totally different. But even if he were just a human…

"So you're alone like me?"

Derek looks over at him and curls an arm around him tighter. "Yeah," he agrees quietly. Then a smile crooks across his face. "Unless, of course, you count the thin blue line of the NYPD."

"Yeah, that's good," Stiles says. "I get that. My dad is the sheriff back home." But his smile fades quickly at the thought of his dad.

Derek hesitates, then frowns and asks, "Is he…"

Stiles shrugs, trailing his fingers through Derek's chest hair as he says, "He's still there in California, back where I grew up. I… haven't seen him in five years. Not since the day I…"

Killed his best friend. Discovered he was some sort of freak. Faked his own violent abduction. Ran away from home never to return. You know. The usual.

But Derek understands. He's heard enough to put the pieces together, and he just offers a soft look
"Do you talk to him?" Derek asks.

"Uh, yeah." Stiles swallows back the itch of tears in his throat. "Barely ever. Just to let him know I'm still around and all. He... I haven't told him, what I am, what I've done."

"Do you want to?"

Stiles glances up at him, then jerks his eyes away at the deep sympathy waiting in his green eyes. "Yeah. Yeah of course I want to tell him. I want to go home again and hug my dad and watch stupid movies with him and make sure he's eating his vegetables. But I've killed too many people to just walk up to him like I haven't done anything wrong. Even if all of them except Heather are bastards. Just since coming to New York, the handful of dickwads I've dealt with puts me in the classification for serial killer. He's... his job, the law, is like, everything to him. So I just keep him in the dark and try not to make everything worse."

"He's human, right?" Derek asks, rubbing his thumb in slow soothing circles against Stiles's hip.

"Yeah..." Stiles asks, frowning over at him. "Well I'm like 99% sure he is but then again what the hell do I know about this stuff anyway?"

Derek's mouth quirks at that. "In my experience," he begins, then pauses, looking at Stiles, waiting until Stiles gives him an encouraging nod. "As a whole, humans tend to react badly to learning about the fae, but one on one? With people you care about? They do a lot better."

Stiles is silent for a long moment, his heart taking a skip and a hiccup as he thinks about it, about telling his dad.

"You think I should tell him?" Stiles asks.

"I'm not going to try and pretend it isn't difficult or complicated," Derek says. "But if you're just waiting? Don't take too long to go see him. You're... You've got a different lifespan than he does." Derek sighs, frowning down at Stiles's chest and brushing his knuckles over Stiles's heart. His face is apologetic when he looks up again. "Only a small fraction of that can be spent with human loved-ones before...," he trails off, making a small gesture with one hand.

Before they die.

And that's... "How long." Stiles's throat tightens. Kali had said centuries. He takes a hiccupsing breath, trying to steady himself against the bubble of panic welling in his chest. "How long do I live?"

"A long time," Derek says. "I don't know exactly but I know someone who might be able to give you a good estimate if you want."

His distress must be palpable, given the way Derek's eyelids lower and he draws in a slow, scenting breath, skimming his hand down Stiles's flank. His body is more than happy to offer sex as the solution to everything that has ever upset him. Instinct has him burrowing his face into the crook of Derek's neck and pressing closer to him. Derek's arms tighten around him, pulling them tight together as he makes a low hum of pleasure, hand curving down over Stiles's backside.

But it isn't soothing. It runs aground of an old worry, a reminder that there's a difference between affection for Stiles the Incubus and Stiles the Person.
"Much as I'd love to go another round," Derek says, carefully loosening his grip again. "It's not exactly easy to get you to stay long enough to listen and there are things I still need to talk to you about."

Stiles sits back, laying his head down against his own pillow. "Uh. Okay."

"First let's talk about your kills."

That has Stiles blanching. It's not that it isn't kinda true, but fuck. Not the most pleasant juxtaposition Derek could be making with his bed-partner.

"Your prey," Derek amends with a chagrinned smile. "We should talk about pacing."

Stiles sighs, embarrassment making his cheeks feel hot. "I know, five is a lot. I know I should be learning to control myself. Normally I would have moved on by now and-"

"Five?" Derek asks, sounding grim. "Stiles, it's not that I don't believe you, but there have been twenty six confirmed incubus kills here in the past two months," Derek says firmly.

Stiles pushes up onto his elbow to stare down at Derek. The cop who apparently had no qualms about being in bed with someone he thinks is a freaking mass murderer - except for how he's sortof interrogating him now that sex has been gotten out of the way. Now that he's satisfied Stiles's needs to get to what Derek needs. The way Derek's eyelids droop again when Stiles feels another burst of upset makes him feel sick with what it might imply. He inches further back from Derek's grasp, trying to rein in his emotions.

"No way. I swear, I only-"

He freezes, mouth closing with a pop. Kali and Deucalion and their top-of-the-food-chain eating for three.

"What is it? What do you know?" Derek asks, eyes narrowing.

Stiles hesitates. "It's not for me to…" he gnaws on his lip, trying to decide what's fair to share. "I'm not the only incubus around."

Derek looks a little relieved, but not nearly enough for Stiles's liking.

"She has a good reason for what she's doing," Stiles says, because she really does. At least he thinks so. It seems like it would be a lot more work to leave humans alive and she's already having a hard time not starving.

Derek sets his jaw. "Maybe. But what you're both doing is about to become a problem for all of us."

His first instinct is to slide close, to use his persuasive abilities to soothe Derek's frown. It has him pulling back even more, a sick feeling settling in his belly. There's a little voice in the back of his head starting to get more and more hysterical as he considers the question of Derek's consent in all this.

"It's survival," Stiles says, as much to himself as to Derek, wrapping his arms around his knees.

Derek's knee nudges up against Stiles's foot. "It's not that simple. You remember that hunter you killed? He's an Argent."
Derek says it like it's important. Like he's supposed to know what the name means. He hates this, not knowing the rules of the world he'd been thrust into. Not having the experience to actually evaluate these different philosophies at anything more than face value. Stiles shrugs defensively. "What does that mean?"

"The Argents are a family of hunters. They're..." Derek runs a warm hand down Stiles's arm. "Vengeance-driven. They're making waves and it's only going to get worse if something isn't done to calm them."

The way Derek is touching him is meant to be soothing, but it sets his teeth on edge. He can't tell if it's because Derek wants to soothe him, or if his need to be soothed is compelling Derek to touch him. Stiles moves his hand out of Derek's reach, scratches at his hair as he asks, "Such as?"

Derek goes silent and it draws Stiles's eyes sharply. Derek's brows furrow as he sucks in a partial breath, words trapped in his throat as he thinks.

"Payoff?" Stiles guesses instead of waiting for Derek to compose a suitable answer. "Scapegoat? Sacrifice?"

Derek's lips close and he sighs tightly. It's more or less an admission.

Stiles glances at him, then back down at the space on the bed between them.

"Give them me?"

"No," Derek says sharply. But his face is not clear of it.

"You've thought about it." It's not a question. Derek doesn't deny it. And hell, Stiles would too, if their positions were reversed.

"But we're not doing that," Derek says firmly, looking hard up at him.

Stiles swallows against the nausea in his throat. "But someone. Something. So what, you...," he pauses, then corrects himself and says, "We fae just, roll over for them? These hunters?"

"No." Derek grimaces at the suggestion, nose wrinkling reflexively. He sits up, giving up on any pretense of relaxing in the bed now. His face is serious as he leans his elbows on his thighs and adds, "No, but they are not to be trifled with."

"So okay, I need to be more careful, sure. But you make it sound like that's not enough. And I don't understand. Why is the question appeasement? Why not take them out? The ones making waves, hunting us?" Stiles says.

"Kill them for an offense they might commit?" Derek says archly and purses his lips.

"Oh come on, don't go all Minority Report on me. I'm not talking about predicting the future. I'm talking about holding our ground. You're a cop. You better than most know that laws or rules are relative as all hell," Stiles says, pushing to his knees and turning to face him, sitting back on his heels.

Derek's eyes narrow, but he murmurs, "I'm listening."

"I think we have a right to exist. To protect ourselves, feed ourselves. If they're actively going around hunting us, yeah, I'd say their intent to do harm is pretty clear there. Why shouldn't we make it known that anyone who... hunts or has special weapons or does hunter stuff or whatever is
breaking our law and fair game?" he says, Deucalion's words ringing ever truer in his memory.

But Derek doesn't seem persuaded at all. He grunts, sitting up further as he replies. "Because it would escalate. There are some of them that would wish it, would exterminate all of us if they could, even the most innocent. None of us have much to gain by fanning their flames. They have the high ground, humans do. We're vulnerable to exposure. Peace, balance is our only protection."

Stiles stares at him a long moment. It sounds a lot like rolling over to Stiles.

"Says you," Stiles murmurs. He wishes so badly that he knew more about the fae.

"So say most all fae. True, not all. But most. The people I consider good." Derek's eyes narrow on him. "Does someone you know say otherwise?"

Stiles hesitates, but this time it's Derek's turn to make an insightful guess.

"Deucalion."

Stiles gnaws on his lip a moment, then shrugs. "Maybe."

Derek heaves a sigh. "He has something to do with the succubus, doesn't he? Stiles, they're putting you in danger. And you don't have enough control of your abilities to be out there dealing with any of this safely," he insists. "You need to let me help you."

And Stiles needs to warn Kali and Deucalion about the hunters he's unleashed on the city. Perhaps Kali's kills have escalated things, but it's undeniably Stiles's fault that they're swarming like this in the first place. He might agree more with Derek than Deucalion or Kali, might want Derek more than Deucalion or Kali, but he's not going to just turn his back on Kali and her baby.

"Listen, thanks for the info," Stiles says curtly as he slides away on the bed. "I need to go. You can stay here or go or-"

"You need to stay here. You need to lay low," Derek insists, hand darting out and closing tight around Stiles's wrist, holding him from getting up from the bed. "There are things at work that you don't understand. You're-"

"Why are you even here, Derek?" Stiles asks, trying not to let his voice shake, desperate hope against hope fluttering in his chest.

Derek makes an exasperated sound. "To help you. To keep you safe."

"And to keep me from killing other people?" Stiles demands, heart twisting as the soft feelings he'd been tendering in their sweet morning together are torn by the harsh edge of reality. "You've come to my bed to keep the peace and make all the fae happy."

Derek frowns, eyes searching his face. "That too."

He feels stupid to have ever let himself feel like Derek's presence wasn't just a function of his nature and Derek's duties as a Fae cop or whatever. So fucking stupid.

"How pragmatic," Stiles mutters, wrenching his arm free and twisting away from him.

But before he can slip from the bed, Derek's hands tighten on his waist, pulling him back to the mattress. Derek presses him down so he can face him as he rises over Stiles's body, boxing him in.

"Says the champion of pragmatism himself," Derek quips, straddling his hips and holding him

"It's my fault," Stiles says. "How can I just hide?"

"No fae would hold these mistakes against you. You're practically a child," Derek says softly.

If it was meant to soothe, it does anything but. Stiles closes his eyes and curls in on himself.

"You didn't say that last night," Stiles whispers. He pulls his aura in as tightly as he can possibly manage, so tightly it leaves his fingers and toes tingling at the loss.

Derek thinks him a child, a rape demon out of control, a careless murderer. Any one of those things should have kept Derek out of his bed. But no, he'd had his control taken from him by Stiles's needs, by Stiles's unchecked power. And yeah. Maybe Stiles can forgive himself for last night, for the sake of his life. But this morning? Even now Stiles wants him, wants to slide close to him, to take his offerings of comfort and forget the world. To go back to last night and this morning. He wants to make Derek forget all these problems, regardless of what Derek wants.

It makes him sick.

"Stiles," Derek says, sounding frustrated.

Stiles refuses to look at him, glaring at a point on the ceiling past his shoulder.

"Stiles, I'm also here because I thought you wanted me here." Derek runs warm hands down his body, tilting his head as he leans close. "Isn't this what you wanted?"

Stiles scowls up at him, unable to resist responding to his touch. "Is it what you wanted?" he demands in returns, voice threatening to crack over the words.

Derek huffs a laugh, breath warm against Stiles's throat.

"Isn't that obvious?" he says, curling his fingers tighter against Stiles's chest, brushing his thumbs slowly over Stiles's soft nipples. "I've wanted you from the first second I saw you."

Through the haze of wild sexual arousal that had been coming off of Stiles in waves, fresh from a kill, high from a chase.

Yeah. That's exactly what he's afraid of.

"You want me?" Stiles asks, letting his voice go soft with seduction.

"Yeah," Derek agrees, holding his gaze.

"Like really want me?" Stiles pushes, rolling his hardening dick up against Derek's body.

"Yes," Derek says, voice going low and intent as he leans closer.

Stiles bows up and kisses him, softly at first, curling an arm around his neck and savoring the touch. But his emotions are like a tidal wave, flooding in with an inexorable swelling that has him up to his neck in moments.

He drinks. Draws in.

And Derek gives it to him. Lets him take even more energy even when it surely hurts. Like he thinks it will soothe Stiles's temper. Serve Derek's purposes. Or maybe he's just that easily seduced,
already hooked on Stiles's aura.

But Stiles is already full. He does not hunger. And yet he drinks anyway, more and more and more. When Derek finally starts to realize something's wrong, to tense against him, it's too late. Derek's hands start to push down on the bed, to give him leverage to lift his head. But Stiles's grip around his neck is tight and Derek's strength has already become Stiles's. Stiles winds as close as possible, even as Derek pushes against him, eyes flashing open in surprise and fear. Even as Derek's fingers scratch hard enough at his back to make him bleed.

Control comes in many forms, and this time Stiles is exercising his by *not* stopping.
Chapter 11

When Derek wakes his head is throbbing. He hasn't felt this awful since Peter had taken him to Amsterdam a few decades back. The bed is cool beside him when he reaches out. The sun is on its way down now, the amber beams slanting in through the window in tiny slivers.

Slowly he sits up, pressing his head to his hands as he breathes through the wave of dizziness the action brings. He's alone in the apartment, he doesn't have to concentrate to know that. Stiles's scent is already fading and there's utter silence around him. He's also not sure how the hell he'd gotten to this state. He wracks his aching, fuzzy memory for the last thing he can actually remember.

"You want me."

"Yeah"

"like really want me?" Stiles had pushed.

"Yes," Derek had said, because it was true, but even as he'd said it, he'd gotten the sense that it was the wrong answer.

But before he could do anything about it, everything had become a blur of heat and mouth and then he'd woken up. Alone and with the worst headache he's ever had. Whatever had happened, he had clearly done something that had upset Stiles enough to not only leave but knock him out and leave him behind. Rejection cuts sharper than any hunter's blade.

He pushes to his feet and glances out the window at the fading light, then reaches for his phone laying in the pocket of his discarded jeans. His heart sinks when he finds no missed messages on it, just the late hour of the day mocking at him.

Some mentor he is, upsetting Stiles instead of helping him. Given the holes in his memory, he's not certain what it is exactly about what he'd said that had set the incubus off, but he knows he's fucked up. Probably more than once. Of course he's fucked up. There was a reason he'd been hesitant when Lydia had suggested he step in to mentor Stiles.

Perhaps he'd literally fucked up. For all of Stiles's reassurances, he knows he'd gone too far, taken too much for Stiles's first time. He'd lost himself in the heady haze of sexual arousal burning through the air around Stiles, in the desperation and the need he'd let become his own. The way he'd held him down, pierced his skin with his teeth… there's dried blood on his fingers for fuck's sake.

He stumbles his way to the bathroom, to wash his face. But there he's assaulted with the stale scent of Stiles's blood. All the more potent for the fact that he can taste it on the back of his tongue. He stares at the torn, bloodied clothing in the bathtub for a long moment. Another way he'd failed Stiles. He offers himself a glare as he leans against the sink. Staying angry at himself keeps other thoughts, other feelings at bay, one's he's not awake enough yet to handle. With most of the day gone he doesn't have time for self-pity.

He washes his face in cold water till the residue of blood is gone and his head feels less cottony. That done he drifts back out into the main apartment room, more alert, more ready to start acting like a detective. It doesn't take him long to grow certain that the apartment is not just empty but abandoned. Stripped of all personal belongings. It had been sparse before, but now there's nothing
save a few unwanted books and the detritus from last night's misadventures.

Himself included.

If Stiles has gone, has left New York with hunters on his tail and without a way to stay in touch…

The thought sends a spike of panic through his chest. Looking after Stiles is not just his duty as a keeper of the peace, or a mentor. His wolf is pawing at him, clawing at him to get out there, to go find his mate. And that… That has him sitting heavily on the couch and just tipping his head back and staring at the ceiling.

A mate? It's been so long since that part of him has been awakened, part of him had begun to wonder if he would find anyone again. Not that he'd thought about it, much less been trying to convince his wolf that Stiles was special. That had happened just by the nature of their spirits aligning well. By the way Stiles makes him feel. They suit. He likes Stiles, his presence and his banter. Surprising as it is, he probably should have known where things were heading for him by the way his wolf has been pacing since the moment they'd first met. But it's too late now. His wolf is invested.

Under any other circumstances he wouldn't have taken Stiles to bed and claimed him so fiercely without at least recognizing that was part of what he was doing. And if Stiles weren't so flighty they'd at least be able to talk it through now that it's apparent what he'd been doing last night. Possibly part of what had scared Stiles off again. Not that it's Stiles's responsibility to deal with Derek's instincts.

He's old enough to know that some fae needs are incompatible with relationships. If Stiles comes to feel for him in return, well, nothing would make him happier. But he's not going to let his wolf give Stiles any grief. After all, he doubts that an incubus would appreciate a wolf's fierce tendencies towards monogamy. He sighs, fingers digging into his thighs in frustration. He'll be able to keep himself in check. Probably.

Regardless. He needs to find Stiles. At the very least to apologize and help him find a safe way away from the hunters and anyone else Stiles doesn't want following him.

He goes back to the bedroom and drags on his clothes. The best he knows how to do is track by scent, but he doubts it's going to serve him well today. Stiles's scent has already faded in the apartment halls as he makes his way down to street level. Before he even steps outside he's already sure it's futile.

Even still, he walks a ways down the street, and though he opens his senses up to the full onslaught of the scents of the city. He breathes in the oils, the fumes, the garbage and sweat, the flurries of everything human and even fae, the one thing he doesn't smell, is Stiles.

Not even a little that isn't completely subsumed in the bloody residue of his trek home the night before.

The street is fairly busy in the afternoon, and his wolf paces in his head, urging him to chase Stiles but heavily wary of the crowds and the too-many possible routes to nowhere. He retreats back into Stiles's apartment, back into the relative safety.

Derek sits on the bed, staring at the rumpled sheets. It terrifies him that Stiles is out there, somewhere, naïve to the ways of the hunters out looking for him. Stiles is so very unpredictable to him, so different from him in some ways. Wolves always come home eventually. Incubi may never do so, from all he knows.
And there's the fact that Stiles isn't the only one in danger out there. Other fae - even regular humans in the wrong place at the wrong time might be in danger if things escalate any further. He stares at his phone and then hits the speed-dial without a second thought. Keeping Erica in the dark only works so long as it's for her safety, and if there's a Grand Hunt in the works…

"Please tell me you had something resembling fun last night," Erica says by way of answering her phone.

Derek huffs a mirthless laugh. There aren't really words sufficient to describe it in any direction. But it's almost easy to slip into the rude banter with her. It's how they stay sane sometimes on the job. He stares at the rumpled sheets under his fingers as he says, "Let's just say the bed I'm sitting on isn't mine and my head feels like it went toe-to-toe with a baseball bat."

Erica cackles.

"I knew you had it in you."

"Yeah," he sighs. But he presses his forehead into his hands. "Listen, Erica," he begins.

"Aw shit, I knew it was too good to be that simple."

Derek grunts in the affirmative, scrubbing his fingers against the pressure in his forehead. "There are some things happening in the city right now. It's difficult to explain, but you should be aware. Strange things, dangerous things might be happening."

"Magic monster things?" Erica says in a voice that's droll, but not entirely teasing. Like she's serious.

He hesitates, sighing a frustrated breath when she laughs.

"Come on Hale, you're not as subtle as you pretend. And you're going to take that because the alternative is that you think I'm stupid and that would piss me off."

Derek is silent for a long moment, trying to figure out how to respond to that.

"Well you're not stupid," he admits, grudgingly-enough that she scoffs and he knows he'd be on the receiving end of a lobbed object if they were within throwing-distance. "So stay smart and stay out of dark alleys and strange crime scenes if you can. And some of the humans are just as dangerous as us magic monsters, you understand? Worse even. You remember those people who came to the squad room talking about Darrell Argent? Do not, under any circumstances, trust them."

She hesitates for a moment, then says, "Okay," her voice going quiet. "Need help?"

"No," he says sharply, then sighs and says, "Not this time. Not until I can tell you some things, okay? This time I need to know you're going to stay safe so I don't have to worry about you."

"You got it, partner. I could use an excuse to keep Boyd in bed all weekend. But don't think this means you get to cut me out of the loop," Erica says.

"Like I could keep your nose out of anything," Derek retorts, earning himself a few choice swear words.

"Okay. I have to go. I'll keep you posted."

"You'd better," she contends, then hangs up.
And Derek's back where he started. His memory of the morning hasn't gotten any clearer so he doubts it's going to.

If Stiles were a wolf, Derek would know to just stay, to wait in his territory, knowing he'd come back when he was ready. But Stiles isn't a wolf. He's flighty, transient. Doesn't lay down roots or leave tracks. In fact, he's been harder to keep in one place or get ahold of than anyone Derek's ever met before. He doesn't know how to hunt like this. If it weren't for the extenuating circumstances, this is exactly the sort of thing he would be asking for Lydia's help with.

He knows he shouldn't call Lydia, knows he shouldn't ask her to interfere any further. If he does, it very well might cost her her life as she knows it. But he also doesn't know what the hell to do and he knows, he knows he needs to do something. Stiles doesn't understand what a Grand Hunt would mean, he hadn't gotten to that part yet. And he hadn't told him about Lydia's premonitions, about how big a role he might play.

He needs to fix his mistake.

He paces the unpolished wood floors, arms folded protectively across his chest and phone cradled in his palm as he gnaws on the problem.

Perhaps this is the choice she spoke of, sacrificing their friendship to save Stiles's life.

It hurts, it hurts to think about it. But the thought of losing Stiles forever is a blow far beyond that.

He takes a deep breath, then dials her number.

The question proves moot moments later when he gets the standard discordant tones followed by the recorded message informing him that this number is no longer in service.

He hangs up and rests his forehead against the phone case. So he's already lost her then. Everything, everything is quickly spinning out of what little control he might have had.

But when he ends the call and returns to his phonebook, there's another name just a few below Lydia that might make all the difference.

Peter.

In fact, Peter might even be the more informative choice. It's the middle of the night where his uncle is, but one thing he knows about Peter is that, no matter how much he might bitch and moan, he's always there for family. Though the mocking does usually come standard.

The phone rings several times, then goes to voicemail. He doesn't leave a message, just hangs up and dials again. This time, Peter answers on the third ring with a terse, "What?"

"I'm sorry to call at this hour, but I need your help," Derek says. "Your advice."

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There's a pause as Peter heaves a sigh and then a rustle as he rises from his bed. There's a soft murmur in the background and Peter replies with a soothing sound before he pads away. Derek can hear the sound of one of Peter's heavy wooden doors creaking and then thumping shut in the background before Peter finally says, "What do you need?"

"It's about Stiles. The incubus I mentioned," Derek begins.

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Peter perks up immediately, laughing softly. "Still having trouble landing him, pup?"
"No I-

"Oh, be still my heart," Peter gushes. "You've finally landed him and you're calling your favorite uncle for tips?"

"Peter, I'm asking about your succubus. Your notes ended suddenly."

"Ah," Peter says, mirth fading from his voice.

"Did you send me everything? Or…" Derek trails off, not wanting to jump to conclusions.

Peter sighs. His voice is oddly flat when he says, "She disappeared on me."

And that's exactly what he was afraid of. He rubs at his opposite shoulder with his free hand, trying to ease some of the tension in his neck. But it's no use.

"Did you look for her?" Derek asks, almost hoping the answer is no.

"Of course I looked for her," Peter snaps. Then he heaves a sigh, saying more softly, "Of course I did. I went everywhere we'd ever been together. I talked to everyone I thought might know her, and even random strangers towards the end. But she was just gone. Left without a word. I never saw her again. But that was a long time ago and we were from different places. With globalization and technology…"

"Yeah," Derek says softly.

"From what I've been able to gather since then, my experience is not a unique one. Once they go, they're gone," Peter says. "They don't come back. Every tale I've ever heard, my own encounter… the break is clean and final."

Derek's wolf keens at the thought, paws at him. He's nowhere near ready for that. He leans against the wall, curling in on himself against the potential losses.

"Based on my experience, your only chance is to hunt him down before he gets too far, and even then…"

"What?" Derek prods sharply.

"Well, he chose to leave you behind. They're fickle creatures, so who knows, he might be delighted that you chased after him. But by the same token if you show up again he might just put a compulsion on you and leave you spinning. Or drain you dry and leave you for dead if you've really pissed him off."

Was that what Stiles had already been trying to do?

"I have to try," Derek says.

"Of course you do," Peter replies with a snort. "So go. And don't think like a wolf. He won't go to ground. He'll go to hunting grounds or transportation. He'll want to feel wind beneath his wings."

"Yeah," Derek agrees. "Thank you."

"Good luck, kiddo," Peter says, then hangs up.

Derek runs over the conversations he'd had with Stiles, picking out details. Stiles liked to hunt at clubs. He'd also talked about Deucalion, been ready to defend him despite the fact that Deucalion's
people had attacked him. Like there was something important to him there. Maybe Stiles had gone to Deucalion If he'd gone straight for transportation, he'd likely take a train or a bus instead of an airplane, but in NYC either would mean far too many people for Derek to parse, far too many options. At least if he goes to Deucalion he might have a chance. He might be able to find Stiles, to offer him a counterpoint, an outside perspective to whatever Deucalion is offering him.

And if he's not there… well. Whatever Deucalion wants from Stiles, whatever he has to do with the succubus who's been leaving bodies around to fall on Stiles's shoulders, that at least is something Derek can get involved in. It's his duty to get involved in, knowing that it plays a part in fueling the flames that burn towards inciting a Grand Hunt.

Hope against hope, Derek leaves a note on the bed, pleading with Stiles to call him if he comes back and telling him where he's going to go.

It's not late enough for the club to be open, really, though the doors to this place are rarely ever shut and locked. Different fae run on different schedules and some of them gather at times others would find odd. It's not lit for clubbing, nor is there music playing as he comes down the hall, but the place isn't empty either. Pip is at the bar when he strides into the club proper, and she eyes him with a deep frown as she sets aside the glass in her hands.

He'd go speak to her, but his attention is sharply diverted by the presence of a Kanima moving towards him. The Kanima. His hackles raise in a flash and he growls, more than ready to let out some of his pent up anger and frustration from the last twenty-four hours.

"You," he spits.

The Kanima hisses in response and tilts his head. "Have we met?"

"No. But you hurt a friend of mine," Derek growls, stalking closer, claws snapping down in his splayed fingers, a blatant show of aggression.

The Kanima's tail flicks in irritation, sweeping long and heavy over the floor, enough of a threat that Derek keeps an eye on it.

"So you're his wolf," he mutters. "Filthy reeking mutts."

"Like you smell any better," Derek snaps.

They're circling each other, and Derek's starting to realize that his anger has dragged him off course. As much as he'd like to throw down with the Kanima, not only is he not here for that reason, he's also nowhere near full strength after the degree of whammy Stiles had laid on him. Getting his ass kicked again is not going to do anyone any good right now.

"I'm not here for you," he says, stopping. "I'm here to talk to Deucalion. I'm here to find Stiles."

The Kanima hisses at him, flexing his claws, his eyes narrowing. "Why?"

"Is he here?" Derek demands.

"He is not," a third voice says, clear and deep and seemingly un-bothered by the tension.

Derek is loath to take his eyes off of the Kanima, but after a moment he jerks his gaze in the direction of the voice. Pip isn't behind the bar anymore, but Deucalion is standing a little ways in
from the door that leads to the back-rooms, hands folded at his waist over his cane.

Derek's eyes land on another fae behind Deucalion, lingering in the shadows. He's pallid and Derek doesn't have to concentrate much to pick up the scent of stale blood on him. But Deucalion is who he came to see after all, so he turns back to the man in question.

"But I'm available if you wish to speak with me. Come, have a seat," Deucalion says and turns away, making his careful way across the floor to the enclosed little area he usually inhabits.

Derek glares back at the Kanima, who casts a frustrated look at his master, but then backs away slowly. It's enough that Derek lets his wolf fade back and lets himself make his way after Deucalion.

"Derek Hale," Deucalion says. "I thought perhaps our paths would cross at some point in all of this."

Derek glares at the Kanima until he drifts further away. The blood-eater just maintains his position on the seat on the other side of the room. But Derek doesn't doubt he's well ready to react at a moment's notice.

"What do you want with Stiles?" he demands.

Deucalion sits down carefully on his couch, setting his cane aside and crossing his legs. He frowns slightly as he says, "I should think that's between him and myself." He pauses for a considering moment, then adds, "And though I know you by reputation, he has never spoken of you to me. Who is he to you?"

Derek purses his lips and leans back against the chair, dragging back his wolf that wants to assert Stiles is his mate. It's been a long time since he's had to deal with such a powerful manifestation of his instincts, but he shrugs it back. Deucalion's also asking if there's any more formal relationship, any of the numerous possible structures of clans and mentors and the like that would offer Stiles his protection, but again, it's not something he's been able to discuss with Stiles yet. So he simply says, "He's my friend."

"And so I should hope to become," Deucalion murmurs.

Derek barely holds back the growl. "Beating him half to death is sure a strange way of showing it."

Deucalion's eyebrows flicker up in genuine surprise at this. "I did no such thing."

"No? I saw the injuries myself, and he told me this morning he was attacked by your Kanima," he says, fixing a glare on the reptilian fae lurking in the shadows.

Deucalion pauses for a long moment, then says, "That is an unfortunate turn of events."

"Unfortunate?" Derek snaps. "They work for you. They're at your damn beck and call."

"Yes. I've been distracted, and perhaps putting too much pressure on them. But they act on their own free will. I assure you, those actions will not be tolerated."

"It's not me who need the assurance," Derek says.

Deucalion twists his lips. "And yet here you are. Why is that?"

Derek makes a dismissive sound. "I'm here to tell you to back off. Stiles has to be free to make up
his mind on his own."

But Deucalion's face clouds abruptly. "I beg your pardon, but you said you spoke with him today? In person?"

"Yes."

"And yet you do not know where he is now?" Deucalion confirms.

"He left me behind in his apartment," Derek admits. Refusing to answer now would just confirm it anyway, and ruin his chances of gathering more information. But he is concerned when Deucalion's demeanor shifts from rather blasé straight into one of heightened tension.

"Please excuse me a moment," Deucalion says and draws a bluetooth headset from his pocket, setting it in his ear and pressing it.

"Ethan," he tells the phone, then waits for it to dial. After a few beats he says a terse, "Report."

He listens a moment, face darkening, then says, "Incorrect." He listens again, then says, "That would be wise," and then hangs up.

Before they can continue their conversation, Deucalion's face lifts abruptly and Derek turns to look as a barefooted woman approaches with drinks in hand. She's beautiful, enchantingly-so. She wears a mid-length dress of loosely-draped blue cloth with detailed but subdued embroidery spanning the bulk of it.

"Ah, Kali comes," Deucalion says, smiling at her.

Derek, on the other hand, frowns at her studiously.

"You're the succubus," he says. It's not a question. If it weren't for the situation and his recent experience with the sensation of being in the presence of a succubus's sensual aura, he might not have known it, but here he's certain.

She looks at him warily, moving closer to Deucalion and handing him a glass, leaving a bottled water under her arm for herself.

But Deucalion takes her hand and brings it to his lips. "Derek is a friend of Stiles's," he says. "The twins tell me he's just come from Stiles's apartment, but Derek tells me that Stiles is no longer there."

Kali's face goes sharp and concerned and she steps forward reflexively. She glares down at Derek with an impressively commanding aura and demands, "Where is he?"

"That's what I want to know," Derek replies just as sharply, hackles rising in return. He won't be easy prey for her.

But to his surprise, she pales at his words and sits heavily beside Deucalion, looking hollowed. She turns her head to Deucalion and murmurs softly, "You have-"

"Yes, of course, they're all searching," Deucalion assures her, squeezing her hand.

"You keep the Kanima away from him," Derek snaps.

Kali's face turns thunderous. "What did he do now?" she hisses.
Deucalion purses his lips and lifts a calming hand to her knee, but inclines his head in agreement to Derek. "If what you claim is true, he will be dealt with. In the meantime, I'll have every other available fae in my employ out searching for him."

"All of them? Are you sure that's a good idea?" Derek asks. As much as he wants to find Stiles, this is not at all what he'd had in mind. He doesn't want Deucalion to find him first, and he's especially not interested in the street climate escalating further towards something no one can control. As it is, there's enough tinder laid about that just one clash might provide an igniting spark sufficient for a firestorm.

"Do you have a reason otherwise?" Deucalion asks, turning back to him. "I understand you're fond of the boy, but there's absolutely no reason why we can't all be friends. In fact, I would welcome and reward your presence if he truly enjoys your friendship."

Kali glances at him and this time her gaze is speculative, her dark eyes holding the seeds of tangled pleasures and things he can't even fathom.

"No I-" Derek huffs a tight breath. That's not something he's at all prepared to consider right now, let alone discuss. "I'm sure you've heard there's increased hunter activity," Derek contends.

Kali shrugs, but Deucalion nods. "Yes. There's been some talk of patrols. New faces."

"It's because of the bodies Stiles and Kali have been leaving," Derek says.

Deucalion frowns. "I find that somewhat surprising. It's true, we've been a bit sloppy in our haste and our need, but nothing that should be sparking much upset. Though I must admit, it is turning uncomfortable. It's part of why I too wish to find Stiles sooner rather than later. We need to leave New York soon."

Meaning they were planning to take Stiles away? But that's not the whole problem. He pauses, chewing over how much of his information he should be revealing to Deucalion and Kali. Lydia's already in enough trouble as it is. But he can't let them incite a Grand Hunt so foolishly.

He can just stick to facts, he decides. He doesn't have to bring in Lydia's foretelling to make it sound urgent. "There's more happening than you know. Stiles inadvertently took a hunter. An Argent. I've since seen two more Argents, leaders. Volatile ones I've run across before. It's only just getting started."

Deucalion grimaces. "Then we must leave as soon as possible."

Derek leans forward, putting as much calm, earnestness in his voice as he can manage when he says, "Then call off your search and go. Stiles can come to you on his own terms."

Deucalion is quiet for a long moment, staring at Derek, though his eyes see nothing. His voice is low and deadly when he says, "Let's be clear, Stiles is going to be mine."

It's said with such finality that the hair on the back of Derek's neck stands on end. He understands that Deucalion functions differently from him, that many fae do, in fact, but there's a ruthless and dominating edge to it that scares him.

"You can't force him. I won't stand for it. No one will stand for that," Derek snarls, shoving to his feet.

Deucalion tilts his head slowly, finger rubbing against the lip of his glass. "Regrettfully, I can't afford to let anyone stand in our way. Besides, I won't need to force him," Deucalion says, flicking
a finger in the air that has Kali slipping to her feet.

Her presence and motion have been enough of a distraction that Derek hasn't kept an eye on the Kanima and the Blood-Eater, doesn't realize they're closing in behind him until they're too close for him to bolt past. He drops his claws, growling at them all, trying not to turn his back on any of them, but it's futile with four people to watch.

"Yeah but I'm guessing you need his cooperation. He's stubborn," Derek warns, glaring at the Kanima when he hears the soft swish of a tail moving through the air. "Your little stunts have just made him harder to persuade. You should probably just save yourself the trouble and move on."

Deucalion just shrugs. "I do appreciate the advice, Derek. However, everyone has a price if you're ruthless enough and powerful enough. I'm certain I can afford Stiles."

Derek flashes fangs Deucalion can't see but can probably hear when he bites out, "I don't think you can."

Deucalion smirks, amused, and makes another gesture with his finger. In a split second, two bodies slam into Derek, propelling him towards the ground, knocking him to his knees and gaining hold of his arms. And normally he might be able to hold his own, at least long enough to break free, especially this close to the full moon. But he goes down almost as easily as a human. Stiles had left him so very drained of power that afternoon and he has nothing left to fight as he's made to kneel before Deucalion, his arms bound behind his back.

"Oh, but Derek," Deucalion murmurs, leaning forward as Derek struggles against the Kanima and Blood-eater's grips. His hand comes up to grip Derek's hair, holding his head steady as he touches his features, 'seeing' his face with his fingers. "Don't you see? If you are indeed his friend, you've just brought me the very thing I need to buy his cooperation."

"It won't work," Derek snaps.

Deucalion shrugs, letting Derek's head drop again. "If not, then your life force will provide me with the necessary sustenance to live a while longer."

"What?" Derek murmurs, jerking his face up again, staring at Deucalion's blinded eyes.

"Gorgon are permitted fae kills. Did you not know?" He tuts sharply. "You really ought to keep up on your fae law and history, Derek."

"He's still young," Kali interjects, sounding vaguely bored, though she watches them intently enough.

Deucalion makes a hum in concession. "Well then, listen well. Gorgon need to harvest fae. We don't need them often, especially when supported by human meals in between times, but fae have a..." he twirls his fingers in a speaking gesture. "A spark, if you will. Something special."

Derek's starting to understand exactly why Deucalion is afforded so much power. Why even someone like Pip is cautious of his games. Derek curses his stupidity, his naiveté at coming in here unprepared.

"Yes, should Stiles spurn my gift of you, I think you will make a lovely statue to add to my collection," he murmurs. Then he flicks his fingers dismissively.

"Take him."
And then everything goes black.
The New York City Grand Central train station is always busy, seems like. There are always people marching through the hallways at a pace that speaks of urgency and annoyance for anyone not moving at their tempo. Now, around late rush hour, it's especially busy. It had taken him forever to cross the city, to run to the mode of transportation that appeased his instincts the best. And even now he's not in the flow of people disappearing from the city.

His head is light, overfull with Derek's energy. The vibrations of everyone around him, rushing, moving, leave him tingling, weightless. It's all a bit blurry. Stiles is just standing there, standing in the middle of the endless-seeming corridor, staring at the stairs that will lead him down to the platform he's chosen. A train that runs to D.C. Another one to Boston on the opposite side of the platform. Either will do. It's dark down there, crowded and noisy and easy to disappear into.

But he can't seem to make himself take the stairs.

He should go. He wants to help Kali, to warn them of the shitstorm he might have caused killing those hunters. But if he goes to Deucalion from a position of weakness like this, he'll lose whatever chance he might have had of preventing himself from getting in too deep, of being able to keep more innocent people from getting hurt. And just here in New York in general there are hunters and blood and manipulations and too-high body-counts staining the city in his wake and there's way, way too much shit here for him to handle.

But if he's honest with himself, none of those things are the real reason he'd panicked and fled his apartment. The real reason is the sick knowledge sitting heavy in his stomach that he'd become, however unintentionally, the very thing he despised the most. For all Derek's apparent willingness, the fact of the matter is Derek had been influenced by his nature, unable to give unalloyed consent.

He'd been seduced, to some degree or another but seduced nonetheless into falling into Stiles's bed and under his spell.

Derek wanting to talk with him, help him and even flirt with him was one thing, but the rest? The ways he'd urged Derek past the edges of control to take as he desired? And when Derek had held him down, kept him from leaving… he'd reacted so violently and maybe that wasn't so bad, just an overreaction perhaps but an understandable one. Until it had been more than that. The worst part was how badly for one horrible moment he'd wanted to rape Derek instead of just disable him enough to get free. The way he'd left Derek there, breathing shallow and face pale, spread limp across sheets stained in places with blood… he doesn't even know if Derek's alright. He'd been breathing steadily when Stiles left, but…

It's everything he never wanted.

But he still can't make himself walk down the stairs. Can't make himself fade into nothingness, alone and lost again in faceless, nameless crowds. Instead he finds himself struggling to keep panic at bay, breathing stiffly and staring vacantly at the bank of payphones along the wall.

A part of him desperately wants to call Derek, hope against hope and find him awake and fine and understanding.

He could…

He can't handle calling Derek. Not yet. But Scott…
He goes to the phone, searching his pockets and then his backpack for change. He tries to keep some around, but at the same time, change is heavy and he travels light. He doesn't have much, but it's enough for a call. He glances warily around him, but nothing strange sticks out so he turns his back to the public. After all, Jackson had been right about one thing, Stiles didn't stand out in a crowd. He punches the familiar numbers by heart, trying to keep his breathing steady.

"McCall residence," a voice says. But it's not the voice he's expecting. Not at all.

"Dad?" he says, voice cracking on the word. The voice hits him like a slap of cold water to his face and tears fill his eyes in a rush.

"Stiles? Stiles, oh god. Please don't hang up son, please," his father says, voice rough and intent.

"Dad, what are you…" There are voices in the background, laughter and the clatter of kitchenware. He must be over for dinner.

"Oh." His dad sighs. "Right. I guess I'm not the person you called to talk to. Should. Do you want me to get Scott?" he asks, like it's painful for him to do it but he will if Stiles needs him to.

"No, Dad," Stiles says, pressing his forehead against his fist and squeezing his eyes shut, tears spilling over and tumbling down his face. "Dad, I screwed up."

"Are you alright? Are you safe?" his dad asks.

Stiles laughs mirthlessly through his tears. "I don't know. Mostly. Everything's really complicated."

"It's okay, son, it's going to be okay," his dad says, voice holding a parent's certainty that Stiles knows is a matter of faith and not fact. But it helps. God it helps.

"I…," the sheriff clears his throat roughly, says, "I know you're a grown man now so I'm not going to pretend I get to tell you what to do. At least I'm going to try," he adds with a wry huff of a laugh that has Stiles making a similar sound through his sniffles. "But maybe you can tell me what's going on and I can, I don't know, try to help."

A pang of longing hits him, then desire to climb into his daddy's lap and let his strong shoulders take on Stiles's burdens. He closes his eyes for a long moment.

"It probably won't make any sense," he hedges, picking at the peeling edge of a sticker on the booth wall.

"But I can listen," his dad says. "I can at least do that."

Stiles curls into the little metal shield of the booth. "Okay."

The noises in the background of the McCall house lessen and Stiles can tell he's taken the extension away into the guest room. And it's not that he doesn't want Scott or Melissa to overhear exactly, but the feeling of privacy makes it easier to let go a little, to stop clinging so tightly to trying to hold it all together. Tears start spilling down his face again as his dad sits on the edge of the bed with a creak and says, "So, tell me what's wrong."

"I think I hurt someone. Someone I really care about. And he-" His voice breaks on the edge of a hiccup that he swallows back before it becomes a sob.

"Okay, just breathe," his dad says, using the same voice he always had whenever Stiles had been upset as a kid, low and steady and calm. "Tell me about him."
"He's-" A werewolf. A hundred and seventy something years old. Absolutely breathtaking in both body and spirit. "He's… good. He's a good person. He's a cop," he says with a chuckle, because he thinks maybe his dad will appreciate that. "Here in New York. He's been watching out for me, helping me fit in here."

The sheriff hums faintly, almost bittersweet. "Okay, that sounds good. So, what happened?"

Stiles huffs a laugh. How the hell does he explain that? "You won't understand."

His dad laughs faintly. "Hey, maybe not. But I've been around the block a few times, you know. So you never know. Give it a shot."

And he's not wrong. He's not wrong and Stiles feels so alone, trying to dig through all his feelings about Derek and about himself and his life, now that he's pushed Derek away again.

"I'm, I've got feelings for him," Stiles says, squeezing his eyes shut against the memory of the soft morning light, listening to Derek talk, his gentle smile. "But I'm… it's not good for him."

His dad makes a sound of sympathy. "I have a hard time believing that. Why do you think that?"

"Being around me… it's going to cloud his judgment. And that would be okay if we were just friends. I could handle it. But I… I could fall in love with him and I won't be able to stop myself from hurting him again because he won't know any better."

His dad is quiet a moment, then breathes out a tight, bemused sound. "You know it's funny," he says, pausing for another long moment. "Your mother said something just like that to me once."

Stiles's fingers go still against the edge of the phone booth. He never talks about her. Never.

"Yeah?" he asks, hoping it's an offer of more.

"Yeah," his dad agrees. "Early days. Of course, you've heard me say before that I'd fallen for her in about three minutes flat," his dad says with a chuckle.

"Yeah." It no longer seems romantic, knowing what his mother was, what sort of effect she would have had on anyone she was interested in.

"Oh she was beautiful, your mom. Just something special about her. But it was her wit that got me. New in town and completely unimpressed with the book club's latest choice, her objections to which she laid out for me in detail as she rung me up. That's when I loved her. Of course she never did believe me about that."

Now that he's never told Stiles before. "Really?"

"Really. Right from the start, in fact. She seemed sad the first time I asked her out. Said she wouldn't be good for me. I don't know why, maybe because she had you on the way, but she turned me down. Told me I didn't really want her. But I knew she was wrong, so I came by again the next day and tried again."

"She said you didn't actually want her again, didn't she?" Stiles asks, though it's not really a question because he understands her reasoning entirely. God, how awful that would have been, how lonely.

"She did. Which didn't sit right with me. Now, I told her if she wasn't interested in me that was perfectly fine, my ego would eventually recover. But she'd have to tell me that she wasn't
interested, not that I wasn't, because I definitely was and would she please stop saying otherwise."

Stiles laughs, brushing aside tears as he leans into the booth. It sounds so like his dad, and a mom he's beginning to understand better every day. "So did she say yes?"

"No," his dad grumbles, though Stiles can hear the wry grin in his voice. "No she did not. But she specifically didn't tell me to stop. So I didn't. I came by the bookstore three more times before she said yes and let me take her out."

Stiles hums a faint laugh along with his dad, a soft smile curving over his mouth at the returning sense of romance about their initial courtship. Stubborn, the lot of them.

"Anyway, what you made me think of happened a few months later when we had a disagreement, nothing important. I don't even remember what the fight was about. But the unforgettable part was when we made up because after that was when I asked her to marry me she said... how did she put it," he pauses, getting his phrasing right, then says, "she said that I only thought I wanted to marry her. That it was her fault and she wanted to say yes because she loved me more than she had ever loved anyone and that was exactly why she wouldn't say yes, because she would only hurt me."

"Yeah," Stiles says softly.

"Well, I never did quite work out what she meant but somehow I convinced her not to leave even though I caught her packing when I came back after a walk. I made the same deal with her as with our first date, she wouldn't tell me how I felt. In return she refused to talk to me in person for an entire month. But eventually she took me at my word, trusted herself again and said yes. Anyway, I guess you know the rest."

"Some of it," Stiles says.

His dad sighs and he can hear the pain in it, so he doesn't push further. He's already been given more in the last few minutes than his dad had given in the last few years before he'd left.

"Thanks," he says softly. "Thank you for telling me."

"Anyway, all I'm saying is, if you care about him, trust him to make his own decisions about you."

Stiles sighs, pressing his forehead against his knuckles. If he were a human that would be great advice. But it's not that simple. Still, just talking to his dad, just hearing about how his mom must have felt... it helps. The panic is loosening in his chest and so is the desperate urge to run.

The recording tells him he's down to a minute and he fumbles in his bag but doesn't come up with any more change.

"Listen, I'm out of quarters." He gnaws at his lip and then says, "I need to get going anyway."

"Oh," his father says, disappointment obvious in his voice. He covers it up quickly with a warm, "Sure. Of course."

"I'll try and call you," he blurts. "Derek's right, I've been putting off calling you for too long."

"I'd like that. I'd like that a lot. Take care of yourself, son," his dad says.

"You too," he murmurs, then hangs up.

He stares at the stairs leading down to the tracks again, then leans away from the opening against
the wall. He doesn't want to leave. It's not like he's likely to get into any less trouble in some other city, with some other group of fae and hunters and humans. At least here he has a chance to start figuring things out. He wants to figure out how to help Kali. He wants to figure out how to stop running and start living.

And as terrifying as it is, trying not to hurt Derek… except for maybe the part at the end where he'd panicked and run away, it wasn't like he'd intended to do Derek harm. He could learn not to. His mom had, hadn't she? Maybe he can be strong enough to be like her. Learn how to keep his aura in all the time around Derek or something. And if it turns out he can't stop seducing Derek, can't keep himself from wrecking the boundaries of consent, he doesn't have to leave. There have to be other solutions. He doesn't have to run from Derek, or from this city, or from the problems he's caused. He can stay. He can stand his ground.

He finds some bills in his bag and exchanges them for coins at a nearby machine, scoffing at the absurd fee. It'll be barely enough for a call, but he just needs to make a quick one, just enough to make sure Derek's okay. That he'll wait for him to come back maybe.

He slots the coins into the phone and dials Derek's number quickly.

It just rings. Stiles's heart sinks as it goes to voicemail. He could be unconscious still… or worse. Or maybe he just doesn't want to talk to him. Either way, it's not a good sign. He hangs up with a click and grabs his things. Leaving a message won't do him any good. He doesn't have a phone for Derek to call him back on. He has to get back, has to find out if Derek's okay.

This time he goes straight back to his apartment - at least, to the street near the entrance to the maintenance tunnels. He does not need any more interference today from anyone, either Hunters or Deucalion's people. The ride in the taxi is nerve-wracking in the extreme, just waiting and worrying and cursing the city traffic. When he gets to the street and ducks into the empty tunnels, anxiety and anticipation start to war.

Running hard down the long tunnels and up the back stairs of his apartment building helps, letting the exertion cover the nerves of approaching his apartment, terrified that he'll find Derek unconscious and injured, or worse. Or that he'll be angry. Or-

He can't. He just jams his keys into the lock, not letting his momentum slow as he shoves his way into the apartment, stumbling into the quiet living room and hurrying across and into the bedroom. The empty bedroom.

Which. He puts his face in his hands, falling back against the wall, taking a shaky breath. That means Derek's okay, physically. Enough to get up and leave, anyway. When he lifts his face again he searches more carefully, noticing that the bed has been casually made, the sheets pulled up and straightened so that the scrap of paper on the bed stands out.

He dashes over to it, snatching it up as he half-falls onto the bed.

*Stiles,*
*I'm sorry. I didn't mean to upset you.*
*I truly want to help you. To be your friend and more if you want.*
*I don't know where you went, but I'm worried you went to Deucalion.*
*It's the only place I know to look for*
you, so that's where I'll go.
Please call me,
Derek

"Fuck," he blurs, crumpling the note to his belly. It all hits him in a rush of conflicting emotions. Relief that Derek's well enough to write a note. Fear that Derek's gone to Deucalion on Deucalion's home territory, that he's out where hunters might find him. And then an emotion he doesn't even know how to parse at the "more if you want". At the supposed claim that Derek doesn't blame him, doesn't want to end whatever they've been building.

God. But Derek hadn't answered him when he'd called. What if…

Even if he can't keep Derek romantically, he wants him as a friend. At the very least Derek wants to help him and protect the city and if Stiles can help in return… If he has to cash in with Deucalion to buy Derek's safety, at least he'll be making sure his power is being used to do good.

Stiles shoves the note in his pocket and then bolts from the apartment again, hurrying down the stairs. He doesn't care about stealth now. He's just going out the front. Hell, they might get him there faster than running or a cab. But when he hits the first floor he stumbles to a halt, stopping just shy of the short woman and her permed black hair just stepping out of her apartment in her pink tracksuit.

"Mrs. Sato," he says, trying to catch his breath as he smiles, turning on the charm. "Hi. How are you? My phone's not working, could I borrow yours? For just a minute?"

"Of course dear," she says, smiling brightly at him, stepping back and ushering him into her apartment.

It's cute. Covered in delicate doilies and other such things but not to an extreme. Tasteful. A cat sits on a shelf near the phone and upon seeing Stiles tilts it's head a moment before climbing down to trot over and wind its way around his legs.

He tries not to stumble as he gets the handset and dials Derek's number. Only once it's ringing does he crouch down, extending his hand for the cat to sniff. She scents him, reminding him abruptly of Derek, nuzzling her cheek against his hand and then sliding close.

But Derek's phone just keeps ringing. It goes to voicemail and Stiles grimaces. But this time he doesn't hang up.

"Derek, I'm sorry. I shouldn't have done that to you and I shouldn't have left. I came back. I'm sorry. Please. Don't go to Deucalion. I… I'm going to go to Deucalion to try and find you. If you get this just meet me back at my apartment. I promise if you're not there with Deucalion I'll come back and wait for you. I'll wait for you."

He runs out of things to say that aren't just repetitions so he hangs up and backs away, heading for the door again. Mrs. Sato's standing there waiting, clearly having been poised to go out on a mission of her own.

"Thank you so much, Mrs. Sato," he says, squeezing her hands gently.

"Please, call me Joy."

She looks at him with a bit of adoration, with open admiration, and also with friendly warmth, and
even though he knows it's all influenced by his aura, it's none of it bad. He's not bad.

"Joy," he says, and pecks a kiss to her cheek before turning to go. He might never see her again but whatever. He has a friend named Joy in New York and it's a good thing. He crouches to pat the cat one last time and then hurries out the door and on his way.

No one jumps out of the shadows at him, fae or otherwise. In fact, he gets an eerie feeling of emptiness about the streets as he goes along. The vibrations are muted, tight, and his throat is dry with the implicit knowledge that he's running late already. There are people around, sure, but they're all getting somewhere with purpose, getting inside, disappearing around corners and into cars. There's something foreboding in the air and it's strong enough that he doesn't need his enhanced fae spidey-senses or whatever it is to give him a bad feeling about it, given the way the humans are scattering.

It's like how birds and rodents go quiet before a storm in the forest. He knows that sound from one particularly ill-advised adventure he and Scott had taken into the preserve, right before the worst storm of the year. They'd had half the department out looking for them and Deputy Traynor had broken her ankle in the process of getting them home safely. But he remembers, before it had gotten bad, Scott had tugged on his shirt and pointed out the ominous silence in the trees.

It's the same now.

He runs. Running feels right, wind slipping through his hair and through his aura as it trails behind him, overflowing still with Derek's stolen energy. There's no taxi around and it's almost as fast this way anyway, though tonight he stays out of the shadows where he can. He hasn't had the best of luck with those lately.

When he gets to the club the silence remains, and he doesn't realize why it's odd until he realizes that it's after dark but he can't hear music through the hallway. It clicks too late. He comes running into the club proper to a terrifying sight.

Hunters.

A lot of them. Weapons everywhere. Ten at least, though counting isn't exactly the first thing on his mind. He's slightly more distracted by the fact that Jackson's lying dead in the center of the room, globs of blue-green blood spattered around the floor and a couple hunters huddled around another one of their kind trying to bandage a nasty cut.

Bad. Bad bad bad. Stiles spins, but there's already a hunter blocking the exit, and there are still people inside that matter to him, so he backs away, towards the less-guarded bar side of the room.

"Oh my god what the hell," he blurts, letting his fear and surprise show through. He doesn't have to fake those in the slightest. He hadn't expected anything like this, though maybe Jackson's warnings about his kills were more apt than he'd given the Kanima credit for.

There's another body, further into the room, though Stiles can see the sheen of fur and he suspects it would be one of the feline fae he'd seen earlier. There's no sign of Derek among the downed, which is a relief at least.

One of the men nearest starts closing in, backing him more towards the corner and Stiles doesn't want the corner. He wants the door to the back-rooms.

"Who are you people? Stay away from me," he demands, putting as much of an order into the latter
portion of his sentence as he can. He's not touching anyone so it's not going to do much if anything, but he's got a lot of energy right now. A lot.

He watches the angry look soften on the man's face as he nears, getting inside the range of Stiles's aura. He relaxes slightly, arm lowering the knife a little and Stiles eases further along the bar in the lull.

There's an old man in the middle of the room and when he moves in Stiles's direction the others part for him. He's clearly some sort of leader given his age and bearing. He moves sprightly enough for someone his apparent age, knife held in his hand. Stiles almost hopes he'll come close, that maybe Stiles can get ahold of the leader and buy himself some freedom.

But the old man pulls up short as he comes into the edge of Stiles's range, eyes widening, a disturbing and somehow familiar smile spreading over his stretched-tight face.

"You're one of them. One of the kind that killed my daughter and my grandson. An incubus," he says, drawing out the tones of the last word in something that reeks of both disgust and delight.

"What? The fuck are you talking about?" Stiles demands, stomach dropping out.

"Take him," the man orders.

Stiles darts towards the door but there are already people there, and before he can find a way around them and down the hall, two men get ahold of him and get knives to his throat, pinning him back against the bar.

"Don't hurt me," he says quickly, putting whatever push he can into his aura as he grabs the edge of the bar for stability, fingers slipping on bits of detritus, peanut shells maybe. He tries to keep panic from taking over, holding his head steady. But the knives stay far enough back from his throat that he thinks that his command has worked, at least partially.

The man tips back his head and inhales slowly. "There's no point in denying it. I can feel it from here. Scared incubi," the man intones, turning slightly to his troops, voice taking on a lecturing tone, "give off a very distinctive and powerful aura of sexual arousal."

He moves slowly, pacing like some self-important pedant giving a speech, gazing at Stiles with a delighted contempt.

"Now some of us might genuinely get aroused by scared little pretty-boys," the man continues with a grim laugh that one or two of the others share. "But Victor here doesn't," he says, pointing to one of the men closest to Stiles who is looking a little doe-eyed and sporting a rather obvious woody, Stiles realizes when he glances down. "Too much the sap for this to be anything but supernatural."

Stiles stares at the blade in the hunter's hand, realizing it's identical to the one he'd been stabbed with. Both times. And then he understands why they're here. That it's his fault that they're here, just like Derek had warned him. He pushes down the sick churning in his belly and fixes the man with a dark look. No. It's not his fault, at least not more than the hunters' themselves. Just like he'd told Derek.

"You're an Argent, aren't you," Stiles says, giving up on pretending he's not fae.

Argent Sr. moves a little closer, a smug smile resting on his face. "So you've heard of me."

"I've heard your kind go on unjust personal vendettas that threaten peace and happiness for everyone," Stiles says coldly. "And believe me, I know all about unfair nasty reputations. But since
every Argent I've ever met has been a rapist or attempted cold-blooded murder, let's just say I think you all earned that rep."

Rage fills the Argent's face. "It was you? You killed them. My daughter, my grandson," he growls, spittle clinging to his lips as he surges closer.

It puts him closer to the range where he could stab Stiles, which is not good. But it also lets Stiles work his aura better. If he can just stall long enough, he can work through the clothing of the men holding him, maybe weaken the Argent. His pinkie finger isn’t on a peanut shell. It’s on something else, something that has a vibration all its own. It's oddly familiar, and he curls his fingers around it surreptitiously, distracting them with words.

"I've never hurt anyone who didn't deserve it," Stiles says, voice low. "And your grandson? Was a rapist," Stiles spits, slipping the chip of whatever into his pocket while he gestures pointedly with his other hand as a distraction.

"Lies," the man sneers. But there's a flicker of doubt in his eyes and he twists to bluster at his troops. "Incubi are skilled liars."

But Stiles sees some of the hunters in the background exchange wary glances and Stiles forges onward, using skills his dad had taught him in counting the men and women and assessing their weapons while incendiary words tumble from his mouth.

"You doubt me? Then why did they find a drugged young woman in his bedroom who didn't consent to being there? Why did he keep waterbottles full of GHB in his fridge? And why would I kill a hunter without a good reason? That's just stupid. I only hunt rapists and your grandson was one of them."

The man's face starts to purple with his struggle to suppress his rage, his hand trembling on his blade.

"From where I stand the only murdering monsters in here are you people. If you had any honor you would let me go," he says, adding compulsion to those last three words.

Argent starts shouting, raging about lies and incubi and Stiles really doesn't listen. He can feel the men's grips loosening on him and he prepares himself to reach up and grab their skin for one last push. An expression of bafflement and skepticism at Argent's rage just fuels the fire and he watches doubt flicker in the ranks.

"They don't believe you," Stiles interrupts, adding his aura to it, holding back giddy laughter as a hardon brushes against his hip as a guy shifts, glaring at Argent.

The moment Argent turns to start arguing with his troops, Stiles slaps his hands to the men's bare necks, giving them a hard push as he orders, "Keep them away from me," and jumps backwards, twisting and levering himself up over the bar and down the other side. Gunfire erupts in his wake, glass shattering over his head but the thick bar protects him as he sprints for the hallway. His influence has the other hunters blocking his dash down the hall for the locked door, the sounds of scuffles and shouts behind him.

There are explosives sitting by the door like he'd interrupted them before they could begin the process wiring them to the door and Stiles does laugh then, almost hysterical as he punches in the code fast and the lock pops open on the first try. He slips through and slams it shut behind him, shouting in relief when he hears the lock engage again before the sound of muffled thumps hit the reinforced door panel.
He takes a shaky breath, leaning away from the door. But with those explosives laid out and with how much he'd pissed Argent off it won't be long. He sprints up through the door into living room area, going towards the place he had last seen Deucalion and Kali.

"Stiles!" Kali's voice cuts through the air behind him, sending him stumbling.

He twists, turning back to look at a corner of the den where Kali's sitting, book in hand, Deucalion's head in her lap. The room is quiet, cheery almost, all sounds of the outside world dampened by thick tapestries on the walls and perhaps by other means.

Deucalion sits up quickly, looking far more energized than the last time Stiles had seen him. It makes him wonder who else has met an inglorious end as food. He shoves down an awful twist of fear at the thought that it might have been Derek.

"Stiles," Kali says, dropping the book and surging to her feet, sounding relieved, hopeful as she moves closer. "You came back."

"Where's Derek?" he blurs first, the cheery fireplace fire and luxurious surroundings mockingly incongruous with the fear raging in his system. "I know he came here."

"He's here," Deucalion says carefully. "He's safe."

Stiles glares at him, knowing there's more to it than that. But he doesn't have time to make bargains. None of them do.

"Then what the hell are you still doing here?" Stiles demands, glancing back at the doorway.

"What…" Deucalion begins just as Kali says, "He's terrified."

And yeah, it's probably pouring off of him in waves. He gestures wildly back the way he'd come. "Hunters. Like a dozen are in the club. They're about to blow their way through the door. You need to… is there another way out of here? Do you have defenses or anything?"

"You can't be-"

"Serious? Jackson and others are dead on the floor and I only got through because of a lot of luck and fucking hell we need to get Derek and move," he nearly shouts, making urgent gestures. "How do we get out of here?"

Kali twists towards a hallway, guiding Deucalion past the armchairs to the path Stiles is standing on, starting down deeper into their territory, heedless of her bare feet.

"There's an exit this way. We have a car waiting," she says, gesturing urgently at Stiles. He can feel Kali's fear now too, spiky and rushing like an inexorable tide.

"Where's Derek?" Stiles demands.

"There's no time," Deucalion says. "Stiles, you can't risk it."

"I'm not coming. Not without Derek," Stiles says, jerking away from Kali's reach, glancing furtively down the hall searching for likely rooms. There's shouting, muffled by the walls, but he knows it's not going to be much longer.

"I'm sorry, he's locked away and there just isn't time," Deucalion says impatiently. "We need to go now if we're going to survive."
But Stiles had come here with the leverage to buy Derek's freedom and he's not going to sacrifice it, not after everything Derek has done for him. He sets his jaw and stares them down.

"You don't have your goons around this time to make me. Give me Derek. That's my price. You said you'd give me anything, and that's my price. I know you won't stay and help me but give me the key and I swear to you if I survive I will find you and help you through your pregnancy."

Deucalion stares at him, face stiff with frustration. But his expression melts into one of almost impressed resignation as he reaches inside his shirt and yanks a cord from around his neck, tossing it in Stiles's direction.

"Down that hallway, last door on your left. Keep your word," Deucalion says, then grabs Kali's elbow and starts moving away.

"Stiles please," Kali begs, thick black hair spilling over her wide eyes, hand pressed to her belly as Deucalion drags her up the hallway.

"I will when I can, I promise," he calls as he backs away.

She gives in and turns to run, guiding Deucalion out towards the exit and onwards to freedom.

Stiles runs the opposite direction down the hallway, going past the security door again and through another door down a narrow hallway, shoving into the last door on his left just as he hears an explosion rip through the air, the walls vibrating like crazy.

Derek's there. He's there and he's alive. His eyes are wide and he's staring at the doorway, at Stiles in surprise.

"Oh god. Oh god you're okay," Stiles blurts, fumbling across the room.

"Stiles," Derek breathes, his voice rough and tight against the bindings. Stiles doesn't dare meet his eyes. He can't bear to see recriminations there now.

Derek's hands are chained in a metal stockade bar at his shoulders, which is itself chained upright. But instead of bolts or other more traditional fixtures, Derek's chains are being held in the hands of two of the statues. But not statues, he knows that now. People. And then he realizes he recognizes them, the creepy twins. They're each holding one end of Derek's chains, wrapped around their twisted, anguished forms.

"Good thing I like you, huh," Stiles says, fighting back tears of relief as he slots the key into the lock. "Because I think Deucalion might have eaten you otherwise."

"Stiles, incoming," Derek says sharply, and when Stiles looks up, Derek's eyes are hard on the door.

"Shit," Stiles blurts, getting one side of the lock undone and then bolting for the door.

He gets to the wall just in time for the door to slam open in his face, but it doesn't hit him, and the guy who steps inside has his eyes trained on Derek, gun lifting towards the striking sight of the bound werewolf.

Stiles doesn't let the moment pass by. He lunges, getting his hand on the guy's skin and furling his aura fast and sharp to mojo him into submission.

"Freeze," he hisses. "Drop your weapons."
The gun clatters to the floor as the guy starts to go limp. Stiles drags him out of the doorway and lets the door shut behind the hunter. He slams the guy up against the wall and slants his mouth over the human's, pulling hard and fast.

It's so tiny, so paltry a sensation now, so much easier for him to pull back from now that he knows what real pleasure is like. What a werewolf lover tastes like. But there's also so much less energy to work with and he almost doesn't stop in time. The man crumples to the ground and Stiles isn't sure if he'll survive.

He tried.

The door pops open again and he whirls, trying to get his hand on the hunter's wrist, but she maneuvers fast, twisting her arm around his and spinning at her hip, using his momentum against him and hurling him against the wall.

By the time he's scrambled halfway upright the knife-blade in her hand is flashing through the air. He throws up an arm, shouting when it cuts through his forearm, but it's enough to stop her from hitting something more vital.

He grits his teeth, trying to stifle a second cry as she yanks it back. He's slipping and she's coming in for another blow when abruptly her head is slammed sideways, a palm tipped with claws dragging her bodily over till her head collides with the wall.

Derek glares at her a moment till it's clear she's not moving and then he turns back to Stiles, offers him a hand up.

"How many?" Derek asks around his teeth.

Stiles presses a hand to the wound still gushing blood in his arm, trying to focus a little energy to get it to stop bleeding at least. "I saw thirteen. One was already injured. And an Argent. An old man."

Derek snarls, fingers curling reflexively into claws. "Gerard."

"I, uh, I pissed him off pretty badly. Side note, I may have also killed his daughter last night," Stiles says with a wince as he looks up again.

Derek stares at him a long moment, then sighs heavily.

"Then maybe it's too late," he says softly, looking lost, afraid as he stares through the body of one of the hunters.

Stiles sucks in a short breath, stepping closer to say, "Too late for -" before just shaking his head and turning sharply to face the door. "You know what? Let's worry about surviving this first."

Derek nods and Stiles moves, Derek hard on his heels. But they're not fast enough. The door snaps open and Stiles jerks to a halt, Derek nearly colliding with him.

A hunter team is there, ready for them this time, weapons trained on them. Staring down the barrel of a gun has him swallowing because as much as Stiles can heal, he's not sure a bullet to the brain is something he'd recover from. He puts his hands up slowly in supplication.

"Please, don't hurt us," Stiles says to the woman who seems to be leading the pair, radiating as much soothing and attraction in his aura as he can.
"Don't move," she says sharply, eyes flicking between them, her dark eyes alert but not filled with hate or rage.

He can work with that.

"I won't. I really don't want to hurt you."

"What about them," the man demands, gesturing down at the two hunters sprawled on the floor.

"They're just unconscious, we were just defending ourselves, that's all," Stiles says, shaking his head. He watches the woman's eyes track down his arm, to where he's been wounded and is still bleeding slowly. She frowns.

The man steps to the side and kneels down to check one of the fallen hunters for a pulse. After a moment he looks up and catches his partner's eye, nodding sharply before he turns his comrade, trying to put her in a recovery position.

"We just want to go in peace," Stiles says softly. "We don't want anyone else to get hurt."

"I know," she says, lowering her gun slightly. "I heard what you said earlier. Everything's gotten so out of control."

"Will you let us go?" Stiles asks, hope against hope.

"Yeah. Yeah I think I will," she says, lowering her weapon further and backing up a step.

"Wait," Derek says sharply behind him, and then the woman cries out, going stiff and arching back as a blade punctures through her from behind.

"Wrong answer," Argent Sr. hisses, shoving her body to the ground as Stiles stares, frozen. Gerard wheezes, hobbling into the room over her fading wet gasps. With the amount of blood pouring out from the wound, her renal artery or abdominal aorta must have been severed. There's no saving her.

"You just killed your own woman in cold blood," Stiles says, incredulous as Derek hauls him away from Gerard's feeble jab with the bloodied blade, backing them up further into the room. He has a pistol in his other hand but his arm appears too weak to lift it to aim at them.

"Kill them," Gerard wheezes at the other hunter, who's staring at him in horror. "Kill them!" he bellows, face mottled and sweaty, eyes wild as he steps past the body, exertion and rage overcoming him.

"What in the ever-loving fuck do you think gives you the right?" Stiles shouts at him, aura snapping through the room in a pulse that has the others reeling slightly.

But Derek draws him further away, and the stresses of the whole situation are apparently too much for the elderly hunter. He stumbles, falling to his knees, and the other hunter hurries to crouch at his side. "Sir."

Gerard shoves away from his help with contempt, saying "Damnit I told you to kill them."

"Sir, you're unwell. They've done us no harm," the hunter tries.

Gerard makes a sound of breathless rage and twists his gun up enough to aim in the hunter's direction. Stiles yelps and lunges forward when he sees he means to use it but he's too late to stop the pop-pop of the hand-gun firing. It hits the hunter in the leg, sending him stumbling back.
Derek moves fast, leaping forward and wrenching the gun away from Gerard's hand and disabling it with practiced motions. But the old man is surprisingly agile, or perhaps just determined, swinging the knife around to bury in Derek's thigh before Stiles can move. It's only a split second before Stiles is there beside him, kicking aside Gerard's knife hand and yanking the potent blade free, hurling it across the room as Derek stumbles.

But Stiles doesn't stop there. He's not just going to disable this time. He reaches down and grabs fistfuls of the Argent's coat and drags him off balance. He pushes Gerard onto his back and straddles his brittle body, taking his aged face firmly into his palms.

"Stiles, what are you doing?" Derek demands, falling towards him and grabbing his shoulder.

Stiles doesn't take his eyes off his prey.

"I'm going to kill him Derek," Stiles says firmly, watching Gerard's eyes widen as he pants.

"I can't just let you-"

"Being human isn't a good enough excuse for all this killing. He's so much worse than us. Me or even Deucalion and Kali."

Derek doesn't relinquish his hold on Stiles's shoulder, though. He sets his jaw, frustrated. "Maybe so, Stiles. But this is the sort of thing that could start a war. It could get people killed, innocent people. It's happened before. I haven't had time to tell you but there have been wars. Horrible wars that happen because of things like this, and a clairvoyant friend of mine has foreseen us on the precipice of one."

Because, in part, of him. Of the things he's already done. The hunters he's already killed.

Stiles shakes his head. "But we can't just stand by. Let them get away with this. How can we? What about the innocent people he and his people have been hurting? What if taking his life could be the thing that keeps it all from getting worse? What if we're meant to stand our ground instead of lay down and be sacrificed in the name of the status quo?"

Derek goes quiet. Slowly his fingers release their grip on Stiles's shoulder.

Stiles bends down and reaches into the small, petty human aura that encircles Gerard Argent. It's brackish, sickly and already so thin. It barely takes more than one long press of his lips, one breath and then he's gone, his tortured energies released.

"Let's go," Derek says, pushing to his feet, wincing as he uses his wounded leg, but offering his hand to Stiles anyway.

Stiles glances at the hunter Gerard had shot, but his eyes are open, unseeing, blood pooled under him in too great a quantity. Derek shakes his head, grim, and Stiles heads for the door.

They run up the hallway, heading for the foyer and the destroyed entrance. Stiles makes it halfway across the foyer before he realizes that Derek has fallen behind. With Derek's wounded leg, his gait is impeded, and before he can make it across the room, hunters are already spilling into the foyer, coming in the direction of unresponsive comrades.

"Go!" Derek shouts at him, gesturing at the escape that's just a few feet from Stiles now.

But Derek doesn't follow him. He turns instead to face the hunters on one good leg, letting out a roaring a howl that has the walls vibrating, drawing gunfire and shouts.
Derek bellows as a bullet punches through his body, but it doesn't slow him as he lunges forward slashes open the throat of the man who'd shot him, sending arterial spray over them.

It's suddenly chaos, screams and shouts and bullets, people trying to figure out what to do. Derek uses an arm against the wall for leverage and leaps sidewards, lands on another hunter in a tangle of mass, claws going deep into the man's chest. There are a few other sporadic shots but people are screaming *hold your fire* in the narrow space since it appears the bullets ricocheting. Besides, given the way Derek shrugs off the bullet wound, it would appear they are less impactful than the smattering of runed blades spread throughout the bunch.

Still, Stiles's heart is in his throat as he sprints towards the nearest hunter when a pistol swings his way. Derek howls as another blade sinks home and Stiles swallows his fear and grabs the hunter in an awkward tackle, ignoring the pistol pointed his way as he goes for some mouth-to-mouth action. At this close range the gun is probably the least useful weapon anyway. It goes off, but at best it gets him with a glancing blow, or at least he thinks so. He's not sure, it could be the adrenaline and he doesn't feel it. Either way he spins them, kissing the man to the soundtrack of screams as he tries to get his back to the wall.

He shoves his tongue into the man's mouth unceremoniously as he plunges into his energy and swallows half of it in a tasteless gulp that turns the human into dead weight that he drops to the ground. His next target isn't so easy. This time the guy does shoot him - with a crossbow bolt.

"Fuck!" he shouts as the rod punctures through his arm. But it's not enchanted or whatever and he rips it free, lurching forward to grab the man's bare arm. Dumping out some mojo is easy because he's fucking overflowing at this point. The guy's eyes go glassy as his crossbow clatters to the ground and he pushes him with an order to *stop her* as Stiles leaps back from the knife blade swinging his way.

The command has the hunter stumbling into the woman who's trying to slash Stiles without hitting her fellow hunter. When he lets go, she makes her move, slashing across his ribs as he dances back. But the hunter he's compelled gets ahold of her and the confusion and his strength holds her long enough to let Stiles slip close and curl his hands around her dark face. There's terror in her eyes when she realizes he's gotten close.

But she's wrong.

"Hush," he murmurs, capturing her mouth and drawing smoothly from her body till she collapses at their feet.

The male hunter's blue eyes are starting to clear and Stiles takes his mouth before that can happen, pulling a pulse of energy from him until he goes limp too and Stiles lets him fall.

Just in time to see a guy about to plunge one of those blades into Derek's back.

"Derek!" Stiles shouts as he tackles the man, throwing his arms around the guy's waist. The knife still hits home as Derek turns, but nowhere as deeply as it might have and he spins, landing a knockout-worthy punch to the guy's temple.

Derek howls again as another hunter flanks him and gets another knife into him as Stiles falls with the hunter, getting buried under his heavy frame. He's deathly vulnerable like this and he flails hard to struggle free. When he scrambles to his feet he finds Derek barely holding the last two off of him, taking too many defensive wounds in order to hold his ground protecting Stiles.

Stiles launches himself at one of the hunters, grabbing at his wrist and struggling with him over the
knife blade. The man's wrist is gloved and for all that he's brimming with wild energy, Stiles can't seem to influence him enough to capitulate. There's too much hatred in the man's eyes, too little humanity in his mind, so Stiles tries for brute force, just trying to twist the guy's arm back and make him drop the weapon. It's working well until Derek howls in horrific pain and Stiles looks reflexively, a move which costs him. Even as he realizes his mistake and jerks back, the hunter lunges at him, plunging the blade right into his shoulder.

The sound that comes out of his throat is awful but his body responds fast, snapping his good arm up to catch the exposed skin of his attacker in counterpoint now that he's closed the distance. Instinct cuts through the chaos of the various energies he's absorbed. He furls his aura with a snap around them. The man goes pliant in his arms as he drags him close, jerking the knife from his shoulder as he covers the man's mouth and drags his energies down to unconsciousness.

The knife clatters to the ground, and then he pulls away, shaking his head and gasping against the urge to kill, lets the man go. When the man falls at his feet, everything's abruptly, awfully quiet. Finally, after what seems like an eternity of fighting and panic, there's silence.

They're all down. All of the hunters. There's no one left standing but them. He lifts his gaze to meet Derek's eyes. Derek crooks a faint smile at him.

And then slowly crumbles to the ground.

"Derek?" he says, stumbling over the man's body in front of him to get to his friend and lover. "Oh god," Stiles says, falling to his knees beside him, awkwardly trying to catch his upper body as even that collapses. Stiles realizes his left arm is useless when he tries to prop Derek up. Between his shoulder wound and another slash lower down his arm, and... yes, he thinks a bullet wound. But that's all superficial. Derek's in trouble and he only needs one hand to guide Derek's head into his lap.

There's so much blood, and so much of it is Derek's. His forearms are a mess of bloody gashes, his legs cut in places too in addition to the deep wound Gerard had dealt. But worse than that are the number of significant stab wounds in his torso. Too many.

"Derek, I'm so sorry," he says, stroking bloody fingers against his temple.

"Just... need rest," Derek wheezes, his breath coming through in wet, rasping gasps. "Be fine."

But Stiles knows better. "No, no you won't. These knives, they're. This is the same one that I got stabbed with I-" his voice breaks because he knows these blades do too much damage to heal when he's not at full strength. And it's his fault Derek's not at full strength. He can see the lack of healing in the gaping wounds, like his body can't even begin to try.

"I'm so sorry," he says, tears spilling down his cheeks and landing on Derek's hair. "It's my fault. I took your strength. I'm so sorry."

"It's...k. Least it's not... Deuc..." Derek says, trying a wry smirk that just ends in him coughing up a mouthful of blood.

No, awful as it is he's glad that Derek's with him instead of having been turned to stone, food for a blind Gorgon.

But the thought hits him oddly, demanding attention even as he wipes blood away from Derek's mouth. Deucalion doesn't get the energy to heal his affliction directly. Kali feeds it to him. She gives energy that she's taken from other sources. She gathers it so she's full of energy, like he is
He's seen her do it. Felt it.

"Fuck," Stiles says, almost shaking as the realization hits him. That he's capable of doing the same. That somewhere inside him, the ability to give energy instead of take it is there. And he has to try. He has no way of knowing if this will work. If he'll do anything but kill Derek himself. But he has to try. There's clearly no time to do anything else.

He lays Derek down, draws himself up over Derek's body on his hands and knees, gazing down at him. Derek's eyes are still able to focus on his, and Stiles drags up a smile for him, framing Derek's face with his hands.

"I'm going to kiss you now," he says, voice wobbling. Derek blinks at him, eyebrows and the corner of his mouth twitching upwards. "Because I'm going to try and heal you. But if I screw up, it'll be the end so... sorry. At least it'll be pleasant I hope."

Derek nods, just a little, and Stiles nods in return, blinking back tears as he takes a ragged breath.

"Okay. And, either way, thank you, for everything."

Derek blinks again, brows furrowing slightly as his lips try and form a word. But it proves to be too much of an effort and Stiles just strokes his hair and closes his eyes, knowing it's now or never.

It takes a moment to concentrate, to get his mind in the right place, but he lets himself remember the last time Derek was under him. They'd been in bed, Derek inside him, holding him close and touching his skin so reverently. The vibration of that moment, the perfect harmony inside him starts to sing and he blinks open his eyes, finds those beautiful green ones with his own. The world around him fades and takes on a familiar amber tone as he focuses in on his sexual aura, his supernatural perceptions of the world. He settles into it, lets himself feel the way his sexual aura responds to Derek, to his body and his electric blue energies.

It's like coming home. He knows these energies, he's been inside them before, touched them in his mind, played with them. They're so weak, so thin now, and his are so dense, so full. He also knows the hunger inside him, the pull that wants to take that thin, ailing energy and make it part of his own, to add it to a greater whole. But that's only part of him. He understands that now. His hunger is deep but this time it is tiny, sated, far from his lips.

The hunger starts low inside him, but the seam in his aura starts in his kiss. It doesn't even take that much effort to draw his aura in close, like folding his wings in and squeezing to compact it and add pressure so that it feels like if he opens the seam it will burst. He wants it to burst. He wants the life to flow out of him.

Carefully he bends down and touches his lips softly to Derek's, opening his mouth as he tears open his own aura and lets it all start to flood out. He feels the reversal in the air, similar to the way it had felt around Kali when she'd done it. It's the best he knows how to do. Only then does he pierce into Derek's aura, with his life-force flooding out of him.

And it isn't graceful. He gets how it could be but this time it's messy as fuck. Tearing his aura so wide was unnecessary, as it turns out. And even still he pushes too hard and too fast. It overflows and he feels energy slipping away at the edges as he struggles to contain it, to funnel it down into Derek. At first he worries he's too late, that he's waited too long. But soon he sees the ice blue turn electric and start to swell around them, and sees the wounds start to slow their bleeding.
He knows triumph as the werewolf's eyes flash golden beneath him and his body bows up and the wounds start to heal in earnest. His donated energy starts to swell into a storm of life, whipping through Derek's body and latching onto these deep wounds, beginning to heal them and remove their cursed residue. Only when Stiles is starting to feel lightheaded does he pull back, reeling in the torn edges of his aura and tucking them in close to his chest. His toes are tingling, but that's okay, probably.

The world fades back to mundane tones and Stiles falls to the side, gasping for breath, exhausted. It takes him a while to get the world to stop spinning, with slow, measured breaths, but eventually it does settle. When he looks over at Derek, his eyes are closed, but he's breathing steadily now. Most of his wounds have grown very shallow or closed almost entirely, leaving lacerations and the beginnings of scars instead of deadly punctures for him to work with.

For a while he just sits there, catching his breath. But he has no idea how long they have before more hunters come, or any of these survivors start to wake up. He needs to get Derek someplace safe to rest. Standing is tough, but doable, especially once he feels the edges of his aura knit back together and his sense of balance improves by about a million percent.

He starts to think about moving them towards the exit, but a sound draws his attention and he prepares to guard Derek and fight, twisting to look for the source.

It's the woman from before, in the first room, the one who'd stabbed him and Derek had knocked unconscious. She's stumbling up the hallway towards them, hand to her injured head, dark hair spilling unevenly from its braid. But she stops, frozen when she sees the bodies.

Her eyes track up to Stiles, wide and terrified. And he must look a fright, covered in blood and a few injuries of his own, the only one standing above more than a half-dozen bodies.

They stare at each other for a long moment, at some sort of impasse.

"You didn't kill me," she says, confused.

"No."

"You could have. Why didn't you?"

"Why would I?" He bites back a bitter laugh. "You still think I'm the monster here? Even though Gerard killed two of your own people. Even after you attacked us blindly and killed people I know?"

She doesn't reply, though he sees the shame in her eyes.

"I could have killed all of them," Stiles says, glancing at the carnage around them. "But I tried to avoid killing anyone. I didn't always succeed and I hate that, but I never wanted any of this. Will you remember that?"

She stares at him, then nods slowly.

"Good. Because killing each other is so fucking pointless and the last thing any of us needs is a war," Stiles says sharply.

The woman shakes her head firmly, face growing resolute. "You're right. And there won't be one. Not if I can help it," she says.

Stiles nods slowly, then steps back to kneel at Derek's side as he says, "We're leaving. You should
"Okay. Thank you," she says hesitantly before nodding and turning to the nearest hunter to try and assess the situation.

Derek's still out, but breathing steadily, so Stiles shakes his shoulder, trying to wake him. He rouses Derek enough to get him to his feet, even if he is leaning heavily on Stiles's shoulder and barely has his eyes open. But it's enough. Stiles is exhausted. Bone weary and his extremities are tingling from depleted energies. But he can get them out. They can run from here.

That's all that matters now.
When Derek wakes up, it's a confusing sensation at best.

First, because he hadn't really ever expected to wake up again. Second, because when he turns his head and blinks his eyes open he realizes that he's in his own bed, in his own apartment. And finally, he wakes up alone, which is wrong. His wolf is certain that is wrong, and as his mind starts to catch up, he agrees, given that the last person he'd been with had been Stiles, and therefore Stiles should be sharing his bed.

Shouldn't he? He'd come back. Stiles had come back…

He groans, pained as he starts to wake up more fully, limbs aching as he shifts in the sheets. He's healing, he can feel it, but it's slow. Difficult. He turns his head to survey the room in the other direction and finds Stiles watching him, eyes brightening as he sees Derek's face.

Stiles is sitting curled up in a borrowed pair of sweats and a hoodie, perched on the edge of the low dresser in the far corner of Derek's room, apparently watching him sleep from afar. He's wearing Derek's clothes…

"You're awake," Stiles says, lifting his chin from his crossed forearms, a hopeful little smile touching his face. "I'll get you some water. And some tea. Or something," Stiles says, hopping down from the dresser and darting out of the room before Derek can say anything.

Just the sight of Stiles disappearing out of the room is enough to have him wincing and wanting to chase. But Derek's in no state to chase and Stiles had said he'd come back.

The clatter of dishes in the kitchen is reassuring as he shifts slowly in bed, propping himself up against the headboard and pillows with achingly slow motions. When he draws the sheets back he finds himself naked and clean. He can see the lines marring his skin left behind by the hunters' runed blades, wounds too multitudinous for him to have possibly healed on his own before bleeding out. He doesn't understand.

When Stiles come back into the room he sucks in a sharp breath, eyes going wide and pupils dilating when he sees Derek's body bared to him. The tone of the air in the room whips fast over to sensual, warm and heady and inviting, but then just as abruptly, snaps back to the cool quiet he's used to in his apartment.

"You're killing me here," Stiles mutters, hurrying over to the bedside table to set down the water and steaming mug of tea for Derek before stepping quickly away again.

Which Derek frowns after him for, but supposes it makes sense not to pursue any bedroom activities just yet given his injuries. He frowns down at said injuries.

"I should be dead," he murmurs, before folding the sheets back over his lap again for warmth and looking over at Stiles in question.

Stiles wrinkles his face, scratching at his chin. "Yeah, well, I decided that would be lame."

Derek gazes at him for a long moment, trying to pull together the blurry, broken memories from… he's not sure how many days have passed. He remembers Stiles holding him, remembers thinking he was going to die. He thinks he remembers Stiles kissing him but everything gets blurry after that.
"How?"

Stiles looks at him and then smiles faintly. "Turns out I actually am good for more than just raping and killing," he murmurs.

Derek frowns at him for the characterization, but then again he's said as much himself to Stiles before. It's something he'll have to work towards undoing.

"I kinda figured out how Kali keeps Deucalion alive. I saw her do it once so I... basically I just kinda, put back your energy instead of taking it," he says with an outward gesture, screwing up his face. "It's fucking weird, by the way. And I may have also fucked it up entirely, so don't thank me yet. You might still die for all I know," Stiles says with an attempt at a grin, looking grim under the veneer of levity.

Derek shakes his head slowly, running a hand over one of the wounds on his chest, just a thick purple line of scar tissue now. He takes stock of how his body feels, taking a deep breath and letting it out slowly.

"No. I'm going to be fine," he says with confidence. He's survived enough grave injuries in his nearly two centuries of life to know that he's well on the upswing for this battle.

"Good," Stiles says faintly, looking like he's trying to pretend it doesn't matter to him.

"How long was I out?" he asks, grimacing as he lays back again. He'll survive but he still hurts like hell.

"All day yesterday. It's Monday afternoon."

It's longer than he'd like, but not that bad. Just his body nursing his injuries. But then, he's not the only one who'd been injured. He turns his head to squint over at Stiles. "What about you? How are-"

Derek's phone rings, his landline, on the table on the far side of his bed. He would ignore it but the only people who would be calling would be family or work, so he stifles a groan of annoyance and tries to sit up more to reach for it. Stiles just hops down from his perch and walks around the bed and over to the table to pick it up, glancing at the caller ID readout.

"Erica?" he says, glancing at Derek.

Derek makes an affirmative noise and extends a hand towards him. Stiles answers it quickly and says, "Hang on" as he brings it over to Derek, guiding it up to his ear.

"Erica," Derek says softly. Stiles's hand moves away quickly when Derek takes the phone from him, avoiding physical contact. And then he's slipping away back to the corner of the room.

"Well hello, who was that?" Erica asks, grin apparent in her voice. "I was going to be disappointed you were back at your apartment but it sounds like you had fun this weekend after all."

Derek huffs a faint laugh, scrubbing a palm over his face. "Something like that."

"You okay? You sound... off. And you're not answering your cell."

He grimaces. Trust her to pick up on that. She may very well shoot him when he finally explains everything to her. "Yeah I... ran into some trouble. Some of those dangerous humans I told you about with their guns and knives. But I'll be fine. I'm fine," he says firmly at her sharp intake of...
"I guess you're not coming in to work then," she says.

"No, not today. And..." he glances over at Stiles. "I might need to take some leave."

"So, leave, or leave?" she says with a blatantly lecherous tone to her voice that has him rolling his eyes.

"Yes," he says mildly, not rising to her bait.

"No but seriously, you rest up, okay? But there's something you should know about..."

His chest tightens, mind flooding with thoughts of the possible consequences of what had happened at Deucalion's. Had he made the right choice in letting Stiles kill Gerard? Had that even been the choice Lydia had warned him about?

"What is it?" he asks. And he can see Stiles tense in response to him tensing up.

"It's Lydia," Erica says.

Derek stiffens, closing his eyes. "What's happened?"

"I don't know. She's just gone. Cleared out without a word."

"No signs of a struggle? A sudden departure?" Derek asks, hoping against hope. A soft layer of soothing, pleasurable warmth touches the air, probably in response to Stiles's empathetic concern.

"No," Erica says, sounding wary. "She's just completely cleared out."

He breathes a sigh of relief, tipping his head back against the headboard.

"Why? Were you expecting a struggle? What do you know?"

"No," Derek reassures her. "There was a small chance they would remove her by force. But I was expecting her to be gone."

"Why?" Erica repeats like she's talking to a child.

"Let's just say Lydia's... special."

"Special," Erica deadpans. "Like how you're special."

"No. Well, she is. But that's not what I meant," he says with a sigh.

"God you're terrible at this," Erica says with a laugh.

"Believe me, I know I'm not winning any awards for my communication skills any time soon," he says, looking over at Stiles with a wry twitch of eyebrow.

Stiles flashes the hint of a grin back at him from where he's perched on the dresser.

Derek furrows his brow and glances down significantly at the bed beside him, but Stiles just shakes his head, smile going tight as he curls tighter on the furniture that's about as far as he can get from the bed and still be in the same room.

"So what happened? Where'd she go?" Erica asks, drawing his attention back to the conversation.
"I don't really know," he says honestly. "You probably won't see her again. I'm sure letters of resignation will be arriving soon in the mail. Maybe a postcard or two, I'm not sure if that's allowed."

"Allowed? Fucking hell. And they don't even let her say goodbye? I mean, she's probably too cool for goodbyes, but I dunno. I'm going to miss having an M.E. who wasn't an idiot and actually had good taste in shoes," Erica says gruffly, masking her hurt with lighter reasons, but he hears the pain underneath because he feels it too.

"Yeah. There are rules for her. When certain things start to happen and if she starts to get pulled into it, she has to disappear. But it sounds like she made a clean break, which is the best we could have hoped for, honestly," he says with a sigh.

He glances up when he sees Stiles twitch, and he finds a bleak look on the incubus's face. Guilt. And Derek just offers him a tight smile because it's not really his fault but he was definitely a part of it.

"So, what, just, let it go?" Erica demands.

"That will serve her best."

"That's fucked up," Erica argues.

"You have no idea," Derek agrees, tired now that the little punch of adrenaline her news had dealt him has left his system. "Erica, I'm going to rest now," he says. "Thank you for letting me know."

"I'll tell the Captain. Get well."

"Thanks," he says, hanging up the phone and setting it aside on the bed, too tired to actually crawl over and put it away in the cradle where it belongs. He lays back down and sighs heavily.

"You really should rest," Stiles tells him, looking sad.

Derek's tired enough that his body practically takes it as an order.

"Don't leave me," he murmurs as he closes his eyes.

He wakes up to the sound of the shower running. No, to the shower running accompanied by soft, stifled moans. After resting he feels even better and the sounds have him sitting up in interest. The moans would be enough to get his blood pumping, but he can feel the edges of Stiles's sensual aura swirling through the air, pulling at him, drawing him in.

He aches when he stands, but it feels good to get off the bed. He stretches, feeling his spine pop, comfortable in his nudity as he moves to the bathroom door. It's ajar, which he takes as, if not an invitation, a lack of 'keep out' sign at the least. Stiles's sensual aura is stronger as he steps into the foggy bathroom.

The air is rich with his spicy scent, with the sparkling citrus and the vibrant liveliness of his aura in general. Derek takes a deep breath, savoring the moment, the knowledge that they're alive. That they survived.

He can see Stiles's blurry body through the glass and the steam, see the way his head tips back, exposing the long column of his neck to the spray of the shower, the way his body moves in a
slow, rolling grind as he fucks into his fist.

"Just like we said," he hears Stiles murmur to himself over the rush of water.

And oh but those borrowed words light him on fire, knowing that Stiles is touching himself with Derek and their exchanged fantasies in mind.

"Getting started without me?" Derek says as he opens the glass door.

Stiles yelps, startled, banging his elbow against the shower wall as he spins, chest heaving with his pleasure-seeking exertions and now the surprise.

"Ow," he mutters, rubbing his elbow a moment. But his eyes track immediately down over Derek's bare skin. He licks his lips and says, "Trying to take the edge off. I thought you were sleeping."

"I'm not anymore," Derek says, glancing down in amusement, body more than happily responding to the heat and the proximity to his mate.

Derek stalks forward, cutting through the steam, but pauses, swallows back anger when he sees jagged lines cut into Stiles's body, a deep wound still red in his shoulder, other marks slashed across his arms, his ribs. The perpetrators had already paid for hurting his mate. He shakes it off and smiles. They're here now.

"Sorry," Stiles whispers, eyes wide as he backs up a step.

"Don't be," Derek says with a low hum as Stiles's sensual presence washes over him even more thoroughly. He steps into the stone-and-glass-tiled rectangular room, separate from the tub and plenty big enough for two grown men to share without bumping elbows too much. "A shower sounds like an excellent idea."

Stiles looks past him at the shower door as he closes it behind him, then closes his eyes and turns into the spray as Derek comes up to him. Derek sighs in soft pleasure as the warm water touches his skin, slipping in behind Stiles and bending to press a kiss to the pale marks left by his teeth, a mating bite. His scent is intoxicating this close. Fascinating. Perfect.

Derek lifts his head to admire the tattoos over Stiles's back that glisten in the water. His wings flex and expand with his breaths, still rapid, and Derek touches them, strokes over them. He wonders if there are something like wings in Stiles's aura, if he does feel the wind beneath them when he runs. If it's something he needs, not just something that pulls at him.

It doesn't matter. Wolves can run too. Maybe they can run side by side. Or maybe Stiles will let him chase him when he needs to run. All he needs is a trail to follow. But when he moves closer and wraps his arms around Stiles, he finds him shaking.

"Stiles?"

Carefully he urges him to turn, to face him. Stiles comes around easily enough, though he leaves his face turned away, blinking. To his dismay, Derek can see tears in his eyes even though their trails are chased away by the shower water. He runs soothing hands up Stiles's shoulders and neck, waiting for Stiles to meet his gaze.

His breaths are still fast, uneven. When he turns his face, his eyes are dark with desire and also something else. Regret?

"I'm sorry," Stiles says, curling his arms around Derek's chest, drawing their bodies close together
so that there's nothing but the slick heat of water moving between them. "I'm sorry," he says again as he moves enough to glide his erection up along Derek's hip, pressing his thighs against Derek's cock.

It feels so good, so good to touch him, to have him in his arms. "For what?" Derek says, shaking his head as he strokes his hands down Stiles's back, savoring the feel of his skin. If Derek weren't already well on his way to being hard, the slow drag of Stiles's skin against his, his sensual clinging grip, just Stiles's soft sigh of pleasure would be enough to have him hard.

"For this," Stiles says as his hand glides down over the muscles of Derek's core, twisting a mesmerizing pattern down through his body hair and down to press in against the base of his cock. With a low, delicious sound, Stiles spirals his fingers around his shaft and strokes Derek's length in a move that has Derek sucking in a moaning breath.

"Please don't hate me for this," Stiles begs, mouthing at the corner of Derek's jaw as his fingers drag back up in reverse of their route to the tip.

"Hate you?" Derek asks eventually through the haze of pleasure, confused. "I would never hate you. Especially not for this."

Stiles bites sharply at his neck, gliding his own dick against Derek's hip. "You will."

"No." Derek growls his dissent, turning his lips to Stiles's cheekbone. "Haven't I told you? This is so beautiful."

The sound Stiles makes in reply is wounded, his body shaking as his forehead drops to the curve of Derek's shoulder. His fingers dig hard into Derek's neck, pulling him close.

"I'm so sorry," he says, voice thick with tears.

Derek hushes him, pressing soft, soothing kisses to his crown and his temple as they rut slowly against each other, cradling his body close. And even when tears hit Derek's shoulder, Stiles is as impelling as ever, one hand tight around Derek's cock, the other scratching lines into the back of his neck. And even as Derek tries to soothe him, Stiles is pressing tighter, grinding harder against him.

"I'm sorry," Stiles says again, breath coming in tight little pants against Derek's neck as he rolls against him in an improbably sensual grind. "I don't think I can stop.""Why would you stop?" Derek asks against his ear, nipping at the delicate cartilage, never wanting to let him go. "I don't want you to stop."

"Derek, I'm so hungry," Stiles breathes, lips dragging along his throat. "I'm going to hurt you."

Ah... and he doesn't exactly have energy to spare. He understands now. Foolish of him to forget that Stiles would have expended a great deal of energy healing both of them these past few days. And it's too late for either of them to stop this now. But short of Stiles trying to kill him, it's just going to set him back a ways in his healing.

"I'll be fine. It's okay," Derek says, unable to stop thrusting their hips together either, too caught up in the desperate need for his mate.

Stiles hums in protest, teeth tight against Derek's jugular.

"It's my fault, I started this," Derek insists, lips chasing kisses along his jaw. "It's okay. Just don't
run. Tell me you won't run or blame yourself."

Stiles makes a broken sound, head lifting finally to meet Derek's gaze. His pupils are blown as he catches at Derek's lower lip with his teeth as Derek presses a hand down over Stiles's erection, giving him more friction against his skin.

"I won't," he breathes, fingers shaking against the back of Derek's head as he licks at the edge of Derek's mouth.

"It's okay," Derek says. "Take what you need."

Stiles moans, tight, broken. His hand grips Derek's head and wrenches him into place, covering his mouth and thrusting between his lips with his tongue as he ruts hard against Derek's hip.

A rush of pleasure slams through Derek as Stiles's deadly kiss takes effect. He thinks Stiles comes in his arms. He's not sure if he does, as amazing, as spectacular as it feels. He knows his knees are about to buckle.

But then everything just fades to black.

When he wakes up again it's thoroughly dark. He's back in his bed and dry, though his head is throbbing a little. The clock reads a little after 2:30AM

His apartment feels empty, and the solitude he normally welcomes feels cold.

"Stiles?" he calls, hopeful yet unsurprised when only silence greets him.

He listens, but he doesn't hear Stiles anywhere in the apartment. Nerves flare in his chest and he struggles to sit up, but then he realizes there's a note taped to his hand. He reaches over to turn on his bedside lamp to read what it says.

"Not running. Went for food. Will be back I promise."

That has his wolf calming down. Not entirely, but enough. The tea beside his bed is cold but he drinks it anyway. The thought of food is an appealing one now that he thinks about it. He's not eaten in days and he could definitely use some protein.

He feels a little weaker than he had before, which is unsurprising given his foolish advances in the shower, but not much worse. Not so bad that he can't slip from his bed and walk slowly to the other side of the room. The light from the nigh-full moon is peeking through the curtains of the window and he moves to draw them open and bask in its light.

He stands there a while, soaking it up, trying to draw what strength he can from it. He's not sure how much of his vitality can actually be influenced by the light of the moon, but it feels good, and it helps keep his wolf calm in the silence.

Eventually his legs grow tired and he crawls back into bed, though he leaves the curtains drawn wide so that some of the light spills over his bed too. Then he tries to rest, and perhaps he dozes a while, but he snaps instantly awake at the sound of keys turning in his apartment's door lock.

He listens to the now-familiar sound of Stiles's heartbeat as he locks up and kicks off his shoes and putters around a bit. He turns on the bedside table lamp so there's more than moonlight for Stiles to see with when he comes in since he has no idea how well incubi's eyes function in the dark.
When Stiles appears in the doorway he brings food with him, as well as the scents of the city. Of the clubs. Of other people. But he also gives off a vibe of satiation. Derek's not exactly thrilled to know that Stiles has had to go to others to feast on their sexual energy, but he's glad that he's taken care of himself. They both need whatever energy they can get.

He pauses, seeing Derek awake, and relief is quickly smothered by a mask of blankness as he looks down at the bag he's carrying.

"I didn't really know what you eat, and since everything is just ingredients in your fridge and I don't really know how to cook, I just. Got a bunch of stuff. Uh. Burgers. Some bulgogi. I figured you like meat."

Derek snorts at the unintentional innuendo, a smile edging onto his lips as he takes the bag. "I most definitely do," he says as he pulls out the container on the top. The spicy beef and sesame oil smells delicious, and he pops open the lid. He doesn't bother to find utensils, just shoves a few pieces of meat into his mouth and chews, humming in approval.

"Have you eaten?" Derek asks after he swallows his first bite.

Stiles starts, looking up from his mouth sharply. And then he looks vaguely uncomfortable as he says, "Yeah. I'm all full up."

He'd actually just been asking about the food, but he doesn't comment, just nods and takes another bite.


Derek frowns at him and says firmly, "Don't be. I didn't think before I went in there and I put you in a bad spot. I'm sorry for that."

Stiles nods absently.

"But it's alright. Everything's fine now," Derek says, smiling at him. "I'm glad you came back."

"Said I would," Stiles says, not looking at him.

Derek frowns, but continues to eat, not sure what to say.

"So, who's Erica?" Stiles asks, clearly making conversation to fill the silence and give himself something to do as he moves away, poking around Derek's room idly.

"My partner," Derek says.

Stiles squints at him a moment, then his face opens in understanding. "Oh. Cool. Is she fae too?"

"No. Human, and mostly unaware. But with everything going on I warned her a little. Turns out she's picked up more than I expected along the way," Derek says, shaking his head. "I should have known better."

"Your phone rang more while you were, uh, asleep. I didn't answer it," Stiles says.

Derek makes an acknowledging hum, laying back and setting his now empty food container aside on the side table and sliding across the bed to grab the handset of the phone again, turning it on to hear the chirping tone that indicates he has messages.

He dials the voicemail service while Stiles takes the opportunity of the space between Derek and
the food container by clearing away the trash and taking the rest of the food away out of the room when Derek doesn't reach for more. While Derek listens to a brief update message from Erica and another from his captain, Stiles moves around in the kitchen some, presumably putting the food in the fridge. When he returns he has a fresh glass of water in hand which he brings to Derek, who takes it gratefully after he hangs up the phone and puts it back.

"Thanks for telling me. I wouldn't have remembered to check since I hardly use it. But I guess I don't have my cell phone anymore," he says.

"Deucalion probably has it," Stiles says with a grimace. "Sucks for you but it'll be an easy way for me to get in touch with him at least."

Derek squints at him. "Why would you do that?"

Stiles tangles his fingers together, avoiding his gaze for a moment, then sighs. "That was the deal I made. To get you out. I'm going to help them."

Derek is quiet for a long moment. Stiles had come back, but had he come back for him? Or had he gone to Deucalion on his own not knowing Derek was there and discovered his plight? Had he saved him out of a sense of honor?

When Stiles had come bursting into his prison, face flooding with relief, Derek had been sure Stiles had come back for him. He's not sure anymore, with the way Stiles is still avoiding him.

"Stiles. I need to know why you would do that for me. Why did you go to the club that night?" Derek asks, shoving his wolf back roughly at its gleeful and simplistic interpretation of Stiles's sacrifice.

"It was my fault you were there in the first place," Stiles says. "No way was I just going to leave you there."

Derek closes his eyes against the sting of rejection, murmuring a soft, "I see."

He doesn't bother to point out that he had gone to Deucalion of his own free will. In pursuit of Stiles, yes, but by his own choice. The deal has already been struck.

But Stiles makes a sound of disagreement. "No, not really. I mean, that's true. Don't get me wrong, even if I didn't care about you personally, it would be a shit move to let you turn into Gorgon food. But there's more to it than that," he says, shrugging awkwardly as he lifts his eyes to Derek's and says, "You're the reason I went. You're important to me."

Warmth blossom in his belly, his wolf rolling over and exposing its belly in happiness.

"I wasn't sure… when you left," Derek says softly, heart in his throat.

"Yeah well unfortunately for you I care about you," Stiles says with a bitter laugh. "A lot."

"That's good, because I care about you too," Derek says, offering a smile. "The only unfortunate part is that you don't carry a cell phone," he adds with a wry smile. He holds out his hand to Stiles, inviting him to come close, showing him that he still wants to be with him because everything that's happened doesn't even come close to being as important as how he feels about the incubus.

"I should buy one. I should buy one and give you my number. And maybe call my dad," Stiles says. "You know what? I'm going to go do that and let you rest, and you can call me if you need stuff," Stiles announces, sounding nervous as he backs away.
"Stiles, wait. Please. Don't go, not when I don't have the strength to chase you," Derek pleads.

"I'll come back," Stiles says, but it doesn't ring true. He shrugs and says, "I'll… I mean, you can call me."

"Or you can just come here," Derek says, tugging at the sheets. "Then I won't need to call you."

Stiles just looks frustrated. Torn. And he inches further away.

"What's wrong?" Derek asks, struggling upright in his bed. "Why won't you come to me?"

Stiles hesitates, gnawing on his lip as he glances at the bedsheets beside Derek.

Almost like he's afraid. And then Derek realizes that he hasn't actually apologized yet for whatever he'd done that had driven Stiles from his bed the last time. Derek stares at his hands, at the hands that had held Stiles down and bruised him through his first time.

"I did hurt you, didn't I?" he says, words tumbling from his mouth in realization. "On Friday night I was so rough with you. I never should have been so… violent," he says, shaking his head at the memory of spilling Stiles's blood himself. "Of course you're afraid of me."

"I'm not. You didn't," Stiles says, but Derek forges onward.

"I did. And I'm so sorry."

"Derek."

He shakes his head sharply, ashamed of himself. "Your first time shouldn't have been like that, taken like a rabid wolf."

"Shut up." Stiles makes a sound of frustration, looking away at the wall. "It was perfect, okay?"

Oh.

There's conviction in his voice. He means it, and maybe he doesn't have the experience to understand how different it could be, but hearing him say that… Derek swallows back the arousal that churns at the memory given Stiles's assurances that it had been good, not something that hurt him.

"Okay. I can't argue with you on that," Derek says, tilting a wry smile down at his hands. "It was pretty special for me too. Still, I don't want you to think that's the way it has to be with me next time. If you want there to be a next time."

The look Stiles shoots his way is full of want and longing with a sardonic edge of really? that almost has Derek laughing. He leans forward, letting the sheets fall down his chest to pool in his lap as he says, "I know I want there to be a next time. In fact, I'm hoping you'll be the one fucking me."

Stiles licks his lips, and Derek can see his pupils dilating even from across the room. But instead of closing the gap like he'd hoped, Stiles just backs up another step and says softly, "You don't really mean that. You're saying that because I made you want me."

Derek pauses, brows drawing down.

"I don't understand."
Stiles makes a frustrated sound. "Whenever I'm around you, my aura or whatever. It makes you want me. You were apologizing for me for how things went down in my bed but it's the other way around. I'm the one who should be apologizing to you, for… seducing you."

"Is that what this is about?" Derek asks, gesturing at the distance between them. "You're trying to not seduce me?"

Stiles glances at him and nods sharply before jerking his gaze away again.

Derek laughs, shaking his head and patting the bed beside him as he says, "Stiles. You haven't seduced me."

Stiles sets his jaw and Derek rolls his eyes. "Don't be ridiculous. Come here."

But Stiles puffs up, scowls at him, the air sparking with a crackle of his spicy scent.

"Ridiculous? Pretty sure consent is a huge fucking deal and not in the ridiculous category. Or are you going to try and pretend that consent is actually possible around me?"

Derek purses his lips, reminding himself that Stiles is still so new to all of this, and has been raised with a human perspective to boot. He takes a breath, then carefully says, "Are we talking human terms or fae? Because it's going to be a different answer."

Stiles pauses at that, some of the fight draining out of him as he closes his lips, turning the thought over. "I don't know? I don't… I don't know how to tell if you want me for me or because of what I am."

Derek tilts his head down, giving the question consideration instead of a quick answer.

"I think my perspective is foundationally different. I've been among fae for a long time. We all have our fundamental truths to our natures. Your nature has influenced me. Mine has probably influenced you too in ways you don't even know. But people influence each other all the time. To me, who you are and what you are aren't separate things. It's all just you. Just like I don't try and pretend that my wolf isn't an integral part of me."

"Yeah but your wolf hasn't done anything to me," Stiles points out with a jab of a finger.

"I wouldn't be so sure about that," Derek contends, arching an eyebrow at the spark of guilt that flares in his belly. "There are things I haven't told you yet. And things I've done that you don't understand."

Stiles goes quiet, eyes tracking back and forth as he runs over his memories, and eventually looking at him speculatively as he says, "Such as?"

Derek tilts his head, scratching his fingers through his beard as he starts to tally up the potential infractions. He might as well start with the biggest one.

"I bit you, deeply. Do you remember?" Derek asks, eyes dropping to Stiles's shoulder where it's hidden by his sweatshirt.

"Yeah… it was kinda unforgettable dude," Stiles says, brows furrowing as he lifts a hand to reach inside the neck of the hoodie to touch his skin.

Derek breathes tightly through his nose, ducking his head again as he says, "The mark's still there, did you know that?"
Stiles's fingers reach further inside his clothing to trace over his skin more carefully and his eyes widen.

Derek offers him a lopsided smile. "The wound's long healed but you can still feel where my teeth were, can't you?"

"Yeah. What..."

"It's a mating mark. My wolf has laid a claim to you, marked you so that everyone will know that you are mine and mine alone," Derek says, voice rough as he says words he's been aching to voice, words he knows he doesn't have a right to.

He can't make himself look at Stiles, not and see the rejection or disgust or fear he expects. "Don't worry. It's not permanent. Much as my wolf would love it to be. It will fade, faster if you reject it."

Stiles is silent for a long moment and Derek stares at his hands, running a soothing thumb over the back of his other hand as he tries not to hurt.

But then the bed shifts as Stiles's modest weight settles onto the far corner, and Derek can't help but look up at him then.

There's so much, too much in those amber eyes. He doesn't know how to read them.

"This fae shit is really complicated," Stiles says after a moment.

Derek snorts at that. "Understatement," he mutters. But he tilts his head and turns his tone back to a more solemn one even as he offers a gentle smile, sliding a hand along the sheets in the space between them.

Stiles slides closer, moving into arm's reach, curling up in the middle of the bed. He doesn't touch Derek, but he does look at him with flickers of hope in his eyes for the first time. "So... you really want to be with me?"

"As long as I can convince you to keep me," Derek says, tamping back more possessive words his wolf would urge. "I don't pretend your nature hasn't influenced me. But the way my wolf feels about you, the way I feel about you... you can't get there through desire alone."

Stiles plays his fingers over Derek's palm, still curled in on himself though he's closer now. He mulls that over a bit, then eventually says, "Okay. But... I can make you want things. Doesn't that scare you?"

Derek holds his gaze.

"I trust you," he says, and when Stiles makes a sound of frustration he forges on. "Don't think that means I expect you to be perfect either. When I say I trust you, that means I trust you to do your best. That's all."

Stiles frowns over that, picking at the edge of his commandeered hoodie.

"Will you stay?" Derek asks softly.

The look Stiles shoots him is full of longing. He looks so young. So alone and lost and Derek wants to hold him against his chest and keep him warm forever.

"I really don't want to go," Stiles replies softly. But maybe I should is still hanging behind those
words, and maybe they'll be there a long time, but for now he'll take what he can get.

"Come here, come lie down with me, sleep with me. Just rest," he says quickly when Stiles's eyes widen. "Just sleep."

After a moment Stiles slides up to the top of the bed beside him, leaning back on the pillows and headboard as Derek draws the sheets down for him. Stiles slides into bed beside him and Derek reaches over to turn out the light of the bedside lamp, sending the room into darkness relieved only by the cool light of the moon.

With tentative motions, so unlike the languid, instinctual, sensual movements of their morning spent in bed together, Stiles turns into his body. He presses close to Derek's side, then cautiously lays his head on the pillow beside Derek's, shifting his shoulder so Derek's arm is under his neck. Derek just watches him with as much calm and openness as he can manage, even when Stiles sets cool fingers to his chest over his heart.

Neither of them are particularly loosened up as they settle in, but Derek runs his fingers through Stiles's hair, and Stiles listens to his heartbeat, and then finally, finally Stiles relaxes. They lie there, together, and that's all they do, and it's good.

They spend a good while just breathing in the silence. Stiles's fingers start tracing slowly over the lines left behind by the enhanced blades the hunters had used on him, and they start to delve lower under the sheets for a moment before Stiles remembers himself and returns his palm to Derek's heart.

"This no sex thing is stupid," Stiles mutters petulantly, though it's hardly serious.

"Yeah," Derek says with a chuckle, nuzzling in against his jaw. "But you'll thank me tomorrow."

"I know," Stiles agrees, turning his head to press a kiss to Derek's temple.

He wakes with the dawn, finding Stiles still asleep in his arms. And he feels so much better this time, with food in his belly and his mate in his bed.

A deep, scenting breath against Stiles's skin makes him feel even better, and Stiles hums in response, already awake and waiting for him. Staying in his arms instead of getting up or going anywhere.

"Morning," he murmurs softly.

"Hey," Stiles says back, fingers tightening over the hand Derek has on his belly as his bare feet twist a little against Derek's.

With the way the sweatshirt has bunched in his sleep, Derek can almost see the top of the mating mark left on Stiles's shoulder, and before he can think the better of it, his fingers drift up to push the fabric down a little and let him see and touch the pale scarring on Stiles's skin.

"You like looking at it, huh?" Stiles asks, shifting back slightly against his chest to give him a little more access and allow him to halfway face Derek. "Your… wolf likes it?"

Derek tries not to be too embarrassed. "Yes. Very much so."

"So, what else does your wolf do?" Stiles asks.
"Right now? Act like a stupidly happy pup," Derek says with a snort.

Stiles looks at him and twitches his eyebrows, prodding for more.

Derek lowers his face to Stiles's shoulder, nuzzling against the fabric of the borrowed hoodie, drawing in their mixed scents.

"You're wearing my clothes…" Derek mutters against his hair.

"Oh, uh-oh," Stiles says in a teasing voice. "I was going to take them off. Guess I'd better not."

Derek growls against his skin, making Stiles laugh even more and burrow further into his arms, squeezing him tight. The air around them hums with positive, sensual energy. Derek slides his hands up under the soft fabric of his hoodie to touch Stiles's bare skin.

"You're in my home territory, in my bed," he adds, pressing them tight together as his hands skim higher towards Stiles's nipples, brushing fingertips over them and earning a pleased hum. "You hunted down food for me and brought it back to our den."

Stiles laughs, delighted.

But Derek sighs. "I know you aren't doing intentionally, but essentially it all adds up to signals that you've decided to stay and be my mate."

"Oh," Stiles says, voice soft. He's quiet for a long moment, fingers fiddling with the drawstring of the hoodie as he composes his thoughts. Then, cautiously he asks, "What would that mean? Me being your mate?"

Derek's breath catches in his throat. He tightens the hand on Stiles's chest a little, lowering his mouth to touch his lips gently to the mark on Stiles's skin.

"It's… a partnership. What exactly that means depends on what we would want. Every relationship is unique. But essentially, it's commitment. Fidelity but," he says quickly when Stiles tenses, "not necessarily in the common sexual monogamy sense, because I know that wouldn't suit you."

Stiles nods slowly, relaxing at that assurance, and Derek continues, "More like keeping to whatever rules or boundaries we agree on. And I'm willing to get creative, to find something that works for us. But at the end of the day, we're there for each other first. It means one fight alone will never be enough to end it. And it means we make our home together, wherever that may be."

Stiles breathes a heavy sigh, fingers sliding up Derek's forearm to lay along the back of his hand over his heart. "I don't know. It… sounds so good but at the same time I just… how can I? But I don't want to lose you. Oh god, when I thought I'd lost you," Stiles says, shaking his head. "Just like everyone else, I-" He breaks off, turning his head away, blinking back the edge of tears that want to form.

Derek hums in dissent, rubbing a soothing circle against his chest. "I'm not asking you to decide. Not now and not until you're ready. I'm already yours for the foreseeable future, if you want me," he says, because it's true. He's already committed himself for the time being. "All I ask is that you tell me what you need. Tell me before you go. If you need to run, I can run with you. If you need me to let you go alone for a while, I can wait," he says softly. "I can wait, if you just tell me you'll come back."

Stiles looks over his shoulder at Derek, eyes wide, luminous. His fingers tighten over the hand Derek has on his chest and he nods, swallows. "Yeah. I can do that. I will do that."
He twists, reaching for Derek, turning to face him and press close to his chest, lifting a hand to cradle his face. "I do want you. Let me show you how much I want you," Stiles says, dragging a thumb over Derek's lower lip. And though to others, sex might be a distancing thing, a way to step away from the emotional and relationships questions and distract with the physical. But he knows better. He knows that for Stiles, for an incubus, it's as intimate and real as anything, perhaps even more-so.

So after a moment he tightens his grip on Stiles's waist and rolls onto his back, pulling Stiles over on top of him. Stiles shifts easily with him, running his hands up Derek's neck and jaw and then sliding up into his hair as he gazes down at him. His eyes dip to Derek's mouth with longing, but he doesn't kiss him.

After last night, he understands. He hopes Stiles will kiss him at some point soon, but he knows it's so much more complicated for him than it would be for most other people. That's part of what being fae is about, learning to make concessions for one's nature, for the nature of others. And there's a beauty to it, a creativity that makes even so long a life as theirs fascinating at every turn.

He takes one of Stiles's hands in his own and turns his face to press an intent kiss into the palm. Heat, low and simmering pours over him as Stiles watches him do it. He watches Stiles bite his lip, watches his eyes light up with excitement, with anticipation and curiosity.

His wolf also likes knowing that he's the only one who's ever touched Stiles this way. It's a foolish thing, and he'll never begrudge Stiles his partners because he knows that an incubus would never tolerate monogamy well and he'd never ask it of someone just coming into their own anyway.

But oh he likes it, being the first.

He wants to be Stiles's, in a permanent way that he knows he can't really expect otherwise. He wants to be his first in as many ways as he can manage, wants to earn a memorable place in Stiles's life history.

"I want you to fuck me," Derek says.

Stiles's eyes widen. "You mean…"

"I want you inside me," Derek confirms, spreading his knees on either side of Stiles's thighs. "If you want to."

Stiles ruts slowly against him, his head turning as he looks down between them at where he's slotted between Derek's thighs. "Oh fuck. Really? Are you sure?"

"Positive," Derek says.

Stiles pulls back from him and sits back on his heels between Derek's knees, sending the sheets down with him and leaving Derek bare for him to gaze upon in the morning light.

He licks his lips reflexively in a move that has Derek's dick twitching in response, then glances up at Derek's face.

"We should… we need lube. Right? I'm pretty sure we need lube," he says.

Derek hums his agreement, reaching for the drawer of his bedside table. Pulls it open.

"Oh fuck," Stiles mutters.
Derek bites back a smirk as he digs through his toys for the less-often-used natural oil lubricant he prefers for this sort of fucking. It's been a long time since he's used this, and he tosses it to Stiles, who doesn't quite catch it because his eyes are still on Derek's toy drawer.

"We can play with those later if you want," Derek says. "But we probably want to start simple here."

Stiles jerks his gaze back to Derek's body, nodding awkwardly as he picks up the bottle of lube and looks at it. He waits patiently as Stiles gets comfortable with the bottle, then sets it down and reaches for the neck of the hoodie, pulling it up over his head in a smooth motion.

"Your wolf isn't going to pout too much if I get naked, is he?" Stiles quips, standing away from the bed to slide the sweats down off his hips too, revealing his hard, pink cock to Derek's gaze. The thing is large, which is appropriate for Stiles's species, and Derek wouldn't mind getting his mouth around it again sometime soon. Then again, he's about to have it inside him. His wolf rumbles in anticipation.

"I think we'll be plenty distracted with other things," Derek murmurs, cocking an eyebrow as Stiles climbs back onto the bed between his legs, bouncing slightly on the mattress and sending his dick swinging enticingly.

Stiles grins at him as he crawls closer, but then the expression fades as his hands settle on Derek's upturned knees as he gazes down at his body. His thumbs move in slow circles on Derek's thighs as he sucks on his lower lip, considering. He takes a deep breath, then sighs it out with an embarrassed twist to his features.

"So, I know how to do this, like, in theory? But…"

"There's no rush. We'll just do what feels right, go slow," Derek says, offering him an easy smile. "We can stay like this, I could turn over, or you could lay back and I could ride you."

"Like this," Stiles says quickly, looking up at his face. "I want to be able to see you."

Derek can't help but smile softly at that. He nods and spreads his legs a little wider and plants his feet on the bed, lifting his hips a little as he grabs the other pillow on the bed and slides it under the small of his back before settling down again. It's not much but it does give him a little more access.

"Can I just like, touch you for a while?" Stiles asks softly, looking up from Derek's lap shyly.

"As much as you want," Derek says sliding his knees up a little higher and sliding his palms in behind his head partly to prop up his head so he can watch and partly to help him keep his hands to himself.

Stiles runs reverent hands up Derek's moderately furred thighs, approaching his groin with great interest. He traces the lines of tendons and muscles that converge at the base of Derek's pelvis, then gently lays his hands on the partially-hard length of Derek's cock. He strokes it gently, delicately, head tilted slightly as he watches it harden under his fingers. But he doesn't linger there, more interested in lifting it to direct it to settle pointing upwards along the crease of Derek's hip, clearing a path to further explorations.

Those broad, articulate fingers slide lower with purpose. Derek has to focus on keeping still when Stiles takes ahold of his balls next, rolling them gently between his fingers a moment before lifting them up and to the side. They continue to get a gentle massage as Stiles's other hand moves past them, exploring carefully behind them with a fingertip.
He doesn't go straight for the obvious goal. Instead he lingers, making sure to explore every line and groove of Derek's body. It feels good, the almost teasingly soft touch Stiles is using to map out his skin. But before too long Stiles lets him go and he feels Stiles reach down and palm his ass, squeezing firmly and grinning.

"Been meaning to do that for a while," he says with a laugh.

But Derek can only grin before Stiles is moving his hands again with purpose, sliding fingertips down along the cleft between Derek's cheeks till he's touching Derek's hole.

Stiles brushes his forefinger over the warm, delicate skin, exploring gently while Derek concentrates on not pushing down against the digit. After a few more passes, though, Stiles draws his fingers back and glances up at Derek.

"Lube next?" he asks.

"Lube next," Derek confirms.

Stiles takes the bottle and opens the cap, pouring some of the thin, pure oil over his fingers, rubbing it between them a little. He holds his fingers up to admire them, or maybe check if they're slick enough. They glisten in the morning light and Derek hums in anticipation.

He seems a little more confident this time as he reaches for Derek's body, sliding slick fingers along behind his balls to swirl over his pucker. After he's smeared the oil around to his satisfaction he presses one fingertip to Derek's hole and with a glance up at Derek, starts to press inwards.

But he doesn't drive it home the way Derek half-expects him to. Instead he runs his fingertip along the inside of Derek's rim, pressing him slowly open and teasing the skin with pressure instead of friction. He moves in slow circles, pressing and tugging on his tight muscle, gliding the tip of his finger against the smooth flesh just inside him.

"How do I know when you're ready?" Stiles asks, tongue darting out to wet his lips, eyes riveted to where he's touching Derek so intimately.

Derek has to clear his throat to speak, and even then his voice comes out a little hoarse. "Depends on your goal. And though I'm more than happy to let you linger there and finger me to your heart's content, this seems like a good time to tell you that another benefit of fucking a fae is they don't need nearly as much prep as humans." He drags fingers through his beard as his voice goes rough when he says, "You could just lube us up and go straight to fucking me if you wanted to."

Stiles blinks at him, brows furrowing in concern. "But that would hurt…"

Derek shrugs. "Heals so fast it's worth it if you're feeling impatient."

"Are you sure?" Stiles asks.

"Very."

Stiles eyes him a moment, then tugs on his rim a little more firmly, slipping in a second fingertip beside the first, drawing a low, humming breath from Derek. He teases at that for a minute, then draws his fingers back murmuring, "Fuck, okay."

He picks up the lube and gathers more, pouring it over his dick this time, smearing it around everywhere and then reaching up to drag the excess off on Derek's skin as he scoots himself closer.
"Ready?" he asks cautiously, looking nervous.

Derek reaches down to run a soothing hand over his cheek. "And eager."

Stiles lines himself up, the tip of his cock pushing just into the edge of Derek's rim. His eyes are wide as he stares down at his dick between Derek's cheeks. He pushes a little, and at first nothing happens, just a little increase in pressure. Derek tries to focus on relaxing, but Stiles just tenses up when he doesn't slide in easily.

"Oh god. I'm too big. I shouldn't. This-"

"Is going to be great," Derek interrupts firmly. "You're going to feel amazing inside me."

Stiles's chest heaves with uneven pants as he inches forward again just a little more, then hesitates again, looking up at him with worried eyes.

"I don't know. Are you su-"

"If you ask me one more time if I'm sure, I may very well bite you," Derek growls, flashing his eyes. "Again. Damnit Stiles, stop teasing and fuck me."

And that does it. Stiles glares at him, though there's no menace in it, only challenge. His chin goes up and he puts hard hands on Derek's hips for leverage and thrusts forward, spreading him and slipping past his rim in one hard slide that has his hips slapping audibly against the backs of Derek's thighs when he bottoms out.

It's just an amazing, overwhelming sensation being mated so deeply, having Stiles hilted inside of him. And it seems even more so for Stiles. He arches, whole body going taut against Derek, every muscle stretching and clenching, even his toes curling up behind him as his mouth forms an 'o' and his eyes fall shut as his head tips back. He breathes out a sound that's absolutely filthy, fingers digging hard into Derek's hips.

"Oh," Stiles says, blinking his eyes open to stare at the wall above them, then drifting down to look at Derek's face with an expression of utter awe painting his features. "Oh fuck, I'm inside you."

Derek tucks his hands behind his head, allowing himself a smug little smile as he ignores the slight pain and burn of having been stretched so forcefully and quickly. "That was the idea."

"No, you don't understand," Stiles breathes, shoulders twisting as he lets his head fall back again, feet sliding on the sheets though he doesn't move his hips yet. "I'm, I'm in you. It's... your... I can't-"

And then pleasure rips through him, crashing like waves on the rocks or wind in a storm, and Derek realizes that maybe he really doesn't understand, because Stiles hasn't even moved.

"Oh fuck," Stiles moans, gasping out little breaths as he tries to find his level.

Derek finds himself struggling not to come right then and there, his cock jumping hard and leaving a thick smear of precome over his abdomen as his head twists in the pillows. His fingers fist hard enough in his pillowcase that he hears the fabric creaking and he can't breathe, his abdomen is so tight with need.

Abruptly the overwhelming sensations lessen and Stiles lowers his head, panting. "Okay. Okay, sorry, I think I've got ahold of it now. Uh. My aura. It was partway inside you too."
Derek can only seem to manage a hum of acknowledgement, still trying to catch his own breath.

"And then it kind of all wanted to be inside of you," Stiles adds with a laugh, shifting his weight a little on his hands and drawing back just a bit before sliding in again, drawing a soft, hot moan from Derek. "Which I completely and totally understand."

He attempts it again, drawing back further, though not much more than halfway before sinking deeply in again and sighing softly. "God, I can't believe how you feel. I just don't have any words that come even close to it. Derek, you're so amazing. So fucking amazing."

And there's something about the way he says it, the way he looks down at Derek when the words come off his lips. Like he's the most alive Derek has ever seen him, the most truly himself, embracing his nature, surrendering himself to his experiences and the purity and depth of the connection they're sharing.

Stiles gazes down at him for a long, worshipful moment, then digs his knees into the mattress and starts to move. Each snap of his hips is something Derek feels from head to toe, pleasure tingling at the edges of his senses.

And it's not perfect. Stiles starts harder than Derek's really ready for, and a few times Stiles pulls back too far and slips out of Derek's body, sending his dick skidding off in a wrong and occasionally painful direction. But Derek just guides him back in, touches his skin in encouragement and vocalizes his pleasure in hums and moans. He also doesn't hold back his grunts of discomfort when Stiles takes an awkward angle, giving him the information he needs to learn his way around Derek's body.

It doesn't take long for him to pick it up. Derek is not at all surprised when after just a few minutes, Stiles is fucking him like he's been doing it for years. He is, by definition, a natural. His pace becomes a perfect rhythm, and not a boring one. His thrusts are variable and following a rhythm Derek can feel in his bones as Stiles hums along with his motions. His body is completely invested in it, from head to toe he's moving, stretching and writhing and feeling with every fiber of his being.

Derek wants to be able to just watch him, to drink in every detail of his experience. But there's also his own experience, the way Stiles is sliding into him, filling him up so completely. He's achingly hard against his belly, though he doesn't touch himself, not yet, wanting to let Stiles do as he wishes. But he's close, frustratingly so. He paws at the sheets to keep his hands busy and Stiles hums in appreciation.

When Stiles hooks an arm under one of his thighs and pushes it higher, angling his body up and sideways, it's a game-changer. Derek can't help but cry out when Stiles grinds inside him against his prostate, the sheer size of him a broad, stimulating drag against the sensitive organ at this angle. Stiles moves so confidently now it's hard to remember his earlier nerves as he expertly chases the angle that has Derek arching back under him, cooing, "There's the spot, there I've got you."

And he doesn't stop there. He hikes a knee up to get even more leverage, hitting deep and rough and fast, biting his lip as Derek grows ever more taut in his arms. Stiles murmurs things to him, praise and encouragement, urging him higher, testing his proximity to the edge. He tells Derek how beautiful his cock is, red and heavy against his belly, untouched and twitching desperately with need.

Derek's already about to come, just from the angle, from the intensity, and that's when Stiles lets loose inside of him. Stiles spills free, and not just his come but his hold on his aura and the trickle of sensation becomes a flood, drowning Derek in pleasure that comes so swiftly, so forcefully, he
loses touch with gravity. All he can feel is the ripping edge of orgasm singing through every
muscle, twisting against the hands that grip him so lovingly.

It goes on until he wishes he could beg for it to stop, if only he had the breath. Then, softly, it all
recedes from him like the pull of the tide. He's disoriented as he comes down, blinking his way
through it and trying to focus again on Stiles's face as Stiles eases his hips back down on the bed
gently. It doesn't work. Everything is still more blurry than not. Soft fingers stroke through his hair
and Stiles says something to him but he doesn't understand it.

He fumbles a hand over to touch Stiles's hand where it's sitting on his hip, and Stiles turns his hand
over, curling their fingers together.

At one point Stiles eases back, slipping free from his body and Derek whimpers at the loss. Stiles
makes some soothing sound as he gets up and attempts to move away but Derek's instincts are still
at the fore and he holds tight to Stiles's fingers, unwilling to let him go.

After a moment Stiles relents and comes back, sitting a hip back down on the bed beside him,
leaning down to touch his face softly.

"I'm not leaving," Stiles says again. "I was just gonna, you know, clean us up a little."

But Derek shakes his head silently, pulling at Stiles's waist, urging him back into the bed.

Stiles capitulates to his desire, shifting and climbing back on top of him, which makes Derek happy
again. Stiles smirks at him a little, eyes twinkling as he leans down and pecks a kiss to Derek's
cheek.

"You'd rather stay dirty, my little wolf?" he asks, trailing fingers along Derek's jaw. "Feel my come
inside you, knowing that I've got yours on my skin? Lay here in the scents of sex and sweat and
each other?"

Derek nods, curling his arms around Stiles's ribs and holding him tight as he burrows his face in
against his collarbone, drawing in the scent of him.

"Okay," Stiles says softly, carding his fingers through Derek's hair and pressing another kiss to his
temple. "We can do that for a while. We can do that for as long as you want."
"I know you're awake."

"Am not," Stiles mutters, burrowing deeper into the pillows.

Derek makes a soft hum of amusement, stretching slowly beside him. He rumbles softly like he often does in the mornings, fingers scratching idly at his chest hair as he looks over at Stiles. He shifts a little, nudging Stiles's ankle with his toes, shaking free even more of the soft haze of waking.

"Come on, it's getting late. We should get going if we want to get there before dark."

"Don' wanna," Stiles grumbles again, sliding closer to Derek and sending searching hands over his warm, deliciously bare skin. "Wanna stay here with you."

And Derek doesn't even pretend to protest that statement. He hooks a thigh over Stiles's hip and pulls him closer instead, letting his strong arm curl under Stiles's neck as he seeks his mouth with his own. Stiles goes easily, gladly into his arms.

It's actually not that often that they have the bed entirely to themselves these days. Not lately, at least, and especially not while they've been travelling. Stiles just feels more comfortable finding someone to welcome them into their bed rather than staying at hotels where so many other people have been before, leaving echoes of pleasure that aren't always palatable.

This bed isn't theirs either, but it only belongs to one woman. Normally the bed's owner would still be there with them when they woke, but Sophie had only taken them home for sex and a nap before going to her night and morning shift job, leaving them to her sheets for the rest of the night and morning.

They've taken the long way across the country, partly because flying isn't the easiest thing for fae to do, and partly because it lets them take an illogical route that helps keep any possible hunters off their trail. It's still recent enough that they worry. Oh, there's no war on the horizon. No uprising brewing. But there have been… ripples. Things he doesn't understand and things Derek tells him have to do with politics, which Stiles is more than happy to stay out of as much as he can since clearly he's a force of chaos. So they stay off the beaten path and try to keep their heads down, for now anyway.

It's also because they've got the time.

Kali had delivered a healthy baby girl almost two months ago now, and they're stable enough that Stiles can leave again. He'll probably go back sometimes. Derek still holds some animosity towards Deucalion and even a little towards Kali, but Stiles has gotten to know them both rather thoroughly these past several months. He understands them in ways Derek doesn't, but that's okay. Because Derek's okay with that. Because Derek's okay with him. All of him, all his needs and his desires and hopes and mistakes and everything in between.

And that's why Stiles always goes back to him.

Sometimes it's hard. Sometimes he wants to run and never look back. Sometimes Derek gets jealous or possessive and forgets to check the impulse to act on it. Sometimes Stiles gets too caught up in a flirtation and neglects his mate. Sometimes Derek worries about whether he's holding Stiles back with this committed relationship. But he doesn't expect Derek to be perfect, and Derek doesn't
expect it of him. They just trust each other and do their best.

And it's pretty amazing.

He kisses Derek, hard, trying to show him how much his love means to him with the physical connection. He doesn't pull his energies or tangle with their auras. He's learned so much more control of his abilities these past several months of focused use, and for a simple morning fuck he doesn't need to play with all of that, not when he just wants to kiss his lover.

Derek hums his approval, pulling him closer with all of his limbs, tongue running slow along each side of Stiles's tongue. Stiles is still moderately loose and slick from last night's adventures, but with the way Derek's wrapping his legs around Stiles's hips, he has a feeling Derek's going to want to get fucked or mount him, one of the two. Both are common results of Stiles having an orgasm at someone else's hands the night before. Like Derek needs to reassure himself that Stiles is still his after loaning him out for the night.

Last night had been fun though, for both of them. Sophie had been so thrilled to have a chance to try out her strap-on on him, and boy had she put her back into it. He'd come under her skilled fingers and dirty words when she'd had her hand fisted in his hair, slamming into him from behind while Derek sat back against the headboard, slowly fisting his cock, just watching with dark eyes.

Derek's fingers drag over the side of his neck, tracing the line of his mating mark, his claim on Stiles. As always, it inspires conflicting sensations in him, an instinctual desire to be free and wildly polyamorous, not owned and monogamous. And then, more strongly, a warmth borne of being cherished, being loved and wanted so deeply. Their instincts will never blend perfectly and he knows it, but that's why they're more than just their instincts.

He laughs when Derek growls and twists them, pushing Stiles down onto his belly and climbing up over his back, leaning down to mouth at the mark on his neck, cock dragging a faintly wet line along Stiles's hip and ass as he covers him.

But yeah. Those instincts do make themselves known.

Derek touches him reverently as ever, broad hands stroking and soothing over his skin, tracing every long-memorized line, every divot and mole. He nuzzles at the back of Stiles's neck as he ruts his dick slowly into the cleft of Stiles's ass. Stiles lets himself savor the touches instead of reaching back and nudging Derek into his body or teasing him into accelerating his movements.

He stretches into the moment, listening to the soft hum of the morning, the songs of birds outside their borrowed window, the soft breaths of air rising as it warms in the morning sun, the slow heat building between his body and Derek's over him.

Eventually Derek does reach down between them, touching gentle fingers to his hole to check that he's still slick enough. Then he's spreading Stiles just enough to guide himself in. He doesn't spread Stiles's legs. He keeps himself stretched over Stiles's body, holding him in close as he slowly lays down his weight against Stiles's back, filling him and covering him from neck to ankle.

He's heavy, and it's not the easiest thing in the world to breathe with a two-hundred something pound werewolf pinning him to the bed, but he doesn't care. Derek doesn't do this very often, and he's going to take it for what it's intended as. Covering him, protecting him. Loving him.

Derek's grind is slow and shallow, but the circling teases at his rim and inside of him in a rolling pressure that just builds steadily on itself, grind after grind. Oh Stiles likes this, especially after a good night of fucking where his rim is still a little stretched and tingly and sensitive. He stretches
his arms up over his head on a pleased hum and Derek's hands slide up his skin just a moment later. He twines their fingers together, curling their fingers into fists as he presses on in his dirty grind.

Sometimes just this is enough to get Derek off. Just this slow grind until he's filling Stiles with quiet pants against his neck. Other times it's just a prelude to a more vigorous claiming. Stiles knows he enjoys it. He's hard against the mattress, aching for friction he's not going to get and has no leverage to create.

Derek works hard to avoid being too vocally possessive in bed. The words just feel like gilded nooses closing down around Stiles, no matter how much he tries to shake them off. Too difficult on his instincts. But they've discovered that the reverse isn't true. It doesn't cost him nearly as much to say the words when they're in his power. And now is clearly a time to use them.

"Yours," Stiles says, because he knows what it does to his mate, and because it's true. "I'm yours."

Derek sighs a ragged, grateful breath against his neck, nuzzling at the mating mark on his shoulder, picking up his pace just a little, sliding his knees either side of Stiles's for just a bit more leverage. It's a study in compressed pleasure, close, intimate, connected.

When Derek gets close, only then does he pull back sharply, the head of his cock just slipping free of Stiles's hole as he starts to come. Stiles hums his pleasure and approval as the thick spurts of come land against his hole and his perineum and between his cheeks. He keeps humming as Derek starts to rub, spreading the sticky ejaculate over his skin and into him and down over his balls. Marking him intimately.

And maybe it's more than just last night. He's taking Derek into his home territory soon, and he knows now that such things matter to wolves. Stiles resolves to wear one of Derek's shirts today, preferably one he's worn and hasn't washed yet. Just to watch his ears turn red.

When he's satisfied, Derek pulls Stiles's hips up a little, freeing his trapped erection from where it's been pinned to the bed. Stiles groans and reaches for himself immediately, curling a well-practiced hand around his swollen dick. Derek shifts to the side, halfway laying down beside him so he can watch. Because Stiles likes it when he watches. Plus he keeps a few fingers on the slick edge of Stiles's hole, teasing and rubbing as Stiles starts to jerk off.

He does it quickly, already close when Derek had come, and he catches most of his come in his fingers. Even through the bliss of his release, he doesn't miss the way Derek's eyes watch him as he cups it in his hand, or the way Derek's tongue flickers out against his lips reflexively at the sight.

He knows what his lover likes. What makes him feel loved in return. Reaching over to Derek's lap, he smears his come over Derek's spent cock, rubbing gently to press himself into Derek's skin.

"Mine," he says, earning a soft, vulnerable sound from Derek. Derek brings that hand to his lips, licking off the excess as Stiles flops back down onto the bed beside him to rest a bit and savor their post-coital buzz.

Eventually Derek lays back down and frees his hand, but Stiles just rests it over Derek's heart after Derek draws the covers back up over them to keep them from growing chill. His palm settles in the middle of Stiles's back and he smiles. He has his wings to fly and his mate to give him a reason to come back to ground. His skin tells the story of the only two things he needs.

They doze for a while, dipping in and out of sleepiness, but eventually the sun coming through the windows is bright and the press of the impending day has them more awake than not.
"We should get going," Derek murmurs when the antique clock on Sophie's mantle ticks over to eleven and plays a set of chimes.

"Seriously though. Can't we just… not? Not yet?" Stiles asks, back tensing against the impending stress.

"You already said that last week. It's why we meandered through the mountains. If we put this off, it'll just mean less time to spend with your family," Derek says, running a finger down Stiles's bare back.

"Fine," Stiles admits with a sigh as Derek's fingers spread out softly over his skin. Stiles smoothes his face down in the pillow as a tingle of renewed arousal starts to work its way up his spine.

"Not helping," he mutters, voice muffled by the soft fabric as Derek's fingers trail down past his tailbone.

But then Derek brings his hand down in an unexpected swat, startling a yelp out of Stiles as the werewolf laughs and drags the sheets off them as he stands free of the borrowed bed.

"Come on. I'm hungry."

He talks the whole way into Beacon Hills. Derek mostly just drives, and that's fine, because Stiles mostly just rambles. He does suggest they stop back by Sophie's when they leave, see if she'd asked Casey out, because foursomes.

To which Derek replied they'd just had a foursome a week ago. And of course Stiles had been forced to go on a rant explaining that the different foursome compositions made a huge difference and… yeah okay he just liked seeing Derek in a het sandwich but that wasn't the point.

The point is before he knows it they're in familiar territory and then he can't talk at all except to give the occasional direction as they pass through his hometown.

The first stop is home - the only real home he's ever felt, even though it hasn't been that for years. The Sheriff's house. His dad. There are a lot of people Stiles wants to see, a lot of places to go, but his Dad is going to be number one, even if it's the scariest.

His jeeps is there, sitting in the driveway next to his dad's cruiser, which kindof blows his mind. Derek must feel his reaction because reaches over and rubs his thigh soothingly, taking another turn around the block without asking.

And then maybe just once more for luck.

Just as he's about to start thinking that his nerves are never going to settle any more and consider asking Derek to turn the car around entirely and drive them away from California and never look back, another car turns onto the block and pulls to a stop outside the Stilinski house.

He doesn't recognize the car, but he recognizes the occupant the instant he steps out. A rush of relief and happiness and warmth blossoms fast in his chest and he wonders why he ever worried.

"Okay, okay pull over," Stiles says, and Derek obliges him, pulling in behind Scott's car on the curb. The move has Scott pausing in his approach to the house, squinting back at them in speculation, then eyes widening in joy.
Stiles is fumbling out of the car, getting stuck momentarily on his seatbelt but breaking free quickly as Derek kills the engine and gets out himself, and then Scott's jogging back across the yard towards him and Stiles is throwing his arms open and laughing and about to start running to collide with his best friend -

And then he's stumbling backwards as Derek shoves himself in front of Stiles snarling. Literally *snarling*. Teeth and claws and all.

"Wha-"

And then everything gets really confusing because Scott is snarling in response and his eyes are golden and he has claws just like Derek's and Stiles is scrambling forwards, hurling his arm over Derek's ready to physically hold back his werewolf mate.

"This place is protected," Scott growls at the same time that Derek snaps, "Stay away from him."

Which immediately has an indignant Scott's saying, "I could never hurt Stiles" and Derek's snarling, "What are you talking about? There's no pack territory here."

And then they're just growling.

At which point Stiles just gives up and starts laughing. Just laughing until he's doubling over and tears are beading at his eyes and both werewolves are staring at him, baffled, because really?

Really?

Sure. Why not. Just add it to the list of fucking crazy shit in his life. Because it wasn't like that list was already brimming or anything. So yeah. He laughs, he laughs until his mate and his best friend put their claws away and he laughs as he hugs them each in turn. Because apparently there's only one thing in his life he can be absolutely certain of.

It is never, ever, going to be boring.

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